

- Can you describe your heritage program and how your community is involved in delivering this program?

Walking and Talking Cultural Program

This program is an innovative cultural awareness program designed to give an insight into Waluwarra's cultural heritage by dealing with both contemporary and traditional issues.

This program was designed with the intention of Waluwarra people participating in a **program of cultural heritage activities**. This program is concerned with places that are significant to Waluwarra people because of traditions or because of history, including recent history.

Some of the things this program has achieved:

- Visiting places and teaching young people about places or country.
- Meeting up for dinner camps on country.
- Meeting up for camps on country.
- Recording family and personal history associated with certain places.
- Recording information about places.
- Identifying places to be put on the government heritage register.
- Identifying places that need to be maintained or protected.
- Working out what needs to be done to protect or maintain certain places.

Throughout the course of this program, invitations/information sheets have been sent out to all Waluwarra people (Mount Isa, Dajarra, Camooweal and Boulia communities) inviting them to participate in the program and to put forward their ideas.

Dr Stephen Long from the University of Queensland was engaged to assist Waluwarra with this program.

- What did the IHP funding help you to achieve in your program?
- As a result of the implementation of the Walking and Talking Country Program, approximately 122 sites have been recorded to date with more sites being identified for future documenting and recording.
- Development and implementation of the Waluwarra Cultural Heritage Information Management System. This database will be a major tool for Waluwarra to house information on all cultural heritage activities and sites.
- Recording of traditional knowledge and transmission of cultural knowledge between elders and younger members.
- Repatriation Programs – skeletal remains have been returned to the organisation and repatriated on traditional country.
- Identification and location of the Moonah Creek Hanging Tree which is listed on the Queensland Heritage Register.

- Planned conservation works of two Waluwarra sites – Moonah Creek Hanging Tree and the Headingly Grave Site. This works has included negotiations with pastoral companies and Government agencies.
- Negotiations between Education Queensland and Waluwarra people for the Burnt Eye Dreaming site at the Urandangi School.
- Negotiations between Waluwarra traditional owners and other traditional owners groups in the region for Henry Dempsey’s ancestor’s grave site.
- Cultural Heritage Management Plan.
- Developed effective communication and negotiation processes to engage with stakeholder groups such as neighbouring traditional owner groups, government agencies, pastoral and mining industries to develop effective working relationships.
- Developed, negotiated and implement Memorandum of Agreements for Waluwarra lands.
- Developed a Waluwarra language dictionary.
- What examples can you provide on the positive impact of your program for the Indigenous community in your area?
- Sharing of traditional knowledge with the younger children has ensured that this knowledge is not lost for example at the Moonah Creek Hanging Tree the elders sat the children down and spoke about the history behind the tree.
- Dinner camps and camps on country are encouraging families to re-establish and maintain contact.
- Implementation of the Waluwarra Cultural Heritage Information Management System will ensure that all Waluwarra traditions, history and places are recorded and not lost for future generations.
- This Cultural Heritage Information Management Systems is also creating a sense of ownership within the group as well as staff and committee.
- What are some of the unexpected benefits to your community that have arisen from your project?
- Sense of ownership.
- Partnerships with other agencies for example Respect and Grow program with Incitec Pivot.
- Ideas being raised for example the establishment of a Cultural Heritage Centre at Dajarra.
- Creating working relationships with other traditional owners groups of the region.

Negatives against the Terms of Reference for the Senate Committee on Regional and Remote Indigenous Communities

- Government policies have been restrictive
- There has been a decrease in funding from the government which has decreased the organisations effectiveness
- Regional and remote indigenous communities sometimes totally rely on Government Policies & Funding for health, welfare, education, law and order. If these policies are not conducive to Aboriginal people then they are useless to the communities.
- How the Northern Territory Government policies affect our Queensland organisation is the increase in numbers of indigenous peoples crossing the border into Queensland to escape the emergency response policies in the Northern Territory. This increase in numbers puts a strain on our existing services and resources. Even though our organisation is a cultural heritage one people still seek our services in terms of advocacy, advice and referrals to the appropriate organisations. For example traditional funerals, people request from us travel assistance to return to country for traditional burial practices.
- In terms of employment and enterprise opportunities in remote indigenous communities since the closure of CDEP in many of our isolated communities, we lack employment opportunities and possible enterprise development in those communities. Lack of support for unemployed indigenous persons in these communities results in consultants being engaged that increases our financial burden because the trained employees are not available.