

DEG Christmas Lunch



A Christmas lunch was held for members in mid December at the Walgett Sporting Club. Goodwill cheer was shared by all as we remembered the year that was almost over, and started planning for the year ahead.



Creative youth project supported

Left: Kerry McGrath and Nardi Simpson visited the Dharriwaa Elders Group in 2005 with members of their advisory committee Gai Richardson (Walgett Shire Council) and Carmen Ryan (Walgett Community College), to introduce the MAD project - a creative youth project of Music, Art and Dance. With the enthusiastic support of the DEG they conducted the arts program with a drugs and alcohol theme, through 2005 and 2006.

Community legal assistance supported by DEG

In December 2005 the DEG convened a wills workshop for the community with the assistance of NSW Legal Aid Commission and Blake Dawson and Waldron.

Right: In March 2006 the Dharriwaa Elders Group assisted the Public Interest Advocacy Centre and Arts Law Centre (of which it is a member) to

give an information session in Walgett. *Aboriginal Information Officer Blanch Lake (Arts Law Centre of Australia) and lawyer Charmaine Smith (Public Interest Advocacy Centre) are pictured with DEG Project Officer Richard Lake.* In particular the Stolen Wages cases were discussed and since then DEG members have asked PIAC for legal representation.



DHARRIWAA ELDERS GROUP INCORPORATED - a charity endorsed by the ATO INC9883394 ABN: 26 795 240 948. <http://www.dharriwaaeldersgroup.org.au>, PO Box 174 Walgett NSW ph: 02 6828 2619

- The primary object of the Association is to promote Aboriginal interests and in particular to:
- * encourage and support Aboriginal elders to resume leadership roles in the community;
 - * assist Aboriginal elders to work for the development of the Walgett Aboriginal community;
 - * manage local Aboriginal cultural heritage and natural resources;
 - * record, protect and promote local Aboriginal knowl-

- edge and cultural heritage including to establish a collection of local Aboriginal cultural heritage information that is accessible to the local Aboriginal community;
- * promote the voice and opinions of Walgett Aboriginal elders;
- * conduct programs to promote community unity and improve the relationship between elders and other Aboriginal age groups; and
- * do all things ancillary to the above.



Flexible Overnight Care Proposal

Left: DEG met with Mary Quinlan from Mackillop Services in August 05 to discuss establishing a new service to support community safe-house providers. This strategy will complement the work to establish a safe house for children in Walgett, and will support those which our research found already provide safe-houses for children at risk in the community. During the year the proposal was developed, presented to the Youth Subcommittee, the Interagency and Community Working Party for support, and is yet to be funded.

Mobile PCYC providing a youth activity

Right: Representatives of the PCYC Foundation met with DEG in March 2006 to announce a new mobile PCYC service for Walgett youth four days a month. The Youth Subcommittee takes credit for attracting the PCYC to Walgett and will support the organisation by co-ordinating volunteers and providing advisory services.



Pool Management Plan & heating proposal



Above: In February 2006 Shire Engineer Alan Nelson visited in response to correspondence from the DEG to the Shire Administrator requesting that the Walgett pool be heated by bore water during the winter so that year-round youth programs could be offered there. He undertook to make cursory research and if feasible, will recommend to the Council that a feasibility study be done into the proposal. The need to heat the pool was found in DEG's research with youth and the recognition of the pool's importance in providing over the 2005/06 summer



Walgett's only youth activity. Above: In May 2006 the DEG and the Youth Subcommittee took a key role in negotiations regarding the use of the Walgett Swimming Pool. The need for a pool Management Plan came about because the Walgett Swimming Club was requiring exclusive access to the pool (a community resource located in a Public Recreation Reserve) during the summer on a Friday night despite the youth centre being closed at the time.

