



Dharriwaa Elders Group Incorporated - a
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Our great loss



We will remember them

Founding Dharriwaa Elders Group members Margaret Rose, Hazel Winters and George Rose OAM left us this year. They are much missed by their brothers and sisters of the Dharriwaa Elders Group.

George Rose OAM was the founding Speaker (Chairperson) of the Group. In 1998 he brought together elders from Walgett Aboriginal families to work on Aboriginal cultural projects, because this was the appropriate way for cultural matters to be decided and managed. These early projects included reburial of human remains, recording of cultural knowledge for future generations, and the Dharriwaa Walaay youth and elders camps. Once elders came together to work on these projects, George led them to realize their strength together. He always encouraged them with his vision to resume a leadership role in the community. He tirelessly worked as a volunteer for our members on a daily basis to develop their strength, integrity and resources, and for their position to be recognised

by the non-Aboriginal community in Walgett, government and beyond. The organisation has undertaken many community development achievements since its beginning, under his caring leadership.

George's skills, experience and knowledge of administration and the start-up of enterprises was invaluable to the success of our organisation. His standing and high regard in the district and position as senior Yu-waalaraay elder and knowledge holder was also invaluable and irreplaceable.

The personal relationships George developed with members, staff and the many people from all walks of life who he came into contact with while carrying out DEG's business, will always be treasured. He mentored and offered a loyal and steadfast friendship to those he worked closely with. His drive, integrity and humour could not be matched. The members and staff of the Dharriwaa

Elders Group will always honour its founding Speaker, George Rose OAM, the great fighter for community development. We struggle to continue without him, but endeavour to do so, so that his work has not been in vain.

Margaret Rose, (nee Dodd) was a senior Ngiyambaa elder who used opportunities provided by the DEG to make sure that young people were proud of their identity and culture. It was really important to her that they knew who they were related to and so she used to sit with them and help them work out their family trees. This is a quote: "I wish young girls would stay longer at school instead of running around and having babies too young." She was one of the key cultural knowledge holders of the DEG.

Hazel Winters (nee Hickey), Gamilaraay elder, was a quiet presence in the Group who enjoyed the fellowship of her brothers and sisters and joined in with most of the Group's activities.

Yanaaya Baayaamibiyaay - *Go with Biامي*

Minister & grassroots governance



Minister for Families, Community Services, Housing and Indigenous Affairs Jenny Macklin, visited the DEG 21 November Above: Lewis Beale officially welcomed Minister Macklin to Walgett - Gamilaraay country. Unfortunately many DEG members were unwell or out of town for the



Minister's visit - but those that were there thanked her for the government's announced "Community Capability" funds for the Aboriginal community, and gave her advice regarding its implementation, and other issues of current concern. The DEG regularly corresponds to the Minister.



State Manager of Dept Family and Community Services, Housing and Indigenous Affairs, Sue Finnegan, visited Walgett in April to announce COAG's new "Remote Service Delivery Agreement" announced by Minister Macklin the previous day. Walgett and Wilcannia will be the only two NSW communities to receive substantial funding to "close the gap" between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians in 10 key areas including infant mortality, early child-



hood and other education, life expectancy, employment and housing. Walgett was chosen because intelligence shows that it has all the right ingredients for achieving the goals. Above: the meeting of the announcement. Since this meeting the DEG has worked to positively influence the implementation of the COAG's intentions. We have found this process difficult and are concerned that this great opportunity for Walgett will not be squandered.

DEG learns of COAG's "closing the gap"



Jodi Bruon, Director General of NSW Dept of Aboriginal Affairs, visited Walgett with her regional manager Anjali Palmer, in May to give us more information regarding the recently announced COAG remote service delivery project for Walgett. She was able to give those assembled at the hurriedly convened meeting, a little more information



about the timing and processes of the project which will be jointly implemented by her department and the Dept of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. NSW DAA and the Commonwealth's Dept of FaCHSIA are the two lead agencies for the COAG agreement.

More grassroots governance walgett style

On the 14th November the AGM of the Dharriwaa Elders Group was held. It was a historic day as the founding Chair of the organization, George Rose OAM, had chosen not to stand for re-election. Office bearers elected were Tim Creighton (Speaker), Thelma Thorne (Treasurer), Virginia Robinson (Secretary). Elders Councillors are Ted Thorne, Marj Weatherall, Gladys Kennedy, Les Pitt, Fred Walford, Leonard Simpson, Richard Lake, Lewis Beale. Members were presented with a comprehensive annual report and financial report. George Rose's unique contribution was acknowledged and he was thanked formally.



March Elders Council

Right: The DEG Elders Council meeting in March 2009. Present were from left to right: Gladys Kennedy, Virginia Robinson, Lewis Beale, Thelma Thorne, Ted Thorne, Marj Weatherall, Tim Creighton.



Elders Lobby MPs



Mark Coulton, National MP for our electorate in the federal government, visited with the DEG in November as he begins to learn about his new electorate and how he can represent Walgett. Above: NSW MP Kevin Humphries visited the Dharriwaa Elders Group in June.



