

## **SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS.**

**Consultant – Christian Lugnan**

**NCADA Community Consultations**

**Allocated areas for consultation - Baryulgil, Grafton and Yamba.**

### **Clarence Valley Goorie Interagency consultation 24 June 2020**

About 13 people attended the meeting. This was the first Goorie Interagency meeting in Grafton since the COVID-19 period. The people in attendance were all Aboriginal people and came from various industries such as high school education, NSW Police Service, NSW Health (Aboriginal Health), Aboriginal Medical Service, NSW TAFE, youth work and an Elder.

Christian and Julie Perkins (NCADA representative) along with Shar Goodwin, Acting Senior Project Officer with Aboriginal Affairs NSW were also in attendance.

#### **Aboriginal specific government funding**

It was discussed that many mainstream organisations receive funding for Aboriginal programs without much knowledge of the community. A question was asked *‘how can community ensure proper accountability of these programs?’* Further it was stated that a lot of the funding is for Close the Gap initiatives however the community knows that the programs are not reaching their targets. A question was asked *‘how can there be more transparency with mainstream organisations who receive CTG funding?’*

Other discussion touched on overall transparency regarding the level of Aboriginal specific funding that organisations may be in receipt of regardless of their Aboriginality ownership status. It was mentioned that often community have no knowledge of the level of funding due to the organisations having no obligation to disclose this information to the public. The question asked was *‘can NCADA and the future Accord with the NSW government address this?’*. A follow up question was *‘will they have a say in how black funding is spent?’*

An attendee provided an example where their small Aboriginal community organisation spent a lot of time and resources in submitting a grant funding application to the NSW government and were unsuccessful. They were advised that a much larger, well established non- Aboriginal not-for-profit organisation was successful in gaining the funding. They were further advised that the mainstream organisation was successful in obtaining the funding due to the small Aboriginal organisation not having ‘the administrative runs on the board’.

There was frustration at this particular outcome when it was well known in the community that the Aboriginal community owned and controlled organisation was already delivering very successful, culturally appropriate programs to community. There was a sense that the administration weakness could have been overcome by entering into a partnership or auspicing arrangement with a more established Aboriginal organisation specifically for the administration strength. The small Aboriginal organisation did not have an opportunity to offer this solution to government.

### Community People

One attendee mentioned other Aboriginal people who are not part of the Goorie Interagency should also be heard. In response it was stated that a questionnaire will be circulated to community via email, a Facebook page, website and other means in the future. Also, the hearing of as many Aboriginal voices as possible was important to assist in the work of NCADA and engagement with NSW state government. It was stressed by AA NSW that the personal stories were really important in being heard.

Those in attendance recommended a future workshop be held to discuss the topics in more depth and to have an opportunity to provide a more considered response. They were advised that this will be considered moving forward with further consultations.

### An Accord

There was discussion about the differences in needs and priorities between the various towns and regions of what is known as the Bundjalung nation. The group were keen to explore the possibility of having individual accords with the state government. The suggestion was the Clarence Valley Goorie community having their own accord with the state government. The shape and form of such an accord was not discussed however the group considered that the accord could potentially be for the Grafton and South Grafton part of the Clarence Valley.

### Future considerations

The group were keen to progress the discussions and noted the current limitations. They suggested further face to face consultations as being really important to provide more input into the OCHRE strategy and NCADA. Specifically, it was recommended that holding a workshop would be ideal to go through the various parts of OCHRE and NCADA to get a better understanding.

The group stated that transparency in the consultation process is important to them. That is, they would like to be advised of progress and outcomes in relation to the OCHRE consultations and recommendations. Further they would like to understand the role of NCADA and how they can work with the representatives.

## **Birrigan Gargle Local Aboriginal Land Council consultation 29 June 2020**

Christian and Janelle attended the Birrigan Gargle Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) member's meeting at Ngaru Village, Pippie Beach at Yamba. The meeting was scheduled at 3pm.

About thirty people were in attendance which was an excellent result considering it was the first face to face meeting the LALC had held since the COVID-19 period. Shar Goodwin, Acting Senior Project Officer with Aboriginal Affairs NSW was also in attendance. Councillor Dallas Donnelly of NSWALC was also in attendance.

Janelle began with explaining NCADA to the meeting. Christian then provided a brief overview of his role. Shar provided some background to OCHRE.

### **What is NCADA**

A question was asked whether NCADA was a registered body. The meeting was advised that currently NCADA was not registered and that the committee is made up of people volunteering their time. It was added that registration may be an option in the future if it was found to be necessary. NCADA is currently auspice through the Tweed Byron LALC with funding from Aboriginal Affairs NSW.

A comment was made that it would be good for the community to be more involved in NCADA. It was explained that the consultations were only just beginning. There will be opportunities for community to provide input, ideas and feedback through the survey that is being produced and other future engagements.

There was a comment that some of the positions of NCADA were not all filled and it was noted that the education and family and wellbeing positions were not filled. A respondent advised that education is a big issue and the education position should be filled as a priority. In response the meeting was advised that in the future it is proposed for these positions to be filled. Further, it was stated that NCADA could be structured with representation from each community as an option.

A question was asked why none of the NCADA representatives were in attendance at the meeting. In response, the meeting was advised that the representatives currently on the NCADA committee are all volunteers and do it in their own time. It was stated that in the future people will have an opportunity to meet with the representatives and discuss priorities.

A comment was made that there was no mention of Native Title in relation to NCADA and how it aligns with priorities. It was advised that this will be noted.

A question was asked about whether the community will see the implementation plan of NCADA. In response, the meeting was advised that community will be consulted and advised throughout the process of establishing an Accord with the NSW state government and other NCADA developments.

