

WUJAL WUJAL CDEP PARTICIPANTS PERFORMING STRONGLY

WUJAL WUJAL ROAD CREW

Four recent graduates from the Wujal Wujal CDEP program are leading the way in their community by getting full time real jobs with the Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council's road crew.

Geoffrey Rosendale, Trevor Yougie, Leslie Walker and Mervyn Nunn Snr have worked as shadows to the existing plant operators on the road crew to learn the skills they need to operate graders, rollers, water trucks and tip trucks. While doing this they also trained for tickets in Traffic Control and Work Health and Safety. A huge commitment in training for their futures.

This commitment has seen the four men achieve their operator tickets and the respect of their new employer and work mates.

Currently they are on the crew laying the new bitumen just south of the Bloomfield causeway for Main Roads. Already they are mentoring new work experience students on this equipment, passing on skills and providing confidence and stability for their employer and community.

CEMETERY CLEAN-UP PROGRAM

Another successful CDEP training program has seen students renovating the Wujal Wujal Cemetery. They are learning practical maintenance skills while improving the condition of the local cemetery. Skills that include weeding, mowing, whipper-snipping, painting, and fencing. If necessary, they will also work with families to repair and re-mark individual graves.

Once the Wujal Wujal Cemetery is complete the crew will assist at cemeteries and with private graves in smaller settlements in the area, such as Ayton and Middle Camp.

CDEP has provided new equipment for the maintenance crews. Not only to assist the cemetery program but to assist those working on skills in horticulture.

TOWN BEAUTIFICATION AND BUSH TUCKER GARDENS

The horticulture crew are working at the plant nursery and around Wujal Wujal to beautify the town and in time establish a bush tucker garden area. For now they are learning the basics of plant husbandry including propagation, soil preparation, planting, weed management, pruning, and irrigation.

Later two groups - one men and one women - will prepare special gardens to pass on their unique knowledge to the next generation while learning important plant growing and keeping skills.

LITERACY

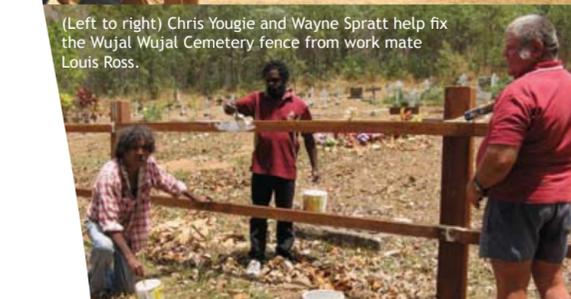
Many of these training programs have identified that successful workers need a certain level of English literacy and numeracy to be able to do their jobs properly. Reading safety instructions, calculating chemical dosages and writing notes for the next shift are all important. Anybody who lacks confidence in their reading, writing or maths in English can join the CDEP literacy classes up at the CDEP offices. Participants work at their own pace in a small group with a teacher dedicated to adult learning.



The road crew work on new bitumen South of Wujal Wujal community.



(Left to right) Geoffrey Rosendale, Colin Friday (work experience), Trevor Yougie, Leslie Walker and Mervyn Nunn Snr show off their road building plant.



(Left to right) Chris Yougie and Wayne Spratt help fix the Wujal Wujal Cemetery fence from work mate Louis Ross.



Vincent Tayley and Eric Murgha (right) try out the new equipment purchased by CDEP.



Dianne Winkles (right) and teacher Margot Steiner work together on a maths problem.

BETTER HEALTH, BETTER LIFE

Five young students from Wujal Wujal are working hard to contribute to the health and well being of their community.

Over the next 12 months they will learn to not only run professional sport and recreational activities, but also build the confidence to be able to have a positive influence within their area.

Nikki Gong has worked within the recreational industry for the past two years and was introduced to the course as part of her training. Nikki said, "I could see that it would be a good thing and I wanted to get more people involved. And she did. Nikki, along with Zeila Wallace, Ava Snyder-Doughboy, Jeffrey Baird and Tiffany George are currently undertaking training at Cairns TAFE for their Certificates III in Community Recreation and Fitness.

The group see the training as their opportunity to run professional programs and activities for the locals, both children and adults.

Nikki explains, "The local school doesn't have an allocated Health & Physical Education teacher and we would like to get more involved with the school and offer our help in this area."

The group appreciates the positive benefits a healthy lifestyle can provide and Zeila said, "We want to motivate people to be active. Get them participating in something fun that's good for them and the community."