He has been helping the Group and the Walgett community lobby the NSW Health for a Walgett dialysis service, and the resumption of an air service to Walgett. He used a photo he took with us, in a media release which was published by the Lightning Ridge News.

DEG works with the Commonwealth Government to implement policy on the ground.



Above: Sandra Chestnutt, NSW State Manager of Dept of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, with project Officer Rob Perrin, met with DEG directors to offer DEG a new position to employ a CDEP participant in June. Funding body requirements and DEG's requirements for it to carry out Commonwealth business, were discussed.



Above: Donna Penny from the Dept of Finance and her colleague Ben visited the DEG in June as part of an evaluation they are performing for DEWHA's Indigenous Heritage Program. We were happy to supply much food for thought including some practical suggestions for better management of projects in the future.



Left: Peter Sharp from the Australia Bureau of Statistics visited Walgett in September in order to begin a thorough survey of the district for statistics collection purposes. The Dharriwaa Elders Group staff Kathleen Shields and Kim Sullivan were keen to assist Peter in his work as we know that accurate statistical data will aid governments to better target resources to our community.

NSW Deputy Ombudsman meeting

Deputy NSW Ombudsman Steve Kinmond and his associate Juliana Dimitrius visited the DEG in April to investigate how the NSW Dept of Ageing Disability and Homecare perform their roles. While they were here they gave the DEG good information and advice about child protection issues, progress regarding the implementation of the Ombudsman's Review recommendations by local police and other matters. DEG followed up the meeting by letter, requesting their office assist the Walgett community by investigating the need for Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner positions so that adult and child victims of sexual assault can be examined locally, thereby decreasing distress for victims, and increasing likelihood of prosecutions.



Community Capability Fund Committee



The first meeting of the Community Capability Fund Steering Committee which was set up by Dept Families, Community Services, Housing and Indigenous Affairs to decide how

\$550,000 will be spent in Walgett, was held in December. Maria Dennis (Walgett LALC), Richard Simpson (Walgett AMS), Anne Dennis (Walgett's new Community Facilitator), Jess Lovel (Walgett Youth Group) were there with Mary Sands (CDEP minute-taker) Tracey Shillingsworth (FACSHIA Project Officer), George Fernando (Walgett Community Working Party Chair) and Stella Sands and Wendy Spencer (DEG) attended.

During the year DEG staff spent many hours developing proposals for this committee, attending meetings and following up suppliers.

NSW Government seeks Aboriginal engagement



DEG members participated in an August 2008 community workshop facilitated / requested by NSW Dept of Aboriginal Affairs to discuss NSW governance structures for Aboriginal people. WAMS CEO Christine Corby and Walgett Shire Aboriginal Liaison Officer Vic Smith are



seen with the DEG table workshop, with Tim Preston from Walgett police. DEG was concerned that local grassroots governance must be recognized by NSW Government. The DEG is one voice that was not represented by the Walgett Community Working Party - the model government favours.

Right: The December morning our founding Speaker, George Rose died, the DEG was scheduled to meet with NSW Parliamentary local member Kevin Humphries, about issues concerning the DEG including the withdrawal of air services to Walgett, the impending destruction of cultural heritage by opal mining and the need for a Walgett dialysis service. The DEG executive decided to carry on with the meeting because George Rose would have wished it. After the meeting the office was closed, as did many others in town, out of respect for the memory of "The Bandit" - Walgett's champion.



DEG's cultural heritage management



Above: in 2002 the DEG nominated Dungalear and Narran Lakes for gazettal by the NSW Government as Aboriginal places under the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Act. This would protect these places from destruction, particularly by mining. After 6 years the NSW government is finally preparing Dungalear for gazettal. Historian Kate Waters has been contracted by the government to research the Aboriginal significance of Dungalear. Elders associated with Dungalear were invited by DEG to speak to the historian by phone in January.



Above: DEG was invited to inspect Barfield in January with the aim of determining whether the DEG should spend part of its archaeology training survey there in March. Barfield is the next property to be opened up to opal mining in OPA 4. DEG has never had access to the property before, but we know that it contains significant places and items of high cultural value, because of its location in the Narran Lakes area and its creation story. Above can be seen a grinding stone.

Dharriwaa EG's work with NSW CMAs



The Namoi Catchment Aboriginal Advisory Committee which includes Richard Lake - a delegate from the Dharriwaa Elders Group, met at Breeza Station in February. They learnt about nearby pasture regeneration projects, and discussed issues like the impending changes to the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Act.. The DEG looks forward to learning of outcomes from the Namoi and Western CMA Aboriginal Advisory Committees in the future. Left: Tim Creighton took this photo of the Namoi AAC when it met 2 December 2009.

Right: The Dharriwaa Elders Group requested a meeting in February with Aboriginal representatives of the NSW Western Catchment Authority, as it has been receiving very little information about its activities. Bert "Blackie" Gordon is the Aboriginal Project Officer for the Western CMA, and Bill Kennedy is a member of its Aboriginal Advisory Committee. DEG gave the Western CMA information about its Aboriginal cultural heritage management work, and sought support and co-operation. We aim to foster a useful working relationship between the Western CMA and the DEG for the future.



