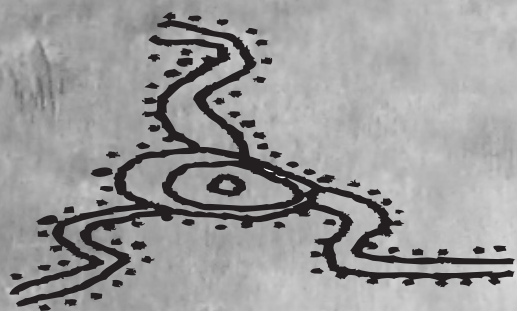


Yuendumu
Substance Misuse
Aboriginal Corporation
Annual Report
05/06





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The Mt Theo Program is managed by a committee of elected Indigenous people from within Yuendumu community. Committee members represent a wide range of Yuendumu community organisations and family groups.

This year Yuendumu community members showed their pride in and commitment to the Mt Theo Program by electing a record number of 36 Committee members. Five Jaru Pirrjirdi members were elected - an acknowledgement by elders of the growing strength and leadership of our young people in the community.

community Committee

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For 2005 - 2006 the Mt Theo Management Committee was made up of the following:

Barbara Wilson
Belle Dickson
Cecil Johnson (TO)
Clifford Brown
Connie Walit
Coral Gallagher
Dadu Gorey
Dennis Williams (TO)
Donovan Rice
Enid Gallagher
Gracie Johnson
Jean Brown (TO)
Jeannie Egan
Johnny Williams (TO)
Larissa Granites (Jaru Pirrjirdi)
Louis Watson (Jaru Pirrjirdi)
Maggie Ross
Margarine Miller
Maxine Spencer
Michael Wayne (Jaru Pirrjirdi)
Nellie Wayne

Neville Poulson
Otto Sims
Peggy Brown (Founder)
Perry Langdon (TO)
Riley Oldfield
Ritasha Watson (Jaru Pirrjirdi)
Robinson Walit
Rosie Fleming
Ruby Collins
Ruby Williams
Shaun Wilson (Jaru Pirrjirdi)
Steven Marshall
Thomas Rice
Violet Marshall
Warren Williams (TO)

The Executive

Warren William – Chairperson
Enid Gallagher - Chairperson
Robbie Walit – Treasurer
Maxine Spencer & Jean Brown – Executive Members

“
This year the Mt
Theo Program has
continued to work on
the prevention and
cessation of petrol
sniffing and other
substance misuse
throughout the
Warlpiri region.
”

Mt Theo Year

The year in brief

7

The Mt Theo Program has continued to strengthen this year. Today, petrol sniffing is a rare occurrence in Yuendumu, and the Program has been able to extend our focus to the causes, effects and prevention of all substance misuse. The zero tolerance approach that has embedded itself in Yuendumu community culture allows an immediate response to any young person engaging in petrol sniffing or other self-harming or anti-social behaviour, providing a solid model of early intervention.

This year the Mt Theo Program has continued to work on the prevention and cessation of petrol sniffing and other substance misuse throughout the Warlpiri region. Mt Theo Outstation cared for 32 young Warlpiri people who were sniffing petrol in Willowra, Papunya, Yuendumu, Mt Allen and Alice Springs, many of whom sniffed only once. Seventeen of this year's clients have been from Alice Springs and the Program has faced the challenge of caring for young Warlpiri people that are not closely monitored by family and the smaller community.

Over the past 12 months, 6 young men have been referred by the court to Mt Theo as an alternative to incarceration. Magistrates in Alice Springs are referring these young men charged with alcohol related offences into the care of the Program. Seventeen juveniles engaging in anti-social behaviour in Yuendumu were advised to go Mt Theo as an alternative to being charged.

The Willowra Youth Program has grown as a strong community initiative providing a wide range of innovative and challenging activities to divert young people from self-harming activities, and in particular, petrol sniffing. This year only 3 young Willowra people were cared for at Mt Theo for petrol sniffing activity.

Through the Jaru Pirrjirdi (Strong Voices) Youth Development Project, the Mt Theo Program worked in partnership with young people in addressing issues underlying petrol sniffing behaviour and the misuse of other substances. Young people in the Jaru Pirrjirdi Project are strongly emerging as mentors and youth leaders, working on community development Projects that help create positive futures for both individuals and the broader community. A natural outcome of strong personal development within the Project has been for young people to successfully seek employment in a range of community organisations. In this Report we take time to highlight the work of this strong Project.

