



stepping stones

Issue 9, March 2014

# Broadening Cultural Horizons



Indigenous  
community  
volunteers

# Welcome to Stepping Stones



Stephanie Harvey, CEO

**In this edition of Stepping Stones you'll read stories from people and communities who are full of drive and enthusiasm to turn their dreams in to reality.**

People like Mark and Karrie-Anne, high school sweethearts from Pinjarra in remote WA. On pages 6 & 7 you can read how they and the Murray Districts Aboriginal Association have harnessed the support of Pinjarra's Indigenous community and secured funding to restore its community centre as

a hub for local Noongar people. ICV volunteers are currently helping Mark and Karrie-Anne scope the work needed for refurbishing and renovating the community centre.

On page 10 & 11 you can read about the women of Bulman, a remote community 300km north east of Katherine in the NT. Members of Bulman's Women's Centre approached ICV with an idea for a sewing project, so they could improve their sewing skills and make and mend clothes for themselves and their community. Within just one week of spending time with ICV volunteer and experienced seamstress Ruth, they were already making clothing.

When people come together to share and learn from each other, deep connections and support networks are created that benefit entire communities (see story on pages 14 & 15). Recently Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women from across the Central west region of NSW gathered to share stories of what and how things happen in their own communities, and to learn new skills from each other.

Readers should be aware that this newsletter may contain images and names of deceased people, which are of cultural sensitivity and may cause distress to relatives and community. Please contact ICV if there are any images of this nature so that they can be removed.

You also have the opportunity to gain a unique and personal insight in to life in remote Aboriginal communities. Our Larapinta Culture 2014 experience is a chance to learn about the landscapes and traditions, native food and customs from local guides and hosts, all while raising vital funds for ICV (see pages 12 & 13).

In 2012 I participated in our very first Larapinta experience and it was incredible. The landscape proved to be more beautiful around every corner and beyond every ridge. I am very grateful to the Traditional Owners for allowing us to experience, for a brief moment, their country and their Dreaming. I encourage you to sign up for this year's experience and inspire others to join you.

**Building cultural connections is key to growing mutual respect and understanding.**



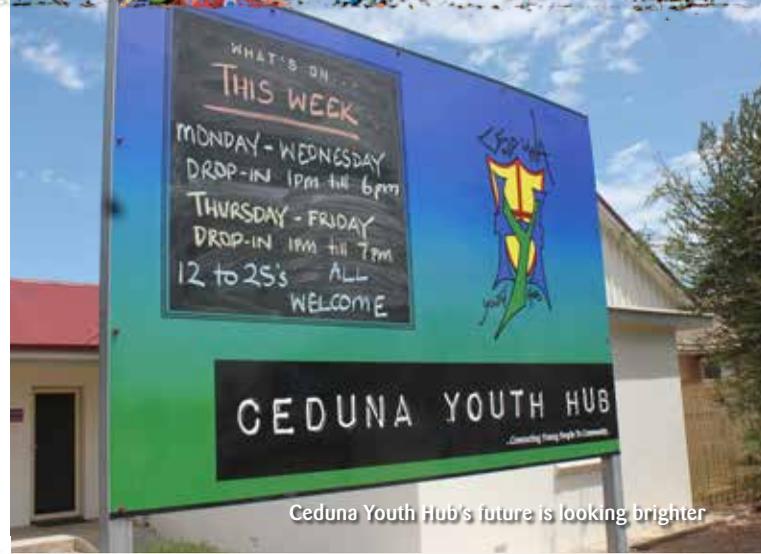
# Out and About

Ceduna Youth Hub engages local people from 12 to 25 years old with support for training, education, employment, health and wellbeing. The Hub's programs include organised recreation, learning and life skills programs, support, advocacy and

information on issues such as drugs and alcohol, mental health, suicide and depression. ICV has been invited to work with Youth Hub staff to enhance operations and ensure the Hub's ongoing financial viability.



**Youth Hub Funding Support, Ceduna**



Ceduna Youth Hub's future is looking brighter



Mislam and friends in the new kitchen

ICV is working with Palm Island community on a new commercial kitchen enterprise to provide meals for the community and visitors to the Island. ICV volunteers are helping with a business plan, budget and stock control, menus and establishing partnerships with suppliers. The community's long term goal is to build a sustainable business creating employment opportunities for locals and promoting grass roots economic growth.