DEG's ongoing voice re OPA 4

Terewah's owners Louise Crites-Foster and James Foster, informed the DEG in October that they had sold Terewah to the NSW Government. It will be added to the Narran Lake Nature Reserve. The DEG applauds the sale, as Terewah is a critical property for the internationally significant wetland, birds and animals and Aboriginal cultural heritage. It was threatened (until the sale) by opal mining as it was zoned in OPA-4 by the NSW Dept of Primary Industries. DEG undertook archaeology surveys on the property last year, and wrote letters to Ministers about its cultural and environmental values. Right: Tim Creighton and Terewah's owner James Foster examine one of the many Aboriginal camp-sites on the property.



In June DEG's Speaker Tim Creighton and Elders Councillor Lewis Beale met with Michael McFadyen from the NSW Dept of Primary Industries, for the first time (see above). Michael had recently reported to the DEG that opal mining would not proceed in OPA 4 (at and near Narran Lakes - a RAMSAR-listed wetland and important Aboriginal cultural place), until a full management plan had been developed for "sustainable opal mining" in the future. At this meeting Michael announced that NSW DPI will no longer

be undertaking this process, and will be conducting a ballot for mining titles on Barfield in late June. He assured the DEG that all miners will then have to apply for prospecting licences and as part of that process, they will be expected to undertake a complete Review of Environmental Factors that will ascertain how their proposed activity will impact on the environment and Aboriginal cultural heritage. Michael said DPI will not grant licences if the REFs are unsatisfactory. The DEG is very concerned about this process and is looking to NSW DECC and DEWHA who are responsible for the protection of the environment, to take a greater role. When we spoke to a NSW DECC officer after this meeting with NSW DPI, he said that there is very little his department could do to ensure NSW DPI oversee this process to our satisfaction. DEG is meanwhile working with the Barfield landholder more closely to develop other strategies. In March 2009 the DEG had conducted a short archaeology survey on a small section of Barfield, and since then has attempted to attract more funding for surveys on the property.

Lee Rhiannon MLC, assists DEG's cause

Lee Rhiannon, Leader of the NSW Greens and Member of the Legislative Council in NSW Parliament, issued the following media release 22 October 2008. It shows some of the results of the DEG's work to protect Aboriginal cultural heritage in the region.

Opals the new NSW emblem but mining scars remain

Greens MP and mining spokesperson Lee Rhiannon says the government's move to make black opal our new State emblem should be accompanied by action to step up regulation of opal mining to protect the environment and Aboriginal heritage. Yesterday she out-

lined her concerns in a speech in NSW Parliament on the *State Arms, Symbols and Emblems Amendment (Black Opal) Bill 2008*.

"While black opal is a beautiful stone the cumulative impacts from its production can be ugly, taking the gloss off the elevation of the black opal to be NSW's gemstone emblem," Ms Rhiannon said.

"If we are to be proud of the black opal as NSW's emblem the government must clean up the destructive aspects of the mining process.

"The government needs to institute much more rigorous environmental and heritage assessments and tighten monitoring of the opal mining industry.

"I have visited Walgett and Lightning Ridge and met with the Dharriwaa Elders Group who have taken me on a tour of opal mining areas in North Western NSW.

"The impacts of opal mining on the natural environment, threatened species and Aboriginal cultural sites are

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DEG training surveys of OPA-4 continue



Above: DEG's Speaker Tim Creighton with Charles Parkinson from Heritage Concepts, preparing maps for survey work. Above right: DEG's Richard Lake and Virginia Robinson received training from Lori Sciusco from Heritage Concepts, on the DEG's surveys. The DEG conducted two archaeological training surveys in March, with Heritage Concepts. We were lucky to be invited onto four western lands leases in the OPA 4 area, by landholders fearful of the damage opal mining would do to the country. The results of the small surveys will be lodged with NSW Dept of Environment and Climate Change, and summaries given to the landholders. The DEG is working towards collecting enough representative evidence to prove to government that our work has merely revealed the tip of the iceberg of the existence of Aboriginal cultural heritage in OPA 4. We believe that because it has not been surveyed in the past, the government plans development as if nothing is there. Our voices have not been enough - we need scientific evidence in order to be heard.



Above: DEG elders travelled to visit the DEG survey team for lunch, when it was based on Guisely in March 2009.

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considerable but the government has turned a blind eye to this destruction.

..."The Dharriwaa Elders Group has been forced to commission its own comprehensive report by environmental consultants which raises alarm bells about the impact of opal mining in prospecting areas 1-4 and the inadequate government assessment to date. The Dharriwaa Elders Group sent its comprehensive report to the Environment and Primary Industries ministers. They have yet to receive the response they deserve. The Rees government is trying to enhance its reputation. One way to do this is to listen to concerns about opal mining and better regulate this industry," Ms Rhiannon said.



