



Speaker's Annual Report to Dharriwaa Elders Group ("DEG") members for 1 July 2018 – 30 June 2019.

Prepared by Project Manager Wendy Spencer.

Members News

From 1 July 2018 – 13 December 2018 the following Elders Councillors presided: Speaker: Clem Dodd, Secretary: Virginia Robinson, Treasurer: Richard Lake. Elders Councillors: Gladys Walford, Violet Morgan, Elizabeth Peters. At the 13 December 2018 AGM the following were elected: Speaker: Clem Dodd, Secretary: Virginia Robinson, Treasurer: Richard Lake. Elders Councillors: Paul Winters, Margaret Barden. After the AGM Full Members Violet Morgan, Lewis Beale, Elizabeth Peters were invited to join the Elders Council to fill casual vacancies. During the period DEG's Elders Council secretariat prepared and held 10 meetings. DEG contributed food vouchers to 17 families for Walgett funerals during the period.

Representation

Narran Lakes Co-Management Committee. Virginia Robinson represented the Dharriwaa Elders Group on this committee, which was managed by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage. Her reports were made as regular agenda items of DEG meetings and correspondence and business arising were addressed when DEG delegates were made aware of the Committee's business.

ACHAA. Clem Dodd and Wendy Spencer represented DEG in its role as a committee member of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and Arts Association (ACHAA), attending meetings by phone from Walgett, and bi-annual gatherings in person when resourced.

The Objects of Dharriwaa Elders Group continue to be implemented by the organisation. The Yuwaya Ngarra-li partnership with UNSW is providing financial, human and knowledge resources to support most objectives. The Department of Health's CHSP program supports an important part of the organisation's efforts. Our participation in the Royal Commission into Aged Care has illustrated how ground-breaking and important our holistic model of care for healthy ageing is. DEG's role in managing and growing Aboriginal cultural values and knowledge remains under-recognised but will continue. DEG continues to network with similar Aboriginal cultural organisations in our NSW peak body ACHAA (Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and Arts Association) to grow our strengths in this unsupported and undervalued domain. Our work advocating a different approach and role for governments, particularly in DEG's reply to the draft NSW Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill, and our experiences with the implementation of the NSW Government policy for Aboriginal Affairs Ochre including Local Decision-making and Connected Community Schools creates trauma in our relationships with NSW agencies and has alerted the organisation to impending NSW government interventions we will be forced to navigate. The Commonwealth Government is absent from any Aboriginal Cultural and development work undertaken by DEG. Local government is awakening to potential economic benefits from Walgett's Aboriginal cultural knowledge and values, yet shows little support for organic growth of grassroots Aboriginal cultural development. DEG's leadership faces a difficult year as it seeks to bring benefits to the Walgett community with its influential partners. We share highlights of our work during 1 July 2018 – 30 June 2019 in the following pages of this report.



Above: DEG brought together WAMS and DEG to meet interim Walgett Shire Council General Manager in August 2018. Walgett Shire Council's new General Manager Greg Ingham was welcomed by DEG in March 2019, after arriving in Walgett in January.

Elders' civic participation



Left: Greens MLC David Shoebridge visited DEG in February 2019 to hear first-hand about our environmental and water concerns. Above: DEG's Virginia Robinson gave a speech for Reconciliation Day 3 June 2019.





Right: In May 2019 DEG met with NW LLS Sara Chapman and Bronwyn Cameron to provide valuable input into the Natural Resource Management Plan for our region – unfortunately only an aspirational document.



9 May 2019 DEG tweeted “When will the grown-ups listen & act? Walgett Elders always concerned re loss of habitats from landclearing, river mismanagement, access to drinking water, food & governments ignoring crises.”

Below: At the May 18 Federal government election DEG & YN staff volunteered at the polling booth – either helping people to vote, or handing out How to Vote cards. We continued to learn of the civic participation task needed for representation of our community in local, NSW and Commonwealth governments.



