

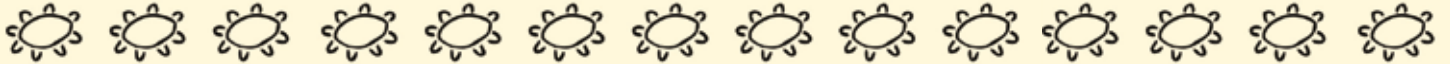
Koori Grapevine



December 2013 – February 2014 | Edition #9

"Well they were standin' on... Solid rock... Standin' on sacred ground, Livin' on borrowed time... And the winds of change... Were blowin' cold that night..." ~ Shane Howard – Goanna ~

Summer is here and let's hope we have more pleasant temperatures and less catastrophes than we had in spring. Thank you to all the volunteers and fire fighters for a fabulous effort throughout the tragic bushfires. Contributions are welcome for the quarterly Koori Grapevine, which is circulated widely throughout the community via print and electronic versions. Previous editions are now downloadable at www.lakemac.com.au. Follow the link under 'Services'. Contact Maree Edwards at medwards@lakemac.nsw.gov.au



A day in the life of Gelina Byers

Gelina is a very special young woman, who has just completed her Higher School Certificate at Belmont High School and looking to pursue a career in acting and public speaking. Wearing her favourite colour purple, including her hair and nails painted purple, Gelina proudly attended her school formal at

Fort Scratchley with her school friends and ironically, as I finalise this story, Gelina is celebrating her 18th birthday.

Her school days begin at 6am with one of her carers, either Fay or Viv, helping her to get ready for the day ahead. At 7.45am, she is picked up by bus and delivered to school where she meets up with her good friends Peter and Nolan, who have been great supporters of Gelina throughout her school years. She looks forward to the end of the day when she can come home to watch her favourite TV show, Home and Away. Another person Gelina talks highly of is her Teachers Aide, Robyn who is there to help her in many ways. Her favourite subjects are English and Music and as soon as she finally finishes school, Gelina would like to start singing and acting lessons. An extra passion that Gelina has discovered is the art of photography. Budding photographer

Jess Irwin, who also has severe cerebral palsy, recently visited her, which has inspired Gelina to pursue this option. As both of these girls are confined to a wheelchair, this is made possible by the aid of an attachment that connects to the chair and the camera, giving the girls the ability to use a camera.

Gelina's bloodlines flow with a blend of Koori and Murri nations and she has a passionate desire to discover more about her heritage and cultural background. She has a yearning to learn so much more about cerebral palsy and become a role model and spokesperson for her high needs condition, which although confines her to a unique chair, she manoeuvres it around quite independently.

With assistance from the Cerebral Palsy Alliance Community Participation Program, a State program supporting school leavers, and Employment Consultant, Paul Fowler, from Cerebral Palsy Alliance Employment Solutions, the aim is to support Gelina's transition from school to a training program that will suit her needs. I will also be working closely with Gelina, to help her connect with more Aboriginal community members, especially females, as well as looking into some courses that may help her dreams become reality.

After reading Gelina the final draft of this story, she asked if she could add how grateful she is to her Mum and Dad, her siblings and family, her friends and teachers, as she, in her words, *"is fully aware of how difficult things have been for them."* Please contact me if you would also like to support Gelina's transition from school to broader areas.

Citizen of the Year



Meet **Melinda Brown** last year's Lake Macquarie Citizen of the Year. Melinda was recognised for her outstanding leadership skills and commitment to improving literacy, numeracy and cultural awareness among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in Lake Macquarie.

Young Citizen of the Year



Meet **Andreena Kardamis** last year's Lake Macquarie Young Citizen of the Year. Andreena has been a driving force behind the Lake Macquarie Youth Advisory Council, and was recognised for the many hours she has devoted to community work, including Relay for Life and as an ambassador for Hunter Life Education.

Volunteer of the Year



Meet **Denise Heath** last year's Lake Macquarie Volunteer of the Year. Denise has volunteered with the Sugar Valley Neighbourhood Centre for 22 years. She comes to the Centre three times a week to cook, clean, distribute food donations and organise activities.

