

NEWSLETTER - ISSUE 2 OF 2021 (APRIL)

# BLACKMAIL

Blue Mountains Aboriginal Culture & Resource Centre

## Message From Chief Executive Officer

Yaama all,

I hope everyone is doing well. Since our last Blackmail, it is really exciting that our programs are returning, albeit with covid restrictions limiting participant numbers. We have received positive feedback from our community that our 2021 programs are uplifting, healing and most importantly making people happy. Also since our last edition, Jade Pyle, Elders Support Worker left ACRC. We thank Jade for her work at ACRC and wish her all the best. Aunty Elly Chatfield will be in the Elders Support Worker role temporarily.

In my piece in Blackmail this edition, I am going to write about working in and for Aboriginal communities. As you may know, my father is Uncle Ray Leslie, a Kamilaroi Elder in his late 70s who lives in Western Sydney. Years ago when just starting out in my career, Dad gave me some advice: 'Never work in Aboriginal Affairs'. It struck me as unusual as I had watched him work non-stop with and for Aboriginal communities ever since I can remember. Even when he gave me that advice, he was sitting on multiple committees and was working very long hours, and his phone never stopped ringing. As a young person at the time, it was confusing to me that on one hand, Dad was saying not to work in and for Aboriginal communities, but on the other hand he continued to keep pushing himself, on and on, to do what he could to contribute to Aboriginal peoples having more services, more rights and overall a better life. continued over page.....

.. ***We acknowledge the Darug and Gundungurra people as the Traditional Custodians of the land in which we live and work.***

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Please call Paul:

0427 710 708



Dad faced a lot of racism from non-Aboriginal people and major challenges and barriers in his work but he kept on going. He told me that despite all of this, the hardest challenge he faced was the criticism and lateral violence from other Aboriginal peoples. It didn't make sense to him that he received this type of treatment, as he worked such long hours (very often as a volunteer), often to the detriment of his health and to his time with our family.

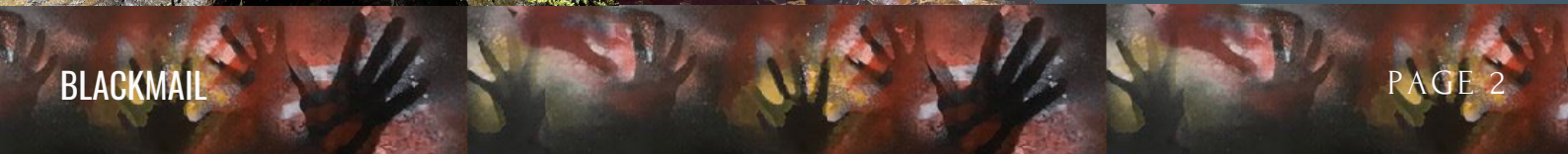
The story does not have a happy ending. Dad got burnt out from this work and had to withdraw from a lot of his work in the community. Why do you think Dad kept going despite all of the challenges, to the point where he burnt out? Because he loved the community, he was driven and motivated to do what he could to help others. As a man in his late 70s now, he has several Disabilities and health issues that impact on him. He is however a man of great strength and resilience and still has that 'fire in his belly' and still advocates where he can for Aboriginal peoples.

I didn't take Dad's advice. I have worked for over 30 years in Aboriginal services. Dad was right. The same challenges that he faced are the same challenges I have faced and still facing. I've also watched other Aboriginal leaders and peoples working in and for Aboriginal communities that face the same.

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# Waterfalls flowing beautifully from the recent rainfalls

PHOTOS FROM CATH RENDELL & BECKY CHATFIELD



Since I commenced full time work at ACRC (1st January 2021), I have received multiple abusive phone messages left on my phone, phone calls and emails from community members challenging my decisions as well as strong messages of how I, and others working at ACRC should do their job. Only this week, I have been told that one of our community members has stated that ACRC is a 'white organisation' and that ACRC only has 'white people working there". This is really disheartening to me as an Aboriginal leader, leading a dedicated Aboriginal small team who service a wide area and large community. Someone said to me earlier this year that it is normal to have this treatment. I reject this statement and say: why should this be normal practice?

