stepping stones

ISSUE 25 · APRIL 2019

APUTULA HAS A PLAN

CEO MESSAGE

STEPHANIE HARVEY, CEO

I'm really grateful to have you by our side. Your generosity gives our community-driven projects a lasting impact.

It means Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can use their own strengths and local knowledge to achieve community goals – and keep control of their own development decisions. Thank you for the support you've shown to Indigenous Community Volunteers.

On page 6 you can read about the recently transformed Littlewell Heritage Site now open for visitors in the heart of the Midwest.

There's also a great story on page 8 about how the remote town of Aputula (south of Alice Springs) came up with an idea to encourage tourists to stop in for a visit.

Indigenous community volunteers

Readers should be aware that this newsletter may contain images and names of deceased people.

Honeyants artwork courtesy of Rowena Lynch and Keringke Arts
Cover photo: ICV Volunteer Ailsa is working with Glenis Little, Director of Midwest Yamaji Aboriginal Music Inc, to organise the First Nations Festival.

Then on page 14 and 15 you can meet two special people – one of our amazing volunteers and a fantastic member of our Supporter Relationships Team.

You're a big part of building a brighter future with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. I'm thrilled to share with you the community success stories made possible with your generous support.

Your generosity gives our community-driven projects a lasting impact

Official opening of the Littlewell-Mingenew Aboriginal Reserve, WA

One Team, One Dream

Our staff conference *One Team, One Dream* held late last year, was the first time in five years that our staff could come together to share, learn and inspire each other with stories of our work with Aboriginal communities around Australia.

We spent an afternoon volunteering at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands preparing a bush tucker garden to educate school groups and visits and painting artworks to honour the birds and animals who make the wetlands their home. We were thrilled to be invited back in February for the installation of the artwork, which will be seen by up to 100,000 people a year. Wetlands Manager Lori Gould said, "*We are very privileged. Indigenous Community Volunteers came and painted some beautiful murals for our building, and the bush tucker garden looks fabulous. We can't thank you enough.*"

"We need to do things from the bottom up and ICV has provided direct support to the Aputula Aboriginal Corporation on the ground, achieving great results quickly."

APUTULA ABORIGINAL CORPORATION BOARD MEMBER

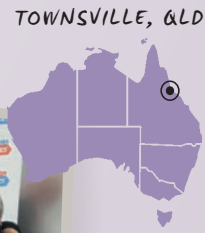
Braving wild weather in Townsville

ICV Community Development Officers, Eddie and Gwen, travelled to Townsville earlier this year to discuss projects with community members. However, Townsville was experiencing catastrophic rain and flooding. Only the community members within a safe distance were able to join the meeting. Thankfully, Eddie and Gwen were still able to meet with the Garbutt Magpies (more about them on page 10!) and Indigenous radio station 4KIG about upcoming projects. Despite the challenges of this trip, Gwen and Eddie look forward to returning to Townsville for more community meetings.

Aputula has a plan

Aputula (formerly Finke) is a remote Aboriginal community located south of Alice Springs. The Aputula Aboriginal Corporation (AAC) works to promote a healthier lifestyle to the people in the community and governs the community's local store. The community members on the AAC Board invited ICV to help plan the future of the Aputula community by updating their 5-year Business Plan. They shared how uplifting it was to make the Business Plan about the Aputula people, knowing it could help developments for the community's growth, future and sustainability. You can read more about Aputula on page 8!

The people who braved the weather to attend the community meeting.



LITTLEWELL IS NOW OPEN FOR VISITORS

A special place of belonging, heritage and healing.

On the outskirts of Mingenew, in the heart of the Midwest, there is a former Aboriginal Reserve called Littlewell. Back in 2010, a group of 30 Elders and former residents from the reserve started the Littlewell Working Group with the vision to protect the reserve as a place of belonging, history, heritage and healing.

For the last 8 years, the group have been working hard to create a heritage trail to celebrate and commemorate the lives and stories of the Aboriginal families who resided there. Their hope was for a legacy to inform the wider community about the history of Aboriginal Reserves in the Midwest.

