



Bundiyarra News

Incorporating Bundiyarra-Irra Wangga Language Centre

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Bringing the news back to you

It's been a while since we've been able to share any news from Bundiyarra – the good place. However, that doesn't mean nothing has been happening! Even with the dreaded COVID-19, we have managed to keep going.

Being considered an essential service, Bundiyarra was able to keep the doors open with a small staff, while the Bundiyarra-Irra Wangga Language Centre staff worked from home for a number of weeks.

In these pages we'll bring you up-to-date with our news.

Aboriginal short stay accommodation project becomes a reality

It was a very excited gathering at Bundiyarra last August when Hon Minister Peter Tinley MLA, WA Minister for Housing announced \$18 million for the construction of a 75-bed Aboriginal short stay accommodation facility for Geraldton.

As one of the first priorities for the Midwest Aboriginal Organisations Alliance (MAOA) – a collaborative action research group working to address key issues affecting Midwest Aboriginal people – it has been on the drawing board for the past seven years.

Announcing the funding, Minister Tinley said the project came from the community.

"It was done by the community for the community," he said.

To be built on Bundiyarra's land, it will provide temporary accommodation for Aboriginal people visiting Geraldton for reasons such as medical appointments or funerals.

An emotional Gordon Gray, Chair of MAOA said he was a bit overwhelmed.

"So many people are going to benefit from this, it's just unbelievable," he said.

"When people come to town... they've got families somewhere and people feel obliged to put them up and it puts enormous pressure on [their] services – power and water and sewerage."



Planning: Minister Peter Tinley, centre, discusses the short stay accommodation plans with from left: Member for the Agricultural Region, Laurie Graham MLC; MAOA Chair, Gordon Gray; Member for the Agricultural Region Darren West MLC; and Bundiyarra Operations Manager Wayne McDonald.

It is expected it will support almost 100 construction jobs and provide ongoing employment at the accommodation facility.

The McGowan Government's \$18 million commitment for the short stay facility is part of the \$5.5 billion WA Recovery Plan for the Midwest, to drive economic and social recovery focusing on getting locals back to work after the impact of COVID-19.



Language ladies give it their all

COVID-19 sure put a dampener on last year's NAIDOC activities. However the Bundiyarra-Irra Wangga Language Centre ladies took to the stage and got the kids (and others) engaged with renditions of a couple of favourite songs including Hands, Knees and Toes. See more NAIDOC pics inside.

First public event at Yamatji memorial to honour Aboriginal service personnel

As part of last year's NAIDOC Week celebrations, Bundiyarra held a Remembrance Day service at the Yamatji War Memorial on November 9.

More than 60 people attended to pay their respects to those Aboriginal men and women who fought for their country through all the wars, and those still serving.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic this was the first public event to be held at the memorial since its unveiling in October 2019.

A number of wreaths were laid from the community, and the flags were raised and lowered by Pedro Abednego for Torres Strait Island; Allan Headland Board Director, Bundiyarra; Tony Dodd, Midwest Aboriginal Mens Association; and Ross Davies, Geraldton RSL Sub-Branch. A prayer was read by Pastor Paul Ihanimo.

More than 260 Aboriginal service personnel from the Midwest, Gascoyne and Murchison are commemorated on the memorial for selflessly serving in all the armed forces. This magnificent memorial is a fitting tribute to their contribution to Australia's freedom.

This is a 'living' memorial – a project idea originated by Returned Serviceman, Ron Cross – who served in the SAS – and driven by Ron and Vietnam Veteran, Graham Taylor, both of whom contributed many volunteer hours to see it come to fruition.

It is a work in progress and names are still being captured of those who served.

As more names are identified they will be included

in the plaques, and anyone who believes someone's name is not included they are welcome to contact Bundiyarra to have it added.

