

Dharriwaa Elders Group and Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service advocacy to improve food and water security in Walgett

In the Walgett Connected Community Strategy High School School Reference Group meeting 3 May 2023, DEG's representative asked whether high school teachers would find it useful to draw on the recent work of Dharriwaa Elders Group and Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service advocating for improvements in Walgett's food and water Security¹ as a teaching resource.

The questions this work could usefully explore include:

- What is food and water security and why is this important in Walgett?
- Why are there problems with Walgett's drinking water and rivers? Why is the cost of fresh food so high?
- Who benefits from the status quo and who does not? How do their statements shape their narratives?
- Who is represented in the media as having the authority to speak on food and water security issues in Walgett?
- Who would benefit from improvements to food and water security in Walgett?
- What is the role of Walgett Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation's ("ACCOs"²) and why are they involved in this advocacy through the media to improve drinking water quality?

Because our advocacy is ongoing, teachers may also keep an eye open for new media responses and our publications³. DEG will be making a large statement soon re Water Management that may also be instructive.

Below are some links to assist teachers. DEG would be happy to be invited to join a yarn about these issues after they have explored the above questions with students. .

Resources by Dharriwaa Elders Group and Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service

- [MEDIA RELEASE 13 April 2023: ABORIGINAL ORGANISATIONS DEMAND ACTION: WALGETT DRINKING WATER HEALTH THREAT](https://www.dharriwaaeldersgroup.org.au/images/downloads/130423_MEDIA_RELEASE_Walgett_Water.pdf)
https://www.dharriwaaeldersgroup.org.au/images/downloads/130423_MEDIA_RELEASE_Walgett_Water.pdf
- [Yuwaya Ngarra-li Briefing Paper - Key Findings from the Food and Water Security Surveys in Walgett February 2023](https://www.dharriwaaeldersgroup.org.au/images/downloads/WalgettReport_A130223b_web.pdf)
https://www.dharriwaaeldersgroup.org.au/images/downloads/WalgettReport_A130223b_web.pdf
- [Yuwaya Ngarra-li Briefing Paper: Walgett's Drinking Water, February 2023⁴.](https://www.dharriwaaeldersgroup.org.au/images/downloads/YN_Briefing_Paper_-_Walgetts_Drinking_Water_Feb23.pdf)
https://www.dharriwaaeldersgroup.org.au/images/downloads/YN_Briefing_Paper_-_Walgetts_Drinking_Water_Feb23.pdf

¹ Food security is people having physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life. Water security is the reliable availability of an acceptable quantity and quality of water for health, livelihoods and production, coupled with an acceptable level of [water-related risks](#).

² A NSW Govt definition of ACCOs can be found here: <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/providers/working-with-us/working-with-you/aboriginal-community-controlled-organisations>

³ <https://www.dharriwaaeldersgroup.org.au/index.php/reports>

- Dharriwaa Elders Group and Walgett AMS Food & Water for Life program <https://dharriwaaeldersgroup.org.au/index.php/food-water-life>
- Dharriwaa Elders Group Facebook updates re Meal of the Month and other Food and Water for Life initiatives <https://www.facebook.com/DharriwaaEGroup>
- Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service Facebook updates <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100063454608650>

Links to recent media coverage of food and water security issues in Walgett

<https://www.2gb.com/you-can-taste-it-nsw-town-subjected-to-undrinkable-water/>

<https://www.9news.com.au/national/residents-of-nsw-town-forced-to-drink-bottled-water/105752a7-1bec-4ac2-840d-336d74bc2924>

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/the-town-where-coca-cola-runs-more-freely-than-drinking-water-20230410-p5cz93.html>

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-04-13/walgett-nsw-water-insecurity-worse-than-bangladesh/102212784>

<https://nacchocommunique.com/2023/04/13/naccho-aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-health-news-thursday-13-4-23/#feature>

