



**The Dharriwaa Elders Group aims to restore a robust belonging to thriving families, community and country, while making our place in the nation and sharing our learning with other communities.**

The Dharriwaa Elders Group is leading a collaboration with UNSW, 'Yuwaya Ngarra-li', to grow our individual and community strengths and assets towards this vision with other supporters.

**“ Our vision is that Aboriginal children and young people in Walgett can learn, work, be safe, supported and thrive within a robust sense of belonging to their families, community, culture and country. ”**

This Action Plan focuses on taking immediate steps to make Walgett a better place for our children and young people to grow up, live and thrive in, as we create the foundations for long term change.

This Action Plan was developed by the Dharriwaa Elders Group and UNSW working in partnership, building on the momentum from the Youth Justice Forum held in Walgett in March 2018 and improved by discussions with young people, community and Walgett services.

# We are seeking agreement from community and commitment from all service providers in Walgett to work together towards this vision. This action plan reflects our common commitments.

Our work will not be in a straight line – we will need to find opportunities, follow the momentum and be flexible in finding the best ways to make life better for our children and young people. We hope that we can walk together and learn together.

## In three years, our goals are that:

- Aboriginal organisations, government agencies, service providers, UNSW and other partners have made clear and funded commitments as part of a long-term plan agreed with the community to improve education, health, housing and employment outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people in Walgett.
- Young people in Walgett report higher rates of belonging, safety, support, confidence and wellbeing.
- Less than 10% of Aboriginal children and young people aged 10-17 from Walgett are appearing in the Children's Court (excluding appearances related to diversion).
- Visible progress in the engagement of children and young people in study and work including through improvements in school attendance and outcomes, and new work opportunities for Aboriginal young people.
- Aboriginal organisations, government agencies, service providers, UNSW and other partners have made clear and funded commitments as part of a long-term plan agreed with the community to improve education, health, housing and employment outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people in Walgett.

## The core strategies of this action plan are:

- Build relationships of respect and develop effective coordination and collaboration between relevant people and organisations within Walgett to enable us to achieve the goals of this Action Plan.
- Significantly improve Aboriginal children and young people's education, training and employment participation and outcomes, including through increased access to relevant services and opportunities.
- Create effective options for diversion of children and young people from the criminal justice system.
- Reflect on our practices and processes, build evidence around our shared knowledge and outcomes, and plan the work that will be required to consolidate and improve on our impact.

# Improve relationships of respect and effective coordination and collaboration between people and organisations within Walgett to enable us to achieve the goals of this Action Plan.

We believe that increasing respect for Walgett Aboriginal people and improving relationships and communication between key people in Walgett will create the trust and ways of working that enable us all to create a different future and solve problems together.

We want Walgett to be a community that people want to live in and be part of improving.

## This work will include:

- Establishing or re-establishing community meetings, the Walgett Gamilaraay Aboriginal Community Working Party (WGACWP) and a Youth Advisory Group for Yuwaya Ngarra-li to make sure that information is shared and work is based on community vision, strengths and views.
- Growing the leadership and other capabilities of local Aboriginal community and organisations including through support and mentoring of emerging leaders, and recruiting and developing Aboriginal staff to support programs.
- Increasing knowledge and respect for Walgett Aboriginal people, identity, knowledge and history through ensuring protocols of respect are observed by all government and other external visitors, and by finding ways to profile and celebrate histories. Building the appreciation of the knowledge of Walgett Aboriginal people by Walgett services and agencies including through, ensuring that representative and consultative processes and bodies are used to set strategy, solve problems and facilitate community input and engagement.
- Improving relationships between the community, police and Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers (ACLOs) through ongoing community input into the Police Aboriginal Strategic Directions Plan, social activity between community and police (e.g. sports, talks, bbqs, police attending community events), and strengthened selection, performance requirements and monitoring of police staff persons' community relationships and engagement.
- Growing the cultural, collaborative and service capacity of police, ACLOs, PCYC, teachers, nurses, community workers, ambulance workers, court officers, lawyers and others through professional development, education, networking and training including annual "Walgett Winangay" introductions and information packages, pro-active recruitment & retention approaches, and developing the local workforce – women and men – alongside skilled newcomers to Walgett. Find ways for the WGACWP to be part of the selection and induction of and ongoing support to key roles and identified jobs in police, hospital, education and community services. We want Walgett to be able to attract and retain skilled staff for core services by changing the perception and reality of what it's like to work in Walgett and be part of the community. We want agencies and services in Walgett to recognise the knowledge of Aboriginal Walgett people and to work with community to create better services and outcomes.
- Building a common plan agreed with community to improve education, health, housing and employment outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people in Walgett that is supported by the clear and funded commitments and action of Aboriginal organisations, government agencies, service providers, UNSW and other partners. Explore and develop holistic approaches to funding and service delivery.