Community Group of the Year



Meet **Peter Gambriil**, President of Morisset and Toronto Meals on Wheels, last year's Lake Macquarie Community Group of the Year. The group was recognised as a leading provider of nutritious meals, providing support and care to frail aged and younger disabled residents and their carers.

Community Event of the Year



Meet **Anita Barker**, Chair of the Committee for Westlakes MARDOC Week, last year's Lake Macquarie Community Event of the Year. In 2012, this event attracted 500 people. This vibrant event provided an opportunity for the local Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community to engage in Aboriginal culture, history and traditions.

Nominate online or download a nomination form at www.lakemac.com.au/ausawards or pick up a nomination form from Council's Customer Service Centre, Main Road, Speers Point. For more information contact Council on 4921 0333. Nominations close on Monday 2 December 2013.





What is Cerebral Palsy?

Cerebral palsy (CP) is an umbrella term that refers to a group of disorders affecting a person's ability to move. It is a permanent life-long condition, but generally does not worsen over time. It is due to damage to the developing brain either during pregnancy or shortly after birth. Cerebral palsy affects people in different ways and can affect body movement, muscle control, muscle coordination, muscle tone, reflex, posture and balance. People who have cerebral palsy may also have visual, learning, hearing, speech, epilepsy and intellectual impairments. In Australia, there are approximately 34,000 people with cerebral palsy. Worldwide, the incidence of cerebral palsy is 1 in 500 births. Currently 17 million people in the world have cerebral palsy. For most people with cerebral palsy, the cause is unknown. There is no known cure for cerebral palsy. Every 15 hours an Australian child is born with cerebral palsy. ce•re•bral / of the brain and pal•sy / lack of muscle control - www.cerebralpalsy.org.au

Support the Youth of Lake Macquarie

Youth Week 2014 - Friday 4 April to Sunday 13 April

Lake Macquarie City Council is encouraging community groups and organisations to support young people of Lake Macquarie by hosting a program or event during Youth Week 2014. Council's Youth Week Funding Grant allows groups to apply for up to \$1000 to use towards their event or activity. Council's Manager Community Planning, John Ferguson, said Youth Week is an important event that celebrates young people and their contribution to the local community. "Involving the youth of Lake Macquarie in events and activities throughout the City is important to Council," Mr Ferguson said. "Youth Week helps to increase the community's awareness of young people and the issues that are important to them." Community groups, agencies and organisations who want to apply can download application form and guidelines at lakemac.com.au/youth-week.

Applications close at 5pm Friday 20 December 2013

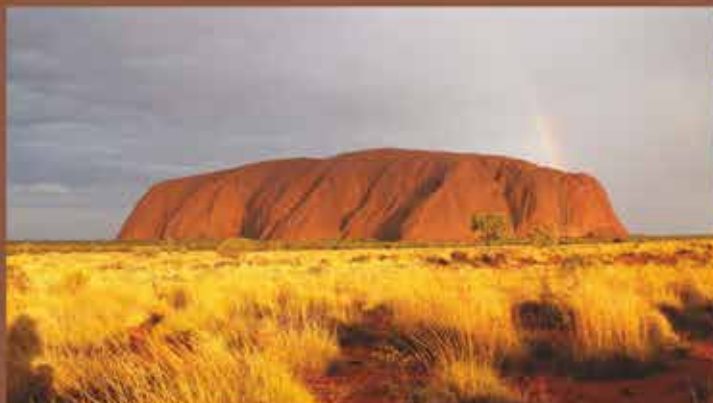
The inspiring awe of Uluru – Kata Tjuta!

No words or photos can ever describe the surreal sentiment of seeing, up close and personally, the allure of these towering majestic beauties in Australia's Red Centre. For my son Cody's 20th birthday in October, it was time for us to visit this unique and spiritual land. Four nights watching the change in hues of spectacular sunrises and sunsets and the blessing of a rare rainbow resting on her southern edge at our final sundown were stunning. The various walks around the outskirts are breathtaking and symbolic to the way Aboriginal people survived before European occupation. Despite requests from Elders and the Aboriginal community not to, many people still yearn to climb her; however, this is discouraged by locals and respected by most tourists.