### Employment, Training and Youth

A comment was made that NCADA should not just speak with the usual people in community. It is important that youth are heard through this process. It was also mentioned that young females should be a focus.

Another crucial priority is the employment and training for youth. It was expressed that often they get overlooked and not heard.

### Future Considerations

The meeting was advised by AA NSW that expectations have to be managed however the community essentially have a blank piece of paper to work with.

It was suggested by the members that another meeting should be held in the future to discuss priorities. The group spoke of a workshop type forum to work through the various priority areas.

Members of the meeting requested more information to be disseminated via the LALC about NCADA and OCHRE. They were advised that this would occur once brochures were finalised this would be distributed.

Members of the meeting were keen to see the survey and have an opportunity to complete them. They were advised that these will be provided in different formats at a later date. The members advised that they will assist the older members in filling out the surveys.

## **Baryulgil and Malabugilmah Consultation 30 June 2020**

Christian and Janelle met at the Baryulgil Community Hub run by the New School of Arts with members of the Baryulgil and Malabugilmah communities<sup>1</sup>.

About ten people in total were in attendance.

We were advised that the population of each community was about 50-60 however these numbers change dramatically depending on time of the year, funerals etc.

Janelle began by outlining what NCADA was about. This stimulated a lot of interest and discussion.

### **Mobile Phone Coverage**

A comment was made about the poor mobile phone coverage for both communities. It has been an issue for many years with no one in authority willing to address it. It was suggested a Telstra and/or an Optus tower is required for both communities. Added to this issue is that most in the community do not have household telephone land lines.

Due to the poor mobile phone coverage and minimal home landline access, internet access is also very poor. We were advised that this affects access to education resources for children. This was particularly prevalent during the recent COVID-19 stay at home period.

### **Cultural Programs**

A strong discussion about the need for more cultural programs in the community.

These included:

- language, dance, song, storytelling, making artefacts etc.
- yarning circles
- an Elders group
- cultural burning of country and a local bushfire crew. This could be conducted in collaboration with the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS)
- better land management practices. There is a need for more local people doing this, which would create employment and training.

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<sup>1</sup> When using the term 'community,' this will refer to both the Baryulgil Aboriginal community and the Malabugilmah Aboriginal community. When referring to one of the communities only, this will be expressed.

- Men's group and women's group. There was a men's group established however it needs to be re- established.

### Services to Community

The group advised that a lot of services are provided to the community (mostly Baryulgil in comparison to Malabugilmah) however in general the services were not regular. The following was advised:

- Headspace runs programs for kids however these are only run during school holiday periods. It was recommended that these programs are required all year round.
- Services such as Centrelink, police, probation and parole and mental health only come out monthly and need to be more regular. A comment was made that the services need to meet with the people more to get to know them and to understand their needs.
- Grafton AMS (Bulgarr Ngaru Medical Aboriginal Corporation<sup>2</sup>) has their own building behind the hub however it has not been used for at least 3 years.
- Healing the Clarence forums. There have been a couple of barbeques previously and these were very successful. There is a need for more activities to compliment the work conducted to ensure continuity and positive outcomes.
- Emergency services. This is a serious issue that has been a concern of the community for many years. Both Baryulgil and Malabugilmah are in the Clarence Valley Council and are 5 minutes from each other but are serviced very differently due to the different boundaries of service providers ie: ambulance, police and NRMA.
- Community transport/patient transport. The service was being provided five days a week to Grafton prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and was well utilised by community. However, during the pandemic, the service had been cut to three days a week. Bulgarr Ngaru AMS have indicated they are covering the cost of these three days. The group did not know when or if the services were going back to five days a week.

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<sup>2</sup> Bulgarr Ngaru Medical Aboriginal Corporation services both communities. There are representatives from both communities on the Corporation's board

- NDIS do not visit the communities. There are a number of people in the communities that have mobility and disability issues that require attention.

### Other initiatives/issues e

The members of community advised of other initiatives and issues:

- A community park with a playground for children. The only park that Baryulgil has is at the school. Malabugilmah do not have anywhere safe and suitable for children to play. It was suggested that the park could be a focal point for community and a rest stop for travellers passing through.
- Irrigation issues. Members advised that farmers up river are taking too much water. The Clarence River is down to a trickle at the back of the communities.

To further exacerbate the issue, Malabugilmah has water trucked in three times a week due to the low levels of water.

- The members mentioned that a lot of work has been produced through the LALC's Community, Land and Business plans for each of the LALC's need to be implemented and monitored.
- The community has two defibrillators (one at the Baryulgil Square LALC and one at the home of the CEO of Jana Ngalee LALC) however no one is certified to use them. The training is needed for community members.
- Need to stablish a community store with scope for a coffee shop. The members advised that there was a community store that was open for many years however closed some time ago. Other ideas for the business were to sell local arts and crafts and a performance space for local entertainment including cultural shows.
- Hold a festival to bring people back to Baryulgil and Malabugilmah was discussed.
- Access to cemetery. Currently community members seek permission to access the cemetery via motor vehicle due to there being a lock on the access gate. Permission has to be requested via a local family as the cemetery is located on their private property.
- The need to develop an emergency evacuation plan for community. Both communities recently went through devastating bushfires in which it was

evident that the community had no structured knowledge of what to do.

- Access to the community rubbish dump. The members advised that access has been reduced due to many outsiders to the community were using the facility due to there being no cost compared to other facilities in the council areas.
- General 'buck passing' by government about issues. *'It's not a state, federal or local issue – it's just an issue that needs fixing'* a member commented. More clarity on responsibilities for each level of government is required so that community know who to approach.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with council/s. It was suggested that each community establish an MOU with each of their councils regarding service delivery and other community priorities.
- Community visits by local, federal and state representatives. A comment was made that it shouldn't just be 'for the photo op' or 'kissing babies' but for real engagement and understanding of the needs and values of community.
- Assistance with grant funding writing and other proposals. It was indicated that many of the priorities and wants of community do require skills in writing grant funding and other proposals. It was suggested that Community First Development (formerly Indigenous Community Volunteers) be approached to assist in this area.

