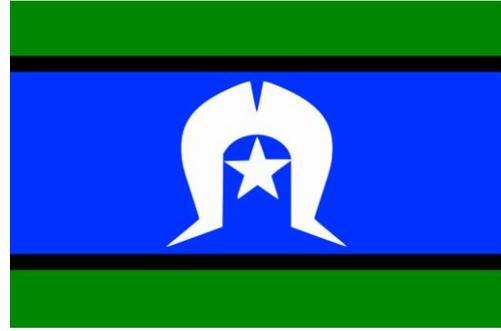


# Dirrawarra Indigenous Network Wangaratta



Dirrawarra - Pangerang word meaning together or unite

## Community Plan 2011 - 2016

# Welcome to the Dirrawarra Community Plan 2011- 2016

The Dirrawarra Community Plan has been created by residents and traditional owners from the Wangaratta area. The plan should be a living document, something that the community uses and updates as needed to keep on track. It is written in plain English, and the font is generous, so that all members of the community - regardless of age or education level - can easily access and understand the plan.

Wangaratta means “Long Necked Cormorant”. This comes from two traditional words - Wanga meaning long neck, and Ratta meaning cormorant. Wanga is sometimes said to mean “meeting of two rivers” however Wanga in this context refers to the long neck of the river where the two rivers meet.

This area traditionally owned and occupied is detailed in the map below, with the boundary running from just south of Chiltern across the Murray River, between Urana and Lockhart peaking at Darlington Plain, South westerly to Coleambally and then on to Steam Plains, South to Hartswood, moving just west of Tocumwal, across to Moama and finishing west of Pyramid Hill. The boundary then travels south easterly to Tatura, Euroa, Mansfield, across to the Alpine National park ranges, finishing just west of Dinner Plain, before heading north easterly to Bright and Yackandandah.

# Our Community



The Dirrawarra Indigenous Network (DIN) brings together Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander & broader communities to develop a shared vision for the future.

2006 Census Data reports that there are 207 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people residing in the Wangaratta area making up .82% of the total population. It is understood that this figure is actually closer to 500 to 600 with many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people choosing not to identify through the Census process.

60% of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is 25 years and younger, a high proportion, inverse to that of the general community, reflecting the lower life expectancy of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Unemployment sits at 15% as compared to 5% of the general community. Educational retention reflects a slightly higher completion rate of post compulsory schooling and a slightly higher uptake of University.

# Our Region



The Rural City of Wangaratta is located in North-Eastern Victoria, about 235 kilometers North-East of Melbourne. The Rural City of Wangaratta is bounded by Indigo Shire in the north, Alpine Shire in the east, Wellington and Mansfield Shires in the south, and Benalla Rural City and Moira Shire in the west.

The Rural City of Wangaratta includes the townships and localities of Archerton (part), Bobinawarra, Boorhaman, Boorhaman East, Boorhaman North, Boralma, Boweya (part), Bowmans Forest, Bowser, Byawatha, Carboor, Cheshunt, Cheshunt South, Docker, Dockers Plains, East Wangaratta, Edi, Edi Upper, Eldorado (part), Everton, Everton Upper, Glenrowan (part), Greta, Greta South, Greta West, Hansonville, Killawarra, King Valley, Laceby, Londrigan, Markwood, Meadow Creek, Milawa, Moyhu, Murrungee, Myrree (part), North Wangaratta, Oxley, Oxley Flats, Peechelba (part), Peechelba East, Rose River, Springhurst, Tarrawingee, Tolmie (part), Upper Lurg (part), Wabonga, Waldara, Wangandary, Wangaratta, Wangaratta South, Whitfield, Whitlands, Whorouly, Whorouly East and Whorouly South.

The Rural City of Wangaratta is predominantly a rural area, but has significant residential areas in and around the city of Wangaratta. Smaller townships include Eldorado, Everton, Glenrowan, Milawa, Moyhu, Oxley, Peechelba, Springhurst, Whitfield and Whorouly. The Rural City encompasses a total land area of almost 3,800 square kilometres, including substantial areas of national park. Rural land is used largely for agriculture, including viticulture.

Source: <http://profile.id.com.au/Default.aspx?id=342&pg=101&gid=10&type=enum>

# Our Community Vision



Dirrawarra is well known for its strength, pride and unity.