Members of the Jaru Pirrjirdi team continue to run the youth activities in Yuendumu. These young people are working with the perspective of “we used to be petrol sniffers and now are working hard to help make Yuendumu a better place for young people so they don’t want to sniff petrol or drink grog”.

Night School has become one of the most popular Jaru Pirrjirdi initiatives. A collaborative initiative between the Yuendumu School, Youth Challenge Australia and Mt Theo Program, Night School provides an opportunity for young people, many of whom are considered “at-risk”, to engage in youth development, educational and vocational activities, as a chosen alternative to substance misuse. Many past clients of Mt Theo Outstation participate in Night School as a meaningful productive outside school hour’s activity.

After the tragic suicide of a young man under the influence of marijuana and alcohol late last year, Yuendumu residents mobilised. Fuelled by the solid evidence of successful intervention into petrol sniffing through the grass-roots Mt Theo Program, the Corporation members at the Annual General Meeting elected 36 Committee members. Since September 2005 the Committee has undertaken two workshops on governance, and two on strategic planning in order to be better equipped to best address the new issues facing our young people.

The Mt Theo team has needed to be flexible to respond to community demands. Johnny Japangardi Miller, the Senior Traditional Owner for Mt Theo was appointed Outstation Manager, and Rex Forrest, Senior Outstation Worker. Ubik Freeman continues as Outstation Support and Diversion Coordinator, well supported by up to 7 Jaru Pirrjirdi workers. Brett Badger coordinates the Youth Program and Jaru Pirrjirdi Project, supported by Youth Workers Natalie O’Connor and Cameron Churchill. The youth team now includes a record 42 Jaru Pirrjirdi casual workers. Talitha Low is now full-time as Office Manager.



I am delighted to report that this year, for the first time, the need for vehicles in the Mt Theo Program has been acknowledged by funding bodies. We received funding from the Attorney General’s Department for a Troopcarrier for the Yuendumu Youth Program and from the Indigenous Land Corporation for the Willowra Youth Program. OATSIH, our major donor, also provided funds for leasing of a vehicle for the Outstation.

This year more than ever before, the efforts and success of the Mt Theo Program have been recognised by governments (both Federal and Territory), community organizations, other indigenous communities and national media as without comparison in the field of petrol sniffing.

This recognition culminated recently in the tabling of the 2006 Commonwealth Senate Report into petrol sniffing ‘Beyond Petrol Sniffing: renewing hope for Indigenous communities’ (report tabled 20/06/2006). The Senate report highlighted the Mt Theo Program as an innovative, committed and skilful program that had achieved unprecedented success in the field of substance abuse in remote communities. The executive summary noted

“The strength of a community and the determination of key members can produce highly effective community-based programs and services such as those operating at Yuendumu and the Mt Theo outstation” (collectively the Mt Theo Program; Mt Theo Outstation, Youth Program and Jaru Pirrjirdi Project) (xvi).

The Program has faced another challenging year as we struggled to provide flexibility to respond to community crises, and at the same time maintain a strong diversionary, preventative, aftercare and youth leadership program. It is an ongoing goal to be able to support young people to recognise the strength within and resist substance misuse and other anti-social behaviour. Maintaining the momentum is only possible because of the strong relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff and volunteers, our supporters who believe in us, and the willingness of all involved to work “above and beyond” for a shared vision.

Susie Low

Manager
September 2006

The Mt Theo Program operates five main arms of service

- 1 Mt Theo Outstation
- 2 Yuendumu Youth Program
- 3 Jaru Pirjirdi Youth Development Program
- 4 Willowra Youth Program
- 5 Outreach and Education

Outstation

Mt Theo Outstation

Mt Theo Program has continued to provide strong cultural treatment and rehabilitation for young Warlpiri engaging in substance abuse. Over the past year the Diversionary Program has also been consolidated and the majority of our clients have been sent to Mt Theo as an alternative to incarceration or being formally charged by police, or who are perceived to be at risk of self-harm as a result of substance misuse.

Over the past year Mt Theo Program has cared for a total of 53 young people who had been misusing substances, or engaging in anti-social behaviour.

During the summer holidays, historically a danger period for young people in the community, there was only four days in which petrol sniffing occurred in Yuendumu. The two young people were subsequently cared for at Mt Theo and have not engaged in petrol sniffing since that time. There have been no relapses or new incidents of sniffing in Yuendumu since December 2005, and most young people from Yuendumu are now engaged in productive youth activities in Yuendumu.

