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Speaker's Annual Report to Dharriwaa Elders Group ("DEG") members for 1 July 2016 – 30 June 2017. Project Manager Wendy Spencer.

Members News

Dharriwaa Elders Group staff and members mourned the loss of member Stan Sullivan, Narelle Cain and Dulcie Morgan during this period.

From 1 July 2016 – 2 December 2016 the following Elders Councillors presided: Virginia Robinson, Clem Dodd, Kathy Sullivan, Gladys Walford, Harry Winters, Bill Simpson, Elizabeth Peters, Violet Morgan.

At the 2 December 2016 AGM the following were elected: Speaker: Clem Dodd. Secretary: Virginia Robinson. Elders Councillors: Gladys Walford, Violet Morgan, Leigh Leslie, Paul Winters, Lewis Beale. Associate Members Jilda Andrews, Jason Murray were confirmed as members of the Management Committee. During the period DEG's Elders Council secretariat prepared and held meetings 29 July 2016, 7 September 2016, 5 October 2016, 1 November 2016, 24 November 2016, 2 December 2016, 3 February 2017, 24 February 2017, 3 April 2017, 28 April 2017, 9 June 2017. The AGM was held 2 December 2016.

DEG contributed food vouchers to 17 families for Walgett funerals during the period.

Representation

Walgett Gamilaraay Aboriginal Community Working Party. Clem Dodd and Virginia Robinson supported by Wendy Spencer (Project Manager) continued as delegates to attend the Walgett Gamilaraay Aboriginal Community Working Party ("WGACWP"). Wendy Spencer shared voluntary secretariat duties with the Chairperson Christine Corby OAM and prepared ministerial briefs and other correspondence during the period.

Narran Lakes Co-Management Committee. Virginia Robinson represented the Dharriwaa Elders Group on this committee, which was managed by changing staff and contractors of the Office of Environment and Heritage. Reports are given as a regular agenda item of DEG meetings and correspondence and business arising is addressed when DEG delegates were made aware of the Committee's business.

CASE. Wendy Spencer attended the Computing Assistance, Support and Education Inc ("CASE") AGM of November 2016 and was re-elected onto its Management Committee as a delegate for the DEG. A lack of understanding of the value provided by CASE by an increasingly corporatized community sector meant that this year DEG assisted CASE to wind down by end of June 2017. DEG has always received a high quality of service from the sys-admin level expertise of CASE members who have offered to continue providing DEG IT support directly. DEG understands the value of robust open source systems that require rare troubleshooting. DEG also gratefully values the quality advice provided by skilled IT knowledge holders.

ACHAA. Virginia Robinson, Clem Dodd and Wendy Spencer represented DEG in its role as a committee member of ACHAA, attending meetings by phone from Walgett. DEG during the period assisted with ACHAA 2020 Strategic Plan, review of a key MoU with Museums & Galleries NSW, oversaw the prep of travelling exhibition materials and matters, and benefitted from a Collections Documentation Grant from Museums and Galleries NSW, facilitated through ACHAA which we used to engage the Indigenous Unit of SLNSW in August 2016 to undertake a Collection Management Review and prepare policy documents required for the collection management. DEG also benefitted from MGNSW conducting a November 2016 workshop in Walgett with Laura McBride from Australian Museum re the conservation issues re DEG's Keeping Place. In October 2016, Clem Dodd, Rhonda Dennis & Wendy Spencer travelled to Deniliquin to attend the launch of the "From Our Place" travelling exhibition which included DEG items, at the Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre (another ACHAA committee member organisation) and took the rare opportunity to attend a meeting with ACHAA members face to face. Towards the end of the year we began planning with other ACHAA members ACHAA's Conference to be held in October 2017 so that ACHAA members have a chance to share and learn from each other and guests, and to discuss common issues of concern.