DEG elders prepare for recording a community service announcement to promote DEG's cultural & natural resource management.

NSW DECC surveys nature reserve



In June the NSW Dept Environment and Climate Change (DECC) carried out surveys for Aboriginal cultural heritage protection at the Narran Lakes (Giiguradjin) Nature Reserve. Large numbers of sites were surveyed and recorded by community members and DEG staff for NSW DECC. The DEG are part of the new Narran lakes Co-Management Committee and have valuable input into a three year plan of management for Giiguradjin currently being developed. Left: There is a plover's nest on this 'island'. As the survey team came through the water we discovered a nest that contained four medium size green eggs with dark black lines across them.

Heritage management with NSW Govt.



Above left and right: Theresa Gay (Director Aboriginal Heritage Operations Branch) and Kath Schilling from the NSW Dept of Environment and Climate Change visited with the Dharriwaa Elders Group in July. Theresa updated the group regarding progress on the Aboriginal



Place Nominations made by the DEG in 2002 of Dungalgar and Narran Lakes and discussed other issues regarding the management of Walgett's Aboriginal cultural heritage. She also helped us understand more about how her branch works.



Above: Alan Holt from the Western CMA visited the DEG in April after we rang their office asking about two projects we had seen advertised. We discussed developing a Working On Country submission for a three year project, which we subsequently implemented, but which was not successful. We will resubmit this project model when other



funding opportunities arise. Above: Jason Wilson, NSW Dept of Environment and Climate Change Aboriginal Cultural Heritage officer for our region, made his first visit to the DEG in March to introduce his new role.

DEG launches cultural exhibition



This month the DEG was proud to launch its first cultural exhibition - a selection of photos taken by the NSW Aboriginal Protection Board, currently in the possession of NSW State Records. Photos included those of parents and relatives of DEG members, and of children attending Cootamundra Girls Home and Kinchella Boys Home. The



travelling exhibition will make the rounds of NSW. Many Walgett residents found photos of their family members many that they hadn't seen before. Staff assisted participants to order copies. Pilliga elders attended the launch and were presented with a copy of one of the photos in the exhibition that were taken in Pilliga.



Above: Walgett Primary School students look at the historic photos with their teacher. Above right: Elders Dot Thorne, June Barker and Val Collis were engrossed in the



historic photos. The exhibition was a great success and we plan to house future exhibitions finances permitting.

Namoi Village Memories

DEG members are working with staff to prepare an exhibition for young people and visitors, of their memories of Gingie, Namoi, Montkeila and other Aboriginal communities of Walgett. The exhibition will comprise of mud maps showing where people lived, and photos of memories.

Right: Victor Beale, Richard Lake work on the project in November with Kim Sullivan.



DEG outreach to other NSW elders



Left: The DEG Elders Council with elders who were hosted by the DEG for a week-long visit, from Gosford City Council. Pictured left to right: Stan Simon, James French, Fay Sands, George Rose, Dolley Wallace, Jacko Smith, Marj Weatherall, Harry Hall, Thelma Thorne, Lewis Beale. The Gosford elders' visit to Walgett was assisted by Council as part of the Sister City arrangements between Walgett and Gosford Councils. They were reciprocating a visit to Gosford that DEG elders undertook in March 2008.

Coonamble elders group visit



DEG director Thelma Thorne and Project Manager Wendy Spencer were invited to visit Coonamble elders in August by Tanya Hind the Community Facilitator and Ted Fernando



the Community Working Party Chair. The Coonamble elders wanted information and advice regarding establishing an elders group similar to DEG.

Hi-tech elders ongoing learning



Dharriwaa Elders Group members are gradually starting to use mobile phones, computers and the internet. Above Left: DEG's Stella Sands assisted DEG Director Marj Weatherall to set up her first mobile phone, as she did for Director Raja Simpson as well in December (at right). Above centre: DEG Speaker Tim Creighton established a



free email address with the help of staff, and also uses the computer to make safety copies onto CD of photos he collects with his new digital camera. He was an occasional contributor of stories and photos for the monthly Yundiboo magazine this year.

DEG's work to improve Walgett school education

Right: Teacher Deborah Walford brought her class of Year 6 students to meet with the DEG. They are seen here with Marj Weatherall, Elizabeth Peters and Tim Creighton. The students were given a talk by staff and directors of the DEG and shown some of the DEG's video resources. In particular they were shown how they could access the DEG in the future.

The DEG encourages visits of young people to the Elders Centre.



Community College Review



The Dharriwaa Elders Group participated in a review conducted by the NSW Dept of Education into the Walgett Community College structure. A list of recommendations



raised by DEG members in a workshop we conducted on the subject which was sent to the Review team, for their information. Above: The September 2008 review workshop.



Left: Walgett Community School Principal Peter Partridge met with the DEG in February to inform members of its new structure (after the above review). He was accompanied by a mentor from the NSW Dept of Education. The DEG requested a monthly meeting with Peter,



so that we can resume elders' active participation in school activities. Above: a June meeting. These meetings have since occurred monthly. The DEG also requested a regular visit to both schools and these were implemented on a monthly basis from that meeting.