Left: July 2018 NSW Local Land Service launched its RAP in Walgett. DEG’s Clem Dodd welcomed them and expressed hope that Aboriginal voices will be heard more in LLS decision-making.



Yuwaya Ngarra-li “vision”



Yuwaya Ngarra-li (YN) is a community-led partnership between the Dharriwaa Elders Group (DEG) and the University of NSW.

Professor Eileen Baldry, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, is the Academic Lead of Yuwaya Ngarra-li. The core Yuwaya Ngarra-li (“YN”) team is based in Walgett and UNSW Sydney. At UNSW Sydney, Yuwaya Ngarra-li sits within the Institute of Global Development.

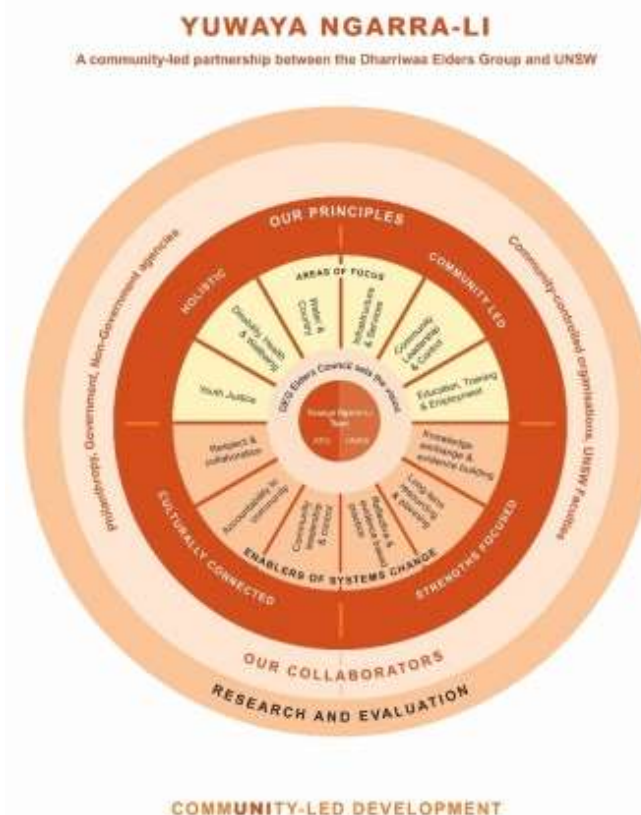
The purpose of Yuwaya Ngarra-li is for the Dharriwaa Elders Group and UNSW to work in partnership to improve the wellbeing, social, built and physical environment and life pathways of Aboriginal people in Walgett through collaborating with government, philanthropy and community organisations on evidence-based initiatives, research and capacity building, and to evaluate this model of CommUNITY-Led Development as a way of working with other Aboriginal communities.

Wendy Spencer (DEG Project Manager) is the Yuwaya Ngarra-li Walgett Partnership Manager, Peta MacGillivray is the Yuwaya Ngarra-li UNSW Partnership Manager, Vanessa Hickey is DEG’s Yuwaya Ngarra-li Project Officer and Ruth McCausland is Yuwaya Ngarra-li Research & Evaluation Director. We are proud of our team's capabilities and look forward to working with colleagues and stakeholders who support and understand our approach.

The DEG has identified the following long-term aims for Yuwaya Ngarra-li in Walgett:

1. Greater Aboriginal community control and capacity
2. Increased numbers of Aboriginal young people in education, training & employment
3. Reduced numbers of Aboriginal people in contact with the criminal justice system
4. Improved social determinants of health and wellbeing amongst Aboriginal people
5. Improved sustainability of energy, water, land and natural resource management
6. Redirection of government funding towards strengths-based, holistic, community-led and sustainable initiatives

The partnership is developing and testing a new model of ‘CommUNITY-Led Development’ which is a place-based approach to breaking the cycle of systemic disadvantage, centring the needs and priorities of Aboriginal people through the leadership of a respected local community-controlled organisation and drawing on the expertise, influence and resources of UNSW. The diagram top right is our approach to this model in Walgett.