### Future Considerations

A lot of discussion and great ideas were presented during the consultation at Baryulgil. As the communities are recognised as discrete, remote communities there may be potential for focused and specific support similar to what the Bowraville community has received through OCHRE. This may include the recruitment of a project officer to either NCADA or AA NSW that works specifically with the communities in addressing current and future priorities.

The utilisation of already produced plans such as the LALC Community, Land and Business Plans may assist in driving efforts to address some of the concerns raised.

Future consultations with more members of both communities through face to face discussions and the completion of the survey may provide broader, current insights of community needs and aspirations.

## **Recommendations**

Apart from the specific findings and future considerations for each community consulted, overall themes were identified through the consultation meetings.

There was a clear sense that communities consulted were excited by the potential of OCHRE and the possibilities that implementation of strategies, particularly Local Decision Making could bring to their communities. Consulted communities were interested in how the NCADA model worked and how they could utilise the model in assisting in addressing their needs and aspirations.

### **Recommendation 1**

*Dissemination of NCADA promotional material through various social media platforms and email to community.*

To better acquaint themselves with NCADA and OCHRE further face to face consultations were recommended for each of the communities. This would allow more time to consider the priorities and provide a deeper and broader understanding of the AA NSW OCHRE strategy.

### **Recommendation 2**

*For community to understand the purpose of NCADA and how they can provide input into their needs and aspirations, further consultations should be held possibly in a workshop format.*

To obtain broader feedback on issues that are important to each Aboriginal person in the southern Bundjalung, Yaegl and Gumbaynggirr regions scoped by this consultation, broad dissemination of the NCADA survey is required in hard copy and electronic versions.

### **Recommendation 3**

*Upon the community survey being approved, NCADA should disseminate broadly electronically and in hard copy to Aboriginal community constituents for their input and feedback.*

The development of an Accord with the NSW State Government and the North Coast Aboriginal Development Alliance is a primary goal. Community feedback suggested more information was required about the purpose of an Accord, what are the benefits to community with an Accord and how should community contribute to the development of an Accord.

### **Recommendation 4**

*After further community consultations and receipt of surveys from community about NCADA and OCHRE, NCADA should consider consultations with community members to develop an Accord with the NSW State Government.*

**Summary of Community Consultation.**

**Consultant – Kathleen ‘Sarah’ Lugnan  
NCADA Community Consultations**

**Allocated areas for consultation – Tweed Heads, Byron Bay, Ballina.**

Consultants met in Ballina to Skype into the Lismore Aboriginal Interagency. Consisting of Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Services from Tweed Heads to Lismore. Each Service provides an overview of their services and how they work with each community. This allows opportunities to hear and share ways to better their workplace or community.

*Outcome from the Lismore Aboriginal Interagency;*

- Present a PowerPoint on NCADA at the next Interagency
- Provide flyers and other relevant material to support the project of NCADA so that they can distribute through their networks
- Established a network of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organisations

**Byron Bay Aboriginal Corporation (Arakwal)**

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

Attendance – 11 participants (excluding consultants)

**The Issues:**

**Housing**

- Housing is one of the biggest issues -not enough affordable housing for Aboriginal people in Byron.
- 15-20 year wait on Housing NSW waiting list
- People often work on country but live somewhere else. Affordable houses will encourage families back on country. Families leave Byron seeking affordable housing in other towns
- Organisation has 4 houses and owns some land

- Department of Housing need to have Aboriginal staff as advocate for Aboriginal people who apply for housing.

### Employment

- More identified positions in specifically funded Aboriginal programs/projects
- Aboriginal staff to be placed in role such as Job Services Providers to cater the needs of Aboriginal clients
- establish a hub for service providers to talk and assist with their services
- Limited identified positions with the Byron Council
- Need traineeships and apprenticeships
- Several Aboriginal people are currently employed with NPWS

### Training & Education

- establishing a learning centre for our Aboriginal children
- Specific courses to upskill our mob so that they can teach
- Short courses on jobs, leadership and living skills
- More cultural awareness workshops in place to be delivered to non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal organisations
- Training and upskilling our mob to deliver cultural awareness this could be a social enterprise
- Offer Working Development Order (WDO) or setting and registering for WDO for our mob to clear their fines and other debts
- More training and support in obtaining drivers licences for our younger generation
- Need to improve accessibility to TAFE
- establishing a hub in Byron Bay for services to delivery training and further education

- there are no current links to Byron Community Centre

### Health & Wellbeing

- Need for more health service across the community of Byron. We have to go to Casino for dental services and Ballina for AMS for other health services.
- Not enough men's and women's group. Should be more of it.
- Not enough facilities that cater for families, they only have outdoor facilities that cater for those who are keeping fit (Eg outdoor gym)
- Community have no input on cultural matters especially the Cavanbah Centre
- We need to have a health and wellbeing hub that cater for the safety of our mob
- Our main focus should be bringing people back to country.

### Funding

- A lot of funding is going to Mental Health
- Need more regional health funding for Aboriginal people
- We need to develop skills in grant writing and funding to our Aboriginal organisations.

### Youth

- Our youth finish school or leave early from school they have nothing to do or go to. Our youth are wandering and leaving Byron to hang out in other towns like Ballina.
- We need to establish a youth hub— somewhere that our youth can go to and elevate youth services.
- Delivery of a gender based youth Leadership Camps that will cater for our youth and also bring home those youth who have taken off to other towns – bringing them back to country, Byron.

- We must have family programs that caters for the whole family and support of our younger generation.