We welcome and respect all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and all people from our diverse community.

# Our Community Values



Respect



Diversity



Acceptance



Openness

# Our Priority Goals



A place of  
our own



A higher  
profile

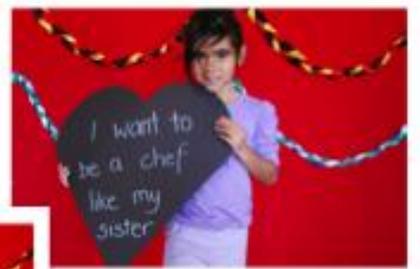


Community  
Coordination



Educate about  
our heritage  
and culture

# Our Dreams



# Priority One:



The need for a place of our own - a physical space where our community can gather, a place that is owned and operated by the ATSI people, for the ATSI people, has been a long term goal of the Dirrawarra Indigenous Network and the wider ATSI community in Wangaratta. We want “Our Place”.

In order to make “Our Place” a reality, we need to work through some issues including identifying an auspice agency to handle any funds that we are able to attract, and to support us with our governance until we are ready to go it alone. We need to work out a governance model that will support what we want to achieve, and finally we need to identify a site, and attract some funding to either purchase or build a building. These things will take time but by following a plan we will reach our goal.

**Together we will build “Our Place” - a place that is respected in the wider community and shows our younger generations what we can achieve. We will have “Our Place”, and it will be a place where our heritage is celebrated, our people can access the services that they need, and we can stand together as a proud and strong community.**

# A place of our own:

## Steps to Success



### **Step 1. A working party, a sub-committee of the Dirrawarra Indigenous Network, needs to be formed**

This group should ideally be between 8 and 10 people who are passionate about making “Our Place” a reality.

These people should be willing to work together, meet regularly, and make recommendations to the Dirrawarra Indigenous Network about how the project needs to move forward. This group does not have decision making powers - that responsibility continues to sit with the Dirrawarra Indigenous Network.

### **Step 2. Identify an appropriate auspice agency**

This may be Ovens and King Health Service, and they have already expressed an interest in the role. However other options should be explored to ensure that the auspice agency selected is the best fit possible.

The auspice agency needs to be an independent, respected and stable organisation. They will need to be willing to support the “Our Place” Working Group as they move through the planning and implementation of the project. They will need to be willing to engage in funding agreements on behalf of the group if necessary, and manage funds on behalf of the group when necessary, and provide both advocacy and mentoring.



### **Step 3. Improve our Governance skills**

To get ourselves ready to manage the planning process, funding, and eventually “Our Place” we will need to make sure that we have strong Governance skills in our community, but particularly on the Dirrawarra Indigenous

Network and on the “Our Place” Working Group.

To improve our skills, we will attend Governance Training courses, available through AAV, and take up opportunities for other training as they become available.

#### **Step 4. Funding for a Planning Project / Feasibility Study**

The working party will need to explore funding opportunities for a planning project to look at:

- \* Who needs to be involved? Potential funding partners, Council, other agencies that may be able to contribute or provide services.
- \* What the building needs to look like, what functions it should perform.
- \* Where might it be located - what land is available, who can we partner with to make the project a reality. New building versus existing building. Options include Ovens College, Scout Hall, or DHS Indigenous Housing.
- \* How much will this cost, where might we be able to secure funding.
- \* How will the building be run and maintained - governance arrangements and financial projections.

A consultants brief will be written that captures everything we want explored by the consultant during the planning / feasibility stage.

Once funding has been secured, the planning project will need to be managed by the “Our Place” Working Party to make sure that a good quality consultant is engaged, and managed well. The auspice agency would be a key partner and support through this period.

#### **Step 5. Secure Funding and create “Our Place”**

The planning study / feasibility study will identify potential funding to make “Our Place” a reality.

We will apply for the funding identified, and continue to work closely with our auspice agency to build strong applications.

When we are able to secure funding, then we will follow the recommendations made in our planning study / feasibility study to make sure that “Our Place” is well governed, well planned and meets the needs of our community.