Left: DEG Speaker Clem Dodd met Dr Martin Andersen (UNSW Global Water Institute groundwater expert) to continue planning a Yuwaya Ngarra-li groundwater and surface waters wellbeing project in March 2019 which formed a funding submission made to the NSW Environmental Trust in May 2019 with Yuwaya Ngarra-li Partner – Greg Leslie, Director of the Global Water Institute. The project would work to understand the ingredients required for the wellbeing of Walgett-region surface and groundwaters, and for local Aboriginal Rangers to manage these values. Turns out the submission was not successful but DEG through Yuwaya Ngarra-li continues to refine our understandings and advocate for this much-needed project.

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and environmental management



Right: Kim Sullivan with wayamba remains from dry Barwon River bed at Walgett March 2019. Many dhingga have perished in the ecocide we are witnessing. Below left: DEG documented and expressed concerns regarding nearby landclearing November 2018 & March 2019.



Right: In July 2018 Laura McBride from the Australian Museum visited to discuss the museum's Cook anniversary project, and naturally DEG took the opportunity to develop with her potential joint projects relating to the Museum's collection.





Left: Walgett Elder Allan Tighe alerted DEG to special finds he was making in the dry Barwon River in March 2019. DEG is very excited to learn more about the Burruguu dhingaa & to protect their remains so we can learn more.



Above right: ANU PhD candidate Michael Curry responded to Alan's find and explained its significance to DEG in April 2019. We are learning about legal protections for our important part of local Aboriginal Cultural Heritage, and how we can support ongoing local Aboriginal knowledge and careers in ancient history.

Cultural values & knowledge maintenance



Right: In November 2018 DEG continued its work to provide a voice in government planning by making a submission re groundwater management.

Left: Elders knowledge sharing workshops continued – November 2018.





Left: Acclaimed artist Reko Rennie returned to Walgett October 2018 to develop a new project for Dharriwaa Elders Group. DEG was pleased to facilitate some reunions with his Walgett mob and we all discovered his many family relationships with DEG Elders. High school art students who we invited to meet Reko and learn of his work and the project were already studying Reko's work! While in Walgett Reko also visited mob and the Men's art group - some who joined Elders for lunch and discussion about the project.



Above: Pam Greer and Virginia from ECAV met with DEG in December '18 to consider workshops for Walgett which were conducted in 2019.

Healing



In May '19 Elders travelled to Moree to see Mervyn Bishop's photography show. DEG is proud to send congratulations to Mervyn for his significant career.

Below: DEG held a picnic 16 May 2019 to examine the newly-filled Namoi River after it had been dry for months.



Above: In May DEG attended the unveiling of the Dubbo statue to honour the legendary activist William Ferguson who made a large contribution towards advancing Aboriginal human rights in Walgett and elsewhere in NSW. See DEG tweets giving more info.



Water learning and advocacy

Left: Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service CEO Christine Corby OAM speaks to ABC's Rachel Carbonell about her concerns for the impacts of high salt levels on Walgett's chronic disease burden, and how WAMS' community garden has been allowed to die due to Council water restrictions – where ovals remained watered.



Below and right: Regional Aboriginal Environmental Health Project Officer Jessica Spencer, provided DEG's Vanessa Hickey with the resources to test e-coli in drinking water tanks. Vanessa has been testing in the community with important results.



Right: DEG's Ricky Townsend contributed to Rachel Carbonell's ABC news stories about DEG's concerns regarding water mismanagement and the health impacts of being forced onto Great Artesian Basin for Walgett's drinking water supply.



DEG continues to express alarm [about the impacts on Walgett's wellbeing from the mismanagement of water in the Murray Darling Basin](#). Through our Yuwaya Ngarra-li partnership with University of NSW, we have sourced experts to inform the Walgett community about our drinking water, and why the high sodium in our water is concerning. We urge water decision-makers to start prioritising health and wellbeing and sustainable industries for thriving futures for communities in western NSW. We are now working with our partners to find community-led policy and engineering solutions for our town. Those who wish to support our work are encouraged to contact our project management team. Stay tuned. Thank you [ABC and Rachel Carbonell](#) for helping us to have a voice.