### Outreach

- Not enough services to support our families, our mob, our community other services
- Need more services visiting the area of Byron
- Lack of appropriate venue for outreach. When asked about AMS having outreach services in Byron the response was “no outreach – there is nowhere to come to”
- Jali LALC need to do outreach programs and services – working on developing a relationship with Jali
- Yarrabee (the aged care) currently undertake outreach
- Native Title need to visit more so that they can build a relationship with community
- Mullumbimby Neighbourhood Centre has a food shelter, Byron needs something like this
- Belief that a lot of the outreach services are just “tick the box” services

### Transport

- Public Transport is an issue – particularly for Elders
- Young people often do not have driver’s licenses “kills” chances of getting employment
- Many young people are paying fine off. This prevents them from getting a driver’s license.
- Lismore ACE had a Learner’s program – This is not delivered in the Byron area

### Mainstream services

- The Mullumbimby Neighbourhood Centre that does outreach to Byron does not have identified positions
- Byron Bay community centre– Has no identified positions and has little connection with Aboriginal community
- Neither organisation appears on Reconciliation Australia's website as having a RAP
- Positions not being backfilled in service provider organisations when people go on leave

### Outcome

Through the conversation the group has expresses concerns around their youth, housing, funding and employment.

They would like to set up a Community Hub that cater for the needs of Byron Aboriginal community and have it as a place that all services can do their outreach services from. ILSC might be potential funding source? This would also encourage their youth to come home.

There are not enough facilities that are free to community to have meetings, deliver programs etc. Need more free accessibility to facilities?

The group is very proactive and very keen to make changes in the community.

## **Ballina - Aboriginal Aged Respite Service - Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

### **The Issues:**

Even though there were 3 in attendance they were very familiar with some of the issues within the Ballina Shire. A significant part of the discussion was based on aged care<sup>3</sup>.

The Northern Rivers Aboriginal Aged Respite Service under the governance of St Andrews Village Ballina is funded by the Department of Health under the Commonwealth Home Support Programme. They have weekly services that provide a range of programs, activities and culture celebrations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 years and over that do not have an individual funded package.

### **Aged Care**

The discussion included:

- How Ballina was well behind other areas in setting up an aged care service system
- The attendees wanted to set up an aged care service in Lismore but found it very difficult due to no support from the Lismore City Council.
- Online application process for My Aged Care was not easy to use, instructions were not clear and the process was not culturally appropriate.

### **Funding**

- In relation to aged care – organisations not funded directly, funding allocated but the funds are tendered out to other organisations
- According to the participants allocated funds were not used in the correct way
- Funding should be allocated on a long term basis and not short term contracts eg: 1 or 2 Years in relation

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<sup>3</sup> The extensive discussion on aged care is due to the 2 of the 3 people in the consultation, working in the aged care sector, though this does not diminish the issues discussed.

## Employment & Training

- There needs to be more Aboriginal Assessors in My Aged Care. There are no identified Assessor positions at present.
- Not enough Aboriginal Aged Care workers within the system.
- More Aboriginal people particularly young people should do training to become qualified for these positions
- Would like to see more Aboriginal Nurses employed
- No sustainability for fulltime employment in the Aged Care system.

## Transport

- Lack of transport across the Bundjalung footprint
- Aboriginal services need their own transport for clients

## Advocacy

- Own Advocacy service, Aboriginal owned as a one stop shop – not just advocacy for aged care but for other service areas too. This is needed because of the complexities and constant changes to eligibility and criteria to attain service delivery. Can this be fed back up into NCADA as a major issues.

## Housing & Homeless

- More Indigenous social housing required. Aboriginal people have to go to non-Aboriginal housing organisations to get support.
- Aboriginal organisations should build partnership with real estates to support the homeless
- Department of Housing application process is too long and can be complicated
- An observation that more older adults are becoming increasingly homeless
- A suggestion was for mobile homes to be set up so that they travel to areas that forces homeless to shelter on the beaches, sand dunes, down side alley

or on the street. The mobile homes will give the homeless person a bed to sleep for the night, food and shower. A case management plan to be put in place so transition into permanent shelter of their own can occur.

- A hostel should be set up in the Northern Rivers for those who are homeless.

### Outreach Services

- Outreach centre needs to be put in place with service provider so that community has somewhere to go and get support.
- Services need to provide an easier process or set up so that it is community friendly

### Other Issues

- There is no consultation by funding bodies with service providers Former project planning meetings with government departments were excellent, where service providers got to vote on priorities.

## **Bugalwena General Practice in Tweed Heads South, Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July - Morning**

### **The Issues:**

#### Health

- Pilot programs are only short term. Need to be more than a year. These programs only have enough leverage to gather data collection. More than 2 years of funding allows the program to develop.
- Allied health providers go to other services that provides the same programs
- Have to go over the QLD border to see a dentist or to Casino Bulgarr Ngaru
- Aboriginal midwives – we need more support from them and for home visits
- In Murwillumbah there are no bulk bill services. All private doctors
- Families who work find it difficult to see a doctor in their work time. This is how their health become an issues
- There is no mental health support in the Tweed.

## Housing

- Lack of affordable housing, Long waiting list with social housing providers and lack of support for the homeless.
- Homelessness is a major concern although there are adequate support services.

## Funding

- Longer funding agreements required minimum of 2 – 3 years
- Issues with Queensland health services coming into New South Wales or providing services to New South Wales residents which has created an environment where Bugalwena GP is competing with the Queensland services for funding and clients

## Employment

- Not enough identified position/roles
- No sustainability in employment and programs
- When jobs advertised, panel should consist of Aboriginal people.
- Need to have a pool of Aboriginal RNs
- A social and emotional wellbeing care coordinator should be in place to support the wellbeing of the clients.