DEG's Clem Dodd & Rhonda Dennis travelled to Deniliquin in October 2016 to attend ACHAA's exhibition "From our place" launch and a collections management workshop hosted by M&GNSW with other ACHAA members - hosted Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre. Left: Clem Dodd with Yarkuwa IKC Chair Jeanette Crew. Right: As part of its efforts to responsibly manage its Keeping Place, DEG requested a workshop re conservation from Australian Museum's Laura McBride offered by M&GNSW in November 2016. Light humidity, pests & temperature were assessed.



Aboriginal Cultural Heritage advocacy activities

Throughout the year DEG worked with the assistance of the Environmental Defenders Office (EDO NSW) to protect environmental and Aboriginal Cultural Heritage values on properties north and west of Walgett, from uncontrolled opal mining. The EDO NSW supported the DEG in August 2016 to appear in Land & Environment Court proceedings re an Access Management Plan being prepared for a Walgett property, workshopped with DEG future legal needs and received instructions for ongoing matters. Also during the year EDO NSW provided advice to DEG re the NSW Government's new Lightning Ridge Voluntary Surrender Scheme¹, prepared affidavits for another upcoming AMP in the Land & Environment Court, and began to research the legal issues of Walgett Shire Council's Barwon River weir-raising proposals.



Above left: Land & Environment Court hearing re an Access Management Plan on country. Above centre: Malabar landholder Wayne Newton, EDO NSW solicitor Ross Mackay and DEG Virginia Robinson await their turn in the Lightning Ridge court – Land and Environment Court session. Above right: EDO NSW's solicitors Ross Mackay and Emily Ryan receive DEG's instructions for future legal work in August 2016.



Left: DEG's Lewis Beale met with the NSW OEH Barwon Darling Floodplain Management team in December 2016, to learn how they will ensure Aboriginal communities' water interests are understood in future water planning. Jason Wilson, Geoffrey Simpson are accountable as NSW public servants with family ties to Walgett.



DEG wrote to NSW Minister for Heritage this year complaining of lack of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage service provision in NW NSW. As a result NSW OEH severely short-staffed Sarah Martin and Joan Chatfield visited in June 2017 to progress DEG's 2002 Aboriginal Place Nomination of Dungalear.

¹ Buying properties for the purpose of opal mining

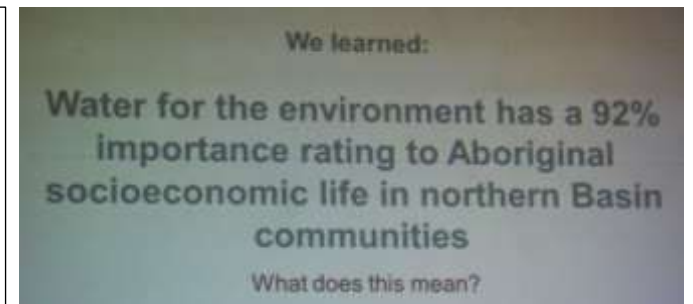
More Aboriginal Cultural Heritage advocacy activities



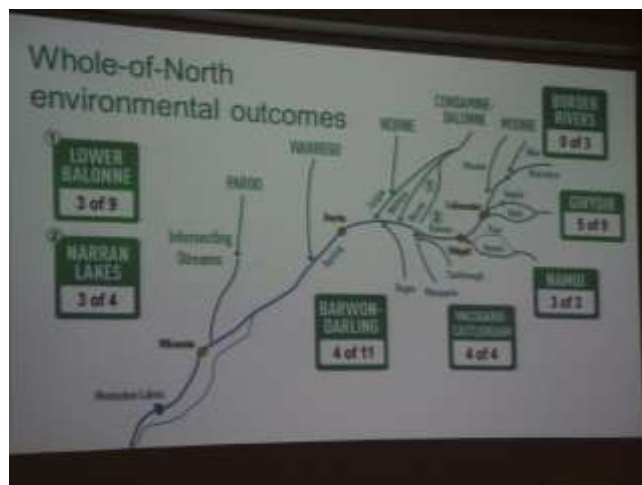
Left: Steven O'Donahue from NSW Planning visited DEG in May 2017 to hear DEG's concerns re Narrabri Gas project EIS process & how Aboriginal communities' interests will be heard. Right: Individual Elders made submissions to the EIS in March 2017. Seen here are Lewis Beale, Doug Darwin, Kim Sullivan and Clem Dodd.