Mt Theo Program dealt with 41 episodes of petrol sniffing by young Warlpiri in Alice Springs, Mt Allen, Willowra and Yuendumu, and through early intervention strategies and family and Program support 9 young people did not need to go to Mt Theo. The threat of Mt Theo is essential to the success of these strategies and in preventing other young people from starting to sniff petrol.

Diversiónary Program

Mt Theo is committed to keeping young people away from detention centres by using Mt Theo Outstation as an alternative to detention while involving them with the community and bringing them closer to their families. This year we have worked hard to strengthen our relationships with the Courts, with Aboriginal Legal Aid, with Community Corrections, and with the Yuendumu Justice Committee. This work has given us much greater access to “at risk” young people at a critical time in their confrontation with the legal processes.

Adding to our success with petrol sniffing, we are gaining a strong reputation with the courts as a “pre” and “post” court Diversiónary Program. The courts recognise that the time spent at Mt Theo is both punishment and deterrent as well as a supportive environment for the young person to move away from their anti-social behaviours. This year we have supported 32 clients diverted from the justice system at the Mt Theo Outstation for residencies of one month or more and in Yuendumu, seventeen young people engaging in anti-social and self-harming behaviour were taken to Mt Theo as an alternative to being charged. Two thirds of the clients this year have been Diversiónary clients. The community and police now have a clear community response to anti-social activities and there is now also a real community based solution for young people appearing before the courts. The strength in our Diversiónary Program this year has given a real stability to our broader youth programs running in the community.

Within Yuendumu now many of our ex-Diversiónary clients are expressing a strong feeling of being part of the Mt Theo family and working hard on community programs, feeling proud that they are giving back to the community

The Department of Health and Ageing, through the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and NT Department of Health and Children’s Services fund the Mt Theo Outstation and related management activities.

“
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”

Case Management

Mt Theo Program has continued to case manage the majority of past petrol sniffers and other diversionary clients who have resided at Mt Theo. Case files are kept on all clients and updated through regular contact through participation in youth activities, and Jaru mentors. However, staff and time constraints limit follow-up of clients who return to Alice Springs. Mt Theo maintains some contact through town based agencies on the progress of these former clients. Where possible, Mt Theo staff negotiate with families and agencies to encourage these young people to stay in Yuendumu for several months after exiting Mt Theo. This allows appropriate aftercare through the Youth Program and Jaru Pirjirdi Project and our experience has shown that this intensive aftercare assists in strengthening clients to re-engage with their families in a stronger, more positive way.

Cultural Strengthening

A core principle of the Mt Theo Outstation is to provide respite for young people engaging in substance misuse, allowing them time away from the offending substances to rest, eat well, and regain their health and mental facilities.

At the same time, Mt Theo provides a safe place for young people to re-engage in the richness of their culture, to remember their identity and value. All carers at Mt Theo are elders or former clients who devote their time to helping other young people heal. Mt Theo is acknowledged as a traditional healing place, and clients spend their days travelling through country, hunting, collecting firewood, cooking over the fire, and listening to the stories of the elders. Yuendumu community elders visit regularly to share their knowledge of traditional crafts such as spear and boomerang making, traditional fire-lighting, bean-tree jewellery, and land management. The visiting Mental Health Worker is also a Traditional Owner for that country.

Every day clients are also engaged in activities such as waste management, construction of windbreaks and shelters, and bore maintenance to ensure ongoing maintenance of the Outstation. The Program also conducts a range of other activities to challenge and motivate the clients as they recover. Workshops on film-making, music, dance, circus skills, and painting were held this year, while entertainment was also provided by football, basketball, occasional film and disco nights, and a visiting rock band. The Outstation has had only intermittent power supply this year, so many of these activities have required an immense amount of client and staff resourcefulness and improvisation!



Yuendumu Youth Program

Yuendumu Youth Program has continued to provide young people in Yuendumu with diverse and vibrant alternatives to petrol sniffing and other substance misuse over the last year. An increase in staff and the engagement of Jaru Pirrjirdi as casual youth workers means that the Youth Program now involves a seven night a week youth activities program in addition to school holiday and after school hours activities.