<https://www.georgeinstitute.org/media-releases/aboriginal-organisations-demand-action-walgett-drinking-water-health-threat>

https://www.nswic.org.au/media_release/remote-town-water-supply-must-be-a-priority/

https://www.northerndailyleader.com.au/story/8157692/this-is-going-to-worsen-residents-worried-about-safety-of-town-water/?fbclid=IwAR1S6Lq5g07XevYQ5seZeOC_4IZRRdD-6Y76jnodcl__v-9ONW5skKxWM-s

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/incentives-to-buy-fizzy-drinks-over-water-should-end-health-experts-20230413-p5d05z.html>

<https://abclisten.page.link/T3Yp5T8NQCmWc68c7>

https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2023/apr/19/epas-water-testing-after-menindee-fish-kill-was-flawed-and-insufficient-expert-says?CMP=share_btn_tw&s=03

<https://westernplains.app.link/5Oq26tSS1yb>

Behind a paywall: “Member for Barwon Roy Butler calls for an audit of drinking water across NSW” LJ Charleston 19 April 2023 The Land

<https://www.theland.com.au/story/8163875/calls-for-state-wide-water-audit-in-wake-of-walgett->

⁴ This Briefing Paper supplies another list of historical links from past advocacy campaigns since 2018 which are also instructive. These contain quotes from NSW Health, Walgett Shire Council and others that remain unchanged in 2023.

issues/?fbclid=IwAR0q8qBkbO_KqRNfPTugUwY5Nf4HdAbYOxPeNuzsHh41hSb7QJiPD4yvTYs

<https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/walgett-residents-ring-the-alarm-on-unsafe-water-supply/4g1i4k4kp>

<https://www.dailyliberal.com.au/story/8157358/indigenous-people-going-to-bed-thirsty-in-town-without-safe-drinking-water/>

<https://www.miragenews.com/aboriginal-groups-demand-action-on-walgett-985834/>

<https://www.mandurahmail.com.au/story/8157657/walgett-residents-worried-about-safety-of-water-supply/>

https://au.news.yahoo.com/walgett-residents-worried-safety-water-031121540.html?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAAJDP0Yofl1W2dEjfw6mKHWs57_E76q5-Qghx18Ipiu2b93yjl4JMfjsXwzfUq4ZUm6Usuv0HHeAYMUootlhNijVMcCcq8HUhP7Bb5hefETGxsPdyZOXURp8oMKhLu9RgxKYGKN7rle2Z0jOTQeF0mCXZkF9TXmMglKz1gDXvk8US

<https://www.miragenews.com/minister-jackson-vows-to-fix-walgett-water-995697/?s=03>

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-04-29/walgett-drinking-water-distress-aired-at-forum/102281886>

<https://www.nvi.com.au/story/8176322/walgett-water-treatment-to-begin-as-community-frets/>

https://www.northerndailyleader.com.au/story/8179133/not-good-enough-minister-meets-with-walgett-community-over-water-worries/?cs=159&_gl=1*1i6l1m*_ga*MTE3MTgyODc1OC4xNjgzMDYzNzAx*_ga_7PC84FGF0J*MTY4MzA2MzAwMy4xLjEuMTY4MzA2MzkyOS4xOS4wLjA

<https://www.nbnnews.com.au/2023/04/23/locals-call-for-change-over-walgetts-water-quality/>

<https://westernplains.app.link/EXYuvpnwszb>

<https://www.nationaltribune.com.au/minister-jackson-vows-to-fix-walgett-water/>

<https://nit.com.au/03-05-2023/5821/nsw-government-responds-to-walgetts-intolerable-drinking-water-situation>

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/media-releases/walgett-successfully-switches-to-river-water>

<https://westernplains.app.link/7NQ1fSflwzb>

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-05-04/walgett-drinking-water-now-being-sourced-from-namoi->

[river/102301424?utm_source=abc_news_web&utm_medium=content_shared&utm_campaign=abc_news_web](https://www.abcnews.com/river/102301424?utm_source=abc_news_web&utm_medium=content_shared&utm_campaign=abc_news_web)