DEG attended a consultation re progress of the Murray Darling Basin Authority's Northern Basin Review in August 2016. Despite Walgett irrigators' wealth drawn from our rivers, they haven't contributed to renovating Walgett's town hall which this meeting was held in. Right: A slide from study undertaken by the MDBA's Aboriginal Unit which DEG advises – part of the MDBA's considerations.



Below: ABC TV's Lateline was shown damage to a Walgett burial ground by DEG's Virginia Robinson in August 2016 when they were researching native vegetation clearing in the region.



Left and above: MDBA tabled its Northern Basin Plan report & legislative proposals to a Walgett meeting in November 2016. DEG's Virginia Robinson urged consideration of sustaining our environment & futures over self-interest & greed.



Aboriginal Cultural Heritage management activities



Left: In July 2016, DEG conducted an activity to investigate using aerial UAV surveys of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage, and then learnt how to combine the results of onground surveys with the resultant UAV aerial photos, in GIS. Right: DEG's workshops to consider GIS results were held in August 2016.

Small funds were provided by Landcare and ProUAV donated time and expertise.



Below: During a break from UAV aerial surveys, Darrell Burkey of Pro UAV undertook at DEG's direction video recordings of Walgett for use in DEG's advocacy efforts. Darrell was the founding President of CASE, a valued DEG partner.



In July 2016 DEG undertook a quick ACH survey on a property threatened by uncontrolled opal mining, at the invitation of the landholder. Above left: Kim Sullivan examining one of many grinding stones we documented in a lakebed on the property we hope to protect. This property has never had its native vegetation cleared we are told, and holds many important habitats and vegetation communities.



More Aboriginal Cultural Heritage management activities



Left: DEG continued to strengthen Walgett family belonging by facilitating another session with family tree historian Michael Bennett 4 July 2017.

Right: DEG supported Walgett's Kennedy Morgan clan gathering to learn of their families' histories and visit ancestral grounds in November 2016.



During the period DEG was invited by Create NSW to make a submission for a Creative Fellowship. DEG chose to request that legendary Walgett / Brewarinna Elder Merv Bishop be supported to provide in-house photography for DEG. Our submission was unsuccessful. Below left: Merv with DEG's Virginia Robinson in December '16. Below right: Dr Bronwyn Cameron & Bill Kennedy of NW LLS met with DEG in October 2016 and provided useful data for DEG's ongoing On Country activities.



More Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and community development activities



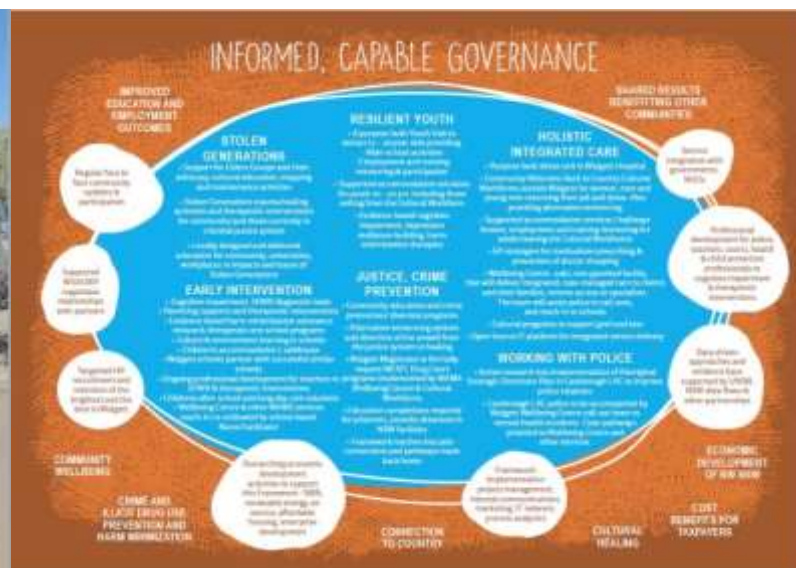
Left: DEG & Walgett LALC met with NSW Local Land Service staff to discuss future management of Gingie Reserve Travelling Stock Routes in June 2017. Right: DEG requested Newcastle Uni's Dr Peter O'Mara to chemically test drinking water June 2017. The doctor had been introduced to the DEG by Dr Bob Morgan who is always generous with his support to the DEG.