With the support of people like you, ICV has worked in partnership with the Littlewell Working Group and the Mingenew Shire since 2014 to preserve the stories of Elders. Together, we've created an online video resource to make it easy for people to access information about the reserve and watch the stories of Elders and families who lived there.

The working group also asked the Mingenew Shire and ICV to help secure funding which we were able to do through Lotterywest. This funding helped set up a walking trail and install interpretative signage at stopping points around the Littlewell Heritage Site.

We're excited to share that the official opening ceremony of the Littlewell Heritage Site took place on 15th March. Community members and tourists are now invited to visit the Site and share in its rich history.

"All our memories go back to the Littlewell Reserve… when we get together, all our stories come out.

Our spirits will now be able to rest in peace, knowing that the stories will always be here and will always live on.

To have a place now to bring our families – to say this is your history and your culture – is very important."

- THOMAS CAMERON, LITTLEWELL SPOKESPERSON

HOW TO ATTRACT VISITORS TO A REMOTE TOWN

Many hands make light work to set up gardens for Aputula's iconic buildings.

Aputula is no longer just a place for briefly passing through.

A significant number of tourists travel through the small town of Aputula, 317 kms south of Alice Springs. People often only stop for a few minutes to refuel before continuing their journey.

Following a number of successful projects in Aputula, a landscaping project was developed with local community development program participants and community members. They asked us to work with them and the Aputula Aboriginal Corporation (AAC) to assist with the construction of a hedge/garden bed around significant buildings in the community. They hoped this would be a welcoming space and would encourage tourists to spend time in the town instead of just passing through.

The AAC plan was to have a tourist walk for visitors to view prime heritage buildings within the community. For the tourist walk to be a successful attraction, significant places like the old pub in the centre of the town and the local store across the road needed some beautification. We worked with Catholic Care NT and the AAC to set out goals and timeframes plus rally together the people and tools required to bring these much-loved buildings back to life.

Over the next two weeks, ICV volunteer Barry worked with Aputula community members to build beautiful raised garden beds around the front of both the pub and store. The group worked together getting their hands dirty to put in plants and set up irrigation.

We were so happy to hear the feedback that community members shared with Tania, ICV's Community Development Officer – the community was delighted with the result of the project and so pleased to have Barry's support and expertise.

Thanks to your support, the Aputula town centre pub and store are now impressive icons encouraging tourists to stay awhile and help the community thrive as a visiting spot.

A PLACE FOR THE GARBUTT BOMBERS TO CALL HOME

Back Row: John MacDonald, Francis Tapim, Alec Illin Junior.
Front row: Michael Schwartz, Colin Stafford

TOWNSVILLE, QLD

The land acquisition project for the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander AFL community of Townsville.

ICV has been working with the Garbutt Bombers since 2016 on their dream to secure a long-term lease over land so they can have their own club house and ground for the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander AFL community of Townsville.

For years, the Garbutt Magpies Sporting and Cultural Association (Garbutt), who operate the juniors known as the Bombers, had been promised the land but the club did not have the resources and knowledge to undertake the process of officially securing it.

ICV has worked with Garbutt on many activities in the past including a Strategic Plan and obtaining DGR status to make financial support tax deductible.

ICV volunteer Colin has been working with the Bombers Committee to lobby the government to secure the land. After more than 18 months of work on this, we're pleased to share some of the successes in this long process.

1. **Legally acquiring the land**
   Official notification from the QLD State Government has been received to say the land is able to be leased for 30 years by the Bombers.
2. **Understanding and following correct legal processes to access the land**
   ICV staff and volunteers have been working alongside the Bombers to share knowledge on legal processes.
3. **Developing a site plan for the project**
   ICV was able to access the Pro Bono support of architectural services to draw up site plans.
4. **Completing site cost analysis**
   A draft costing has been developed with more detailed calculations and analysis currently underway.
5. **Finalising a lease with Townsville Council**
   Garbutt is seeking direct support from the QLD State Ministers Office to finalise a lease agreement.