Above: Jane Cavanagh, Director of Schools for the region, met with members in November to inform them of the results of the Review into the Walgett Community College structure, and proposed changes to it in 2009.



Kurt Vagaard is a new teacher in charge of the newly created middle school. He visited the DEG during lunch after the March board meeting, to discuss some of the initiatives he needed guidance with.

Elders preside at school presentations



New ways for walgett schools



High School Aboriginal Studies teachers Ashley Albanese and his colleague met with the DEG in April to discuss teaching approaches and content for their Aboriginal Studies classes. Since that first meeting Ashley Albanese regularly liaises with DEG staff in an informal capacity.



Tyson Yunkaporta was invited to host a presentation in November with members informing them on his work trialling more effective ways to teach Aboriginal students in schools. Members were encouraged by his ground-breaking work in Aboriginal education and gave him permission to cite his work at Walgett in his theses and at conferences and other public occasions.

DEG works to improve youth services

Interagency Youth Subcommittee

The Youth Subcommittee of Walgett's Inter-agency was first set up in 2003 at the request of the DEG. Since then many new services for youth have been attracted to Walgett (the purpose of the subcommittee). One such new service is Unitingcare Burnside's support of families of disabled young people. Karen Green introduced this service to the Subcommittee in February 2009.



Right: The Youth Subcommittee of the Walgett Inter-agency in June 2009. Police, schools and council workers participated and we had a useful discussion about core issues for all agencies which hopefully will result in quality advice which can be given to the NSW Safer Families and the COAG service delivery projects which were then about to start in Walgett. Since DEG first requested the Youth Subcommittee in 2003, participation has varied. Since the end of 2008 DEG has noticed a drop in participation and we will work to understand and rectify this in the new year.



Left: Father Chris Riley and staff from Youth Off the Streets revisited DEG in November and discussed the delivery of YOTS programs in Walgett. Since this meeting DEG regularly meets with the organisation, and has more recently begun to develop cultural programs that we can deliver for YOTS clients.



Right: Lara Gordon from the NSW Dept of Community Services, visited DEG in January at the request of its directors, to discuss the DEG's belief in the need for a Walgett children's safe house, and to provide information about DoCS' policies. She visited when the women's group were receiving assistance from Geraldine Kennedy with jewellery making.



CASE provides network admin to DEG



Darrell Burkey and Sam McKeon from CASE, a non-profit organisation in Canberra of computer technicians that offer technical assistance to non-profit members, visited the DEG in June. Speaker Tim Creighton and Director Richard Lake took them on a quick lunch-time tour around Walgett, stopping to eat at the scarred tree lock-up on the Barwon River. Almost a year prior we'd worked together remotely to install a server that CASE techos had built in Canberra and then shipped to Walgett. Guiding installation and setup over the phone and with our remote administration tools, DEG ended up with a high quality intranet that has been stable for twelve months. This time we needed to upgrade the server with 2 x 1TB hard drives,

install a security camera in our shop/ exhibition area (recommended by National Library), clean our six computers and install new anti virus softwares on each of them, and install a network printer. Remote server help was donated by CASE volunteer Andrew Tridgell over the phone. Darrell and Andrew worked late into Monday night and then again early Tuesday morning to upgrade the DEG's Linux server which was pretty complicated and involved unforeseen developments which had to be pretty constantly figured out. Andrew is a world-renowned open source developer. He wrote the software that allows MS Windows operating systems talk to Linux (open source) operating system. DEG staff were amazed and humbled to have such an international legend donating his time to little ol' us!

Legal info re child protection



DEG organised and hosted in June a legal information session for the community and service providers by the Western NSW Community Legal Centre on child protection issues and NSW Dept of Community Services. We were extremely pleased and surprised at the huge attendance of ser-

vice providers. This proved to the DEG that child protection is of huge concern to Walgett and that service providers are in a good position to provide quality advice to COAG and the NSW Safer Families Projects re initiatives that should be tested to improve Walgett's situation.

Elders voice made to Walgett Council



Above: New Walgett Shire Council Community Development Officer Leanne Tasker met with the DEG in February to introduce herself and get to know the lay of the land.



Above: George McCormick, Walgett Shire Council's Youth Development Officer, met with the DEG in February to receive input into the Shire's five year draft Youth Development Strategy.



Jenny Trindall (Acting Aboriginal Liaison Officer Walgett Shire Council) and friend Gail Simpson, met with the DEG in January during the process of developing their Aboriginal cultural awareness training package for the Walgett Shire Council staff.



Above: Lianne Tasker from Walgett Shire Council consulted re the development of Council's Social Plan in June. This is the first time that a proper consultation has been held by Council with the DEG regarding any of its policy development.

Relations with police develop



Above: DEG's Kim Sullivan attended a workshop hosted by Doreen Peters from NSW Police in October, to learn how to provide cell support to Walgett prisoners. Doreen is an Associate member of DEG and also assists our work with the Local Area Command Aboriginal Consultative Ctee.