Below left: Friends of DEG since 2003, Gilbert + Tobin lawyers – in this case Tamara Sims and Nicole Lojczyk receive advice in February 2017 as DEG requested their help for tenants of two Walgett housing providers needing urgent housing repairs. Despite the difficulties this has brought to relationships with one of the housing providers DEG continues to support tenants to pursue their legal tenancy rights. Below centre: DEG sought help from the GT Law in July 2016 with DEG's Jilda Andrews to plan ancestral remains repatriation. Below right: DEG approached NSW Legal Aid's Kieran Shipp and Felix Turnball to assist Elders with claims to the NSW Govt Stolen Generations Repatriation Scheme in February 2017. DEG thanks its legal service supporters who we could not operate without.



Another important advocacy activity undertaken by the DEG in the period was our advancement of the Walgett Social and Emotional Wellbeing Framework – “Moving Forward to Healthy Communities”.



Left: During the period DEG continued to advocate for services we need to heal. UNSW and Rotary donated funds for our engagement of Gaawaa Miyay design team for the advocacy document. The next few pages of this report include activities dedicated towards this plan which is another iteration of thinking developed during the 17 year life of the DEG.



Above: Elders receive the news when the NSW Govt's response to NSW Parliament Inquiry into Reparations for Stolen Generations recommendations in December 2016.

Left: During the period DEG supported members to consider the NSW Govt's response to NSW Parliament Inquiry into Reparations for Stolen Generations. DEG had hosted community workshops & prepared submissions, presentations to a Walgett hearing of the Inquiry. We planned an information event to be hosted in July 2017.

Right: DEG spent time with Pav, teacher of Walgett's "behavior" high school class, seen here in Aug. 2016 and developed a project for her class which has yet to be implemented. Students' "difficult behaviours" often mask the need for extra support, cognitive impairment and issues the school needs support to understand and address.



DEG recognizes that the difficulties of Walgett youth are linked to the fact that our community suffers from Stolen Generations trauma that remains unaddressed.



Above: DEG convened an information session in September 2016 so we could understand psychosis better after recent experiences managing psychosis in the community.



Above: DEG staff benefitted in April 2017 from training in the use of the new DEX My Aged Care reporting platform from Aged and Community Services Australia.



Above: DEG's Virginia Robinson was invited to provide a Welcome to Country to a NSW AH&MRC training opportunity in August 2017. It was there that Walgett AMS and DEG first learnt about the Primary Health Network's plans for Aboriginal drug and alcohol hubs for Walgett and other Aboriginal communities (illustrating inappropriate processes). Below: DEG took advantage of a webinar offered by the Healing Foundation in August 2016. Visiting partners from NSW State Library also benefitted.



Above left: Western Local Health District staff Sandra Suey sought information and images for use by agency in their RAP for the district in February 2017. Above right: DEG was invited by Health Service Manager Kevin Behm to meet board members of the Western LHD who conducted a flying visit through Walgett in June 2017. We took the opportunity to lobby for health infrastructure and a purpose-built drug and alcohol detox unit for Walgett Hospital.



