

NEWSLETTER - ISSUE 1 OF 2021 (FEB)

BLACKMAIL

Blue Mountains Aboriginal Culture & Resource Centre

Message From Chief Executive Officer

Yaama all,

I hope everyone is happy and healthy. Welcome to the new look Blackmail. We hope you enjoy the new format as much as we've enjoyed putting it together for you.

There has been a lot happening at our end since our last Blackmail edition. We re-opened on 4 January and since then we've been busy planning some deadly programs and services for 2021. This year however will be different to the past where we will have limited numbers and different procedures to keep it Covid safe.

An exciting feature of 2021 will be more of an emphasis on Culture in everything we do. As you know, Culture is at the heart of our wellbeing as Aboriginal peoples. With that in mind, we've incorporated Culture more in all of our programs and services; and we have focused on Culture in our staff meetings, professional development training sessions and planning day; and we have an internal Culture Committee that provides advice and monitoring on our focus on Culture. An important part of our emphasis on Culture is Uncle Lex Dadd who commenced in his new role as Manager, Cultural and Community Programs from the beginning of January. Uncle Lex is integral to the operations and strategic direction of ACRC now and into the future.

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

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Transport Enquiries
Please call Paul:

0427 710 708

CEO Message Continued...

For me, since I started full time on 1.1.21 there have been some rewarding and challenging times in equal measure. I am proud of our team at ACRC who consistently show me their dedication to the community and to each other. I am looking forward to getting out and about to meet more of you in the coming months.

Until next time,

Lana

Dr Lana Leslie
Chief Executive Officer

Message From Board

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>

Possum Pouches made by the "Woolly Women For Wildlife"

AUNTY ELLY
CHATFIELD



Elders Support Service

Warami everyone,

I hope this finds you all safe and well.

We have been busy reconnecting with you all and planning services for this upcoming year.

This year programs will be different in the way that we will hold groups with limited numbers and different procedures to keep community COVID-19 safe.

The Elders Support Service is here to assist with support accessing of Cultural and social connections as well as advocacy, referrals, home visits and social support.

With respect to us as Aboriginal people from many different nations it is our Culture to come together in sharing and caring ways, that is in all that we are and all that we do, it is who we are.

Our first Elders Yarning Circle kicked off on 10th February and was the beginning of community coming together in a Culturally safe and respectful way, guided by our Elders in community.

Looking forward to sharing this upcoming year all together connected in Culture and community.

Yarnu
Jade
ACRC Elders Support Coordinator

Home Visits with the Elders

One of the Aunties got two visitors at the same time, this little beauty the Macleay's Swallowtail, had beautiful purple along its body and purple next to the green on its wings. The adult butterflies have a wing span around 8 cms. It feeds on the foliage various species of Australian native trees in MONIMIACEAE including Australian Sassafras (*Doryphora sassafras*) one of the dominant rainforest trees up here in the Blue Mountains. The upperside of the wings is green with black and white markings. Unusually for butterflies, the legs are also green. This photo doesn't do justice to this amazing little being. Aunty and I agreed this was a good visit. For more info on this little fella <http://lepidoptera.butterflyhouse.com.au/papi/macleayanum.html>



UNCLE EDWARD WALKER - MY STORY



Friday 5th February 2021.

Hi Community, from Uncle Edward Walker.

Dharawal Elder South Coast, who has had the honour to join the Community of the Blue Mountains, and be part of the Aboriginal Culture and Resource Centre.

Just want to say Welcome our new CEO, Lana Leslie and the return of our loved staff who work so hard behind the scene and inform us of up-coming events.

Covid-19 has changed just about everything; and our freedom can't be taken for granted.

I don't think I'd be wrong in saying Covid-19 isn't over, keeping a safe distance from others is a safe start.

My many years are finally coming to a close, (Uncle Ed's way of saying he is maturing in years).

Being a Stolen Generation child raised in an Aboriginal welfare mission, from 10 years old up until 21 years; It has been very traumatic, being denied your parents and forced to acknowledge a mission director as Mum and Dad. This was impossible for me to do, and Family was a strong force with all the other children with similar backgrounds

The Government, has deemed the mission as a Hidden mission situated at Kellyville.

I received a letter on the 20th November 2020. A formal apology letter from the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, the honourable Don Harwin MLC. The letter was a long time in the making, and as I read it I got tears running down my cheek.

Welcomed News. I now can move on, Thank you to the state Government. Admitting profound ongoing and Intergenerational Trauma.

We are learning as well as Intergenerational Trauma; we are also learning that our Mob has Intergenerational Resilience.

My experience, will remain with me always,

Truthfully, Uncle Edward Walker

Cultural and Community Programs

In-Service Cultural Learning Day

Our staff at ACRC participated in Cultural activities that specifically focused on developing and building a connection to Country and with each other.

We began with a warm and heartfelt Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony by Darug Custodian Uncle Lex Dadd. These two special ceremonies were accompanied by a song, bringing in the dreaming, peace, love and standing strong, 'together' across Country. This followed by stories of looking after one another and sharing in the spirit of Yanama Budyari Gumada – to go/walk with good spirit.

Lastly, we crushed ochre and mixed this with water to make a paste in the gulamun. We used the ochre to sign into Country by pledging our responsibility for Country and each other. We did this by blowing ochre from our mouths onto our hands that formed hand-stencils onto the trees surrounding our place of work.

Lana then spent the rest of the afternoon providing the space for Cultural learning and development. Staff shared some of their personal stories of growing up, family life and identity.

Cultural Artefacts and Educational Tools

Uncle Lex has been making wooden discs for Playgroup that are marked with various animal symbols. These symbols follow a Darug story and language song. He has begun with the buru – kangaroo. Each week, the gulyangarri – children will be learning the story and song whilst interacting with various activities created around the wooden discs.

A message stick carved out of wood has been made for our yarning circles. The markings and symbols reflect 'Yanama Budyari Gumada' – to go/walk with good spirit, with patience, humility, and respect. A message stick is a means of communication (non-verbal) that carries a message. Traditionally, a message stick would travel with a messenger from Country to Country. The message would be received and extended upon by means of markings and symbols. We continue to use the message sticks for their original purpose as well as a tool to keep our yarning circle respectful by taking turns whilst the speaker holds the message stick to indicate their turn to speak.





Our Place

A group for boys to connect with their environment,
their community and themselves.

Meet with Uncle Lex and Uncle Ed around the fire pit.

Learn bush skills, hear stories and songs.

Next gathering

When: Tuesdays 2nd March

4-5.30pm

Where: ACRC - 14 Oak Street Katoomba

Phone Kath at Gateway - 47825326



BLUE MOUNTAINS ABORIGINAL CULTURE AND
RESOURCE CENTRE



KOORI PLAYGROUP IS BACK

MONDAYS · 11AM TO 1PM
BUNGARRABEE CENTRE 48-50
OAKLANDS RD, HAZELBROOK
NSW 2779

Bookings are required Contact Raylee on 02 4782 6569 or 0439 028 652