Above: Two Walgett police dropped in for a yarn and were met by Tim Creighton and Richard Lake in October. They were responding to an open invitation from elders who try to welcome all new services to town.

DEG fights for Walgett air service



Above: Dr Vlad Matic visited the November DEG board meeting to encourage the organisation to lobby government for the reinstatement of air services to Walgett. The loss of an airline from December has affected the provision of health and many other services to the community. Since this meeting DEG has lobbied state and federal governments and joined to support Walgett services for the resumption of this basic transport need.

DEG starts Walgett monthly markets



DEG began to hire in February from the NSW Lands trustees, the use of Apex Park in Walgett (opposite the Walgett District Sporting Club) for monthly community markets. Stallholders were encouraged to set up their own

stalls and join us in the large shady space which is situated on the highway through town. Above are photos taken at the February and April markets of the DEG's stall and that of Wendy Spencer who assists DEG volunteers.

Community garden initiative



Matthew Goulton from the Catchment Management Authority assisted interested community members and service providers to begin planning a community vegetable and fruit garden, in September. Walgett Shire Council has offered the use of a plot of land for the purpose. Decisions



have to be made regarding the organic status of the garden, its productivity and other planning issues. Unfortunately the committee did not convene after this promising meeting.

DEG's work to aid return of trust funds



At the request of the DEG directors, staff hosted a community information session in October about the Trust Funds Reparation Scheme conducted by the NSW Government. Directors were concerned that not all the community understood that they should register before 31 December 2008 in order to trace any funds they might be owed if they were



born before 1969. Since then the deadline was extended, and the guidelines were changed. DEG staff have spent much time assisting members to liaise with their legal advisors, and to communicate information about the scheme to the community at large, in the absence of any NSW government information being provided on the ground.

Gladys Kennedy collects evidence of work history



In August Gladys Kennedy requested DEG assist her to gather evidence about her places of work as a young girl.



Above are photos taken of Gladys at Narran Point and the hut she lived in while working as a housemaid there.

DEG finds cultural videos



Virginia Robinson (DEG's Secretary) was pleased to receive from Jane Cavanagh (Dept of Education Director of Schools for the Bourke region), a collection of videos produced in Walgett in the 1970s, in March. The videos were made with local elders and contain much cultural material, now invaluable. DEG's Project Manager tracked them down through retired Dept of Education videomaker, Bruce Ryan. Wendy believes Bruce deserves a medal. Not only did he work hard to make and edit the recordings to begin with, when the recording of Aboriginal cultural information was very unfashionable. He also rescued the recordings from the skip when the NSW Dept of Education decided to scrap its audio visual archive for the region. He has looked after the tapes until now, and is very pleased that Bathurst Council, the Dharriwaa Elders Group (and at our request, NSW DET) have rediscovered their value again.

Elkin papers researched



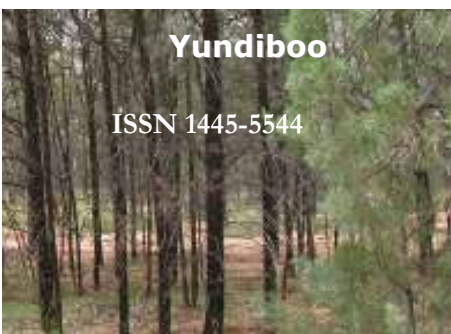
Left: Julia Mant, Research Archivist Sydney University Fischer Library. In May the Dharriwaa Elders Group was shown Professor Elkin's papers held by the Sydney University archive. Professor Elkin was a prominent anthropologist who was often employed as a consultant by the NSW Aboriginal Protection Board. He and his colleagues visited Walgett in the early 1940s to research the need for better housing for Walgett's Aboriginal community, which led to the new houses being built at Gingie Reserve in the 1940s. An article about Walgett was written afterwards by Miss Marie Reay entitled "A half-caste Aboriginal community in North-Western NSW South Wales", and published in Mankind Vol15, No 4, 1945. A copy of this article and Elkin materials is now at the DEG for viewing by the community by appointment.

NSW Government hands back records

Right: NSW Dept of Aboriginal Affairs family records unit officer Richard Aldridge presented the Elders Council of the DEG a collection of records held by the NSW State Records regarding Walgett Aboriginal affairs, in August. The Dharriwaa Elders Group immediately placed documents relating to the closure of Angledool Aboriginal Station in 1936, on display in its new cultural exhibition space. These records have been pored over by elders, school students and community members regularly since. Other records will be displayed in future.



DEG's media production continues



Left: DEG continued to produce this year its monthly magazine Yundiboo which is distributed to the community and schools. 2009 introduced Volume 10 of Yundiboo. The magazine is named after a popular Walgett community newspaper first published by George Rose and an-

other Walgett Aboriginal community organization.

Below: Screen shots from the community service announcements completed and launched in October by the Dharriwaa Elders Group.