DEG strengthened its partnership with University of NSW.



During the period, DEG gained strength from its Yuwaya Ngarrali partnership with UNSW. The relationship was cemented when Academic Lead Professor Eileen Baldry, now the Deputy Vice Chancellor Inclusion and Diversity, brought Vice Chancellor Ian Jacobs to meet DEG in October 2016, after which he prioritized the partnership across UNSW faculties. Together, UNSW and DEG worked through the year to introduce potential partners to our vision, and worked to develop business plans for the outcomes we hope to achieve for Walgett together. DEG invited trusted individuals from the UNSW to form a partnership because they not only value the work of DEG but recognize that successful initiatives must be community-led and must support and not challenge the fragile capacity of Walgett community-controlled Aboriginal organisations.



Above: Invited visitors with Yuwaya Ngarrali's Dr Ruth McCausland in April 2017, and with Professor Eileen Baldry in November 2016. Below: Some stills from Yuwaya Ngarrali promotional video produced by DEG in March 2017 to attract capacity to support Yuway Ngarrali and its work for DEG's SEWB Framework.





The Yuwaya Ngarrali partnership hosted a visit to Walgett of UNSW Education Faculty leader Professor Chris Davison, Dr Sue O'Neill and Honorary Professor Adrian Piccolli to Walgett in June 2017. They discussed education vision with DEG and invited guests, made a presentation to Walgett Community College leadership and the wider school community regarding what UNSW and Yuwaya Ngarrali could offer the school. Matters discussed included in-school professional development for Walgett teachers and how Education students could learn how to provide best practice teaching to remote schools like Walgett. Such a partnership is a key priority of the NSW Education Ochre Connected Community School policy. DEG is concerned to do what it can to support the school and community to address currently unacceptable Walgett education outcomes .

DEG has embraced use of the school's new "Community Hub" space (below).





UNSW Photovoltaic Engineering student Aidan Alexander visited DEG in July 2016 to undertake the Walgett component of his community energy efficiency study requested by DEG as part of its work in Yuwaya Ngarrali to address the drivers of Walgett poverty. After Aidan's findings were released UNSW made a presentation to NSW Aboriginal Housing Office and DEG explained the project to ABC News (above in February 2017). This study was the first step taken by Yuwaya Ngarrali to address the need to reduce energy costs for Walgett Aboriginal community. Further steps bore fruit in the following year. Stay tuned.



Left: DEG Speaker Clem Dodd signing a May 2017 tender to NSW Health. Right: DEG facilitated a meeting between Prof. Eileen Baldry, WAMS CEO Christine Corby OAM and Magistrate Claire Giroto October 2016 to discuss a Walgett alternative MERIT program led by Aboriginal Community-Controlled orgs.



Yuwaya Ngarrali wrote two SEWB Framework services funding proposals during the period. One was for the provision of an Aboriginal women and their dependent children's drug and alcohol residential rehabilitation service on-country near Walgett. Another was for an innovative on-country residential service for family violence perpetrators. Both were unsuccessful. They were awarded to regional centre organisations operating with access to built infrastructure – a challenge for Walgett ACCOs. We continue to seek support for the many services identified by Walgett's Social and Emotional Wellbeing Framework, while also making plans for how the required infrastructure can provide investment opportunities for the private sector. A third submission was developed for building Yuwaya Ngarrali and the projects we believe are achievable with greater human and IP resource capacity, influential friends and best practice evidence.



During the period DEG invited young supporters of the organization to become DEG Youth Advisors in our ongoing development & advocacy for a new service for Walgett youth. Above are pictured Jaidyn Robinson-Whitelaw, Susie West, Joint School Captains Taliyah Tahura and Bridie Lake – three of the five invited so far. DEG is lucky to share company with these promising young people. Many discussions were held with youth, Elders and their families about the kinds of support young people need to live independent, healthy, active lives. We think a youth organization like DEG is for Elders is required. We have identified 4 youth work roles.



