



**DHARRIWAA  
ELDERS GROUP**



## Information regarding Walgett Pool Day 30 November 2019

The Pool Day held in Walgett 30 November 2019 had many purposes. Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service ("WAMS") and Dharriwaa Elders Group ("DEG") – both long-standing Walgett Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations ("ACCOs") value the swimming pool highly for health and wellbeing and recognise the important activity for children that the pool provides. Most Walgett services for children and families try to organise pool activities over the hot summer months to "beat the heat".

WAMS Goonimoo chose to conduct a Pool Day to launch a new child injury prevention program it is undertaking in 2020 with UNSW School of Public Health and Community Medicine. Dharriwaa Elders Group and its Yuwaya Ngarra-li UNSW partnership team chose to conduct a Pool Day to continue its Community Data gathering activity, building on a successful pool day conducted in 2018. The two strong local ACCOs combined resources, and Goonimoo invited Mission Australia and Walgett PCYC to join in. The day was attended by 388 people from 11am – 5pm and a really positive vibe was experienced by all.

200 sausages, steaks, potato & green salads, watermelon, rockmelon, apples, oranges and bananas were served throughout the day. Vivid zinc cream colours were painted on faces and sunscreen made available in great quantity by WAMS. Drinking water was provided and two rounds of iceblocks were distributed. Patty Walford drew the raffle winner - Natalie Middleton, who won a family season's pass to the pool donated by the child injury prevention program. 400 giveaway Pool bags containing blow-up balls, fans, sunglasses, frisbees and water bottles were quickly snapped up. PCYC staff provided music which lifted the environment, while Mission Australia performed BBQ duty.

Water safety and harmony was maintained by the constant presence of many team members patrolling the pool perimeters, troubleshooting as they went, answering questions and always receiving compliments.

### **WAMS Goonimoo launches a new child injury prevention program**

WAMS Goonimoo delivers a Playgroup service<sup>1</sup> to Walgett, Carinda and Collarenebri. Playgroups are scheduled for all NSW school terms for families with Children 0-5 years to attend. The sessions foster a play-based learning environment to build on Early Childhood Education and learning. All sessions role-model positive play techniques from educators that allow parents to participate and model positive behaviours to build confident parenting skills. Goonimoo has worked in partnerships with Biraleegal Preschool, Collarenebri Preschool and the Collarenebri Central School to provide positive transition and to build strong pathways and engagement for children and their families prior to attending school.

During 2019, WAMS Goonimoo has been working with child injury prevention experts from UNSW School of Public Health and Medicine, introduced through the DEG's Yuwaya Ngarra-li UNSW partnership, to co-design an evidence-based program that will prevent child injury. In 2020 when Goonimoo will be delivering the new program, these collaborators will evaluate its progress to inform implementation. Their final evaluation work will be

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<sup>1</sup> <http://walgettams.com.au/goonimoo-mobile-childrens-services.html>



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ELDERS GROUP



undertaken in 2021 and will be used to support WAMS's advocacy to continue the program in future years.

The Child Injury Prevention Project ("CHIPP") collaborators are the School of Public Health and Community Medicine at the University of New South Wales (UNSW), Kidsafe NSW, The George Institute for Global Health and the University of Wollongong. The 18 month CHIPP co-design and implementation is made possible by supplementing WAMS existing resources with funds from the Australian Prevention Partnership Centre (TAPPC).

The CHIPP program will incorporate learning about safety in the water, on the road, at home, and while playing sport. Regular feedback will be sought from parents about ways to improve the program.

### **DEG's Yuwaya Ngarra-li team conducted community data gathering**

Yuwaya Ngarra-li is a community-led partnership between the Dharriwaa Elders Group and UNSW.

The purpose of Yuwaya Ngarra-li ("YN") is for the Dharriwaa Elders Group and UNSW to work in partnership to improve the wellbeing, social, built and physical environment and life pathways of Aboriginal people in Walgett through collaborating with government, philanthropy and community organisations on evidence-based initiatives, research and capacity building, and to evaluate this model of CommUNITY-Led Development.