## Drugs and Alcohol

- Some service providers have no connection to community
- More outreach services are required as the waiting period for rehabilitation is long and there is a lack of drug and alcohol rehabilitation services therefore clients are required to travel long-distance for treatment.
- Need more after hour support, currently staff are not covered to do after hours support

## Transport

- Lack of adequate transport support for the Tweed area.
- Concern with our Elders who have to catch a cab to and from Bugalwena to their appointments. They have to cover their own cost.
- The ITC program needs to be reviewed for the clients

## Youth

- There is a lack of adequate support for youth leaving out of home care once they turn 18.
- Youth are couch surfing as they don't have anywhere to go or they experience problems at home

## Other Issues

- Trying to establish and build up the community
- Provide more follow up as there is not enough of that type of support.
- Women's program was delivered but due to COVID19 it ceased. Would like to establish more women's programs like budgeting, yarning circles, weaving, op shopping and beauty days.
- Could Rekindling the Spirit cover these areas. Not enough support from them.

## **Tweed – Fingal Heads, Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July - Afternoon**

Leweena Williams, Claire Lena and 1 other Community member

### **The Issues:**

## Elders

- Lack of respect for Elders
- Need to form an Elders committee and set protocols in place so that they can take the lead– this is currently being considered

## Health

- Little chronic care support in place
- Have to go over to Kalwun
- Everyone goes to Bugalwena at the Hospital to get their check ups
- Bugalwena GP has been trying to build up their services for the community to assist clients and families travelling over to QLD

## Youth

- No support for them
- No police ACLO – there was a male and female ACLO, the male ACLO retired and female ACLO on long term sick leave
- PCYC has lack of resources/programs for our youth,
- No trust in the law
- Need to have a centre or hub to deliver activities
- Need more sporting activities
- They have the surfing – Jaraki Surfing but this is the only thing that is around for them. This is run annually

## Homeless

- Tweed Heads has a very large homeless population including Aboriginal people who are;
  - rough sleeping
  - Couch surfing
  - In the street
  - Need more access to food and shelter.

## Housing

- Long Housing list, longer waiting period
- Tweed/Fingal families pushed right back on the list due to other families from other nations come to reside in our areas.
- No pull in the community
- No support from Social housing
- Encourage community to buy their houses
- Tweed/Byron council has crown land that they can spread housing across. need to offer to community at an affordable price.

## Employment

- Need to have long term employment
- Not enough identified positions
- Upskilling of community members to take on identified roles

## Education

- More support for Distant Ed
- The home schooling has been supported and works well
- Need to set up school base traineeship
- No support at school when struggling in class and this can be a reflection at home
- Bullying has become an issues at schools.
- Struggles with other people coming from other nation and trying to take control; eg language in the schools

## Other Issues

- Women's group cancelled
- Older women disperse to other groups
- Other services are over the border not enough service in the Tweed area.
- Have problems with QLD services coming over to NSW area seeking clients to build their stats and gain additional and/or maintain current funding

## **Other community outcome – Email response, Aboriginal Services Coalition Group, Met in mid-June 2020**

As COVID19 pandemic had restricted us to set up a meeting in Murwillumbah or Mullumbimby. The ladies from the Aboriginal Services Coalition had emailed the consultants their concerns and recommendations. The group consist of women and men from Tweed Heads, Murwillumbah and Mullumbimby area.

## Service Centre

- Need to develop and fund an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service based at the Mullumbimby Neighbourhood Centre.
- Service to have a holistic approach to service delivery and create a culturally based community hub for ATSI community.

- Service to have a strong visibility and cultural identity to foster belonging in broader community.
- Service to be managed by an Aboriginal Steering Committee under the Mullumbimby Neighbourhood Centre Management Committee.
- Outreach Coordination and Aboriginal Community Development Manager – Funded Position
- Full Time position to work with services across the regional to develop and promote a program of outreach services, community engagement and relationship building by participating in ATSI community events,
- Promote interests and priorities of local ATSI community in inter-agencies and decision making processes and forums, identify gaps in services and develop strategies and opportunities to address these gaps.
- Develop partnerships to apply for and attract funding for projects.

#### Case Workers

- Male and Female part time case workers to manage individuals complex needs,
- Support access to services and create pathways,
- Facilitate group work, peer support for healthy community networks,
- Support delivery of special projects to engage and build community.

#### Improve Housing for Byron Shire Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community

- Increased number of Aboriginal housing options including single, small and large families for long term and short term accommodation needs,
- Existing process to access community housing is clarified, streamlined and affectively communicated to ATSI community,
- Development of an Aboriginal Hostel with different size units for short term and long term options with case support for holistic support
- Support for exit of Aboriginal Housing into mainstream housing market through holistic support.

### Create an Employment Pathways Officer

- Work with employment agencies and Centrelink to support case management of ATSI people to create meaningful employment pathways,
- Promote employment incentives to local industry and employers,
- Promote local industries with employment opportunities to local young people,
- Work with schools, TAFE, Universities and industry to hold ATSI specific employment expos.

### From the Byron Shire Aboriginal Transport Committee

- Identify barriers created by lack of public transport, how these are impacting local ATSI people to access essential services and develop strategies to overcome these barriers,
- Work with local and state government to develop transport programs and incentives,
- Promote existing programs and services and opportunities in the local ATSI community.

### From a Byron Shire Aboriginal Education Consultative Group

- To work with community and local schools to build relationships, resources and improve educational outcomes for local community.
- Services and programs for the Byron Shire Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community need to be holistic and integrated to be culturally appropriate, respond to need, be cost effective and sustainable in the community.
- Implement the strategies in the Bagwa Bugalma 5 Year Strategic Plan
- Develop a Byron Shire Aboriginal Social and Economic Development Plan

During the community visits and meetings, there were a lot of similarity in the issues and concerns that Aboriginal people and communities face, within this region. However, the Tweed Heads meetings not only face issues and concerns within their community they also face issues and concern across the state border into Queensland (QLD).