Zeila is actively involved in sport and recreation within the Wujal Wujal community. She helped to make Oztag part of the school holiday program and hopes as part of her training she will be able to expand on this to provide more sporting opportunities to local youngsters and adults.

Although the group feels strongly about the benefits of a fitter, healthier lifestyle, they also understand they will face challenges such as lack of interest for their plans. However that won't stop them moving forward with their ideas of coming up with specific programs for different groups, especially the youth.

(Left to right) Nikki Gong, Ava Snyder-Doughboy, Jeffrey Baird and Zeila Wallace.



Nikki said, "We really want to help kids change their habits. As they become teenagers they sometimes don't engage. We want to help them find something they can be interested in and stay motivated."

Zeila explained, "Kids need an 85% attendance rate at school before they can enter into sporting competitions outside the community and go on trips away."

The group wants to be able to have a positive influence on these youngsters to achieve this. This achievement then ultimately has many advantages such as increased participation at school leading to improved literacy and numeracy and greater employment opportunities after finishing school.

Asked what they were enjoying in the early stages of their course they said, "It's great being in a classroom with people from other communities, not just the Cape, and making new friends."

Ava said, "We are learning about what's happening in other communities and what their challenges are."

Zeila added, "Now we have these contacts we can band together to share resources and to do things like sports and trips away."

The group is very positive about the possibilities their training is going to have for them and their community.



**Indigenous
JOB CONNECTIONS**

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NEWSLETTER

THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT FOR TRAINING

Bilwon Farm is a 38 hectare working farm, situated 15kms north of Mareeba on the banks of the Barron River.

Indigenous Job Connections took over the farm 12 months ago, cleaned it up and cleared two thirds of the area for crops.

The Farm provides a welcoming, comfortable environment for its students and is well resourced with facilities including a house for training and lunch facilities, sheds and a wide range of farm equipment and working irrigation systems.

The irrigation systems have allowed it to become a producing farm and it is used solely for training, with training packages now offered to external training networks.

Mal Pask from IJC said, "The great advantage of the farm being located in the Mareeba area is the volume of work available in neighbouring farms, providing places for people to move into work. There is currently a big demand for labour on the Tablelands."

"The ambition of CDEP is about delivering training that will see people end up with a job. Making the best of every opportunity that is there."

The farm has proven successful and is now growing its own crops including Sorghum, Lucerne, Millet, Rhodes Grass, hay, pumpkins and watermelons.

Mal said, "It has all the machinery and is a great place for training. There is always a lot to do in relation to farm

work, like mending fences and picking crops. The farm environment is a wonderful place to be."

Mal added, "We are not teaching specific farm skills like those that might be required for say banana farms as these are not too hard to learn and are best taught by the individual farmer."

"We provide people who are multi-skilled, so when the crop farming slows down they can do other jobs like mend fences."

Mal explained that a very big part of what they do is to give people a good knowledge of "what they are getting in for", without putting them off.

Courses conducted at the farm can be flexible to suit varying needs. Some of the accredited courses currently being delivered include Rural Production Cert 1 (Harvest), Rural Production Cert 1 (Maintenance), Horticulture Cert 1, Conservation and Land Management Cert 1 and Skills Set Horticulture.

IJC now also offers a non-accredited, pre-employment course. It is a two week course getting participants work ready by providing life skills and doing a bit of a small assessment at the same time.

The training at Bilwon Farm is very hands on, provided in a wonderful farm environment and is flexible enough to be delivered to suit its participants.



PRACTICAL APPROACH PRODUCES THE GOODS

Seven women from Coen and one woman from Aurukun were the eager students who participated in the latest horticultural training program, and they definitely made the training their own.

Trainer, Robyn Wing said she has since visited Coen and seen that one of the ladies from the group has started to strike some cuttings and is actively practicing her new skills. Robyn lent a helping hand during her visit and assisted in establishing another couple of vegetable gardens.

Of the training itself, Robyn explained, "The training was made very real in that the ladies were taught skills they could take home and use in their communities."

"For example, we built things out of whatever old junk pieces we could find lying around and ended up building a compost heap, a vegetable garden, fruit fly traps and a shade house."

Participants learnt about propagation, insect pest and disease control, soils and PH levels - testing soils and potting mixes - making it relevant to their communities and where they were located, eg beach soils.

Trade visits were organised, including a trip to a wholesale nursery and a paw paw farm to see firsthand how things are started from seedlings and then prosper. The purpose of these visits was to help bring together what was being taught with a visualisation of how it all eventually works.