Elders Health Program



Above and below are scenes from the elders health program in March, showing sessions held with an exercise physiologist, receiving flu immunisations from Dr Vivienne Cebola, chatting with the psychologist and another exercise physiologist. Andy Carroll and colleagues from the Greater Western Area Health Service



come to the DEG every Monday morning to check blood sugar levels and blood pressures and refer elders onto other services as required. This is an important part of our Monday morning health sessions that are delivered by a group of health service providers supplied from GWAHS, Walgett AMS and NSW Outback Division of GPs.



Above: Leigh Black from the NSW Outback Division of GPs gave a quit smoking talk in a November health session. Left: DEG elders received a session from Allied Health Central's exercise physiologist and were given dyna bands to use to build strength. The DEG's Elders Health Program engaged Virginia Robinson this year as its external evaluator. She will be providing her final report early in 2010, and we expect it will be very useful to assist us to improve this service.



Left: DEG's Lewis Beale welcomed participants in the Outback Health Forum in March, to Walgett, for their quarterly gathering. It's at this forum that the DEG has lobbied for improved health services, and participation in its elders health program by service providers.



Above: Renal Co-ordinator Gail O'Brien from the Greater Western Area Health Service explained to the DEG in January progress on the department's promise to provide a dialysis service in Walgett. Above right: Margot Anderson (NSW Outback Division of GP) met with staff and directors in July



to finalize arrangements for the elders health program which resumed this year with funding assistance. Margot is the greatest supporter of DEG's elders health program, which couldn't have continued otherwise.

Right: In November, Michael Thompson, a doctor specializing in substance abuse recovery, made a presentation. The DEG encourages Walgett AMS and GWAHS and NSW Outback Division of GPs to arrange for their health personnel to deliver Elders health program sessions.



Doctor visits Dharriwaa (Narran Lakes)



Above: DEG Speaker Tim Creighton, and DEG Elders Councillor Gladys Kennedy who has strong family ties to Dharriwaa, were amongst elders who hosted a visit by locum Doctor Vivienne Cebola and her husband Chris, to



Dharriwaa in March. Above Right: Dr Vivienne was disappointed to find no water in the lake despite recent heavy rains.

DEG Conference attendance



DEG attended Connecting Up which gives non-profit organisations information about developments and useful applications regarding internet technologies. This year's May conference had an emphasis on social enterprise (generating income from non-government sources) and how to

promote social actions. Left: DEG's Richard Lake with Sam McKeon (Director), Karen Realph (Treasurer) and Darrell Burkey (President) of CASE Inc, an association DEG belongs to which offers technical assistance to non-profit members. They recorded a podcast with us while we were there.

Right: DEG's Virginia Robinson and Elizabeth Peters attended the Conference "Empowering Women for Strong Communities and Towards Healthy Country – Making It Our Business in NSW & ACT" 5-7 May 2009. It was a gathering of Aboriginal women to progress strategies, arrangements, plans and develop a statewide effort to get

women involved in cultural heritage management by working on their country. The gathering was held over two and half days at Nelsons Bay.



vandal affects DEG's transport

Staff returned from the October long weekend to find that a vandal had rammed their car into the rear gate, damaging the front of the DEG's Kia Carnivale. Eye witnesses reported the incident to the DEG and we passed on information to the police. We have heard no more. We were without this vehicle for nearly two months and want the perpetrator to recognize the inconvenience he caused to Walgett elders.

Recent wars remembered by DEG



Tim Creighton took this photograph of the new area unveiled 11 November 2008, in memory of Aboriginal servicemen and women, at Moree cemetery. Tim and other DEG members attended the occasion along with elders and families from Moree. DEG elders usually commemorate Aboriginal service men and women at ceremonies on Anzac and Remembrance Days.

Inset is the wreath laid by DEG elder Virginia Robinson on behalf of the Dharriwaa Elders Group at the Walgett Anzac ceremony.



Beadmaking women

Left: Kelly Rowe, Rodney Thorne, Thelma Thorne, Gladys Kennedy, Kim Sullivan. Rodney Thorne and WAMS' Kelly Rowe assisted the DEG's women's group in January to begin beadmaking. This year the DEG's women's program worked to strengthen and support DEG women within general DEG programs, and to meet separately on weekly basis. At these regular gatherings the women enjoy a practical exercise while they talk. Knitting, crochet and arts and crafts are also undertaken. Trips to visit other communities are also undertaken.

Lifeball learnt from its founder



In April Joanne Barrett (NSW Dept of Sport and Recreation) and Colleen Wilson-Lord OAM (founder of Lifeball) visited the DEG and Walgett to spread the word about healthy exercise for seniors. The following day the



DEG women's group enjoyed learning how to play Lifeball at Lightning Ridge, where they found they were the only participants. DEG has Lifeball equipment and so there is nothing stopping the women starting a local group!