Dharriwaa Elders Group occasionally offers its advice in focus group discussions to researchers and services developing new services for Walgett and similar communities. Above left: NDIS focus group was held during storm damage repairs in December 2016. Above centre: DEG discussed Walgett's new Aboriginal Hub drug & alcohol triage service with Orana Haven and Weigelli CEOs Danny Jeffries and Norm Henderson in March 2017. Later in 2017, DEG would house this new project. Above right: DEG offered a focus group re gambling to CIRCA, contracted by NSW Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing in May 2017. Problem gambling is another driver of poverty in Walgett. The two Walgett clubs currently benefits from poker machine income largely sourced from those who can least afford to donate. The Walgett SEWB Framework, if supported, may offer services to strengthen journeys away from addictions.

Dharriwaa Elders Group sustainability

DEG project staff this year were Elders Support Officer: Kim Sullivan; Casual Project Services: Wendy Spencer; Casual administration, driving, vehicle maintenance and visitor engagement services: Clem Dodd and Virginia Robinson.

Efforts to build the capacity of the Dharriwaa Elders Group (an Aboriginal Walgett community cultural organization of 17 years standing) were continued during the period. Services the DEG offers to governments and external NGOs now attract fees. During the period the DEG began to deter timewasters and negative influences and became stronger in rejecting advances from companies who want to use DEG's assets but do not serve DEG's priorities or enhance DEG's capabilities.

The Dharriwaa Elders Group was supported financially or in kind by:

- a. The University of NSW for developing Yuwaya Ngarrali and providing focus groups
- b. The Commonwealth Government through the CHSP program of the Dept. of Health for Transport relating to service - \$27,849.67 and Social Support - \$84,536.82
- c. The Commonwealth Government through the IAS program of Dept. of Prime Minister and Cabinet end of financial year discretionary funds received June 2017 for acquittal in the following 2017-2018 year - \$10,119 for Archives Accession Activity, \$34,455 for Elders Knowledge Transfer Activity
- d. DEG wishes to thank its pro-bono supporters: Gilbert + Tobin Lawyers, Environmental Defenders Office, CASE volunteers, particularly Darrell Burkey and Andrew Tridgell for supplying network administration; Heuristic Video Pty Ltd for supplying media and project management services; Helena Grunfeld, Rachel Heaton, Steven Davies of Indigenous Community Volunteers; Dr Ruth McCausland, Prof. Eileen Baldry from UNSW.

DEG directors determined to develop DEG's fundraising and social enterprise activities, and continued to develop relationships with the private and academic sector by investing in relationships with Indigenous Community Volunteers, and the University of NSW in order to continue DEG's valuable culturally-led community development activities.

Staff undertook training in Dept. Health Data Exchange with Aged and Community Services during the period in order to adapt to the Department's changing reporting demands.

DEG continued offering a financial management service to Aboriginal Women of Walgett ("AWOW") during the period.



Walgett AMS gifted sunglasses to DEG Elders in November 2016.

Lola Murray, Violet Morgan, Elizabeth Peters, Virginia Robinson, Louise Shields, Gloria Winters, Raja Simpson, Rose Simpson & Lewis Beale were some of the Elders who tweeted their photos to thank WAMS for this thoughtful gift.



Left: Gladys Walford, Paul Winters, Clem Dodd & Kim Sullivan also wanted to thank WAMS for the gift of sunglasses.



DEG's Raja Simpson entertained the Walgett Show for another year in May 2017. The Show Society this year provided him with a new outfit.



The Namoi River flooded at Walgett in September 2016. DEG's Elders Support Officer Kim Sullivan took Elders to check on the levels and she is seen here with DEG Elders Councillor Violet Morgan. The bedrock of DEG's community development is provision of Elders Centre & social support activities.