Robyn said, "It is about incorporating the interests of the participants and encouraging them to be proactive."

Eventually the ladies were split into three teams, which they named themselves - Tea Tree, Ironwood and Fig. Robyn said, "This worked well as a motivating tool as it created some friendly competition and gave the ladies ownership and ultimately created further unity amongst them."

Robyn said, "The training was obviously meaningful and appreciated by those within the group, and this was a big achievement for the trainers - we were so pleased."

The original program was run in conjunction with QRITEC and ITEC.



Learning the skill of 'striking cuttings'.



A classroom of wide open spaces.



Francis Creek from Coen hanging up the organic fruit fly catcher she made at Bilwon Farm.



REAL SKILLS FOR REAL LIFE

Indigenous Job Connections' Field Officer, David Sexton, appears to have what it takes to make a real difference to the lives of those participating in the CDEP program, who are striving for a bright future.

According to David's "right hand man", Kerry Lenoy, David's biggest achievement since joining the IJC team has been generating a considerable increase in employment outcomes.

Kerry said, "Coen reached its KPI of twenty placements and the outback areas of Chillagoe, Laura, Croydon and Mt Garnett collectively achieved sixty-four employment results."

Along with visiting the areas with job network organisations to help coordinate job seeker registrations, David also pays personal monthly visits to follow up the outcomes of the participants, providing mentoring where needed to achieve outcomes for both IJC and the job seeker.

When asked why she thought David has been so successful in increasing employment outcomes, Kerry said, "David has a way with talking to people and they just relax around him. He has an ability to gain people's respect."

Kerry explained how David helped rebuild lost relationships with the Howe Farm in Mareeba so that it is once again a successful partnership for IJC.

Kerry and David work as a close team. Kerry explains, "We are always seeking positive outcomes for the job seeker. This is to help them finish their training and move into meaningful employment."

"David and I have the same goal and that is to see employment outcomes and the positive effect this can have on our people."

David's colleagues also agree and are grateful of the support he has given them, especially his ability and desire to source available job opportunities.

Darryl "Bonza" Douglas from Croydon said, "David likes to help out. He helped us get a lawn mower for our gardening crew."

"He also had a talk to the local Council to get us some work at the Information Centre and we helped them out with the gardens when their workers were away."

When asked what he liked about David, Bonza laughed, "He is laid back and likes a joke. He likes to tease me about my cuppa tea, saying, here comes Bonza with his cuppa in his hand!"

Betty Cashmere from Mt Garnett also appreciates David's supportive presence. Betty says, "David has time for people. He'll have a chat and wants to know how he can help and what we need."

A small town such as Mt Garnett has very specific challenges but Betty says, "David is a positive person and approaches local businesses to negotiate job opportunities. He is very supportive and understanding of the indigenous people."

GENERATIONS OF PASSION

Vanessa Tongs has a passion to see good things happen for her people, after all, it's in her blood.

As a young child Vanessa saw the commitment of her parents working in remote communities to make a difference. Her stepfather trained people in bookkeeping to help them manage their own finances.

Vanessa shows the same enthusiasm when she says how excited she is about the new partnerships CDEP has developed, "Especially with Employment Services Queensland and its connections with JSA contracts."

She said, "CDEP is really branching out and spreading itself in different directions. It has something good to offer its partners."

Vanessa was born in Leeton, New South Wales and grew up in Canberra. After completing her schooling at St John's

College in Darwin she returned to Canberra and entered the public service on a traineeship with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

At the completion of her traineeship she continued to work for the New South Wales government before making her big move to Cairns in 1987 where she has remained.

Vanessa is a board member and Treasurer for Cairns Regional CDEP. Leading up to her current role she has had a varied and successful working career in government, having worked with the Department of Employment, Education and Training and then four years with Job Network, involved in the first indigenous employment program. Vanessa's position on the Board seemed a natural progression after her involvement in so many different roles within CDEP, as well as her achievements.

It was in 2002 that Vanessa started with CDEP when the organisation was only five months old. She held positions in employment and training, as well as in consultancy, supervisory, field and site management roles.

A wonderful learning curve came Vanessa's way when she moved into the role of Acting CEO for a period of six months. She was certainly challenged during this time having to coordinate the integration of CDEP Kuranda into Cairns and manage the almost overnight growth of participants from 110 to 330, which meant starting up a whole new range of training activities.

However, the real tribute from this chapter in Vanessa's life was her ability to work through and deliver on these new responsibilities whilst going through a very difficult and personal bereavement.