Above: Then NSW Water Minister Niall Blair and previous NSW Water Minister and Barwon MP Kevin Humphries faced the music in Walgett in February 2019 before the March NSW election.



Above: NSW Govt's James McTavish and Ashley Albury meeting with WAMS and DEG in March 2019 where drinking water matters were discussed & our case for desalination progressed.

Below: Yuwaya Ngarra-li's international sodium & nutrition expert Jacqui Webster was able to join Walgett's water security planning meeting held in February 2019 by Greg Rummery.



Our rivers, the lifeblood of our community, have been grossly mismanaged given our changing climate, and water saving measures have not been put in place. Walgett means 'the meeting of two rivers', the Barwon and Namoi, and yet no water currently flows in those rivers at Walgett. The town's drinking water supply is coming from the Great Artesian Basin since the Namoi River has dried up. We have held significant concerns for some time about the high levels of sodium in this bore water and the serious implications for a community with high levels of chronic disease, informed by world experts who have tested Walgett's drinking water. Long term use of bore water in the drinking water system is neither a safe or viable solution for Walgett.

Our concerns were realised when Walgett's drinking water supply was jeopardised over the January 2019 new year period after a breakdown at the local treatment plant, leaving the water levels in the reservoir at critical levels and Walgett Shire Council urging residents to conserve filtered water for drinking. With temperatures reaching well over 40 degrees, some residents were also left without air conditioning after evaporative air conditioners could not operate. Concerned people from across NSW donated bottled water to Walgett residents, in a moving display of generosity and shared outrage that Walgett could be so vulnerable to losing its water supply.

Water and related issues are a priority for the Yuwaya Ngarra-li partnership. As part of the long-term commitment to Walgett through Yuwaya Ngarra-li, UNSW Engineering's IMPACT Engineers and the Global Water Institute were invited by DEG to visit many months ago to scope water projects, including new infrastructure, training and long term capacity building.

The YN team developed and provided an induction program for the students in Sydney and then with Elders in Walgett. While in Walgett the team were invited to scope water projects for the Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service's Community Garden, and the provision of Drinking Water Kiosks. Please read our [full statement](#).

Below: Walgett's Mayor, Deputy Mayor & Council workers introduced Walgett water infrastructure to the UNSW Engineering team in September 2018 so that Yuwaya Ngarra-li can support water engineering capability – an issue for many rural and remote NSW councils, in the future. Water scarcity has highlighted these issues.



Below: The UNSW Impact Engineers and their facilitators first visited Walgett in February. They are pictured here with DEG Elders & YN staff at the junction of the Namoi and Barwon Rivers in February 2019 where the dwindling Barwon weir pool water is seen in the background. The Namoi River was totally dry.



Water engineering capability

DEG has long held concerns for the health of surface and ground waters of Walgett. The DEG understands the cultural significance and vital importance of water to the Social and Emotional Wellbeing of the Walgett Aboriginal Community.

Over its 20 years of operation, DEG has become increasingly aware of the vulnerability of Walgett's water infrastructure and capacity, and the lack of planning for the impact of climate change. The DEG is also aware of the low priority that the views of the Walgett community are given in planning for water security.

Global Water Institute Engineers Greg Leslie, Martin Andersen and Melinda Wimborne who support student-led projects were invited by Dharriwaa Elders Group to look at a range of Walgett water engineering challenges in September 2018. Walgett Shire Council's Mayor and Deputy Mayor and the Council water team and engineers supported the parts of their visit which required understanding of current facilities and practices. We were pleased to assist Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service to think through their responses to the Walgett water restrictions, for Walgett's valuable local food asset - the community garden. During the visit we secured a donation of Great Artesian Basin water from the Council to fill the 1 x water tank at the garden - a temporary solution. We are following up with obtaining expert opinions regarding the length of time artesian water should be relied upon, and designing ways to obtain permanent water security for this important community food resource. Dharriwaa Elders Group first hosted "Impact Engineers" in Walgett in February 2019. This is a multi-disciplinary team of students who work together to make an impact. They provided desalination for a Sri Lankan village and through Yuwaya Ngarra-li they are working to make the WAMS Community Garden more water efficient. Their second visit to install trial water-efficient garden beds was in June 2019 when IGA burnt down.