## Recommendations

- As these issues and concerns have been prolonged for years and no action has been rectified, these communities stipulate that they need someone to be an advocate on their behalf so that future outcome are successful.
- That NCADA promotional material is filtered through various social media platforms and email to community.
- Further face to face consultations are to be set up in the communities. This will allow NCADA to capture further findings to support these communities.
- That more NCADA workshops are delivered across the region/nation for community to learn more about the OCHRE Strategy.
- More solution based discussions focused on regional issues and the Government structure of NCADA moving forward.
- That Surveys or feedback forms once approved be ready for community consultations and outcomes.

**Summary of Community Consultation.**

**Consultant – Julie Perkins**

**NCADA Community Consultations**

**Allocated areas for consultation – Casino, Tabulam, Kyogle, Lismore.**

**Junbung Elders Aboriginal Corporation and Toys Change Lives (TCL).**

An introduction to NCADA and the OCHRE Strategy was provided to each group. The structure of the Alliance and persons involved was also provided to the Elders and workers at the social enterprise. There were no negative comments made to the consultant on the structure or committee members or staff. The Elders were welcoming and stated they were happy to have competent people representing them.

We tried to promote a positive meeting in terms of seeking solutions as opposed to problems without solutions.

**The Issues:**

**Housing:**

- \* Lack of affordable housing.
- \* More information for people to buy homes – rent to buy and other programs needed.
- \* Lots of people are complaining about their homes in terms of ongoing maintenance requirements not addressed.
- \* Specifically mentioned Land Council homes that are in need of repair; commented on areas like Tabulam and Mulli that are out of town and need their voices to be heard. Examples were provided about homes with no proper locks and a lack of safety for women, Elders, young mums and children.

**Jobs and unemployment rates:**

- \* Elders were very concerned about the lack of jobs for young people. They discussed the past whereby lots of people went to TAFE and did pre trades, building programs, administration and forestry programs to name a few.
- \* They appreciated CDEP gave some people hope and opportunities to enter the workforce. There might have been some changes needed to CDEP, but it worked in

some areas and especially for people who were long term unemployed or lacked work skills.

\* Elders wanted to see more Aboriginal people in the roles to help people gain jobs in job agencies as people could hopefully relate to them.

\* Elders wanted to see programs which ensured people gained more private sector jobs on offer in towns.

\* Specifically mentioned the need for Cadetships and Traineeships for the regional areas and not concentrated in the city areas. Strategies needed for Government and large employers in community and private sector to increase Aboriginal people in country towns to permanent jobs.

\* Aged care sector is a growing industry; rural and regional strategy to upskill community and young ones to work with Elders in Aged Care sector.

#### Educational opportunities:

\* Elders discussed some good programs at the high schools, concerning language and culture.

\* They were not aware of too many youth at Southern Cross University but thought there should be more people taking advantage of University with Cadetships and TAFE outreach programs. TAFE used to be strong in the old days but does not appear to be the same.

\* Poor educational outcomes will not help people move forward in life.

\* Elders knew of some school-based traineeships – but thought most opportunity goes to the cities; why not more regional strategies for country children?

#### Advocacy and Rights /Responsibility:

\* The Elders thought people (in general) and young people need to know more about their legal rights. More workshops on rights are required in outreach and smaller communities. More people to stand up in leadership roles – we were used to this in the old days. We had leaders.

\* Elders thought a few more workshops on youth rights and responsibilities would be good.

\* Advocacy skills are needed for community to stand up on issues and advocate for change in community.

### Funding of Projects:

- \* Concerns expressed over short term funding models of successful projects.
- \* Projects that work well only receive short term funding, need and additional assessments and longer term funding if working well.

The Elders spoke in general about times when ATSIC existed and there were leaders and respect in community and when community stood up and led, those with respect. "Its all different now" – stated an Elder.

### **Casino - Toys Change Lives. (TCL)**

An outline of OCHRE and LDM and the NCADA Alliance was provided.

TCL – is a workshop 2<sup>nd</sup> chance program working with Aboriginal young people providing culturally meaningful pathways to employment. It is run under the Keeping Our Freedom Indigenous Corporation. The Centre is staffed by youth under skilled supervisors and 'Pastor Pete' – who used to be a Chaplain at Acmena Juvenile Centre.

### **The Issues:**

- \* Young people need hope and a vision for a better future
- \* Young people who have had a poor start or made wrong decisions need respected mentors to get them on the right path.
- \* Gave example of a young person who was in Acmena a few times and is now studying social work after being assisted at TCL.
- \* Needs a co-ordinated approach to making a difference in the area.
- \* Reoffending is massive.
- \* Current solutions don't seem to work; need practical solutions with work- based skill and cultural inclusion of respect and hope for a better life without crime.

We were shown examples of work and the items on sale and the website selling the goods.

There were a number of Aboriginal people in the centre and also other community members arriving for youth who were doing various JJ orders there and also working

and training and volunteering.

The Program has been widely recognised but like all community – based, social enterprises they were seeking to become self- sustainable to ensure longevity. TCL are always seeking volunteers and mentors and soft woods to create goods.

### **Tabulam - August 2020**

Tuckerbox at Tabulam.

The meeting commenced with an outline of NCADA and the OCHRE Strategy. The community took note of the Website and Facebook and email addresses of the Project Officer for additional communication. The community did ask if we had some flyers, they would post in their offices and encourage community to complete Surveys on need, solutions and Regional priorities.