A selection of free cultural activities like art workshops, yarn ups, didj sessions, boomerang and spear throwing, happens throughout the township on a daily basis. The Wakagetti dance troupe had the tourists, young and not so young, participating in the cultural dancing, with males imitating the kangaroo and females as emus. The majority of the Wakagetti group are Wonnarua lads (Hunter Valley and my bloodlines), and they display such cultural respect by acknowledging who taught them each dance before they perform for the public.

With the warmest Welcome to Country by Yankunytjatjara Elder Uncle Bob Randall, a world first event was witnessed under a star filled sky with the funny and talented James Morrison, together with the sensational world-renowned didj player William Barton, both backed up by the incredible Darwin Symphony Orchestra. There were not many dry eyes when Uncle Bob Randall performed his heart-rending song about the Stolen Generation, "Brown Skin Baby (They Took Me Away)". When he finished singing, an immense round red full moon rose on the eastern horizon.

Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park is Aboriginal land, jointly managed by the Anangu people and Parks Australia. The park is 1,325 square kilometres in size, and about 450 kilometres southwest by road from Alice Springs, however there are direct flights from Sydney to Uluru airport, which enables both Uluru and Kata Tjuta to be viewed from above. A \$25 pass will give you entry to the park for three days and needs to be purchased at the gate prior to entering the region. People from all over the world visit the World Heritage listed park, marvelling at its geological wonders, cultural significance and natural beauty. If you ever get the opportunity, I encourage all to visit this special and sacred place.





Westlakes NAIDOC receives another award

Congratulations to the Toronto NAIDOC event for taking out Category D - Environment Cultural & Heritage Award in the 2014 Keep Australia Beautiful Tidy Towns Sustainable Community Awards. Committee Chairperson, Anita Barker wishes to sincerely thank the Westlakes NAIDOC committee, the entire community, both local and those who travel from long distances, the sponsors of this annual event, as without their support, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community would be unable to display their cultural activities and performances. The organisers look forward to your continued support and better weather in July 2014.

15 Minutes of Fame - Kristy Crooks



NAME: Kristy Crooks

WHERE ARE YOU FROM: Born in Dubbo however I have lived in Newcastle most of my life. I do enjoy going back home every now and then to visit my family.

ORGANISATIONS YOU WORK FOR/ROLE: Aboriginal Health Education Officer – Hunter New England Local Health District

WHO'S IN YOUR FAMILY: I am the eldest of five and I have 11 nieces and nephews

FAVOURITE BUSH TUCKER: Kangaroo.

FAVOURITE SPORT: Basketball is my favourite sport. I play socially in the local competitions, and I am also a senior representative player for the Newcastle Hunters.

AMBITIONS IN LIFE: To work with and for my community to achieve positive health outcomes and to be a positive role model for younger people.

WHAT SERVICES CAN YOUR ORGANISATION PROVIDE TO ABORIGINAL PEOPLE IN LAKE MACQUARIE: The Aboriginal Health Unit provides health promotion and education to the Aboriginal community in the Greater Newcastle region. We work in both primary and high schools delivering the Shake A Leg program which is aimed at educating young people about healthy behaviours and the I-FIT program which is a free fitness program aimed to educate youth and adults on the various types of exercise and is delivered in group training sessions. We implement a number of health promotion activities throughout the year such as the Aboriginal Health Careers Expo, men's groups, NAIDOC events etc. The unit also provides support and advice that improves access to health services for our communities and works with other Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organisations to improve health outcomes.

CONGRATULATIONS to the Newcastle Yowies both men and women teams, who won the 2013 Koori Knockout!



Community Transport wears the Nikipa logo



Westlakes Elders members with Robyn Houston and Steve Warham from Transport NSW



Mercy Services/Lake Macquarie Community Transport has signed several of their vehicles with the logo of the new Nikipa Aboriginal Child and Family Centre in Toronto. The logo was created by well-known local Aboriginal artist Ray Smith, with guidance from the Local Reference Group of Nikipa Aboriginal Child and Family Centre. Mercy Services/Lake Macquarie Community Transport worked in alliance with Westlake Elders, Transport for New South Wales, Department of Family and Community Services and Nikipa management. The project has been made possible to acknowledge the association between Mercy Services/Lake Macquarie Community Transport and the local community. Aboriginal employees of Mercy Services have agreed to look after the grounds of this beautiful new building by taking care of the mowing and gardening on a regular basis. Mercy Services is excited to be involved with the Nikipa Child and Aboriginal Centre and congratulates everyone who worked so hard to achieve this wonderful result. By Robyn Houston from Mercy Services.