DEG hosted collaborators in the UNSW Built Environment Faculty - Sara Padgett Kjaersgaard & Louise McKenzie in Walgett mid-February 2019, scoping many future Yuwaya Ngarra-li community-led projects. Sara Padgett Kjaersgaard took heat images of various places Walgett children and young people use, and at the end of their visit DEG and YN staff workshopped project priorities with staff of Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service.



Elders inducted Assoc. Professor Jacqui Webster and Keziah Bennett-Brook to Walgett in February 2019 and DEG discussed future potential public health, preventative health community-led projects, together with Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service. Jacqui and Keziah work with the George Institute for Global Health and are collaborating with us to find the resources and evidence base we need to implement aspects of our Action Plan for Children and Young People, launched in 2018.



Impact Engineers from UNSW Global Water Institute, with Ernie Sands from WAMS installed 2 x water efficient test garden beds in the Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service ("WAMS") Community Garden, for WAMS' Sophia Byers in early June 2019. Unfortunately these test beds did not work in the drought conditions and so Test #2 beds are to be installed in September 2019 when the students return.



Yuwaya Ngarra-li hosted the Walgett Food Forum - "Food and Water is Life!" 8 April 2019. [Read our statement here](#) and [report released 26 June 2019 here](#).

The Dharriwaa Elders Group identified the need to improve access to available affordable nutritious food in Walgett as a priority for Yuwaya Ngarra-li from key community concerns raised in our *Community Data Gathering in December 2018* and in our community consultations and workshops developing the *Action Plan for Children and Young People* in April and May 2018. These concerns include:

- the lack of affordable healthy food options and social places to eat is having an adverse impact on health.
- the degradation of the rivers over time and the most recent rapid stopping of flow have had increasingly devastating effects on sources of food.

To learn from and act on these community concerns and perspectives, the aims of the Yuwaya Ngarra-li Food Forum were to:

- Provide data and research about what is known about food issues relevant to Aboriginal people in Walgett and impacts on long-term health and wellbeing
- Gather community members and critical services, organisations, and other stakeholders together to discuss food issues in Walgett
- Facilitate a public forum that is action oriented and focused on positive strategies and evidence-based solutions.

Continuing our work "Food and Water for Life" with [Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service \(WAMS\)](#), Dharriwaa Elders Group's Yuwaya Ngarra-li partnership with UNSW hosted a "water update" meeting 22 May 2019. Speakers included Christine Corby OAM CEO of Walgett AMS, Professor Greg Leslie of UNSW Global Water Institute, Vanessa Hickey of Dharriwaa Elders Group (DEG), Wendy Spencer of DEG, and Roy Butler NSW MP for Barwon.

Updates were given regarding the work of the Walgett AMS and DEG to advocate for short, medium and long term solutions for Walgett's drinking water quality, their work distributing packaged water, advocating for improved health & emergency response communications, desalination and other public health solutions including drinking water kiosks, river health and improved river management. Professor Greg Leslie explained how a town desalination system would work and his progress on the design of chilled public drinking water kiosks. He also gave a brief explanation of how Walgett's waste water could be recycled and offered to provide project advice and documentation for necessary approvals. Christine Corby also provided an update on the work WAMS is undertaking with Yuwaya Ngarra-li partners from Engineering and Built Environment faculties to revitalize Walgett's Community Garden - an important community asset that has been wiped out from lack of water. Barwon MP Roy Butler rang in to the meeting from the road to Broken Hill and provided support for our work, saying he is making representations to the NSW Water Minister urging a greater response to the Barwon communities' short, medium and long term water needs, stating that "we need to make the government realize that water is the highest priority issue for our communities". Local agronomist Greg Rummery presented the 10 priorities for Walgett's water security that have been recently identified by community meetings he has been convening.