Integral to this work are processes of reflection and analysis by the YN team, DEG Elders, Walgett collaborators and community. In December 2018, YN conducted community data gathering activities with different age groups, and interviews with children were undertaken at a Pool Day. At the 2019 Pool Day, an Elders tent and meals were provided, the YN distributed information to parents about last year's children's interviews, and new interviews were conducted with Walgett children aged 10 – 17 by two experienced Aboriginal researchers supported by YN's Director of Research and Evaluation. This will be followed up with Elders and others in February 2020 when the YN team will provide a more comprehensive feedback of the 2018 and some of the 2019 findings to selected participants, their families and YN Walgett collaborators.

### **Ingredients for success**

Free pool entry, food, water, sunscreen, a raffle and novelty giveaways helped the organisations treat our community on the Pool Day. Music, the mingling of well-known local staff constantly through the crowds, and pool supervision provided additional good vibes and water safety. Rubbish was collected regularly so that the environment was kept clean and packing up at the end of the day was not onerous.

Other important ingredients for success included good event promotion and the provision of transport to and from the pool, including for families with young children in specially – hired car seats for the event.

DEG staff provided transport for 6-7 busloads of families from Gingie, Namoi and Town to and from the pool using the Elders' bus and the Yuwaya Ngarra-li UNSW team's people mover.



**DHARRIWAA  
ELDERS GROUP**



WAMS Goonimoo promoted the pool day relentlessly in its playgroups, emailed to all Goonimoo playgroup contacts, each month sending a “Save the Date” notice to families. Goonimoo staff walked Walgett’s streets, putting fliers in shop windows and displayed a promotional stand containing the flier and promo bag contents in WAMS’s three premises in Fox St, Wee Waa St and Pitt Sts. Goonimoo also arranged to have the flier distributed to all parents through the schools while both DEG and WAMS staff shared the flier on social media. DEG’s YN staff also visited parents in the weeks leading up to the day in order to promote and explain YN’s community data gathering and obtain formal parental and carer consents.

Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service and Dharrriwaa Elders Group express their heartfelt thanks to everyone who made the Walgett Pool Day 2019 a raging success, especially Vanessa and Kimble Riley from Walgett Pool, and hardworking staff from WAMS, DEG, Yuwaya Ngarra-li Walgett and UNSW, CHIPP team UNSW, Mission Australia and Walgett PCYC.

The staff from **Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service** present at Pool day:

1. Amy Townsend (Goonimoo Manager)
2. Tara Smith (Goonimoo Assistant)
3. Katherine Thurston (Assets Register Officer)

The staff from **UNSW CHIPP collaborators** present at Pool day:

1. Dr Melanie Andersen (Research Fellow School of Public Health and Community Medicine UNSW (Honorary Fellow, The George Institute for Global Health))
2. Nellie Pollard-Wharton (PhD candidate School of Public Health and Community Medicine UNSW)

The staff from **Dharrriwaa Elders Group** present at Pool day:

1. Vanessa Hickey (Yuwaya Ngarra-li Project Officer)
2. Brendan Welsh (Yuwaya Ngarra-li Project Officer/ DEG Project Officer)
3. Wendy Spencer (DEG Project Manager/ Yuwaya Ngarra-li Partnership Manager Walgett)
4. Robyn Morgan (DEG Elders Support Officer)

The **UNSW Yuwaya Ngarra-li** staff present at Pool day:

1. Peta MacGillivray (Yuwaya Ngarra-li Partnership Manager UNSW)
2. Dr Ruth McCausland (Director of Evaluation and Research)
3. Pauline Futeran (Yuwaya Ngarra-li Projects Coordinator)
4. Pru Mewburn (Yuwaya Ngarra-li Community Data Gathering Research Assistant)

The **Mission Australia** staff who were working on the day to cook and serve the BBQ were:



DHARRIWAA  
ELDERS GROUP



Gary Peterson from Brewarrina men's safe house and Susan Taber Women's Refuge Barwon Cottage, Walgett.

The **Walgett PCYC staff** who were providing the music on the day were:

Reburdah Dennis, and sister Chloe Dennis.