**New commercial kitchen, Palm Island**

Willum Warrain Aboriginal Association (WWAA) is an important community gathering place providing a range of health and wellbeing programs including information, support and referral services to Aboriginal people in the Mornington Peninsula area.

WWAA's goal is to become more independent and self-resourced. To this end, ICV is helping with various projects such as strengthening governance, developing a marketing and fundraising strategy and building a website.



**Strengthening community links, Mornington Peninsula**



Glens Watts (Board member) and Deb Mellett (project officer) outside the new Peninsula Gathering Place



Karrie-Anne planting a tree outside the community centre

## High school sweethearts making dreams come true for their community

The Murray Districts Aboriginal Association (MDAA) was established in the late 1970s in Pinjarra, a small town in the Peel region of Western Australia. ICV has had the privilege of working with MDAA for the past three years. Over this time we have seen MDAA navigate its way through stiff opposition, complex challenges and institutionalised racism. Now, MDAA's dream of restoring its community centre as a hub for local Noongar people is finally being realised. MDAA was recently awarded \$350,000 from Lotterywest to renovate their community centre precinct. This success story shows what community development is all about: believing in a dream and having the passion and persistence to achieve it.

At the heart of this dream are Mark and Karrie-Anne, high school sweethearts from Pinjarra. Over the years they have harnessed the support of Pinjarra's Indigenous community and have worked hard to achieve some significant milestones for MDAA.

Bindjareb Park precinct is a 1.7ha landholding and brick building on the site of a former Aboriginal Reserve, where many local Indigenous people lived. Currently in a state of disrepair, work is now underway to return the precinct to the hub it was in the past – a centre for local Noongar people to meet and engage in community activities and cultural events. The site also has the potential to be somewhere local people can develop business enterprises in the future.

To support them in reaching their development goals, ICV volunteers have helped in many ways:

- Installing a new roof on the community centre building
- Installing a half sized basketball court
- Strengthening internal governance and organisational capacity

ICV is currently helping MDAA scope the work needed for refurbishing and renovating the community centre. We look forward to a grand re-opening in the not too distant future, and to a long and prosperous relationship with MDAA as they continue to go from strength to strength.

Doyen (ICV) with Theo, repairing the roof



# Happy Healthy Communities

Photos courtesy of Rage Cage [www.ragecage.com.au](http://www.ragecage.com.au)

Yalgoo, a remote community 500km north of Perth, WA, is celebrating the much-anticipated opening of its new recreational centre. ICV volunteers Rosalind and Allan helped secure funding for the centre. ICV continues to support Yalgoo with community development activities and we look forward to celebrating more successes together in the future.





Jennifer with new shorts she made for her daughter

## New skills and new clothes for remote NT community

Bulman is a large community of around 500 mostly Aboriginal people some 300km north east of Katherine in the Northern Territory. It also provides important resources to nearby smaller communities and homeland centres and outstations.

Bulman Women's Centre has been operating for a while now with many local women involved in different activities. They are understandably very proud of their centre and its programs which enable women to build their skills in different areas. So when centre coordinator Jill approached ICV with an idea for a sewing program, ICV was delighted to get involved.

ICV staff spent time with Jill and the women exploring their idea further. The women were particularly keen to learn basic sewing and dressmaking skills, with their goal being to make and mend clothes for themselves and their community.

Volunteer Ruth's three day trip from the east coast of NSW via Sydney, Darwin and Katherine was only the start of her journey. During her three weeks in Bulman, Ruth learned just as much as she taught.

Ruth's openness and positivity contributed to a great partnership approach to the project. She found the women of the community to be friendly, caring and keen to learn, which has resulted in lasting friendships and fond memories.

For their part, the women learned to design basic dress patterns, use different stitches, mend and repair clothes and make garments from scratch. They also learned how to operate and maintain a sewing machine. After just one week with Ruth, the women were already making clothing.

The women's new skills mean they are able to provide new and cheap clothing to local children, and to sell to the local community store and through the newly opened Op shop.