Lets change this up to create a different normal, where we can yarn about our concerns openly, around a circle and most importantly together. If you do have any concerns or complaints, we have a Complaints Resolution and Feedback Procedure you can access from our website [www.acrc.org.au](http://www.acrc.org.au) You are welcome to call ACRC to voice your concerns or request a meeting with me to discuss. In May, I will be organising some yarn-ups for community so keep an eye out on Facebook for these.

I thank all those that worked for all who have worked tirelessly to create and build ACRC to what it is today. Let us keep forging on together not just for ourselves but for the generation that follows us.

Until next time,  
Lana, Chief Executive Officer

**'Lets change this up to create a different normal, where we can yarn about our concerns openly, around a circle and most importantly together'**

**Dr Lana Leslie,  
CEO of ACRC**





# Message From Board

## Annual General Meeting (AGM) Information

The Board are excited to share the news that we are now Covid safe to fulfil our requirements and hold our 2019/2020 AGM's. The date is set for the 1st May. Members of ACRC, please put the date in your calendar. You will receive further details about the location and time in the official notice that will be posted or emailed out to you. We are looking forward to sharing with you, our trials and tribulations since 2019 and are extremely excited to finally be able to come together and share in the spirit of: Yanamai Budyari Gumada – to go/walk with good spirit

## Update of Contact Details for Members and Blackmail Subscribers

A big call out to our Members and Blackmail avid subscribers to check in with ACRC that your contact details are up to date. We want to ensure you are kept in the loop with the latest news and information from ACRC. If you are reading this message and you have moved house and/or changed your phone number recently, we would love to hear from you. You can get in touch with us by emailing, providing the information to our staff or ringing and making an appointment to come down personally to the office to share your contact details.

## Supporting the Revitalisation of Languages

We continue in our quest to collate greetings and farewell language words for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community for an art piece. Some time ago, we shared the Dharug words:

Warami for Hello/gudday and Yanu for I go/see you. (until next time)

Lana Leslie (CEO) and Aunty Pat Field regularly greet and farewell in their Gamilaraay language: Yaama for hello/gudday and yaalu for I go/see you

What is the greeting and farewell words in your language? We would love to hear from you. Please send an email, call, leave a note at ACRC, or follow up with a staff member. There is no timeframe but an ongoing dialogue of working together to share language that empowers culture. Remember to follow the safe ACRC COVID guidelines of accessing the office at ACRC if you are wanting to come down and have a yarn with us about language.



## Message From Board

### Confirmation of Aboriginality

Overtime, the Board have been continuously improving our internal processes, working on particular areas to improve quality of services for our community. Our latest task has been to review the Confirmation of Aboriginality (COA) applications and the way we process these. The ACRC Board (past and present) has provided a community service for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in confirming their Aboriginality for a number of years. As you are aware, we are a voluntary Board and most of you would appreciate and understand when managing timeframes to come together and make decisions, can be quite complex. In the meantime, the Board have made a decision to put future applications on hold until we complete the COA review process.

If you already have an application submitted, we are currently working through these. The timeline for a COA approval depends on many factors and could push your waiting time to a minimum of 3 to 12 months. Please keep in contact to see how your application is progressing. This includes checking that you have provided all the required supporting documentation and your contact details are up to date, as sometimes this hinders the process. Identity is such a sensitive issue and we want to ensure that ACRC is providing an authentic service by improving and supporting our community through a genuine process.

### Surveys

We are gaining feedback from community through our 3 surveys which are on our website and our Facebook page. Your feedback will assist us with the way we do business; as well as inform our Business Strategic Plan, shaping the future of ACRC. Would you like to participate?

- Link to Survey 1: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DYXXVPK>
- Link to Survey 2: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GKSYXV9>
- Link to Survey 3: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RL5J6H6>



## Message From Board

### Smokey Dreaming - Weaving and Dharug Language Information

Didjurigura - Thank you for sharing in the spirit of weaving over the last two Smokey Dreaming Wednesday's. Not only did we learn a particular technique, we also were introduced to a weaving song to help us learn how to weave. This song and dance we will learn over time. What is really important is we came together and had so much fun learning and growing together in culture.