The meeting agreed unanimously to a statement that was sent by Dharriwaa Elders Group letter to the Walgett Shire Council 24/5/19 which offered support to the Council to enhance Walgett's civic infrastructure by installing and maintaining town desalination and 11 drinking water kiosks to be located in high public use areas around the town, (locations specified). Discussion in the meeting ranged from the impact on rainfall and river health of excessive landclearing, to the need for community education campaigns regarding water efficiency and the use of the drinking water kiosks. Strategies for beginning long-term climate resilience planning by our community were also discussed.





Food & Water Emergency

Left: In June DEG responded to the emergency brought by the IGA fire by attending the emergency ctee, steering voluntary efforts to distribute donations from well-meaning individuals & organisations, and starting a fundraising appeal, buying & distributing food & groceries to the vulnerable in the months while the town awaited IGA's temporary store.



Left: WAMS and DEG staff were pleased to unload and distribute a water donation from Absec. Throughout the period WAMS responded by storing water deliveries and assisting community distribution efforts. DEG staff led by Richard Lake have been delivering water to Elders. Right: Shanel Tighe, Seniors Rights also delivered donated water for Elders.



Above: Greg Moore, Ashley Albury & Peter Alexander dropped by during the IGA fire investigations. The coroner's findings remain unknown. ICAC investigations into water also remain unknown.



Enterprise development work

Makrita Solitei & the Walgett waste audit team September '18



DEG's Yuwaya Ngarra-li partnership was pleased to introduce to Christine Corby OAM of Walgett AMS and Amy Townsend from WAMS' Goonimoo early childhood service, a child injury prevention program with UNSW School of Community Medicine and Public Health in March 2019. Since this introduction a program is being co-designed for inclusion in the Goonimoo service delivery in 2020.



Above: Ashley Albury & Jayne Humphries from NSW Premier & Cabinet visited DEG November '18 when Ashley Albury offered to be our go-to contact for the NSW Gov't. DEG and Yuwaya Ngarra-li are grateful to be able to ring Ashley when we have issues with NSW agencies.

In September 2018 Yuwaya Ngarra-li undertook an audit of Walgett's waste to progress our project to start-up a waste social enterprise. PhD candidate Makrita Tanayian Solitei from Wollongong Uni led the audit, ably assisted by Walgett Waste Station workers and Jess McDonald, Walgett Shire Council's Manager of Planning and Regulatory Services. DEG was supported in this activity by Netwaste. The audit gave us all insights into the work needed to improve the waste quality and the quantities of different materials currently going to landfill. Our next step is to prepare our business cases for the two social enterprises Yuwaya Ngarra-li aims to create (led by Dharriwaa Elders Group) which will reduce waste going to landfill and create jobs. Wins for the whole community we hope.



Left: In October 2018 DEG brought linguist John Giacon and Schools Director Chris Shaw together to discuss sustainability of Aboriginal language teaching in Gamilaraay Yuwaalaraay schools.



Left: Mark Rudd Walgett Primary's new Executive Principal was briefed by DEG staff Vanessa Hickey and Kim Sullivan in February 2019.

Right: Murat Dizdar, NSW Dept of Education Deputy Secretary, School Operations & Performance, visited Walgett in September '18. DEG was invited by the Walgett AECG President to join the Walgett Community College School Reference Group. We are working with the AECG, Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service and the P&C to pressure NSW Education to change. Walgett's education outcomes are unacceptable to the DEG. DEG has offered project proposals to the school, and through our Yuwaya Ngarra-li partnership with UNSW, is encouraging the school to embed ongoing professional supports for Walgett teachers. A 2017 proposal by UNSW School of Education to the Walgett Community College was not implemented by interim Principal Chris Shaw, and another proposal was developed by YN and UNSW School of Education during the period to be proposed to the SRG and new Executive Principals once they are embedded into their new roles.