# Significantly improve Aboriginal children and young people's educational and employment outcomes, including through increased access to relevant services and opportunities.

Our young people are loved. They are not bad. They deserve better options and outcomes to learn, have fun, be safe, supported and find work. Aboriginal children and young people in Walgett need to have access to a range of relevant pathways for learning, wellbeing and work.

They can become more confident, better communicators, and develop the skills they need to live a good life and stay out of trouble. Services in Walgett need to be designed and created with Aboriginal children, young people, families, Elders and community to make sure they serve their needs and interests.

## This work will include:

- Explore ways to work with Walgett Community College to ensure that culturally appropriate and specialist supports are provided to Aboriginal students and their families to overcome barriers to participation and learning and by supporting them to thrive in their families, community, culture and country. These could include therapeutic reach-ins, hearing loops, on-country time-out programs, family homework supports, school-week hostel accommodation, school nurses and social workers, adult education initiatives incorporating literacy, financial management, nutrition and other healthy lifestyle parental supports.
- Improving educational opportunities and outcomes for young people in Walgett by working with Aboriginal students, family and community, Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service, Walgett Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) and the Yuwaya Ngarra-li education working group of supporters and experts.
- Improving existing and planned facilities and activities for Aboriginal children and young people in Walgett based on what they want, such as improved local park facilities, new playground equipment at the primary school, fixing up the Walgett Youth Centre and skate park, improved swimming pool facilities, a kids radio station, bicycle and trail bike paths and tracks, kids café, pottery making centre and cultural camps and activities on-country.
- Scoping new services that children and young people (including young parents) may need, this could include after-hours programs and support, safe house and emergency temporary accommodation, and health and wellbeing promotion and education (drug and alcohol, mental health supports, and access to quality early childhood services).
- Working closely with families and carers to support them and their children and young people to be safe, learn, grow and work. In particular, investigating ways to support young people who are parents through working with Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service (WAMS) and early childhood services.
- Scoping and facilitating opportunities for work experience, training and employment. New local training and employment case management roles (male and female social workers and local Aboriginal colleagues) could provide organised activities based on young people's interests and aspirations.
- Supporting new employment opportunities for young people through the development of new enterprises including a start up module factory that produces high value items from local waste. Yuwaya Ngarra-li will also investigate and respond to barriers to youth employment in Walgett.

# Create effective options for diversion of Aboriginal children and young people from the criminal justice system.

Aboriginal children and young people are over-policed and over-represented in the criminal justice system. We believe there are better ways and that diversion from the criminal justice system can change the life options for Aboriginal children and young people in Walgett.

## **This work will include:**

- Developing specific initiatives and improvements to facilitate diversion in consultation with Aboriginal young people, community members, and other stakeholders. These could include kinship and other safe accommodation options, police cautioning, Youth Justice Conferencing in partnership with DEG, Warrant Clinics to prevent warrants being issued by allowing legal advisors and the young person to develop a personal plan, engagement with parents and family to support their children and young people, and an Aboriginal youth court diversion program that provides options for therapeutic pathways into drug and alcohol rehabilitation to improve social and emotional wellbeing.
- Generating explicit commitment and clear plans from key stakeholders and influencers – Police, Health, Family and Community Services, Justice, WAMS, Regional Enterprise Development Institute Limited, DEG, WGACWP – to improve long-term outcomes for young Aboriginal people in and at risk of contact with the justice system. Agreed plans and commitments will be officially monitored by NSW Ombudsman's office and Law Enforcement Conduct Commission, as well as by Yuwaya Ngarra-li.



# Reflect on our practices and processes, build evidence around our shared knowledge and outcomes, and plan the work that will be required to consolidate and improve on our impact.

All of this work is accountable to Aboriginal people in Walgett – to how our community sees that Walgett and our lives are changing. Along with all government agencies, service providers and organisations in Walgett we need to learn collectively about what is and isn't working to be able to continue to build our shared knowledge, change what we are doing and build the long term plan for our future.

## This work will include:

- Using times that we are together, such as monthly community meetings, and other events to reflect with community on how things are changing in Walgett and what else we might need to do to achieve our vision.
- Ensuring community access to data and information, and spaces to give feedback about data and research related to them including from government agencies and through research conducted as part of Yuwaya Ngarra-li.
- Working with UNSW on how to assess and measure the impacts and outcomes of services and programs in Walgett, including Yuwaya Ngarra-li.
- Reflecting on our practices and processes within the Yuwaya Ngarra-li team and with our partners in an ongoing way to improve our impact.