We specially learned the 60,000 + years of coiling. The particular style of coiling was through stitching. You would mostly know or have commonly heard people call it the blanket stitch. In the Dharug dalang we refer to the language word, gun gun that represents our word for basket and stitch - nuruwa. Now use the key below to sound out any of the words you come across in the Dharug language.

KEY For sounding out the vowel sounds

a

as in cut, love, rough

aa

as in father, part, car

i

as in bit, pretty

ii, (e, ee)

as in peach, weep, ski

u

as in pull, should, wood

uu, (o, oo)

as in boot, junior



## Message From Board

Di-dju-ri-gu-ra – thank you for learning to:

banga ngarangaul nuruwa – make the stitch (coiling) to make:

1. midagar nurunyal – friendship bracelet
2. nuru - circle.

Didjurigura - thank you for sharing in the spirit – gumada of:  
ngarangagul bangali weaving and making

Di-dju-ri-gu-ra – thank you for also for wanting to continue to coil (stitch). As promised I am providing you the links to be able to purchase your own bamurura – grasses. The particular fibres are raffia.

Raffia, also known as Madagascar grass - botanical name, (*Raphia farinifera*).Raffia is one of the many introduced fibres used for coiling and weaving. This fibre is adopted by Aboriginal and Torres strait Islander people across Australia. It comes from Madagascar (Island on the South eastern coast of Africa).

Links to purchase the materials for coiling and weaving are:

Raffia Connection <https://www.theraffiaconnection.com.au/products>

String Harvest <https://stringharvest.com.au/collections/all-raffia>

This is only the beginning of a long journey. Next time when we meet we will gun gun nuruwa with our local fibres, lomandra and other native grasses endemic to the Blue Mountains and introduce you to a weaving pattern.

I look forward to seeing you, until next time. Yanu

# AUNTY MARIE CLEGG - MY STORY



Aunty Marie Clegg is a proud Wiradjuri woman.

Aunty Marie has spent 35 years in the Blue Mountains, previously being in Granville. She moved back to the Mountains 8 years ago. She is a mother of 3 children, grandparent to 6 grandchildren. Auntie Marie worked 12 years at the Aboriginal Land Council in Parramatta, 3 years as an Aboriginal SLSO at Chifley College, Mt Druitt. Auntie Marie has done a Wiradjuri language course in Dubbo.

Aunty Marie was on the board with ACRC working with our Young Strong Deadly program when the program was running. In this program, Aunty Marie worked with Lex Dadd, Manager of Cultural and Community Programs and Paul Glass, Transport Coordinator from ACRC. Both Lex and Paul stated it was a delight to work with an Elder who had patience with all the children with good Elder guidance and an understanding ear when listening to others in the community. Auntie Marie is always there with a helping hand when we have ACRC gatherings and her cheerful disposition lifts the spirits of all that are there.

Aunty Marie works tirelessly in the community as a volunteer as a Director on the board of ACRC; as well she is on a volunteer on the ACRC Children at Risk Committee. In addition, she provides ACRC with great support and care to employees and community members.

Auntie Marie is an accomplished artist, jewellery maker and has been very active in the community for many years, and continues to be. Auntie has a bubbly nature and kind eyes she is always looking after the staff at ACRC checking on how they are doing and if the staff needs an ear to talk too!



# Family Support

## Playgroup

ACRC Koori Playgroup have been running since last year in term 4. ACRC we had to relocate the playgroup to a new building because of the restrictions with COVID-19. Koori playgroup is held at Hazelbrook at the Bungarrabee Centre. Playgroup has been running strong throughout this year with 8 playgroups and 1 playgroup cancellation due to the wet weather. Koori Playgroup have had big numbers each week and with the restrictions on the numbers allowed, it was booked out every week.

While playgroup has been running we have been doing cultural activities each week with Uncle Lex Dadd making discs with symbols on them. Uncle Lex did kangaroo foot prints on a disc so that our children can keep and play and remember what they are. Playgroup have been doing Kangaroo, emu and possum foot prints stencils for the children and parents to colour. It was fantastic to get all parents and grandparent participate with their children.