The women have invited Ruth back to help them increase their skills and make items to sell at the annual Walaman Festival this year.

"We were very pleased with the support Ruth gave us," says Women's Centre Coordinator Jill. "The ladies were very pleased with the outcomes from the project too. They all worked well with Ruth and now they are very happy and proud of their achievements. They look forward to strengthening their skills and maybe creating a community market to supply and sell products."



Learning the art of sewing

# Larapinta Culture Experience

20-27 July 2014



**“You get a rare chance to experience the country and at the same time, it’s an educational experience. We had an Aboriginal family company as our guides. We lived on their Country, we heard their stories, and they helped us understand Aboriginal law. I’d encourage everyone and anyone to do it if they can, it was something very special.”**

Bill Armstrong, ICV Co Chair and Larapinta 2013 participant

Larapinta Culture is a unique and authentic experience of Indigenous life in the Australian outback. Incorporating cultural interaction with Traditional Owners and homelands, Larapinta Culture offers a deeper, richer experience of Australia and Indigenous culture.



- Follow in the footsteps of the Arrernte and Luritja tribes and experience the wild and rugged landscapes made famous by the paintings of Albert Namatjira
- Gain a deeper appreciation of Aboriginal culture as you learn about the landscapes and traditions, native food and customs from our local guides and hosts
- Experience the living desert landscape and its wild and remote beauty as you trek the best sections of Larapinta Trail
- Marvel at the breathtaking night-time skies of this remote region when you camp out under millions of stars
- Help fund community development projects that improve quality of life, health, social and economic wellbeing for Indigenous people

**For more information**  
email [donate@icv.com.au](mailto:donate@icv.com.au)  
or call 1800 639 565.





Participants celebrating the inaugural Women's Gathering

# Communities in Focus

## Regional Gathering creates new opportunities and lasting connections for Indigenous women

Women play a very important role in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Creating a culturally supportive environment in which they can explore issues that affect their lives and discuss the needs and wants of their communities is key to creating positive, lasting change.

In November, more than 100 Indigenous women came together from across NSW for the inaugural Central West and Murdi Paaki Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Gathering.

The gathering was an opportunity for them to share perspectives and exchange information, and to come up with innovative ideas and strategies to improve their lives and help their communities. Women from remote and isolated communities connected with other organisations and communities and established new support networks.

Topics for sessions and workshops included culture, health, education and financial opportunities, energy efficiency, trans-generational trauma, as well as weaving and creative art workshops. The sessions were facilitated by the Department of Fair Trading, Family Planning, the Department of Education, TAFE, The Smith Family and ICV.

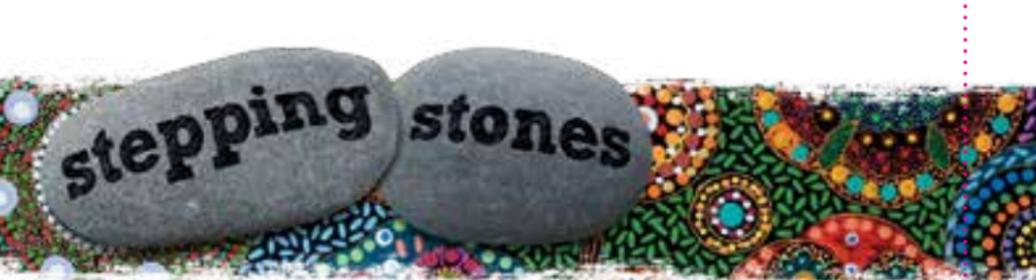
ICV's NSW Regional Coordinator Mel Shipp was part of the Steering Committee, and ICV staff volunteered their time to help ensure the gathering ran smoothly.

The gathering was a huge success and will become an annual event. The women appreciated the opportunity to come together, connect, share stories and yarn about what's important to them and their communities.

"I can't wait for the next one, it was amazing," says Kim Peters, Sector Development Officer at ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS). "We just don't realise how important it is for us to take time out for ourselves and this is what the gathering meant to me. Many connections and networks were made with many healthy and happy conversations generated. All I can say is that it was an awesome uplifting rejuvenating experience."



The Women's Gathering Steering Committee



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