Upcoming Events - More events including Library and Art Gallery activities at: www.lakemac.com.au

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	CONTACT
Monday 2 December 10am - 2pm	International Day of People with a Disability 2013 (Free) Activities, entertainment and information. There will be a fancy dress competition and a free BBQ lunch! Please remember to bring hats and sunscreen. Remember to dress up. Prizes for the best dressed!	Speers Point Park	4921 0333
Thursday 5 December 10am - 11am	Think outside the Square: Cryptic Crosswords with David Astle (Free) Unlock the secrets of cryptic crosswords and puzzles at this entertaining and informative mini-workshop with word play guru David Astle	Swansea Library	4921 0780 Bookings essential
Sunday 8 December From 11am	Newcastle Permanent Carols by Candlelight (Free) 11am Family movie – Santa Claus The Movie (Rated G) 12.30pm Local entertainment on the main stage 12.30pm – 4pm Free kids activities 6pm Carols - featuring The McClymonts, Damien Leith and a visit from Santa 9pm Fireworks finale	Speers Point Park	4921 0333 The Newcastle Permanent Carols by Candlelight is supported by the Newcastle Permanent Building Society, NBN, The Star and Radio 2HD
Monday 9 December – Saturday 22 December (inc)	Christmas Countdown Various activities around the Christmas Tree	Speers Point Park Wednesday 11 Dec Aboriginal cultural activities from 10-1pm	4921 0333 or go to www.lakemac.com.au
23 November 2013 – 9 February 2014	I SPY: WINDOWS AND DOORS IN AND DOORS IN ART This engaging show includes the <i>Yuendumu Doors</i> , which provide unique insight into Dreamings of the Warpiri people of Yuendumu, NT	Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery	Laura Wilson on 4965 8260 or lwilson@lakemac.nsw.gov.au or Debbie Abraham on dabraham@lakemac.nsw.gov.au

Significant Dates

DATE	EVENT
3 December 2013	International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD) IDPwD is a United Nations sanctioned day that aims to promote an understanding of people with a disability and encourage support for their dignity, rights and wellbeing.
26 January 2014	Australia Day/Survival Day Some people choose to call Australia Day, Survival Day, which acknowledges Aboriginal people.
13 February 2014 – National Apology Day	National Apology Day Prime Minister Kevin Rudd moved a Motion of Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples in the House of Representatives on 13 February 2008, apologising for past laws, policies and practices that devastated Australia's First Nations Peoples – in particular members of the Stolen Generations.

Hunter NAIDOC Family Fun Day (HNFFD)



Young band 'Odd One Out' with NSW Fair Trading's Alan Mounsey

With support from NSW Fair Trading and a passionate committee of people from various local organisations, the HNFFD was held on Wednesday 25 September 2013 at National Park, Cooks Hill. Services from education, employment, housing and health provided valuable information and advice to the community and the stage rocked with musical acts from Odd One Out, Gear Jammers and Sharnie Fenwick.

A photo booth was set up to take family portraits, which were printed almost immediately, and both Newcastle and Lake Macquarie councils' libraries hosted various children's activities including

storytelling and a pop up playground. A jumping castle also entertained the young ones, as did various cultural displays. The Kiwanis, AES Newcastle and Wesley Mission fed the large crowd and the water boys were kept busy running around, refilling water stations on the hot 30-degree spring day and emergency services were on hand to show off their equipment.

Competitive junior and senior teams were formed for netball, touch footy and soccer tournaments and stallholders, participants and the community enjoyed the entire event. Many thanks to the sponsors, stallholders, committee, the community and all the volunteers who helped this event take place. Feel free to 'like' the Hunter NAIDOC Family Fun Day Facebook page, which has photos from the day and we hope to see you all again in 2014.