# Priority Two:



**The Dirrawarra Indigenous Network wants to raise the profile of both the Network, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.**

We want to see greater recognition and more “good news” stories in the media about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We want to celebrate the wonderful things that are being done in our community and by our community.

We also want to ensure that everyone in the community is aware of the Dirrawarra Indigenous Network, that we are viewed in a positive way, and that people are attracted to join our group.

We want to make sure that our partners and service providers feel comfortable in displaying our flags, and appropriate local artworks and information to make local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people feel welcome and included when they visit.

**Above all, we want to raise the profile of the Dirrawarra Indigenous Network, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in a positive, active and ongoing way, to build respect in the community.**

# A Higher Profile: Steps to success

## **Traditional Welcome at all events**

Education of the wider community, so that everyone is aware of or has access to information about protocols and cultural competency.

Develop an accepted welcome for a variety of event types, and work with the local Council to publicise this to the local community. Presentations at local schools, service clubs, key agencies and Council. Potential to work with Council to have this information published on their website, along with contact details for Traditional Owners who may be able to facilitate Welcome to Country at events.

## **Local Honour Roll**



To acknowledge community members past and present who have been loud and proud ie: Mary Jane Milawa. This may be hung initially at an appropriate agency, with the intention that it will one day hang in “Our Place”.

Funding for this project may be sourced through Wangaratta’s Community Grants Program, or another small grants program.

Names of past and present community members will need to be collated, and some rules for deciding who is commemorated drawn up. This may become a function of the Dirrawarra Group - to annually add one or two local community people

to the Honour Roll.

Photograph of Mary Jane Milewa - source:

<http://cv.vic.gov.au/data/11957/mary%20jane%20milawa%20001%20001.jpg>

## Flags flown by the Wangaratta Council

We'd like to see our local Council fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags all year around, on a daily basis. We will need to discuss that with the Wangaratta Council, because the decision will be theirs. There is a process for taking this sort of request up to the Council.

The first step is to contact the Council, and ask to meet with the Arts, Cultural and Heritage Committee.



## Signage

We would like to see signage erected, so that as you come into Wangaratta you are welcomed, and the Traditional Owners are acknowledged.

Again, this is an issue that will require a good relationship with the Wangaratta Council. Council has already done some work to recognise the local ATSI community on their website and other materials.

## Heritage Path



Have an interpretive path, honouring local Indigenous people. The path may include photos of local Aboriginal people. It should also give detail about cultural heritage, and contain recognition of significant sites.

This is already a priority for the Wangaratta Council, so there is an excellent opportunity to support the Council to ensure the content is culturally appropriate, and celebrates our local stories.

## Media Officer - Increased Public Profile

This may be one person, or may be a different person for each event that the Dirrawarra Indigenous Network is involved in.

The Media Officer is responsible for contacting the local newspapers and

television stations well before an event is to take place to invite them to cover the event.

The Media Officer may also write press releases which can be distributed to the local newspaper and television stations if they are unable to attend on the day of the event.

The Media Officer should aim to have at least one story a month going to the local media, and may also consider submitting stories to the Koori Mail and other publications to raise the profile of the Dirrawarra Indigenous Network outside of the Wangaratta area.

The Media Officer can also work to have stories included in existing columns within the local newspaper - Cal's Corner for example may be able to do a profile on Uncle Freddie Dowling. The Media Officer can be the liaison between the paper and our Elders.

# Priority Three:



**The Dirrawarra Indigenous Network wants better coordination of services and information for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Wangaratta and district.**

We want a “one stop shop”, someone who knows our community, and can help members of our community to find what they are looking for and connect with the services that they need.

We also want to ensure that service providers have an easy way in to our community - that the information and services that they have on offer for our community is held at a central point and distributed to those people who most need to receive it.

The community Coordinator will also be a key person in the development of plans for “Our Place” - Priority One in this plan.

**Having a single point of call for information and links to services will allow community members to more effectively and easily access services and information that they need.**

# Community Coordination: Steps to Success

## **Step 1. Identify potential auspices.**

This may be Ovens and King, or another agency. The agency will need to be willing to handle funds for the group until such time as the Dirrawarra Network is legally able to be a fund's manager. The agency will need to be willing to submit funding applications and to manage both the Human Resource responsibilities and management of the Community Coordinator when they are employed.