Quiet service for ANZAC Day

The pandemic meant ANZAC Day was quietly remembered at Bundiyarra on April 25, with four dedicated Aboriginal men paying their respects and raising the flags:



Graham Taylor; Ron Cross; Alan McDonald; and Wayne MacDonald paid tribute on this national day of remembrance, to all Australian and New Zealanders who served and died in all wars and conflicts, and the first landing of the ANZACS at Gallipoli.

It was a quiet but moving affair.

Familiar faces welcomed back to the language centre



Back at the Good Place: Nadine, Jenni, Sueraini and Nola.

This year kicked off with a full team at the Bundiyarra-Irra Wangga Language Centre in Geraldton.

Trainee Sueraini Simpson returned after taking some time off to look after her new baby daughter, Zaliyah,

who is now six months old, where does the time go?

Senior Language Worker Nadine Taylor is back in her old seat part time, after a year's sabbatical, ready to get back into helping with the nine languages the centre is curating.

And long-time, tireless Bundiyarra worker, Jenni Gregory-Kniveton has found herself reefed out of retirement (happily she says) to head up some projects part-time.

A new face - but also really a returning face - Nola Gregory, (yes, Jenni's malyu!) has joined the team to undertake some much-needed archiving. Nola has always had a connection with Bundiyarra having worked and helped with various events that have been run over the years.

The rest of the team, Rosie, Jacqui, Edie, Danah and Sue happily welcomed them back.

Coordinator Rosie Sitorus said it was awesome to have all seats full.

UWA students enjoy language centre internship

Bundiyarra-Irra Wangga Language Centre loves hosting students for hands-on language experience and Hannah Davies and Libby Phillip recently joined us from the University of Western Australia.

Both in their third year of Linguistics – and other studies – they enjoyed the three weeks spent with us and we enjoyed having them!

Hannah Davies

Third year student, Hannah, is finishing a Bachelor of Biomedical Science, majoring in Neuroscience and Linguistics.

Hannah said she became interested in the science subject in Year 12 at high school, “I loved it,” she said. “I’m more interested in the research emphasis of neuroscience, how the brain links to behaviour.”

Hannah’s family is a pretty sporty lot and when she’s not studying, Hannah – the eldest of four – likes playing and watching sport, particularly soccer, with her family. She says she is an avid reader and loves doing word and sudoku puzzles (that should be useful for a neuroscientist working on brain behaviour!)

Hannah would like to travel overseas and work in the field of biomedicine and believes studying linguistics would help with speech pathology and help her communicate better, bringing all her skills together.

Her time at the language centre was well spent and Hannah said she enjoyed the visit.

“Everyone is nice,” she said “it’s like a family, and they are caring and respectful of each other which creates a good team, and respectful of community.”

Libby Phillip

In her third year of a Bachelor of Arts majoring in



Learning: Senior Language Teacher Edie Maher, gives Libby and Hannah a helping hand with some Wadjjarri words during their internship.

Linguistics, Libby says she always loved languages and was initially inspired to study linguistics after reading a favourite book; *Alex and Me*, by Dr Irene Pepperberg, about a scientist’s work that proved that Alex, her parrot, could understand and speak English words.

“It did inspire me,” she said, “and made me interested to learn more about language.”

“I’m interested in the many ways languages can be applied and I want to have a broader education than just speech, so hope to pursue a Masters in Speech Pathology.”

Libby’s downtime includes reading; and, being an animal lover, spending time with her five cats.

Libby loved her time at the language centre and said it was amazing to see how the centre works.

“It was interesting to see how the language centre works with the community too,” she said.

NAIDOC Day at Bundiyarra

Last year, due to Covid-19 NAIDOC Day was postponed until November and Bundiyarra Aboriginal Corporation ran with the date and put on a fabulous day attracting a big crowd. There was



Brothers in beards: Allan Headland and Lance Mongoo show off their beards.

plenty of entertainment with singers including: Zain Laudehr, Latia Robertson, Nicole Robson, Justin Pilkington and the band, Kin Folk. And plenty of food of course!



Cute: Danah Merritt and Melakhi Ryder, fresh from face painting.