The playgroup children have been also making pancakes and fried rice at playgroup with the assistance from Raylee and Lesley help with the children participating in cutting veggies up for fried rice and shacking of the bottle for the pancakes.



Blue Mountains Aboriginal  
Culture and Resource Centre  
**Koori Playgroup**  
**STARTS  
BACK**  
April 19, 2021  
Starting at 11am at  
Bungarrabee Centre 48-50  
Oakland Road, Hazelbrook





# Family Support

## ACRC Children at Risk Committee

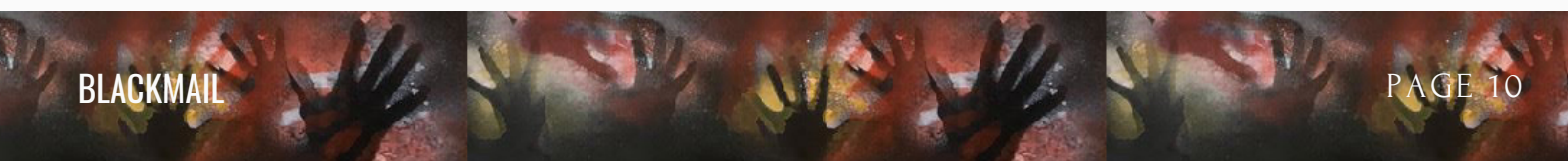
ACRC have started a Children at risk committee that will meet every 3 months. This committee have been put together to give me guidance and support with families that are facing the risk of their child/ children been removed, the committee is filled with local Elders that live in the Mountains.

## Update on Family Fun Days

We are really sorry that ACRC are not holding a family Fun day this term due to COVID-19. At the time of planning, participant numbers were very restricted, with only 50 people maximum numbers. As you may be aware, restrictions have now eased which means we are hopeful to hold a Family Fun day in the next school holidays.

So keep an eye open in out on Facebook and our Blackmail newsletter with the date, place and time for our upcoming Family Fun Day!

Thanks, Raylee  
Family Support Worker



## Elders Support

As you may be aware, Jade is no longer with us at the Blue Mountains Aboriginal Culture and Resource Centre, rest assured that we will continue to provide you with the outstanding service you have come to expect. Until a new employee is assigned to the position, the responsibilities will be covered temporarily by Aunty Elly Chatfield. If you have any questions, please contact Aunty Elly on 0439 595 181 or ACRC 4782 6569 with any queries or concerns. We wish Jade all the best with her future endeavours.

We are currently in the stage of planning the Elders morning teas, lunches and outings now that Covid19 restrictions have eased. Stay tuned!

Thank you, Aunty Elly

## Cultural and Community Programs

### Smokey Dreaming Cultural Healing Programs

Our cultural programs are in full swing and going really well. Funded by Aboriginal Affairs, in March we conducted the following programs:

- Healing through Identity
- Singing up Country
- Weaving Healing Stories (workshop 1)
- Weaving Healing Stories (Workshop 2)

The April programs commence soon and have a focus on Elders; and young peoples. May and June programs are being finalised at present. Our programs are promoted on our Facebook page, so please follow us to get all the up to date information:

@BlueMountainsAboriginalCultureResourceCentre

Warm regards,

Lex Dadd,  
Manager, Cultural and Community Programs





# Transport

Hi All,

I wanted to introduce myself, I am the acting Transport Coordinator for ACRC, and am still learning all the procedures associated with the role. Please call 0427 710 708 or 4782 9402 for all transport requests.

To share some of my story; I am a Kamilaroi man, Dad (Douglas Bruce Glass, 1933-2019) was born at Burra Bee Dee Mission in 1933, and lived there for several years until moving to Merrylands. Mum grew up in Lane Cove and moved to the Mountains in the mid 60's. I was lucky to grow up in Lawson and spend all of my childhood in the Blue Mountains playing sport, schooling and hanging out in the bush as a kid. I look at the Mountains from the Lapstone Hill up to Mt Vic as one village stretched across the plateau with the Great Western Highway as the backbone connecting all towns.