The Youth Program targets 4-16 year olds within Yuendumu in order to provide them with positive, interesting and exciting community activities and to alleviate potential boredom. Ideally young people would never have to be removed to the Mt Theo outstation but would 'graduate' naturally from participants in the Youth Program to active workers in the Jaru Pirrjirdi Project. This is becoming more and more common.

Jaru Pirrjirdi workers run all Mt Theo Youth Program activities. These activities occur outside school hours, every day from 3-10.30 on school days and all day from 9am to 11pm on weekends. These Youth Program activities include a wide range of activities through sport, recreation, art, music, culture and excursions. Jaru Pirrjirdi workers act as the 'on-the-ground' youth worker under periodical supervision from senior Jaru.

“
Yuendumu Youth Program has continued to provide young people in Yuendumu with diverse and vibrant alternatives to petrol sniffing and other substance misuse over the last year.
”

There are generally 5-6 Youth Program activities every day and two workers may be paid for each activity. Allowing for concurrent activities this means that there are over 100 hours of Youth Program activities provided by 42 casual Jaru Pirrjirdi workers for the youth of Yuendumu every week.

Young people returning from Mt Theo who are considered to be particularly at risk are engaged to work alongside Mt Theo staff and Jaru Pirrjirdi workers in running the youth activities. This aftercare also provides a natural forum for mentorship by senior Jaru members.

Regular activities this year have included mural painting, swimming, basketball, softball, concerts, discos, IT skills development, football, indoor soccer, bike building and bmx racing, pool table and video games, film nights, Night School and cultural excursions. Special holiday activities included workshops in circus skills, multi-media, art, rap and hip-hop dance, contemporary dance, and rubbish as art.

Commonwealth Family and Community Services provide core funding for the Youth Program through the Outside School Hours Care initiative.

Yuendumu Swimming Pool

This has been an extremely frustrating year for Yuendumu residents, especially the young ones, who are still waiting for their pool. Despite an extraordinary level of community commitment and success in fulfilling fulfil our obligation to the PIRA (Pools in Remote Areas) agreement the pool has not yet materialised. The PIRA Scheme called for an equal financial partnership between the Commonwealth and Territory governments and Yuendumu community to construct the pool.

This year, community residents unanimously agreed to forgo their personal royalty income from GMAAAC (Granites Mines Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation) and committed that money instead to the construction of the pool. Never before has such an action been taken, and is a clear indication of how much the pool is wanted and valued by the community. At the same time, Christine Godden, a longtime community supporter has raised all the remaining funds through representation to philanthropic organisations, corporate bodies, and Yuendumu Aboriginal associations.

Representatives of Yuendumu community, NT Government and ICC (Indigenous Coordination Centre for the Commonwealth Government), Newmont Mines, Yuendumu Council, Central Land Council and Mt Theo Program remain on the Steering Committee to further the Project. And still we wait...

**PROTECT CHILDREN, PROTECT CULTURE.
HELP STOP PETROL SNIFFING.**



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“

The Jaru Pirrjirdi Project was founded to listen to the strong voices of young people in Yuendumu and to assist them to envisage and build more positive futures for themselves and their community.

”

Jaru Pirrjirdi (Strong Voices) Youth Development Project

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Despite the petrol sniffing problem being largely solved in Yuendumu, young people are still at high risk of entering cycles of other substance misuse, unemployment, crime, self-harm and violence. The Jaru Pirrjirdi Project was developed to create more meaningful, systemic and long term solutions to problematic youth issues in Yuendumu. The Jaru Pirrjirdi Project was founded to listen to the strong voices of young people in Yuendumu and to assist them to envisage and build more positive futures for themselves and their community.

The Jaru Pirrjirdi Project is an integrated after-care and community development Project for young people aged 17-30 in Yuendumu. Whilst the Youth Program is primarily geared to provide an ‘entertainment’ for youth aged 5-15, Jaru Pirrjirdi attempts to provide a structure through which young adults can engage in meaningful and productive community activity. There are currently 42 young people who are members of/work for the Jaru Pirrjirdi Project. The project is proving significant in establishing meaningful and positive pathways for young adults in Yuendumu.

The progressive structure of the Jaru process means that young people feel their own capacity increasing as they move through the different levels and elements of the Project. As they progress their level of responsibility and challenge also increases. The ultimate outcome of this process is to ‘graduate’ young adults into career pathways within the community. This is firmly based in a community development process that seeks to empower local people into positions of employment and strategic power within the community. Intimately correlated with this outcome is the development of strong, confident, responsible and capable young adults who have high self-esteem, deep cultural knowledge and strong problem solving, mentoring and conflict resolution skills.

