



Annual Report 2017

ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Despite operating on a very lean budget Coomaditchie continued to be a hive of activity throughout 2017. Our volunteers have been wonderful and our staff members have coped with erratic employment arrangements. No matter how we have had to do it we have managed to continue to live up to our commitment to make a difference, support our community and work towards reconciliation and closing the gap.

The Coomaditchie hall continues to be a place where community members come to spend some time, participate in education or activities and connect with information and other services. From the hall people make phone calls, send and receive faxes or emails, surf the net for information (or fun), log on to Centrelink or practice for their driving tests on the computers.

Lorraine; Narelle Nicole, and Sue have worked – often as volunteers - to organise projects and events and provided assistance to many members of our community on all the issues that affect their lives - housing; emergency needs; legal issues; health problems; drug and alcohol issues; employment and training opportunities.

PROJECTS

The Coomaditchie Community Hub

Funded by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet

Coomaditchie has continued to operate as a community hub providing a space for community members to meet, access services and technology. We also continue to provide advocacy; referral and information to community members; connect community members with the wider community and relevant services; run events and consult with the community regarding future directions. There is always a cuppa available if that's what some-one needs.

The Community Hub employs 3 Aboriginal workers on a part time basis and has met its service delivery obligations.

Coomie Learning Club/Homework Centre

Funded by Collegians via the ClubGRANTS scheme

The number of children attending the homework centre this year has fluctuated depending on who has been in the area. However the number of children attending is not the only measure of success. We are thrilled with the work being achieved at the homework centre and the progress some of the children have made in their reading. The Smith Family through their Learning for Life program continue to run the centre with a group of enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers. Once again we are grateful to The Collegians Club who have supported our Learning club. This money has enabled us to pay for bits and pieces for the centre, some thank you's for volunteers and also for the rewards program. Nicole Archibald

ensures that the program is culturally appropriate and also helps to keep an eye on the children. The funding also enabled us to upgrade one of the computers.

Coomie Catch Up

Funded by Collegians via the ClubGRANTS scheme

This project enabled us to hire Leanne Windsor who developed our wonderful new website. This is still a work in progress and has attracted a great deal of attention. Also through the project we reinvigorated the community garden and did some work towards launching the Mens group.

The Coomaditchie Bush Care Project

Funded by NSW Environmental Trust

With the help of Ben Coddington and the Illawarra Lands council we were able to complete this project. Ben coordinated the project, which provided the opportunity for a number of our community members to earn some money while doing some excellent work on clearing the bush track alongside the lagoon.

Mura Nura

Funded by Local Land Services South East

The objective of this project was to capture the knowledge and stories of the local environment and share them widely. We did this by hosting a number of collaborative art workshops. Participants yarned with the Elders and were then supported and guided to create panels depicting aspects of what they had learned about the local environment. Groups that participated in these workshops included people from University of Wollongong, Catholic Care and Port Kembla youth. The Coomaditchie children and young people also created a panel and so did group of people who were associated with the National Parks and Wildlife Service. These panels will be made available to be exhibited in public spaces.

Partnerships and Community Involvement:

Our partnerships are our strength. Since our incorporation in 1993 we have been developing and strengthening our partnerships with other organisations. It is as a result of these good friendships and strong partnerships that we are able to achieve the things that we achieve. In addition to this we like to participate in or contribute to community activities. Our partners and community activities include:-

Waminda. The South Coast Women's Health and Welfare Corporation have been a wonderful support to us this year. Waminda have conducted outreach programs at Coomaditchie which have included Dead or Deadly (the very successful Quit smoking program), Pamper days, Health checks and an ongoing Womens Wellness program.

Barnados Our strong relationship with Barnados has continued this year. Barnados' outreach programs at Coomaditchie allow community members to easily access Barnados support and services.

Beyond Empathy Gemma and Phil from Beyond Empathy continue to do wonderful work with our kids. Earlier in the year many of us attended a screening of the movie Protection at the Gala cinema in Warrawong. The movie featured several scenes filmed at Coomaditchie and starred many of our kids. It was a very proud moment to see them on the big screen.

Illawarra Wingecarribee Alliance Aboriginal Corporation (IWAAC) formerly known as LDM. Errolyn Strang has attended many of the meetings we have not been able to get to as Coomaditchie's representative. We have contributed to a number of important conversations regarding priorities for Aboriginal people in the area, in particular housing, education, employment and health. We value being part of this very important group.

SDRO – Work Development Order Scheme This continues to be an extremely successful partnership. People who have fines are able to work to have their fines reduced and we benefit from the extra volunteers.