Bundiyarra NAIDOC Community Recognition Awards

Over many years our people have done amazing things and often work voluntarily for the better good of their community. Last year Bundiyarra decided to honour some of the community heroes and volunteers by establishing the Bundiyarra NAIDOC Community Recognition Awards which will be an annual presentation at the Bundiyarra NAIDOC Community and Family Day.

These awards recognise our people who contribute to their community in either a voluntary capacity or other capacity to help build a better, prouder, and safer community.

Seven well-known community members were awarded for the hard work, passion, commitment and leadership shown to the community with more than 200 years of accumulated service between them.

Jenni Gregory-Kniveton was instrumental in organising the awards and imagine her astonishment when she



was surprised with one herself. That was one secret hard to keep!

The inaugural recipients were from left above: Merrilyn Green; Jennifer Gregory-Kniveton; Ross Oakley (posthumously) accepted by his granddaughter Kalicia Oakley; Margaret Kelly; Ronald Cross; Graham Taylor; and Gloria Fogarty.

Elders' Christmas lunch draws some familiar faces

It was solid to see some familiar faces – some we hadn't seen for some time – at the Bundiyarra-Streeties combined Elders' Christmas Lunch last year.

About 40 people tucked into a delicious roast Christmas lunch with all the trimmings as they caught up with old friends and enjoyed a deadly yarn or two at Streeties.

Kitchen staff at St John of God Hospital in Geraldton, cooked the sumptuous meal of roast beef, chicken, pork with crackling and lots of gravy, roast vegetables, cauliflower and broccoli bake, followed with traditional Christmas pud and custard for dessert.

Staff of Bundiyarra and the Irra Wangga Language Centre served the hungry and appreciative mob and elder Kevin Merritt offered a prayer.

Terri-Lee Dalgety did an awesome job of the table decorations and the whole hall had a very festive feel.

Well-known local poet, Nola Gregory, read some of her poetry and language centre trainee, Danah Merritt, talked about her journey to language and where she hopes to go from here.

All in all, a wonderful way to end such a difficult – for many – year.

We hope to see more of these familiar faces at the Good Place throughout the year.



Christmas cheer: Margie Kelly and Nola Gregory.



Sumptuous spread: Plenty of traditional Christmas food.

On country trip preserves language

One of the Irra Wangga Language Centre's important bodies of work is the Warriyanga on Country project.

Linguists, Aboriginal artists, an ethnobotanist and a support team from the Bundiyarra-Irra Wangga Language Centre, headed to the lower Pilbara-Upper Gascoyne for a two-week camping trip in October last year.

The project centres around 87-year-old Thiinma elder and Warriyanga speaker, Peter Salmon.

Peter is a significant language and cultural knowledge holder and possibly the last fluent speaker of his Warriyanga tongue. He has worked hard with BIW over the past five years to revitalise, document and preserve his sleeping language.



Big mob: Members of Peter's extended family at Glenflorrie Station camp site.

About 50 members of Peter's extended family, including children, joined the team for the rugged 4WD only field trip, visiting places of significance in his life.

It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience for most of his family, as Peter showed them where he was born, places he had worked and places of cultural significance and stories behind them, in his Warriyanga/Thiinma language and English, carefully documented by the linguistics team.

Peter was born on Maroonah Station in the Pilbara and worked as a stockman on pastoral stations across the region since 1945. He is a fit and amusing



Inspired: The kids get busy drawing under the trees.



Collecting ideas: Project artist Sonya Edney with Peter Salmon.

character who now musters on a buggy after many years on horseback and can still jump into the saddle with relative ease!

The project will culminate in a book documenting the trip in both Warriyanga/Thiinma and English and will be complemented with paintings depicting the stories by well-known Aboriginal artist, Sonya Edney, who is currently enjoying great success with her paintings in Perth.

During the on-country trip, Sonya mentored emerging artists and the youngsters while they sketched, under shady trees, the stories Peter told.



Three generations: Peter with his son Grantley and grandson Rhys who learned a lot on the trip.