The Jaru process

Youth Program Workers

Jaru Pirrjirdi workers run the Mt Theo Youth Program activities. These activities occur outside school hours, and include a wide range of activities through sport, recreation, art, music, culture and excursions. Jaru Pirrjirdi workers act as the ‘on-the-ground’ youth worker under periodical supervision from senior Jaru. There are generally 5-6 Youth Program activities every day and two workers can be paid for each activity. Allowing for concurrent activities this means that there was over 100 hours of Youth Program activities provided by Jaru Pirrjirdi workers for the youth of Yuendumu every week.

Night School

Night school has strengthened considerably this year, with an average of 30 young adults accessing education and training every night. Night school activities variously involved mathematics, English, reading, writing, art, music, land management and computers. Night School also included workshops on issues such as sexual and relationship health, substance misuse forums and dealing with ‘government forms’.

In this sense Night School provided a productive and meaningful evening activity for young adults in Yuendumu rather than just participating in the Youth Program (or acting as a worker for the Youth Program). Night School occurred every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings between 7.00 and 10.00pm. Two young Jaru Pirrjirdi members co-ordinated all activities in conjunction with Mt Theo staff. The first five enrolments in the new secondary facility in Yuendumu school were all young adults who had been attending Night School.

Projects

Jaru Pirrjirdi members developed, managed and participated in over 47 projects this year. The projects respond to Jaru interests and concerns, as well as requests from agencies outside Yuendumu. These projects also allow Jaru members to begin training or identifying potential career pathways through activity across a broad range of areas.

Examples of Jaru projects:

Representation and Advocacy

Presentations to ‘The People’s Drug Summit’ Adelaide October 2005 & SA Drug & Alcohol Services Department

Participation in Willowra & Nyrripi launch of Opal Fuel.

Trip to Canberra to lobby Senators regarding launch of Commonwealth Senate Report into petrol sniffing.

Media

Domestic Violence Film with Warlpiri Media (Production). Jaru Director. actors / assistance with script & process refinement.

Film project. Filming of Jaru band members video clip and 6 short films about Yuendumu, boys bike tricks/ pool table/tour of Yuendumu/Mt Theo story/swimming excursion/basketball competition. Filmed and edited by Jaru.

Website Development and Management. Selection of Photos/Layout and writing of stories for Mt Theo/Jaru Pirrjirdi Website.

Youth Program support

Built ‘music space’ in disco ‘band cage’ and Establishment of Jaru computer room.

Organisation of School Holiday programs (youth activities morning, afternoon & evening.

Painting project of two major pieces by Jaru workers and co-ordination of kids painting 30-40 smaller pieces for Mt Theo office and Jaru Pirrjidi room.

Jaru Pirrjirdi Project Model

Level 1 ‘Training Jaru’

- Element 1. Youth Program
- Element 2. Night School

Level 2 ‘Jaru Members’

- Element 3. Projects
- Element 4. Bush Trips

Level 3 ‘Senior Jaru’

- Element 5. Youth Committee
- Element 6. Mentoring
- Element 7. Career & Life Pathway

Sport and recreation trips

Trip to Melbourne. Auskick Representative Training Camp.

Trips to Papunya (softball for 35 girls), Lajamanu (25 girls/women for dance performance), Alice Springs Crocfest for 5 girls.

Alice Springs Auskick Trip. 12 young boys playing at half time of AFL game mentored and cared for by Jaru.

Leadership and development

Trip to Darwin as part of Norforce recruitment process.

3 days Men’s health camp at Wayililimpa with WYNHealth. Discussion of general health, sexual health, relationships, gun and road safety.

Swimming Pool Committee and Development. Darwin Remote Pool Managers Conference. 3 days at Batchelor College Participation in meetings regarding design, community support for swimming pool. Jaru Pirrjirdi mob to be the workers/lifeguards for swimming pool.

Bush Trips

Bush trips formed a vital part of the Jaru Pirrjirdi process. The six trips conducted consistently involved 15-20 young people and 3-4 elders. The group journeyed to sites of cultural significance for up to 3 days and recorded the elders’ stories of these areas. Upon return the Jaru members edited the film and audio of these bush trips to add to the cultural mapping archive, and website.