Lifelong learning



Below: DEG's long term IT / network administrator Darrell Burkey visited Walgett in September '18 to install a network server donated by CASE to DEG. He gave Virginia Robinson a UAV flying lesson.



Above: DEG hosted a professional development information sharing session in September 2018 and invited Anne Dennis to present on her representations to the United Nations in her role as Deputy Chair of the NSW Aboriginal Land Council.

Right: Frank Potter, Executive Director School Performance with Chris Shaw after the November 2018 SRG meeting.





Above: Senior ABC reporter Jamelle Wells broadcast a story on ABC 7.30 Report on Walgett's magistrate Claire Giroto. In August 2018 Elders participated in the documentary in the spirit of acknowledging the magistrate's contribution and hoping future magistrates will learn by her example.

Justice matters



On 9 August 2018 at Dharriwaa Elders Group Yuwaya Ngarra-li convened the first Walgett Youth Justice Working Group meeting, an idea from the [Youth Justice Forum](#) that community wanted included in the [Action Plan for Children and Young People](#). Our aim is to bring together services & key stakeholders in Walgett to collaborate, share information and commit to working holistically to reduce the numbers of Aboriginal young people coming into contact with the criminal justice system. Yuwaya Ngarra-li's Peta MacGillivray is leading this important work. DEG would like to give special thanks to Walgett AMS and the Aboriginal Legal Service - our sister Aboriginal community-controlled organisations on the ground who are working holistically with the Yuwaya Ngarra-li partnership to bring change & better justice outcomes for Walgett children.



**COMMUNITY-LED
DEVELOPMENT**



Our Yuwaya Ngarra-li team presented at the 2019 Reintegration Puzzle Conference in Darwin in June. While we shared about our work, we learnt from many other organisations working in healing after Australia's law and justice impacts.



Above: Yuwaya Ngarra-li UNSW arranged a Walgett livestream from the GWI Murray Darling Basin summit 23 Feb 2019. A small DEG crew watched on Saturday morning. Right: YN's Ruth McCausland Croakey article 26/6/19 documented our response to the food emergency when IGA burnt down in early June 2019. <https://croakey.org/new-report-documents-a-community-led-response-to-a-health-crisis-in-walgett-nsw/>. Check out DEG's www for more publications.



Knowledge sharing



New report documents a community-led response to a health crisis in Walgett, NSW - croakey.org/new-report-doc...



8:15 PM · Jun 26, 2019 · Croakey News

NSW Aboriginal Culture, Heritage and Arts Association Inc. (ACHAA) – DEG's NSW peak

The AGM of NSW Aboriginal Culture, Heritage and Arts Association Inc. was held Friday 26 October 2018 at the Australian Museum Sydney. Dharriwaa Elders Group attended the AGM by Skype, when Speaker Clem Dodd was re-elected as a committee member. A 2 day meeting was held for the delegates, at which information was shared from NSW Aboriginal Affairs Healing Unit and Languages Team, Arts Law Centre of Australia / Artists in the Black, NSW Aboriginal Tourism Operators Council. Members undertook a planning session for ACHAA and discussed Create NSW assessment of the NSW Aboriginal Arts and Cultural Strategy 2015 – 2018.

The ACHAA Committee selected the winner of the **inaugural 2018 Imagine ACHAA Award for Excellence by an Aboriginal Curator** - Bianca Beetson for her work curating the New England Regional Art Museum: *Myall Creek and beyond* exhibition. "The Art Museum along with The Friends of Myall Creek Memorial, Armidale Aboriginal Keeping Place and University of New England produced a program of exhibitions, public programs and a symposium that explored the history and on-going impact of the 1838 massacre of Aboriginal people at Myall Creek. Bianca Beetson was engaged as a guest curator to develop the curatorial direction of the NERAM exhibition. In this role she was responsible for selecting artists to, firstly participate in research residencies at the Memorial and surrounding region, and secondly produce new works responding to the history and site."