An artists' workshop will be held in Carnarvon in April, to progress the work undertaken on the trip.

Ethnobotanist, Arpad Kalotas, documented flora in the Warriyanga language and this will be incorporated into the book.

This project is funded through the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries; the Australian Government through the Regional Arts Fund (administered by Regional Arts WA); and Wyemando (Harper Sisters Aboriginal Bequest); with support from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) through First Languages Australia (FLA).

Listen and read more about the Warriyanga on Country project by visiting this [link](#) (online version only).

EH works towards preventing trachoma in remote communities

Aboriginal environmental health practitioners from the Midwest, Murchison and Gascoyne met for a regular EH forum at Bundiyarra recently, to network and share information about improving health outcomes for regional and remote communities.

Funded through the WA Department of Health's Environmental Health Directorate, the twice-yearly forum also provided value added practical training to skill the regions' EH teams in assessing health hardware in bathrooms.

Aboriginal Environmental Health Practitioners from Yulella in Meekatharra, Carnarvon Medical Service Aboriginal Corporation (CMSAC) and Bundiyarra undertook two-days of practical training visiting four houses in Geraldton.

WA Department of Health Senior Program Officer John Perrett said "The aim to date has been to ensure a safe, secure area to wash, reducing the potential for sickness," he said.

"Outreach teams can be the circuit breakers in communities in fixing basic emergency problems, and since we have been training EH teams to address some of the problems and promote practising better hygiene, there has been a notable reduction in plumbing issues in those communities.

"Any issues that are beyond the scope of the EH teams are referred to Department of Housing or other relevant agencies," said Mr Perrett.

The program has reached a stage where the focus will be on all wet areas in the home and the external apparatus.

Trachoma in remote Aboriginal communities is still a prevalent issue because of poor hygiene, overcrowding and a lack of functioning bathrooms. The condition – a bacterial infection that affects the eyes and is extremely contagious – can cause

visual impairment and even blindness.

Scott Mackenzie a research officer with the Ending Trachoma project team from Curtin University – who travels the State working with Aboriginal EH teams – attended the forum.



Keeping it clean: Les Dann, Steven Kelly and Derek Councillor Junior with the donated goods.

He had been visiting Meekatharra, a trachoma identified location, with Yulella.

"The project team offers a range of skills-based training packages to EH teams," he said.

"This includes safe bathrooms training, based on trachoma prevention, to improve the hygiene and safety of the wet areas.

"We also collect data on infrastructure, existing

programs, partnerships and gaps to support the development of community-led environmental action plans to identify and plan environmental health initiatives and actions in remote communities, many of which will focus on hygiene and environmental infrastructure," said Mr Mackenzie.

The project team provided some trachoma packs for Bundiyarra's EH team to distribute to communities; and Rotary WA donated new towels to help with better hygiene to prevent trachoma. The Water Corporation also donated some adjustable showerheads to upgrade community bathrooms.



Healthy lads: Attendees at the February EH Forum at Bundiyarra.



Getting it on the record

Sueraini Simpson and Danah Merritt along with UWA intern Hannah Davies got stuck into some recording training while Hannah was at the language centre.

The girls will soon be proficient at recording their elders and language speakers, capturing all the stories that need to be documented and preserved.

Singing for their supper

Warriyanga speaker Peter Salmon, who has been working with the language centre over the past few years, recording his language and cultural knowledge, has recently embraced song writing.

Bundiyarra-Irra Wangga Language Centre's Rosie Sitorus and Jacqui Cook are not only professional linguists they are also talented musicians; and along with Peter and fellow local musician Darcy Hay, have recorded a song in Warriyanga for the Sounds of the Midwest album.

With words written by Peter and music by Rosie, the song – *Water Song – Warriyanga Warralgurniya* – was selected to appear on the latest WA Music's 'Sounds of' regional recording project.

The project inspired Peter to write more songs in his mother tongue and he chivvied Rosie to create more music.

"There seems to be no stopping him!" said Rosie.