General discussion took place and issues raised - in no particular order - just as conversation took place. The Project Officer and I were always mindful of trying to keep such conversation solution focussed. It was difficult as many challenges were raised.

#### **The Issues:**

- \* Commenced by stating they were unaware of OCHRE (they had not heard of this via their Land Council system)
- \* They were aware of some Members of the Committee via other interaction over the years – going back to ATSIC.
- \* Drug and alcohol abuse is very bad in community. A lot is with the young people too which is concerning. “Our kids can’t see a future” said one participant.
- \* Outreach services are not consistent – it feels like a “tick and flick” when you reside in Tabulam. Many differing groups arrive but not much follow through – does not seem like commitment is there.
- \* Community advises a real lack of co-ordination between agencies; they gave examples of groups who work in the child related services and out of home care who all arrive day after day from each other; there is an expectation that community can have all the days to meet and all groups competing and doing the same role. Lack of communication with the community on their visits – even Government Departments just arrive and not follow any protocols of talking with the few workers

they do have on community at Tabulam.

\* There were some very good individuals who came from Lismore/Casino on occasion.

\* Low retention rates at high school – children travel over to Bonalbo daily but a lot of the time don't make the trip. There was a functioning Youth Art Centre at Bonalbo where youth tended to go to and be mentored – that has since closed.

\* Concern raised that community believe suspension is easy to the Department.

“ the school finds it easier with excuses to suspend kids, hard to focus on education (as kids) when there's so much other stuff going on” – “ they don't fit into a box as expected” Children here have a lot of “baggage” from their home environment.

\* Try something different with school – like school - based traineeships – there seems a lack of pathways from education to employment.

\* AECG could have stronger role possibly; community do not deny some bad behaviours of young people but need to break the cycle for their future.

\* Uncle Poppy Harry tries to teach language with youth but he is expected to do all that for nothing. Elders are seeking to bring back respect in community.

\* Lot of people have gambling addictions on community. They were aware and had contact with gambling programs but not much has changed – cycle of poverty, hopelessness.

\* Elders believe there is no discipline with children in community; and Elders should be in charge to bring back a lost culture and respect for people.

\* The Pre-school was specifically raised in that it needs fulltime permanent Aboriginal staff. An example was provided whereby lots of programs ran and gained qualifications for community to work in pre-schools and early - education. This was seen as very important to set children on the right educational path for life. This was carried out in partnership with Aboriginal employment and TAFE and people were given opportunity to become Teachers.

\* Balunda Program was raised; quite a few Aboriginal people on the program with Corrective Services. There were Aboriginal jobs there, “sad people incarcerated but it does give 2<sup>nd</sup> chance”.

\* Housing was raised; there are lots of issues; maintenance, care, affordable in the area for people who might be able to purchase homes and free up community

housing.

\* Confusion over some housing properties in town and corporations: Community were unsure who to turn to for assistance. (Consultant referred to ORIC regional and also possibly NSWALC for clarification)

\* Transport – need regular community transport for those without cars or means: Elders, sick, youth activities.

\* The workers who were at Tuckerbox – need consistent funding for their roles. DJC funded though not long term to address issues, plan and have security of tenure for quality staff.

\* Boundary issues raised; Tenterfield Shire and Workers of New England versus Kyogle Shire. This causes issues of service delivery- overlap and lack of services co-ordination too.

\* Recovery after the Bushfires was a problem; community were getting notices from the Shire after the close of dates for application for assistance.

\* “Where is the co-ordination”?

\* PHN came out to see them on mental wellbeing.

\* Land Council office has not been operating for a long time; some people were unwell and there was COVID but Land Council can play a central role in community. Community contacted Regional NSWALC to try and ask for acting staff to keep the office running.

#### They also advised:

\* There is a lot of opportunity at Tabulam for small enterprises; examples were provided of a person who does the graves and headstones; eco cultural tourism- through talks and walks.

\* Tabulam has some very creative people; good artists.

\* Uncle Poppy Harry wants to do language- he is a knowledge holder but needs to be paid for his work and contributions too.

\* Elders want to look at cultural protocols that service delivers can follow with community.

\* Asked what would you change in community if you could? “We want our respected Elders in charge of our community – we are strong in culture “.

The community appreciated NCADA visiting and asked for a return to talk with more community members and possibly go to the Balunda clients and gain their views too.

### **Kyogle - August 2020**

Githabul Ranger Program (a very successful program contributing to the quality conservation of National Parks, State Parks and private lands within Githabul Nation. and to the Land Council.

The Project Officer and consultant attended Kyogle to talk with community. NCADA role was discussed, there was support for NCADA and no negative issues raised.

### **The Issues:**

#### **Housing:**

\* Housing rental and affordability was a major issue. A lot of people had to rent private and rents are expensive.

\* Need more information and programs on home purchases. Were aware of IBA, but not a lot of knowledge on how to purchase and maintain your own home.

\* People rent and over years could have contributed a lot of money to home ownership.

\* Discussion too on outer areas of affordable accommodation like Mulli. Do not leave out the areas that are out of towns.

#### **Environment:**

\* Environmental issues need to be a priority for people; understanding the damage that is occurring.

\* Need more Ranger Programs like Githabul, Caring for Country,

\* Detailed a women’s ranger program which was successful for bringing women in. More is needed to draw women into these work areas.

- \* Qualifications through TAFE and that can lead to environmental science at University.
- \* Community are very concerned about the waterways and damage being done.
- \* Need to bring environmental issues to forefront of people's minds.

#### Jobs and opportunities:

- \* A need to look at opportunities in eco cultural tourism for the area.
- \* Not a lot by way of private jobs in small towns.
- \* Some very good artists identified by the Land Council.
- \* Land Council also discussed woodworking; some members of community were producing boomerangs and painting them - quality work, but needs a market for ongoing sale or to grow social enterprise.
- \* Discussion on the importance of education in community and the need for pathways to opportunities to gain an income and take people out of poverty and welfare dependence enabling families to prosper.

