

Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Corporation

PO Box 160
Warrawong.

Annual Report 2016



Acknowledgements

Thanks to those who have supported CUAC during the past year: Errolyn Strang, Uncle, Vic and Aunt Ruth Chapman; Elaine Hudson, Kristy Thomas; Allison Day; Jane Marton; The Smith Family specially Alyssa Kellam, Emma Woods and the wonderful volunteers for the homework centre; Philip Crawford and Gemma Parsons from Beyond Empathy; Boyd, Pam, Sam, Dave and Toni from the New Wine Church, Deb Lewis, Glen Sutherland, Lani Balzan, Ben Coddington and the Illawarra Lands Council, Jenny Briscoe, Tina Howard, Sheryl Wiffen, Misty Gurtala from Our Community Project and NILS; Kathy Clapham; Dr Ivers and The Aboriginal Medical Centre; Southern Suburbs Taskforce; Michelle Park, Wollongong City Council; Shellharbour Council; Port Kembla Pharmacy, Youth off the Streets, And our funding bodies - IAS, FACS, IRT Foundation, Collegians Club, Wollongong City Council; Shellharbour Council. 1

ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

2016 has been an extraordinarily difficult year. Darryl's passing and Lorraine's ill health in the middle of the year made it more difficult than ever to do what we always do and keep going.

In addition to that it has become more difficult to attract funding and so we have had to operate on an extremely reduced budget. However we have somehow managed to continue to do what we do which is to make a difference, support our community and work towards reconciliations 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

Partially funded by IAS and partially funded by a generous donation to the organisation Coomaditchie has continued to operate as a community hub. Providing advocacy; referral and information to community members; connecting community members with the wider community and relevant services; running events and consulting with the community regarding future directions.

Coomie Learning Club/Homework Centre

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 support the club with a group of enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers. Once again we are grateful to The Collegians Club who have funded our Learning club. This money has enabled us to provide a healthy after school tea to participants, pay for bits and pieces for the centre including a new computer, 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 children who met the attendance requirements and their parents enjoyed a day Jamberoo Recreation park on Friday 16th December despite the rain.

Coomaditchie Catch Up Project

The Collegians Club also funded The Coomaditchie Catch Up Project. Through this we have employed Leanne Windsor on a contract basis to help us revamp our web site. Leanne also worked on creating some production art products. The catch up project also supported the work in the community garden and the Mens shed.

Out from the Shadows

A twelve-month project funded by FACS commenced in July 2015. The purpose of this project was to foster resilience, community connectedness and participation through a range of activities. This project employed Nicole Archibald as a mentored project coordinator. Nicole helped to organise a number of activities and supported community members to use computers to access information and comply with their Centrelink obligations.

Capturing Culture

Funded by the IRT this project is also coordinated by Nicole Archibald. We were generously given an extension for this project as we were unable to work on it effectively during the difficult times we experienced in the middle of the year. This project encouraged the younger members of the community to work with the Elders, to collect their stories and capture them and learn more about their culture. The project funded a number of tablets and the children helped the Elders to have a go at 'playing with' technology. The project relied heavily on the expertise of Phil and Gemma from Beyond Empathy. To conclude the project we employed the expertise of Leanne Windsor and produced a beautiful book depicting the story of the Five Islands and a small range of products which were sold at our Last Minute Gallery Exhibition.

The Coomaditchie Restoration project

With the help of Ben Coddington and the Illawarra Lands council we continued the project that was funded by the Environmental trust. Ben has been the project coordinator and the project 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.

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:-

New Wine Church and SWAG – we have developed a wonderful relationship with members of the New Wine church who have been holding Sunday services in our hall on a weekly basis. They have also been teaching some of our kids music. Members of the church have become wonderful volunteers at Coomaditchie and have done terrific work in the community garden and engaging with

the children. This group of extraordinarily dedicated volunteers have made an enormous difference in our community.

Beyond Empathy Gemma and Phil from Beyond Empathy have done some terrific work with our kids again this year. One of the exciting projects has been the filming of a Protection which which has involved a number of our kids. Beyond Empathy also contributed wonderfully to our Last Minute Gallery Opening and family day. Beyond Empathy organised a tent to screen the capturing culture stories, a Photo Booth and helped to organise the other activities.

Naidoc Week

We were successful in obtaining funding for a Naidoc week event - but due to the time we were granted an extension for the funding and held the event to coincide with the opening of the Last Minute Gallery Exhibition. We had farmyard animals, a jumping castle and a terrific BBQ provide by Youth off the Streets

University Of Wollongong This year we again contributed to the UOW's Graduate School of 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 series of panels that the whole class was painting and chatted to Lorraine, Narelle, Nicki and anyone else who was around to learn more about Aboriginal culture

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. We currently have 3 people on the WDO program with us and through the course of the year 6 fines have been paid off.

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.

Lorraine and Narelle have also been employed by schools to work with students.

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.

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.

Barnados Our strong relationship with Barnados has continued this year. Barnados has been holding outreach activities at Coomaditchie which has benefitted 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.

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.

The NSW Police

We continue enjoy the support of Glen Sutherland from ILAC who visits us on a regular basis to see how best we can work together.

ART

Community Art Projects

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.

Competitions

Lorraine and Narelle recently won an art Competition through the NSW Federation of Housing Associations Inc to use one of their paintings "Connections" as the primary artwork for promotional materials.

New Years Eve 2016

Wollongong City Council is going to use 2 of Lorraine and Narelles's artworks that are in the Wollong City Gallery collection as part of their multimedia display on the harbour on New Years eve

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 small range of products which 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 and guide us to ensure correct practice.

Future Directions /Challenges

Our main challenge over the next 12 months is going to be to attract funding. We are operating on an extremely tight budget .

Another challenge is to find some-one to assist with the administration.

We also need to consider the health and well being of our executive and staff

Narelle Thomas
Chair



Staff

During 2016 the following staff were employed at CUAC on a casual basis:

- ❖ Lorraine Brown - Cultural Development worker and Project worker
- ❖ Narelle Thomas- Cultural Development worker and Project worker
- ❖ Sue Leppan - Administration manager.
- ❖ Nicole Archibald - Project Co-ordinator
- ❖ Leanne Windsor - Product and Web Developer

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 appears every Monday and does WHATEVER it is we need her to do - Jane has made an invaluable contribution to Coomaditchie and a big difference to many of our processes. The other people who earn a special thanks are the wonderful volunteers of the homework centre

Lorraine Brown
Co - Chair



Thanks to the Coomaditchie Management Committee and Staff

Management Committee Members

Chairperson - Narelle Thomas

Co-Chair -Lorraine Brown

Secretary -Alison Day

Treasurer -Nicole Archibald

Committee Members

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