DEG produces welcome to Walgett video



In September 2005 the Dharriwaa Elders Group began producing a cultural awareness video for non-Aboriginal professionals arriving to work in Walgett. The project has many aims, including to improve the services offered to the Walgett Aboriginal community, to promote Walgett's Aboriginal culture and help keep good workers who want to be here. The video script was written by Tim Creighton and Wendy Spencer, and produced

by Heuristic Video Pty Ltd for Dharriwaa Elders Group. The NSW Departments of Education, Police, Attorney General and Health were all involved and modified the script, provided workers and locations for recording scenes depicting new workers coming to Walgett. Dept of Environment and Heritage made a contribution to the costs of the project. We aim for completion in the new financial year.



Cultural management a DEG responsibility



Above: Richard Lake is the Dharriwaa Elders Group's delegate to the Namoi Catchment Management Authority's Aboriginal Advisory Group. The Group met in Wee Waa for the first time in June 2006 and here they are pictured with Namoi CMA staffer Clare Smith.

Above right: DEG advised the NSW Dept of Environment and Conservation regarding the fire management plan for the Narran Lakes. Paul McInnes, delivered the completed plan in Feb 06.

DEG supports community events



Walgett beat Brewarrina 20 - 16 on Sunday 7 August 05 at Brewarrina. Above left: Mixed Under 12 + 14 Walgett team pictured with Walgett Rugby League organiser Virginia Robinson. Virginia was supported throughout the



year by Dharriwaa Elders Group members on her football committee. Above right: The Walgett "Breakaways" cricket team which won the cricket final in March scored 140 and beat the Collie "Cods" with 105 runs.



Football Legends

Left: Ricky Walford, George Rose (DEG Speaker) OAM, Wes Nauqama (St George Illawarra) and Matt Rose (former NRL player currently with Group 9). These men came to Walgett to support junior rugby league and netball on the gala day in August 2005. The Ricky Walford

Rugby League Trophy, George Rose Rugby League Memorial Shield and Jenny Wright Netball Shield are all held on the same day in August every year and is attended by schoolchildren from across the north west NSW. DEG hosted an elders tent on the day.



Left: In February 2006 the DEG supplied its barbecuing skills to the whole-of-community Jobs Expo in the Walgett RSL Hall. Richard Lake and Lewis Beale are seen here doing the honours. Right: The team were at it again, providing the BBQ for the Fun Run organised by the



Dept of Sport and Recreation in March 2006. Neville Beale, Richard Lake and Lewis Beale won awards for best runners over 60 while they were there.

Elders attend Country vs. City League



Tickets to the City versus Country Rugby League match played in Dubbo were generously donated to the Dharriwaa Elders Group by the Australian Rugby League in May 2006. Our thanks go to Rick Walford former Drag-

ons star who organised this as it was greatly appreciated by the Group. The Country side's win over City made the night even more enjoyable for the Elders who attended the match.

Elders attend Canberra exhibition



The launch of a photo exhibition "Our Community - A Great place to Be" focused on life in northwest NSW towns and was held in the National Museum of Australia



in Canberra in June 2005. It was attended by people from Walgett, Lightning Ridge, Grawin and Dubbo, including DEG staff and members.

Lewis on the road in Tamworth

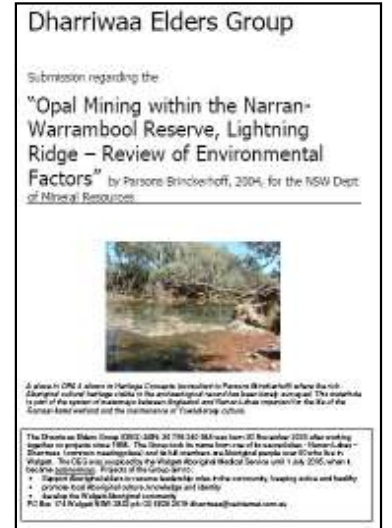
Country musician members Neville and Lewis Beale and Richard Lake travelled to Tamworth in January 2006 for the Country and Western Music Week. Right: Lewis Beale posing in front of the Butler Boys van which was parked in front of the Lindsay Butler recording studio in Tamworth.



