

**NAIDOC WEEK**

**OPENING**

*Ceremony*

**WALGETT RSL HALL**

**8.7.2024**

NAIDOC Week celebrations are an opportunity for everyone to come together and share the week of celebrations, embracing and recognising the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal people in the Walgett Shire.

The Opening Ceremony saw approximately 40 community members in attendance including:

DEG

Walgett AMS

Walgett Police

PCYC

Lands Council

Walgett Shire Council

Mission Australia

Mackillop Family Worker Services



George McCormack was the MC for the event, Aunty Fay Green OAM, as the community Elder opened the NAIDOC with a warm welcome to country with Dianne Kennedy in her support.

PCYC performed an Aboriginal Dance.





Walgett Shire Council Mayor, Jasen Ramien, also provided a speech acknowledging the significance of this special week for Aboriginal people and also praising the efforts of local organisations such as the Lands Council in Collarenebri for the keeping of the scarred trees, DEG for preserving local Aboriginal artefacts and knowledge and to WAMS for the Freedom Ride Park and the revitalisation of Gamilaraay Language that has been introduced across the organisation.

The Police were also invited to say some words that reflected working within an Aboriginal community that was said to be highlighted as one of the most rewarding experiences as mentioned by the police spokesperson. Walgett has been a great experience so far and it's been a pleasure to see the strengths of the people and organisations working together with the adversities and challenges which shows the resilience and strengths within the community.



Megan Dickon, General Manager for the Walgett Shire Council, welcomed the community, shared her enthusiasm for being a part of the community and so far it's been 12 months since she had taken up the position with the WSC. Megan shared her story of growing up in the Northern Territory and experiences working with Aboriginal stockmen and that being a very positive lived experience. Megan went on to share the Art projects (Large painted canvases on display) that were facilitated and led by Frank Wright across the Shire. Megan says she is still getting out and about across the Shire across the communities and sees this NAIDOC week as an opportunity to meet more people and services in these areas.





The NAIDOC cake was presented and cut by local Elders, Stephen Dennis, Aunty Fay Green OAM, Aunty Elizabeth Peters with support from Mayor Jasen Ramien and General Manager Megan Dixon.

WAMS Staff in attendance were:

Christine Corby AM

Leanne Baton

Mary Purse

Christine Hill

Amy Townsend

Sarah Dowse

Eathan Dickson

Christopher Omoruanga

Louann Brown