#### **Lismore Happy Women Goonellabah – September 2020**

We attended the Women's Project in Lismore supported by the YWCA. There were a number of women of all ages and locations in attendance. youth, young mums and Elders.

NCADA was outlined and the women's group was very supportive of the future of NCADA. It was important to have people involved "with the right attitude, hope and skills to lead community and advocate for change". The group asked NCADA to keep them informed as NCADA grows.

The issues were raised in general group discussion with the women. No specific order but just general talking – again, we emphasised solution. The group was very positive and that is a part of their mantra – positivity, hope, strength and support for all. It was a most welcome environment.

### **The Issues:**

- \* Support the creation of social enterprises.
- \* The group paint, sew, create ceramics, - anything artistic; they are always seeking support with materials, teachers.
  
- \* Need more outreach and flexibility with TAFE and programs.
  
- \* Lots of people go into TAFE classroom and gain Certificate after Certificate but there needs to be jobs or opportunities to use those Certificates too.
  
- \* Not TAFE 'fault' – but training must be linked to practical skills and opportunity.
  
- \* The Women's Program works as it is non-judgemental started as a Yarning Circle and grew by accepting all women and believing in the strengths.
  
- \* Programs have to be more "free-range", not dictate how people should work, do business, and having to complete form after form. Outcomes are important, but do things differently from standard Government ways.
  
- \* Find good supporters in community to make programs work: YWCA stepped in and supported.
  
- \* More culturally safe places for women and men to connect with self and others and grow positively.
  
- \* It is important to "link" people to feel accepted – regardless of your ability. "Everyone is special and has a unique offering or talent"
  
- \* Participants talked about how the group and leaders accepted them and helped them with challenges to gain self -confidence – young mums, bringing them out of their homes for at least a half a day to develop skills.
  
- \* Challenges, the group attend markets, fashion shows, exhibitions to raise money. If a program is working well – why isn't it funded appropriately?
  
- \* Group want to see more capacity development in community and positive skilled leaders.
  
- \* The YWCA is doing a good job and seeks to grow these programs across the Region/areas, though enabling locals to run the actual program.

- \* The group are firm on people having “choice” - respect that people are intelligent; many services and Government still “telling everyone what to do” – truly come to us and listen.
- \* The group was excited to hear that OCHRE LDM is supposed to be about listening to people and not Government and agencies continually telling people how to live from Sydney.
- \* Issues were many in community; lack of affordable housing stock, jobs for community, lack of respect and cultural ways.
- \* Need of practical programs that change people’s lives via opportunity of jobs.
- \* Social groups are important too for people’s social and emotional wellbeing.
- \* There can be a lot of lateral violence in community through poverty and jealousy. The women’s group try to keep out of that and maintain happy positive people.

### **Additional Meeting in Lismore with Community Members**

The Project Officer and Consultant also attended Lismore on request to meet with representatives inclusive of various mental health areas and those in social and emotional wellbeing. These were two separate meetings and we spoke informally.

The meeting started with an outline of the NCADA structure and the Committee and staff – inclusive of; goals, OCHRE, an Accord process and the State Government Strategy. Support was spoken of for NCADA and the representatives.

### **The Issues:**

#### **Lateral Violence:**

- \* There was strong discussion on lateral violence in the community. To the point where a few people and workers were off on stress leave and were finding it hard to live in community.
- \* There appeared to be a “closed circle” on some who commit lateral violence and when it is raised – people turn to pretend to be victims themselves.
- \* Lateral violence needs to be called out in Forums and workshopped over what is lateral violence.
- \* A lot of good community- based people have left the “human services sector” due to lateral violence.

\* It was noted that some senior and supposed 'respected' people are involved in consistent lateral violence behaviour.

\* Needs to be a focus on lateral violence in the region and followed through, "not a one off".

#### Health:

\* Suicide and youth, as two separate groups, require further culturally appropriate programs.

\* Apart from the current COVID crisis, people are suffering severe mental health issues.

\* Crisis occurring in social and emotional wellbeing space. The programs that work well should be assessed and refunded for the longer term .Healing does not happen overnight.

\* There are youth issues but also older people being put out of work with COVID and other reasons and now feeling worthless. Ageism is rife in employers too. What can be done?

#### Crime:

\* A reasonable degree of criminal activity; overrepresentation in detention and gaol.

\* Why aren't gaols built with drug and alcohol residential facilities? There is a shortage of detox and residential rehabilitation and appropriate mental health. Many inmates are there for mental health issues.

\* DV and breaches of orders are apparent. Lots of services but it appears a lack of co-ordination between people.

\* DV and other anti-social behaviour leads to a lot of the out of home care placements with children.

\* A major forum was suggested to see who is funded for what? Is that something NCADA can assist with – accountability for monies and services?

\* Concern noted as the participants knew the Consultant – and asked as to why a 'peak group' like ALS abandoned senior Aboriginal management when there is Black Lives Matter and over-representation in gaols.

#### Federal involvement – Close the Gap:

\* How does the community become aware of these issues with Federal funding?

Where does the Federal money and accountability link in – with Close the Gap?

\* How will NCADA work at Regional or National level to connect Close the Gap and Federal funds and services?

Other Matters:

\* Concerns raised on a degree of a lack of community cohesion; how does a regional strategy exist in differing locations, when there can be community dispute in the one town?

\* Can an Accord be one of many across the Region or develop localised genuine leadership models in groups or towns and NCADA focuses on the major Regional strategies with Government and private sector and local Government across the entire footprint – for high level advocacy and leadership.

***Leading the Way by Accountability, Advocacy and Action.***