The second aim of the bush trips is to develop personal strength in, and support for, young people and their issues. With the elders, senior Jaru, Mt Theo staff and young people hold formal and informal discussions about personal and community issues through meetings and nightly camp fire discussions. These discussions are facilitated by the fact that young people are out of the community and in an environment understood to be used for the discussion of such issues.

Day bush trips every week are mentoring trips and usually involve several Jaru members and young adults facing personal issues. These trips provide a relief from these issues, support from strong peers and appropriate forums in which to discuss these issues. After participation in such trips we have invariably found that the young person ‘at risk’ will begin to work in the Jaru Pirrjirdi Project and adopt a more positive lifestyle. Moreover if that young person does continue to face trouble they know that they have potential avenues of support through the Jaru Pirrjirdi members and Mt Theo staff.

Youth Committee

The youth committee is comprised of senior Jaru members and is the driving force behind the strategic direction of the Project. Six formal meetings were held over the year to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the Project and suggest ways forward. Five members of this committee also sit on the over-arching Mt Theo Program committee (MYSMAC) and report on Jaru activities and direction. This committee has been responsible for the whole evolution and framework of the Jaru Project as well as specific ideas such as Night School and Bush Trips.

Mentoring

Senior Jaru members have naturally taken on mentoring roles for young people of all ages in the community. This has taken various forms such as regularly checking in on individuals at risk, providing support for them and their families, bringing individuals on bush trips, visiting Mt Theo outstation to talk with clients, bringing young adults into the Jaru Project and guiding their progress. It has also involved more formal interventions and representations such as removal from at risk situations, liaising with clinic, police and Mt Theo staff and representation in court.

Each young person who returns from Mt Theo Outstation, is allocated a mentor from amongst the senior Jaru Pirrjirdi group. This mentoring not only develops skills and confidence within the Jaru Pirrjirdi members but has been found to be more effective at producing behavioural change within those at risk. These young people are particularly affected by their contact with strong and positive young Jaru Pirrjirdi members who represent potential ‘successful’ life pathways. Over the past year 36 young people have benefited from mentoring from a core group of 14 senior Jaru Pirrjirdi workers, on 89 different occasions.



Career & Life Pathways

A strong trend emerging from Jaru members gaining confidence and lifeskills is their desire to pursue career pathways. The empowering process of the Jaru Pirrjirdi Project has seen many young people emerge as young community leaders who are of immense value to the community and have a strong desire to work within various community organizations. Eleven senior Jaru have taken up responsible positions in Yuendumu Night Patrol (2), Yuendumu Police (1), Warlpiri Media (2), Yuendumu Old People’s Program (1), Yuendumu council workers (2), Administration Mt Theo Program (1), carers at Mt Theo Outstation (2).

This extraordinary success in a short space of time is strengthened by the knowledge that all of these young people have demonstrated a significant degree of commitment and skill to their new roles. These young people have been praised by their employers for their particular skill and dedication and this ‘extra’ element in these young people is attributed to the strengthening they received during the Jaru Pirrjirdi process.

The major funding sources for the Project have been Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation, Foundation for Young Australians, and the Commonwealth Department of Health’s Illicit Drugs Strategy.



Willow

Willowra Youth Program

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Despite community unrest, a tragedy that impacted on old and young, and very limited funding, the Program has remained active and there has been no petrol sniffing in Willowra this year.

Youth activities are provided daily, and include sports such as football, basketball and softball. Every week a film is shown for entertainment, as well as on occasions for reviewing different filming techniques, showings after community films are completed, and special films focussing on community issues which are followed by discussion.

Music plays a big part in the Program with discos held every weekend, and bands playing at every opportunity. Multi-media activities through RIBS radio are held three afternoons a week with young people playing their music and telling their stories on local radio.

Bush trips form the core of cultural activities and occur every week with elders and young people. These trips are recorded on film, edited, and shown to the community on film nights. Over the past year six overnight trips were also conducted, focussing on special sites and recording the jukurrpa and old people's stories.

“
Willowra Community
Youth Program has
continued to develop
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For five weeks in April and May this year, the normal youth activities were suspended. A local disabled man went missing and the community focussed solely on the search. Mt Theo Program was the only community organisation that recognised the gravity of the situation, and the fact that nothing was more important to Willowra residents than finding this young man. The Youth Worker joined young and old community members in searching day and night for the man, providing tyres and fuel for the search vehicles, and providing meals and drinks for the community searchers. Tragically, this man was eventually found, passed away. At his funeral, the Youth Worker and Mt Theo Program were acknowledged, with gratitude, for their assistance.