## **Step 2. Develop Memorandum of Understanding and Policies.**

In partnership with the auspice agency, these need to clearly spell out the roles and responsibilities of each partner - both Dirrawarra and the Auspice Agency. This will allow the auspicing arrangement to be carried out in a way that is clear and assigns responsibilities to each partner.

## **Step 3. Develop role and project description.**

For the position of Community Coordinator. The auspice agency will have a key role in informing these documents.

## **Step 4. Seek funding to implement project.**

Identify potential funding sources and work closely with the funding body to ensure the application is as strong as possible. This may be DPCD, or FaHCSIA another source.

## **Step 5. Appoint a Community Coordinator.**

Community Coordinator is appointed once funding is sourced. The Community Coordinator commences work with the community, builds partnerships and coordinates services.

## **Step 6. The Community Coordinator partners effectively.**

The Community Coordinator works closely with the PaCE worker, and other project workers already on the ground to ensure seamless services to the

community.



**Current Service Providers and Programs to link with may include:**

- \* Ovens & King Community Health Service
- \* Council
- \* Parks Victoria
- \* North East Health
- \* NESAY
- \* Corrections
- \* Centrelink
- \* Mental Health
- \* Education
- \* PaCE program
- \* Gateway Community Health
- \* Villa Maria
- \* Personnel Group
- \* Central Hume Primary Care Partnership

# Priority Four:



**The Dirrawarra Indigenous Network is committed to ongoing education about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage in the Wangaratta area and more broadly. We want to educate about our heritage, including the sacred sites that exist around Wangaratta and how to care for them, and our culture - the culture that we live each day. Dirrawarra Indigenous Network has identified a number of target groups for cultural education.**

The local farming community: To grow their understanding of cultural heritage sites, and what having a site on their land really means. To do away with fear and prejudice. To make way for respect and care for sites while also allowing farmers to manage their farming businesses.

Our ATSI young people: so that they feel like a valuable part of our community, and know their cultural heritage. We want our young people to learn how to walk with pride between the two worlds.

Young people from the wider community: To educate our youth about the contemporary cultural identity of Torres Strait and Aboriginal people and to remove stigma and misinformation that leads to racism and intolerance in later life.

# Education about our Heritage and Culture:

## Steps to Success

**The local farming community:** We want to educate farmers about what having a significant site on their land means. We see Landcare as a key partner in this discussion, and so the first step to educating the local farming community is to form a partnership with the local Landcare groups.

We can work with Aboriginal Affairs Victoria to set up some joint community information sessions with Landcare to talk about Aboriginal heritage sites, and the laws around them. We want farmers to understand that no-one is going to take their land away from them if they identify a site.

**For our young people:** We want our young people to live in the world of today, without forgetting the pride and traditions of yesterday. To walk between the two worlds and feel at home in both.

We want them to feel like valuable members of our community, to be “part of it” not “outside of it”. We want for them to embrace and stand tall in their contemporary cultural identity as Torres Strait and Aboriginal people, and have pride in their ancestry.

We also want to keep our language knowledge and traditional knowledge safe. We can do this by completing projects like the gathering of stories from Uncle Freddie Dowling. These can be used by schools, or read to young children to pass along traditional stories and knowledge from generation to generation.

We want to talk to our young people about our heritage, and give them opportunities to participate in cultural activities. Being part of celebrations like NAIDOC week will give the Dirrawarra Indigenous Network a place to offer

cultural activities to our young people, and activities on a smaller scale can be done all year round.

**Dirrawarra Meetings:** We also need to make sure that the Dirrawarra Indigenous Network remains open and welcoming to young people.

We may be able to ask young people from each school to attend our night time Dirrawarra meetings, to keep them in touch with what we are doing as a community. The Catholic Education Office may be able to assist us with this.

We could also look into getting some culturally appropriate toys for young children to play with during our meetings, so that they are able to have an experience and their parents are able to participate and enjoy their time at our meetings.

**All young people:** We can investigate how we can work with the schools to get some interaction between young people and the Dirrawarra Indigenous Network - this may be an opportunity to bring cultural activities to the schools. Educating young people about culture - both historical and contemporary - will have a positive impact on how those young people think about the ATSI community as they grow up

