

Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Corporation

PO Box 160
Warrawong.

Annual Report 2014



Acknowledgements

Thanks to those who have supported CUAC during the past year: Uncle Vic and Aunt Ruth Chapman; Nicole Archibald; Kristy Thomas; Allison Day; Jane Marton; Elaine Hudson; Chris Bridger; Kelli Ryan; Beyond Empathy specially Philip Crawford, Gemma Parkes and Bec Parkes; The Illawarra Forum specially Alison Larkin; Deb Lewis; Phil Preston; Bluescope's Warrawong project specially Dino di Donato, Elana Kells and Ged Bourke; Port Kembla Community Project and NILS specially Jenny Briscoe, Tina Howard, Sheryl Wiffen, Misty Gurtala and Dan Deighton; The Port LOCALS Group; Joanne Pollard; Armando Reviglio; Phil Preston; Kathy Clapham; Charmayne Salter; Allison, Farad and Jessica from the Bahai Group; Dr Ivers and The Aboriginal Medical Centre; Southern Suburbs Taskforce; The Red Cross specially Judy Harper and Siobhan Howard; The Smith Family specially Amy Williamson, Danielle Brankovic, Suanne Sneddon and the wonderful volunteers for the homework centre; Shellharbour TAFE; Sharralyn Robinson. Susan Locke Edmond; Trevor Edmond; Stephen Jones; Linda Fletcher; Michelle Park; NSW Dept of Community Services; Wollongong City Council; Shellharbour Council;; FACS; ICC. The Illawarra Legal Centre and members of the Coomaditchie Community;

ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

2014 has been another challenging year for Coomaditchie and our future is still not secure. However we do what we have always done - and focus on the positives and continue to make a difference, support our community and work towards reconciliations and closing the gap.

We continued to work with Wollongong City Council for the first half of this year as part of the capacity building initiative funded by FACS. Through the council initiative Phil Preston linked us with a group of volunteers at Bluescope Steele and the "Warrawong Project". As a result of this connection we were successful in securing a grant through the Bluescope Steele community grants program. This in turn resulted in us being eligible to receive a final sum of money from FACS. We are grateful for Phil's creativity and the efforts he made and also the efforts of the people who are part of the Warrawong project - because as a result of this and the additional funding we were given some 'breathing space' as we continue to seek revenue to operate the community centre.

Armando Reviglio from Wollongong City Council commissioned Professor Kathy Clapham from UOW to do an evaluation of the project funded through FACS. As a result of this Professor Clapham produced an extensive report from the data she collected. This report collated data over a two year period and showed that the number of people we support "far exceeds the targets set with the funding body" For example "There were a total of 6514 individual 'occasions of use' in which individuals received information or referral between 2011 and 2013 (3357 in 2011-12 and 3157 in 2012-13)."

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) or practice for their driving tests on the computers.

Lorraine, Narelle and Sue have continued to provide 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.

We have also been working on some specific projects.

Projects

The Coomaditchie Community Hub

Funded by FACS and managed by Wollongong City Council for the first 6 months of the year and then managed by Coomaditchie. This funding means that we are being paid for doing what we do. Providing advocacy; referral and information to community members; connecting community members with the wider community and relevant services; run events and consult with the community regarding future directions.

Coomie Homework Centre

The homework centre has grown this year. In 2013 6 children attended the fun day at Jamberoo as a reward for their regular attendance at the homework centre. This year there will be 17 children!!! The Smith Family through their Learning for Life program continue to run the centre with a group of enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers. We then were fortunate to be granted \$5000 through the CDSE program and the XXXX club. This money has enabled us to pay for bits and pieces for the centre and also for the rewards program. The children who have attended the program more than 80% of the time and their parents will be joined by the volunteers for a fun day at Jamberoo Recreation park on Tuesday 16th December.

The Men's Shed

The Community Building Partnerships grant enabled us to create a wonderful space for men to gather and work. Chris Bridger from TAFE helped

us to source a suitable demountable and helped to create a good outdoor area in the community garden. We are now looking to source funding to be able to run programs from the space. In the mean time it is a good space for the men to be.

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:-

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.

SDRO – Work Development Order

Scheme This has been 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 three people on the WDO program with us. Two of those work as volunteers at Coomaditchie and one is a TAFE student and we are managing her Work Development Order.

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.

RPA Coomaditchie is a proud member of the Illawarra Regional Partnerships agreement. While we are not able to attend as many meetings as we would like to; we value being part of this very important group.