Printmaking and cultural research



Above: DEG elder Flossie Kennedy learns about the printmaking process, at a workshop organized by Outback Arts with the DEG in May. Artist Liz Clarke was engaged by Outback Arts to conduct the workshop to teach a skill which might interest local Aboriginal artists. Most Aboriginal artists in town at the time dropped by



the workshop. Above: James Wilson-Miller from the Powerhouse Museum was introduced to the DEG by Sam Newstead from Outback Arts in October. He proposed a cultural project with local artists and will send detail in writing about the proposed project for the DEG to consider.

Language program continues despite loss of language elders Margaret and George Rose.



The Yuwaalaraay Gamilaraay Language Teaching Group is a regular meeting, guided by a strategic plan, convened by the DEG of those working for the increased use of YG in Walgett. We try to support those in nearby YG communities as well. The May meeting above was pleased to include Noeline Briggs Smith and her colleague from Moree Library's Dhiyaan Indigenous Centre, and Glenda Simpson from Walgett TAFE who is setting up the language teaching courses to be run (we thought) in February 2009. We hear now that they will begin in early



2010. Above: Karen Dumas began a new Aboriginal language teaching position at Walgett Community School in 2009. The DEG was dismayed to find her difficulties obtaining pencils and a clock and A3 paper for her classes, and so hastily purchased them for her. DEG's Kim Sullivan is seen here presenting the items to Karen who we offer all our support to. The DEG meets weekly with Karen.



Above: John Giacon was invited to visit DEG in August when the Speaker bumped into him at a Walgett Community Festival function. He instructed DEG's language program's project officer Kathleen Shields re the use of a transcription software, and gave the DEG copies of transcribed Walgett audio language recordings from AITSIS. Above right: Those attending the Yuwaalaraay Gamilaraay Language Teaching Group in May included (left to right) Tyson Yungapurta (NSW Dept of Educa-



tion), Gail Simpson (NSW DET), DEG's Kathleen Shields, Glenda Simpson (TAFE), Lyn Rummery (Walgett High School). Matters discussed included DEG's development of a teaching resource for the Dharriwaa (Narran Lakes) creation story, and the long-planned TAFE language courses which have yet to be implemented.

IT'S COOL TO STAY IN SCHOOL

collection management continues



Dharriwaa Elders Group staff continued learning how to safely manage the organisation's nationally significant collection, and begin to make it more accessible to the community. Chief archivist from the University of New England Heritage Centre, Bill Oates, conducted a two-day training course with DEG staff for this purpose in September. Thanks to Stella Sands and Virginia Robinson, our collection is mostly accounted for. Our next task is to import this spreadsheet work into a cataloguing database and label all items. Once this is achieved our collection will become more accessible to the community.

Yaama ngiyaningunda
(hello all)
Nhalay ngiyaningu guliyaan
(this is our news)

Elders visit Moree's Dhiyaan Centre



On 10th March 2009 Dharriwaa Elders Elizabeth Peters, Marjorie Weatherall, Gladys Kennedy and Tim Creighton accompanied by DEG workers Kim Sullivan and Richard Lake travelled to Moree to visit the Dhiyaan (meaning "family") Centre. Noeline Briggs – Smith (Manager of the center) welcomed the group and supplied them with family history that is stored there. The Centre has an important regional role and contains much cultural information deposited by Walgett elders. The DEG continues to foster a relationship with the Centre, and provides assistance when it can.



Harry Hall wins DEG raffle



Left: Tim Creighton, DEG's second Speaker, and Lynn Field from Youth Off the Streets, drew the DEG's fund-raising raffle in December. DEG member Harry Hall won the prize - a front-loading washing machine. Our raffle only just covered the cost of the item over one year. Oh well - back to the drawing board!



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

1. the Commonwealth Government through the

- * Maintenance of Indigenous Languages and Records, the Indigenous Culture Support and the National Indigenous Heritage Programs of the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts
- * Indigenous Women's Program of the Department of Families, Community Services, Housing and Indigenous Affairs
- * Healthy Active Australia Program of the Department of Health and Ageing
- * Regional Arts NSW
- * Community Heritage Grants Program of the National Library of Australia.

2. the NSW Government through

- * Thubbo Aboriginal Medical Co-operative and NSW Dept of Ageing Disability and Homecare
- * NSW Dept of State and Regional Development

3. and by the following companies and individuals

- * Gilbert + Tobin, Blakes, Dawson and Waldron
- * Heritage Concepts
- * George Rose OAM, Arnold Spencer, Julie Williams, Mrs Karen Wilson, Mrs Reid, Virginia Robinson, Kathleen Shields, DEG directors, CASE volunteers Darrell Burkey, Andrew Tridgell and Sam McKeon, Geraldine Kennedy, Rodney Thorne, Kelly Rowe.

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



Left: The DEG held a Xmas lunch at the Sporting Club, after its last board meeting for the year. It was a somber occasion as George Rose was in hospital, Margaret Rose had left us, and many of our more entertaining members were out of town at the time. Lewis was about to leave for a Melbourne

Holiday, and others had pressing family engagements. Again this Christmas the Coolabah Motel donated lollies to the DEG. Thelma Thorne led female staff and volunteers in gift-wrapping the lollies, and then presented them to pre-schoolers.