Dharriwaa Elders Grp asks: is opal mining worth more to NSW than Aboriginal culture?



Left: the Dharriwaa Elders Group Elders Council reviewing the final draft of the submission, with Project Manager Wendy Spencer. The submission can be found at www.dharriwaaeldersgroup.org.au/downloads/opalsubjul05.pdf.



The Dharriwaa Elders Group made a submission in August 05 to the NSW Dept of Mineral Resources in reply to the department's gazettal of the area known as OPA 4 for opal mining. This area has high conservation and Aboriginal cultural heritage value, and borders on the Narran Lakes Nature Reserve. The submission was made with

legal assistance from Gilbert + Tobin which was much appreciated. The Commonwealth Dept of Environment and Heritage provides DEG with financial assistance to pursue this matter and perform other cultural protection activities.



Above: Bruce Reddan from NSW Mineral Resources visited the DEG to begin liaison between the two organisations re opal mining in the region in March 2006.



Above right: Richard Lake made a statement to ABC News in response to the Minister's announcement of the gazettal of OPA 4, which wasn't broadcast.

Amnesty for return of cultural objects



Left: This is what is left of a spectacular display of cultural items at the entrance to Walgett's community hall, which are of great value to the Walgett Aboriginal community. This year the DEG began an appeal for the return of the missing items. Right: George Rose, Lewis Beale and Ted Thorne discuss a wooden weapon that was brought in for identification by a local non-Aboriginal woman.



New Minister visits Walgett to learn



The Hon. Milton ORKOPOULOS, MP, visited Walgett 12 December 2005, to learn about the Aboriginal people of NSW and his new portfolio of Aboriginal Affairs. Issues raised by Dharriwaa Elders Group members and staff included the severe housing shortage, the renovation of the Walgett Community Hall, the fear of Aboriginal cultural heritage destruction by opal mining, the DEG Walgett Wellbeing Centre proposal, health, employment and education issues. Left: Minister Orkopoulos is farewelled by Dharriwaa Elders Group Speaker George Rose OAM at Walgett airport.

NSW Education Minister inspects

Right: Education Minister Carmel Tebbutt MP visited in March 2006 The Minister is seen here meeting George Rose with College Principal Michael Cavanaugh. Issues discussed were the attraction and retention of quality teachers to Walgett, Aboriginal language teaching in the schools and the disturbingly low academic achievement of Walgett students.



Local members meet DEG



Left: MP Ian Slack Smith met with the DEG in August 2005 so that he may promote the Group's important activities. Since then he has provided his support in correspondence with the Minister for NSW Lands so that the proposed Walgett Wellbeing Project may use the derelict SkillShare building. Right: The Hon Rick Colless MLC (Nationals Whip Legislative Council Parliament of NSW) also met with the DEG in November 2005 to discuss issues of common interest, for example land and water is-

issues, social issues and support Mr Colless may be able to offer to the community development initiatives of the Dharriwaa Elders Group. Mr Colless undertook to assist with the Walgett Wellbeing Project crime prevention project the DEG is developing. He also expressed his interest in acknowledging the rights of Aboriginal communities and the environment to water in the Murray Darling Basin, and participated in a discussion about whether current water allocations to industries that provide little benefit to the local economies, were fair.