Southside Festival:

As a result of budgetary constraints this year's Southside Festival was once again smaller and more 'low key' than former years. The festival took the form of an outdoor movie night. We screen Bran Nue Day after some performances by The Little Nargins and a wonderful young singer. The Red Cross made popcorn; The Koori Mens Group did a sausage sizzle and Adrienne Thomson made some delicious pumpkin soup. Barnardo's did face painting. The weather was kind to us with nasty cold; wet and windy weather on the days on either side of the event. All in all it was a lovely family affair. Funded mostly by the community organisations hosting the event and a small grant of \$2000 from Wollongong City Council's Cultural Grants program.

TAFE: We continue to enjoy our strong partnership with **Shellharbour TAFE Community Services** Section. Once again a group of students spent Fridays with us while discovering more about their own culture in addition to learning about Aboriginal culture. They created 3 beautiful mural panels as part of the process.

NILS: Coomaditchie is an active member organisation of the Nils Committee. We try to have least one member of the organisation attend a meeting on a monthly basis.

Port LOCALS continue to support us and work with us. There haven't been as many big days this year – mostly because every-one is so stretched due to the illnesses in the community.

Kids for Peace This successful program has continued throughout 2013. The volunteers from the Wollongong Bahai community have maintained their commitment to working with our kids and teaching them life skills and discussing values and virtues.

Barnados Our strong relationship with Barnados has continued this year. Barnados generously

donated 6 computers to Coomaditchie which helped us set up the homework centre. Again this year we have supported activities that they have conducted and vice versa.

Beyond Empathy It was terrific to see The Rites of Passage movie at the gala cinema in November and also The Circle at the Southside Festival. We look forward to working with Beyond Empathy again next year in whatever project they dream up.

The NSW Police

We continue to enjoy the support of Layne Brown from ILAC.

Archaeological and Heritage Management Solutions. We continue to work with AHMS either actively participating in sites surveys or consulting on projects.

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 awareness activity. This year we have worked with: Peterborough School; Warrawong Public School; The University of Wollongong; Barnados playgroups and TAFE.

Art Exhibitions

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. We produced a range of 7 Christmas cards this year and used the same design for 7 plain cards - both sold well. We also took part in the Shellharbour City Council Art exhibition and exhibited 10 of our paintings at Alibi wine bar in Crown Street Wollongong.

Administration and Finances

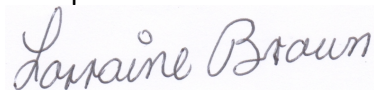
Thanks to our ever-patient bookkeepers Tina Howard and Susan Locke Edmond for keeping our finances in order. Susan has taken over from Tina doing the weekly finances and Tina is overseeing the quarterly reports. Nicole Archibald our treasurer has ensured that all documentation is in order.

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

Future Directions /Challenges

We have been working with consultants from Wollongong city council to try to build a social enterprise and to see if there can be support from local businesses. While we appreciate this help and support we believe that a community organisation needs to be funded by government. Coomaditchie is funded till June 2014. After that our future is uncertain. We plan to hold an emergency meeting in February in conjunction with the Warrawong kitchen to plan for the future.

Lorraine Brown
Chairperson



Staff

During 2012 the following staff were employed at CUAC:

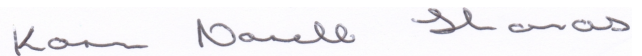
- ❖ Lorraine Brown - part time Cultural Development worker and Project worker
- ❖ Narelle Thomas- Community Development worker and land care specialist.
- ❖ Sue Leppan - part time community development worker and projects manager.
- ❖ Leslie Bloomfield - Casual Sites survey worker and bush care worker

Also doing occasional casual work - Shaun Brown - bush care

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 the committee; Nicole Archibald; Jane Marton; Susan Locke Edmond and Trevor Edmond.

Narelle Thomas
Co- Chair



Thanks to the Coomaditchie Management Committee and Staff

Management Committee Members

Chairperson - Lorraine Brown

Co-Chair -Narelle Thomas

Secretary -Denise Freeman

Treasurer -Kristie Thomas

Committee Members

Uncle Vic Chapman; Aunt Ruth Chapman Allison Day; Sharralyn Robinson; Raahna Brown; Karina Thomas;
Sue Leppan (Public Officer)

Community Garden.

Our community garden started well this year but has had a major set back. Sonny Brown our lead gardener has been in hospital since July. Sonny has been the inspiration in the community garden since its inception. Without him things have been a lot slower. Some of our volunteers have done a little work but in truth - we need Sonny back - even just to sit in a chair and be present there.

The Community Garden has not been funded this year however a Volunteers Grant of \$5000 has supported some of the work carried out in the gar