Work for the Dole After several years of endeavouring to get this program off the ground at Coomaditchie we have finally managed to do this. We are working in collaboration with Max employment and have the opportunity to host 10 participants. The benefit to the participants is that the environment is culturally appropriate and supportive and to Coomaditchie is that we have the benefit of a number of people who can help us with the care of the environment around Coomaditchie and also with other ad hoc projects.

Southern Suburbs Force This coalition of community based and government organizations in the Port Kembla; Warrawong and Berkeley areas who meet together at the Coomaditchie hall once a month to take action on issues that affect the communities in our area continues to an extremely beneficial partnership. Working with this group and their commitment to Coomaditchie continues to bring many benefits for our organisation and we look forward to continuing this relationship in the future.

University Of Wollongong We have continued to be involved with the UOW's Graduate Medicine Immersion program. Over the course of the year young women who are studying to be doctors came in small groups to spend the afternoon at Coomaditchie. They worked on a panels that the whole class was painting and chatted to Lorraine, Narelle, Nicki and any-one else who was around to learn more about Aboriginal culture and working with Aboriginal people. Due to the success of the program and the extremely positive feedback this year several staff members had the opportunity to participate.

Illawarra Lands Council continues to support us and respond to the needs of the community of Coomaditchie. With the help of the Lands Council we are working towards a healthy and safe environment.

Members of the Coomaditchie Community

NILS Coomaditchie enjoys the relationship with Nils and continues to refer people. NILS has made a great deal of difference to a number of community members lives.

Orange Sky Laundry appears every Monday and have provided Coomaditchie community members with a wonderful service.

TAFE Through our relationship with TAFE we have been able to run off campus courses for some of our community members

Wollongong City Council

We continue to enjoy the support of a number of divisions of WCC including the community services; community facilities and the environmental sustainability divisions. We are grateful for the advice and guidance we receive. We were thrilled this year to be invited to participate in the conversation regarding upgrade of Port Kembla. Our kids also contributed by painting pictures of what they would like to see in the future. We have also been in discussions regarding an upgrade of the Community hall and we are looking forward to a new look in 2018.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Coomaditchie uses art as a tool of engagement. Working with people on artworks creates a comfortable environment for conversation. We work with Aboriginal people on specific projects; with young Aboriginal people to help them learn more about their culture and history and with non Aboriginal people as a cultural training activity – we have continued to do this through fee for service activities which helps to support the centre. We have also reprinted the Five Islands Story book and a range of cards and products to bolster the income of the organisation.

ART EXHIBITION

Our hall looked beautiful for Last **Minute Gallery** exhibition again this year . As usual it was lovely to see the hall looking like an art gallery rather than like a studio (for a week or so). We enjoyed chatting to all the people who popped and making some new friends. This year we produced a few bags and mugs in addition to our Christmas cards and they sold extremely well.

ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCES

Thanks to our ever-patient bookkeeper Deb Lewis for keeping our finances in order. Nicole Archibald our treasurer ensures that all documentation is in order before we take the paperwork to Deb. We use an external book keeper to ensure an arms length approach and to help us ensure good practice.

Akele; Kinnas and Company; Chartered Accountants continue to be our auditors.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS /CHALLENGES

As always Coomaditchie faces an uncertain future as a result of being reliant on short term funding.

We have opened a Funeral Savings fund bank account and plan to launch that in 2018 – to enable people to save for the cost of funerals without the horrendous administrative expenses of “Funeral Funds”. A group of people in Port Kembla hosted a dinner earlier in the year to provide our seed funding for this initiative.

THANKS TO THE COOMADITCHIE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND STAFF

Staff

During 2017 the following staff were employed at CUAC:

- Lorraine Brown – part time Cultural Development worker and Project worker
- Narelle Thomas- Community Development worker and land care specialist .
- Sue Leppan – Administration manager.
- Nicole Archibald – Administration Assistant, homework centre coordinator

Volunteers

- Many people volunteer at Coomaditchie from time to time and we are grateful to them for their time and assistance. We would particularly like to thank Jane Marton who has been a long standing volunteer and nothing ever seems to be too much trouble for her.

Management Committee Members

Chairperson – Narelle Thomas

Co-Chair –Lorraine Brown

Secretary –Alison Day

Treasurer –Nicole Archibald

Committee Members

Errollyn Strang, Uncle Vic Chapman; Errollyn Strang; Kristie Thomas; Elaine Hudson
Sue Leppan (Public Officer)

Vale Aunt Ruth Chapman – thank you for your support over the years.