Above: ACHAA members and staff at the State Library of NSW 8 March 2019. Photo courtesy ACHAA.

In March 2018 DEG joined other ACHAA members at our meeting in the State Library of NSW 7 & 8 March 2019. Workshops to enhance members' capacity included re funding, collection management, community language project development. Overviews were given of the SLNSW language and family history collections.

ACHAA throughout the period offered DEG and other members the opportunity to advocate together for individual organisation's interests and for the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and Arts sector as a whole.

Dharriwaa Elders Group sustainability and supporters

DEG staff (part-time and casual) this year were Vanessa Hickey, Robyn Morgan, Wendy Spencer, Clem Dodd, Virginia Robinson.

Efforts to build the capacity of the Dharriwaa Elders Group (an Aboriginal Walgett community cultural organization of 20 years standing) were continued during the period. Services the DEG offers to governments and external NGOs now attract fees. During the period the DEG became stronger in rejecting advances from entities who want to use DEG's assets but do not serve DEG's priorities or enhance DEG's capabilities. We also became stronger in controlling the way research is conducted in Walgett, and continued to assert community sovereignty over its own data. The wellbeing of our members and safety of staff remains our highest priority and the skill in providing a safe meeting place and harmony amongst Elders and their visitors has become an increasing challenge in our troubled community.

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

- a. Leading and providing services to the Yuwaya Ngarrali project – DEG's partnership with University of NSW
- b. The Commonwealth Government through the CHSP program of the Dept. of Health for Social Support and related Transport
- c. Gilbert + Tobin Lawyers, Environmental Defenders Office, Darrell Burkey, Ian Urquart and Andrew Tridgell; Heuristic Video Pty Ltd; Steven Davies and Indigenous Community Volunteers
- d. The many donors to the Food and Water Fundraising Campaign. These include: Alice McDonald, Francesca Sidoti, Bethany Clark, Mark Neasmith, Julianne Stewart, Inara Walden, Emma Pierce, Bec Harcourt, Kimberley Crofts, Fiona Pacey, Leigh Brennan, Rona McNiven, Alison Barnes, Gemma Meddings, Jan Idle, Claire Vajdic, Jamie Drake, Terri-Anne Kingsley, Caroline Falshaw, Kirsten Edwards, Amrita Tarr, Teresa O'Sullivan, Leonie Wellington, Stephen Fitzpatrick, Camilla Pandolfini, Giulia Fabris, Sophia Robson, May Miller-Dawkins, Catherine Rowe, Patricia Hill, Niki Douglas, Anna Wallace, Angelo Fraietta, Linda Corkery, Eileen Baldry, Inka Eberhardt, Silas Taylor, Wendy Spencer, Tracey Love, Marie-Louise Harvey, Wayne Wang, Sarah Dunbar, Jacinta Byrne, Rachel Thompson, Leesa L'Episcopo, Rebecca Ivers, Louise McKenzie, Julie Stubbs, Prue McCausland, Catherine Pogonowski, Melanie Andersen, Melissa Sweet, Judith Wingrove, Jacqueline White, Jimmy Little Foundation, Isabella Bertella, Bridget Chappell, Ben Sendy, Rebecca Howe, Sara Kjaersgaard, Sarah Obrien, Amanda Masset, Karyn Sherman, Jacqueline White, Judith Wingrove, Melissa Sweet, Willem Vervoot.



DEG directors are determined to develop DEG's fundraising and social enterprise activities, and continued to develop relationships with the private sector to continue DEG's valuable culturally-led community development activities.

Staff undertook training in a suite of community development theory of change mapping, reflection, analysis and documentation methods. Vanessa Hickey gained a Civil Aviation Safety Authority Aeronautical Radio Operator Certificate in June 2019, also learning about building robots with Indigenous X. During the period she also learnt to test drinking water for sodium & e-coli.

DEG continued acting as banker for Aboriginal Women of Walgett ("AWOW") during the period.

Left: DEG gratefully accepted gift of 2 x mats for outside activities from Milan Dhiyaan in May 2019.