DEG discusses Council's future

Right: Member George Fernando spoke with a dissenting opinion. Right: Members Lewis Beale and George Rose also took an active interest in the Council EGM



The Walgett Shire Council Administrator called an EGM in April 2006 to discuss the shire's future. The DEG developed a position paper in discussion with Sam Jeffries, Chair of the Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly, and Virginia Robinson, Chair of the Walgett Community Working Party. DEG Project Manager Wendy Spencer delivered the presentation on behalf of the Chairperson of the Walgett Community Working Party who couldn't attend. Most of the recommendations of our presentation were incorporated into the final recommendations of the Administrator, ie: "Recommendations: That the Minister for Local Government be asked to consider deferring the scheduled election of the Walgett Shire Council to give the Administrator of Walgett Shire the opportunity to consider and/or investigate the options for fu-

ture strategic direction outlined in this report. That the Minister for Local Government be requested to develop a suitable mentor role to site in Council meetings for a period after general elections to ensure that Councillor and staff meet the requirements of the Local Government Act. That the Walgett Shire Council participate in the Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly modelling exercise That a long term campaign to ensure that Aboriginal people participate more fully in Local Government be developed. That the Minister for Local Government be advised that the Community Working Parties are the recognised governance for the Aboriginal communities of the Shire as per the COAG agreement. Carried."

DEG contributes to Review of NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act



Dharriwaa elders attended and opened a community consultation organised in November 2005 by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs about the progress of the governments review into the NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act. DAA's Jodi Broun introduced the day, and Jack Beetson

(pictured centre) and Wendy Machin facilitated discussion. Aboriginal governance is always of great interest to members of the DEG, which will certainly respond to a draft Act when it receives one.

DEG advising government and services



Above: Dept of Education Drugs Officer Christine Reisinger visited the DEG for input regarding the development of a school drug education program in March 2006

On a number of occasions throughout the year DEG has provided images and other content to the Editor Noni Rutherford of local paper the Black Opal Advocate. Above: She is seen here with Speaker George Rose, digesting local news over a cuppa.



Left: In August 2005 Centrelink conducted a focus session to review the Walgett Centrelink's work to encourage school attendance. This sort of DEG activity needs to be funded by the Commonwealth, or otherwise DEG will be forced to adopt a user-pays policy in the future.



Left: Arts consultant Alison Page met with the DEG to present her draft Regional Arts and Culture Plan commissioned by Outback Arts in March 06. She was given advice by the Group, which is awaiting a further draft of the Plan.



Right: New workers in Walgett for the Namoi Catchment Management met the DEG for the first time in November 2005, unfortunately clashing with an appointment with The Hon Rick Colless MLC (Nationals Whip Legislative Council Parliament of NSW). The DEG took the opportunity to propose a burial sites management program with the CMA, which has yet to be project managed or funded.



Above: ANU academic Peter Radoll visited in August 2005 to ask the DEG to participate in a project with Nunavut Inuit elders. The project will provide a think tank re Aboriginal governance and beaurocracy.

DEG works to improve walgett services



In March 2006 members of the DEG, NSW Education and other community education stakeholders, met with Linda Burney MP and John Lester from the Dept of Education to evaluate and improve the progress of the Walgett Community College.

Above: Aboriginal Education Consultants Yvonne Hill and Marilyn Redmond visited the DEG in March 2006 to arrange an in-depth consultation about the Walgett Community College. The consultation was conducted soon afterwards to improve the College's performance.



Left: The DEG provided advice to Walgett Shire Council, community organisations and the NSW Premiers Department regarding the "River Towns" Community Facilitator position which will now be serving Walgett and Collarenebri when it is filled. The job description and duties were decided. DEG requested that it provide office facilities to the position (in order that community development initiatives share resources) but this offer was rejected. The lack of a community facilitator position all financial year appears to have severely hampered the community development progress of Walgett, when compared to the progress of other communities who have had a stable position. The DEG performed a similar, yet mostly unrecognised role in Walgett in its absence.



Above: Kevin Humphries has been pre-selected to replace nationals MP Ian Slack-Smith at the next NSW election. He visited DEG's Richard Lake, Fay Sands and George Rose in January 2006 to discuss future plans.



DEG continued to contribute to the COAG trial by developing proposals for the Community Working Party to endorse for COAG action. The DEG will undertake an evaluation of the COAG trial next financial year. Above: COAG Action Team DEST officer Mark DeWeerd at a meeting with DEG in September 2005