The proud mother of two sons and a daughter professes, "I am very much a family person. My family are just so important to me. I love my children and I love spending time with my mother and two sisters." Vanessa also admits, "I am an animal lover. I have birds and fish and guinea pigs."

"I have become a real lover of scrapbooking. I love making things for my family."

And with a slightly embarrassed smile confesses, "I am a collector of bone china tea cups. My favourite is my Lady Diana cup and saucer set from around 1980."



NEW DROP-IN CENTRE TO PROVIDE INDIGENOUS SUPPORT SERVICES

Indigenous Job Connections (IJC) has won two Federal Government Grants to provide an Indigenous Community Support Service from the old Indinji Community Hall on Irene Street.

Federal Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has provided almost \$428,000 over three years to help IJC connect local indigenous people to a network of services that will assist them achieve ongoing employment.

The second grant of \$110,000 under the Indigenous Employment Program will see a corporate plan developed for ATSI Youth Welfare Company with the expectation of generating cash flow and building a viable business on the Indinji site.

The Cairns Indigenous Community Support Service will support individuals and families by providing links and referrals to a range of mainstream and Indigenous services which may include welfare and social support, family violence counselling and support, health services (including drug and alcohol support), housing, childcare and legal services.

IJC CEO Chris Martin explained IJC will employ a co-ordinator to run the drop-in centre.

"This person will develop and provide services to meet the needs of locals and these will vary

and change to suit demand", Chris said.

He explained, "The key to making this work is providing all these support services through the Indinji Hall - somewhere welcoming and safe, staffed by their own people, who understand the challenges local indigenous people face staying productive in the mainstream of Cairns society.

"If we find people need help finding accommodation, we will develop assistance in this area; if they need support with brushing up their literacy and numeracy, our co-ordinator will make sure tutors are available".

"We will have comfy chairs and a coffee station to make visits more comfortable, computers for job and housing searches, basic stationery items to help prepare job applications and a kids' corner to keep the little ones amused while their carer gets assistance", Chris expanded.

Part of this program in partnership with ATSI Youth Welfare Company will utilise the Indinji Hall and again make it the hub it once was for local indigenous people.

Libby Morgan, Chairperson, IJC and Terry O'Shane, Chairman, ATSI Youth Welfare Company pose for the media at the Partnership launch.

TAIPANS HELP OUT AT INDINJI

The Skytrans Cairns Taipans joined forces with the Indinji team recently to help the youth centre with their community working bee.

Rich Melzer, Dwayne Vale, Deba George & Kerry Williams got their hands dirty assisting with cleaning, gardening and painting duties.

Skytrans Cairns Taipans Community & Operations Manager Joel Khalu said it's part of the club's commitment to helping the youth welfare centre get back on track.

"The Indinji Centre does many wonderful things for our community, in particular Indigenous young people," Khalu said.

"We are happy to help out where needed to help make sure their doors continue to stay open and programs continue to run."

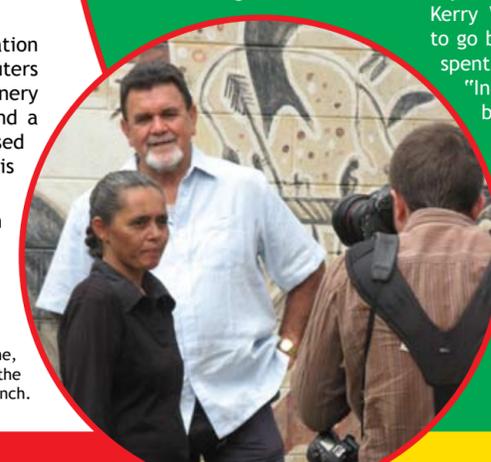
Indinji is currently operating as a drop-in centre for parents and kids and have plans to kick-start a number of new initiatives.

Skytrans Cairns Taipans young gun Kerry Williams said it was great to go back to the place where he spent many of his young days.

"Indinji was my first junior basketball club," Williams said.

"The coaches and role-models involved at Indinji really helped shape me not only as a basketball player, but as a person too."

"I leaned many valuable life skills at the centre which I am thankful today for," Williams added.



The Team (left to right) Mary-bell, Alana Liddy and Francis Creek, Rhianna Poonkamelya-Ornyengaia, Lena Peters, Isabel Coleman and Edna Peters, Robyn Wing Horticultural Trainer and Barry Ornyengaia, in the process of constructing a compost heap out of found materials.