I travelled Australia for three years in my mid-twenties, fruit picking, labouring and working in hospitality. Following that I completed a degree in Tourism and Environmental Management and worked as a ranger with National Parks and Wildlife for 14 years fighting fires, weeding Country, working with Community and in the final years dabbling in Cultural Burning at Yellomundee.

## Introduction of New Fees

Transport NSW funds our transport service at ACRC. As part of the contract, we are obliged to charge a nominal fee to our clients for all trips. From the 3rd May 2021, we will be charging fees:

- \$2 – Gold coin donation from anywhere on the Mountains return. (Per household address)
- \$5 – From anywhere on the Mountains to Penrith return. (Per household address)
- \$10 – From anywhere on the Mountains to Sydney return. (Per household address)

Are you interested in being a Driver with ACRC?

We are looking to employ another casual driver. If you are interested, please contact me on Ph: 0427 710 708. You will need to have a Drivers licence and have, or willing to obtain, a Working with Children Check, National Police Check and a First Aid Certificate.

Yours in getting there,

Paul Glass

Acting Transport Coordinator

# Computer Skills Course

Including skills for

## Mobile Phone or Tablet



THIS COURSE IS DESIGNED FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ADULTS WITH NO PREVIOUS COMPUTER EXPERIENCE. This computer skills course will provide you hands on experience using current technologies for the workplace, study and at home. You will learn to access, create, save and manage documents, use email and the Internet effectively. We demystify terminology and guide you to productive and secure use of hardware and software.

- appropriately start up and shut down your computer
- use Office 365
- use operating systems and start applications
- use basic functions to save and store your files
- use basic functions in a word processor and PowerPoint
- print documents
- receive and send emails
- use a web browser to navigate the Internet.

This program is a collaboration with Blue Mountains Aboriginal Culture & Resource Centre, ACRC [www.acrc.org.au](http://www.acrc.org.au) and TAFE NSW

To enrol or get more information  
Call: 4782 6569  
Or email: [admin@acrc.org.au](mailto:admin@acrc.org.au)

### Course

Code	CS05555
Duration	6 months
Cost	Fully subsidised Fee FREE
Location	Mitchell Street Wentworth Falls campus A103
Start Date:	April 22 2021
Times:	10am – 1pm

### COURSE ELIGIBILITY

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- No longer at school
- Living or working in NSW



# Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment

The Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment (AGDRP) provides one-off financial assistance to eligible Australians adversely affected by the storms and floods.

The rate of AGDRP is \$1000 per eligible adult and \$400 per eligible child. Claims for this payment can be lodged with Services Australia for a period up to 6 months.

AGDRP is available for people who have been seriously injured, have lost their homes or whose homes have been directly damaged, whose major assets have been directly damaged or are the immediate family members of a person who has died as a direct result of the storms and floods. You have until 24 September 2021 to lodge a claim.

For more information on eligibility, visit the Services Australia website <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/news/support-people-affected-recent-nsw-floods> or contact the Australian Government Information Hotline on 180 22 66 for claims assistance.

## Do you have a complaint or feedback?

We value our Community's feedback. You can offer a suggestion, give a compliment or submit a complaint to help improve our service. If you wish to submit a complaint or offer us a suggestion or compliment, you can speak to one of our friendly staff. Please phone 02 4782 6569 or email [admin@acrc.org.au](mailto:admin@acrc.org.au)

You can find a copy of our Complaints Resolution and Feedback procedure on our website [www.acrc.org.au](http://www.acrc.org.au)

### *Forgotten Heroes: Honouring the Service and Sacrifice of Aboriginal Soldiers*

Lana Leslie

CEO Aboriginal Culture and Resource Centre

We request the honour of your presence at the ANZAC Commemoration,  
Aboriginal World War One plaque unveiling and wreath laying

RSVP 12 April 2021

**ANZAC COMMEMORATION**

**10:30 MONDAY 26 APRIL 2021**

**BLUE MOUNTAINS DISTRICT ANZAC  
MEMORIAL HOSPITAL**