"We find ourselves rehearsing and practising at all hours of the day and in all manner of places."

The success of the groups' collaboration saw the four musicians invited to play four sets at the south west's



ever-popular Nannup Music Festival at the end February.

They are pictured above practising during the lunch break at the language centre.

Sounds of the Mid West (2021) will be officially launched in April this year.

Next time we'll take a peek at the shenanigans at the Nannup Music Festival...

Setting the stage for cultural expansion at the Good Place



Performing: Bundiyarra Operations Manager Wayne MacDonald shows Premier Mark McGowan and Lara Dalton the stage plans.

Premier Mark McGowan delivered some good news to the good place last month (Feb 18), with an election commitment of \$44,000 to construct an outdoor performance stage on the cultural centre grounds.

Visiting with well-known local WA Labor candidate for Geraldton, Lara Dalton, he said the construction of a stage at the Bundiyarra Cultural Precinct would take Bundiyarra to the next level.

"Investing in cultural infrastructure makes sense for the economic, cultural and social future of the region and it is something that will help keep the Midwest strong," he said.

Ms Dalton said the addition of a performing arts stage would provide new opportunities to celebrate and share traditional culture with locals and tourists.

"It will give local performers a place to practice their craft and it will become a destination for touring performers," she said.

Bundiyarra Acting Operations Manager Wayne MacDonald said it was very exciting news.

"The stage will be a fantastic addition to Bundiyarra's cultural precinct," he said.

"It will allow us to host inclusive events for the whole community.

"The elders procured this ground for our community to be a cultural space and we are proud to continue the legacy.

"We are thankful that Lara listens to us about Bundiyarra's needs and has advocated for this project!" he added.

Feeding the mob, 100 meals at a time

A program to help bring some relief to COVID-19 compromised community members wrapped up in Geraldton late last year.

The 100 Hot Meals project, funded by the Aboriginal Biodiversity Conservation Foundation, in partnership with Bundiyarra Aboriginal Community Corporation, MEEDAC and Geraldton Aboriginal Streetwork Corporation (Streeties), delivered more than 1800 hot meals to 100 people over 18 weeks last year.



Cooking it: Carmen Simpson cooks a pot of potatoes.

Starting in August 2020, the meals were provided to disadvantaged Aboriginal people including the homeless, large families, disabled and elders during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure food security.

Bundiyarra's Jennifer Gregory-Kniveton coordinated the project and MEEDAC, Streeties and Bundiyarra delivered the meals to eligible people across Geraldton.

Darren Martin, a fully qualified Aboriginal chef, cooked a variety of hot meals in MEEDAC's Rosella House commercial kitchen in Bayly Street, Geraldton, for the first 13 weeks with cook Carmen Simpson taking over



Packing it: Jenni Gregory-Kniveton packs the food into containers.

for the remaining four weeks of this great community initiative.

Each partner agency identified their own target group

Bundiyarra Aboriginal Community Aboriginal Corporation



Delivering it: Trevor Pickett, Margie Kelly and Gordon Clinch make sure the meals are delivered.

and delivered the meals to their clients over the 18 weeks.

Margie Kelly delivered to Aboriginal people in Rangeway and Beachlands for Bundiyarra; and Trevor Pickett and Gordon Clinch delivered for Streeties, with Chris Quartermaine from MEEDAC, dropping the hot meals off to people Spalding, Waggrakine and Karloo.

The appreciative clients enjoyed meals including roast dinners; spaghetti Bolognese; rissoles, chicken and beef curry and all served with vegetables. The week before Christmas they were treated to a special hot roast meal with vegetables.

Meals were delivered the day before pay day to ensure Aboriginal people had access to a hot meal during this lean period, when most households would run out of food.

ABCF will evaluate the success of this program to consider the viability of continuing it into this year.



Sisterly love

Sisters, Miracle and Harmony Pepper had a great time and happily posed for a photo with the Aboriginal flag at Bundiyarra's NAIDOC Day celebrations last year.