The Willowra Youth Program is providing a strong and consistent forum and development ground for local governance, vocational training and employment. Seven former Outstation clients are now employed on community projects in Willowra.

Catering Project

This small business, initiated by young women to cater at youth functions, has thrived this year. They use the school kitchen, and as payment for cooking for school functions, receive payment in food that can then be used to cater for youth functions.

All cooking is done bush style, and with the guidance of a nutritionist from Alice Springs, the menu now includes good, healthy meals for the community. The young women want training to further develop this into a viable business, providing ongoing nutritional tucker for the school, the shop, and community events.

Community partnerships

Strong partnerships have been formed with the limited number of community service providers in Willowra. The male nurse at Willowra clinic runs young men's clinics and shows videos in tandem with Friday night discos. A film and sausage sizzle was held at the clinic to attract young people to the young men and women's sexual health screening.

Willowra School uses the developing media skills of some of the Youth Program participants to record school bush trips with film and photographs, and also allows the school kitchen to be used for the Catering Project. In return for catering services, the school provides food to be used in other Program activities.

Warlpiri Media provide ongoing training for young people in multi-media skills and are committed to monthly training sessions.

To encourage male secondary students to further their education, Yirrara College sent a teacher for 6 week blocks every term. A special classroom has been set up and the teacher is flexible to community ways of learning.

Wynhealth supports the Program through funding and facilitating bush trips that focus on specific health issues such as men's health, sexual health, mental health and substance misuse.

This program was funded by NT Department of Health and Community Services, and the Department of Family and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Mt Theo Program has responded to numerous requests for information regarding the Program throughout the year. Nearly every week the Mt Theo Program is called by people wanting to hear the Mt Theo story of hope. Requests come from politicians, newspapers, radio, government agencies or people from other communities trying to stop sniffing.

This year the Mt Theo Program staff, Committee and Jaru Pirrjirdi members have told the Mt Theo Story to:

- Medical staff from Yuendumu clinic
- Hamilton Downs Youth Convention
- Willowra community
- Nyrripi community
- Senators Trish Crossin, Claire Moore, Garry Humphries, Judith Adams, Andrew Bartlett, Helen Polley, Ruth Webber
- Yuendumu school staff
- Yuendumu police
- Northern Territory Correctional Services staff
- Students, School of Art History, Cinema, Classics and Archaeology, Melbourne University
- Staff of Commonwealth Department of Health and Aging, OATSIH, NT OSR, FACSIA, ICC
- Submission to NT Select Senate Sub-Committee on Substance Abuse Committee
- Submission to Senate petrol sniffing inquiry
- NT Ministers Delia Lawrie, Peter Toyne
- ‘The People’s Drug Summit’ Adelaide 29th October 2005
- SA Drug & Alcohol Services Department
- OATSIH Petrol Sniffing Prevention Communications Workshop.

“
Nearly every week the Mt Theo Program is called by people wanting to hear the Mt Theo story of hope.
”

educa

Education and Outreach

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Media

TV feature stories about Mt Theo

- ABC 7:30 Report - 28 Feb 2006

Print articles about Mt Theo

- Touring senators skirt reality of petrol sniffing by Ashleigh Wilson, The Weekend Australian 25 Feb 2006
- Outstation gives hope to petrol sniffing inquiry, ABC NEWS Online 24 Feb 2006
- Desert Project fuels hopes for young sniffers by Lindsay Murdoch, The Sydney Morning Herald 21 Feb 2006
- Community continues push for non-sniffable fuel rollout, ABC NEWS Online 6 Sept 2005
- SA urged to adopt drug rehab scheme, ABC NEWS Online 30 Oct 2005

Radio stories about Mt Theo

- Llife after petrol, Alvin’s story, ABC radio. Feb 24 2006.
- Petrol sniffing inquiry travels to Central Australia, ABC radio, AM program. Wednesday Feb 22, 2006.
- Indigenous delegation calls for sniffable petrol ban, ABC radio, The World Today, Sep 6, 2005

In addition to the above, the Mt Theo Program team has conducted numerous radio and television interviews over the past year focussing on issues such as OPAL fuel, Program success, Jaru Pirrjirdi, and Government inquiries into petrol sniffing.