Thank you for supporting us so we can continue working with Garbutt in their quest to have their own land for the Bombers. We will keep you updated on this project as we make progress!

HEALING COUNTRY WITH CULTURAL FIRE

UPDATE

ICV volunteer, Rebecca, and Community Development Officer, Ruth, at Bundanon

Firesticks Alliance has now released its official report of the 2018 National Indigenous Fire Workshop.

In the last issue of Stepping Stones we shared a story about the National Indigenous Fire Workshop hosted by Bundanon Trust and Mudjingaalbaraga Firesticks, on Yuin Country.

Ruth, ICV Community Development Officer,was invited to assist with the workshop's logistics and promotion. ICV volunteer Rebecca helped the Firesticks Alliance to create a detailed report and evaluation of the workshop.

Around 400 local and interstate guests attended the July event to learn about managing Country with 'good fire'. This was the first time the workshop had been held away from its birthplace in Cape York and it was a huge success.

Firesticks has also produced a beautiful short film so you can see the amazing healing power of fire for Country and culture in action. It's a great chance to hear the learnings of the cultural fire masterclasses directly from the people involved.

Thank you for supporting us to be part of a cultural practice that is many thousands of years old, and one that was almost lost when the traditional caretakers of Australia were taken off Country. With your support and people around the nation working together, cultural fire practices are now being restored amongst Aboriginal communities.

We encourage you to have a look at the Firesticks report and film on their website www.firesticks.org.au

"*This volunteering experience for me has been so powerful it is hard to put into words. Volunteering to write the report for the 2018 National Indigenous Fire Workshop was a complete honour for me. I knew little about this ancient and sophisticated practice before. I attended the full workshop which shared just some of the elements of the intricate practice of cultural fire management. This is a practice that kept Country healthy for thousands of years. It is a practice that is being revived, and if it is supported, could not only heal our landscape but contribute to healing nations in the process. The importance of cultural burning cannot be overstated and through the work of ICV, in partnership with the Firesticks Alliance and so many others, this report is now publicly available so that this message can be shared.*"

– ICV VOLUNTEER, REBECCA

Some of the National Indigenous Fire Workshop participants

VOLUNTEER PROFILE

Ailsa is working with Evelyn McKay from Be My Koorda (an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family disability support group in Perth) to provide mentoring, planning and funding support.

MEET AILSA,
one of our volunteers

What motivated you to become a volunteer with ICV?
I worked with a lot of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the community sector. When I retired, I wanted to keep building these connections and friendships.

What have you found most rewarding through your experiences volunteering with ICV?
Meeting new people. When a project progresses, and a group or community can achieve their goals you get a "buzz" out of knowing you helped in some way.

What is something you have learnt through your experience?
How difficult it can be for new groups and projects to gain support and funding.

What words of encouragement do you have for others thinking of volunteering with ICV?
You get back as much as you give. It's satisfying and interesting work especially when you meet lots of people and learn from them. Volunteering can give you a great appreciation for the different life experiences people have.

Please call us on **1800 819 542** or email **volunteer@icv.com.au** to find out how you can make a difference by volunteering for ICV.

STAFF PROFILE

MEET KESSIE,

a member of our staff

We have many big-hearted volunteers and donors who help provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with access to practical, hands-on partnerships to achieve their dreams.

Today, we'd like to introduce you to Kessie. Kessie is a member of our wonderful Supporter Relationships Team. She is the Supporter Relationships Trainee and since starting her job at ICV, she has studied for a Certificate III in Business, which she successfully completed in January 2019. Kessie was born in Canberra, and her family comes from the Warumungu group in the Northern Territory. Outside of work, Kessie enjoys Aboriginal dot painting and volunteering.

Kessie, along with Nalin and Alicia, make up our Supporter Relationships Team based in our national office in Canberra. They love to speak with supporters and enjoy reading the lovely messages.

Every year, ICV relies heavily on the generosity of supporters. We have a deep respect for every one of you and we thank you sincerely.

PLEASE GIVE WHAT YOU CAN. THANK YOU

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