‘Beyond Petrol Sniffing: renewing hope for Indigenous communities’

Senate Committee report tabled 20/06/2006

Earlier this year a group of Commonwealth Senators conducting an inquiry on petrol sniffing, visited Mt Theo. At the tabling of this report, 2006 Commonwealth Senate Report ‘Beyond petrol sniffing: renewing hope for Indigenous communities’, Senator Trish Crossin (NT) praised Larissa Granites and Louis Watson, two young Jaru Pirrjirdi members and the Jaru Pirrjirdi Co-ordinator, Brett Badger sitting in the Senate gallery (as well as Central Australian Youth Link-Up Service staff):

“they are deeply committed to eradicating this problem in their community and because they have taken responsibility in their community...These are people who are doing an outstanding job in Central Australia. They are a highly professional, highly committed team of people who spend every waking moment of their day addressing this problem. This is the kind of organisation that needs not one-year funding but five- or 10-year funding. It needs millions of dollars thrown at it so that they can sit back and put a long-term plan in place to address this problem. They need to be reassured that their funding is long term and that they can tackle this problem with a long-term strategy rather than with the stop-start funding”

The Senate report strongly highlighted the Mt Theo Program, including the Jaru Pirrjirdi Project, as an innovative, committed and skilful program that had achieved unprecedented success in the field of substance abuse in remote communities. The executive summary noted

“The strength of a community and the determination of key members can produce highly effective community-based programs and services such as those operating at Yuendumu and the Mt Theo outstation” (collectively the Mt Theo Program ; Mt Theo Outstation, Youth Program and Jaru Pirrjirdi Project) (xvi).

The Mt Theo Program is proud that our efforts are being acknowledged and supports the Senate Report and the 30 recommendations. We will work with local, Territory and Commonwealth representatives to pursue implementation of the recommendations.





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The feasibility study phase of the upgrade of infrastructure at Mt Theo was finalised early in 2005, and the design and construction phase is now complete.

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Capital Works Project

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During this year, Mt Theo Program has continued to work with Richard Layton and Associates, Project Manager for the capital works Project, and the architect, Brendan Meney, to ensure the building Project is precisely what the Mt Theo Program founders, workers and Traditional owners want.

The feasibility study phase of the upgrade of infrastructure at Mt Theo was finalised early in 2005, and the design and construction phase is now complete. The upgrade includes the building of dormitory style accommodation at Mt Theo, including ablution facilities, and upgrade of power and water. The renovation of the existing house has been completed and construction of the dormitory will begin in August 2006. We hope to open this new facility by June 2007.

Bushlight, of Alice Springs, have designed a unique energy-efficient power and water system for Mt Theo Outstation to suit the remote location and varied use of the facility, which will be installed during the construction of the dormitory.

In support of this project, a family in Victoria have also donated two rainwater tanks and filtration units to be attached to the dormitory.

The office has been renovated and is a pleasant hang-out for Program workers and community members and showcases artworks from our workshops. Construction of a staff duplex will commence in August 2006.

Contractors for both buildings will employ and train young community members in construction skills for the duration of the projects.



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Mt Theo Partners

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Mt Theo story has continued to operate this past year with the assistance of strong government and community support. Our partners have included:

- Department of Health and Ageing
- Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health
- Drug Strategy Branch
- Department of Family and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
- Indigenous Land Council
- The Attorney General's Department
- The Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination
- NT Department of Health and Community Services
- NT Department of Justice
- NT Office of Sport and Recreation
- NT Office of Crime Prevention

AER Foundation
Foundation for Young Australians
www.shoeboxgallery.com.au
Newmont Mines

Mt Theo remains inspired by those private individuals in the broader community who acknowledge the value of our Program and donate regularly. These donors allow us respond to community concerns and issues as they arise, regardless of the stringencies and conditions of specific funding.



statistics

Statistics 2005 - 2006

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Number of petrol-sniffing free days in Yuendumu	361
Young people cared for at Mt Theo Outstation	53
from Yuendumu	30
from Willowra	3
from Alice Springs	17
from Mt Allen	3
Number of petrol sniffing clients at Mt Theo	32
Number of diversionary clients at Mt Theo	32
Number of young girls who stayed at Mt Theo	18
Number of young boys who stayed at Mt Theo	35
Young people who went to Mt Theo more than once	17
Number of FACS referrals	11
Number of referrals from Corrections and Police	25
Number of family/community referrals	39
Average number of youth activities in Yuendumu every week	28
Number of Jaru Pirjirdi members employed as casual sport & recreation officers	42



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