

**‘A Unified Community Working
Together
Creating a Great Future’
Walgett Gamilaroi CWP Plan**



**Walgett Gamilaroi
Community Working Party
Community Development
and
Strategic Plan**

2004-2007

**“Supporting the whole Community to
move ahead”**

June 2005

Walgett Gamilaroi Community
Working Party

and

Burdon Torzillo and associates

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Cover Photos

Gingie Village
Walgett Township "Newtown"
and Namoi Village

Acknowledgments

Walgett Gamilaroi Community Working Party (CWP) would like to thank and acknowledge the entire Walgett Aboriginal community for their input. The CWP would also like to thank the Chair of Murdi Paaki ATSIC Regional Council Mr. William 'Sam' Jefferies for his and the Councils vision, and Burdon Torzillo for their patience and time in putting together our plan.

Intellectual Property

This document is the property of the Walgett Gamilaroi Community Working Party (CWP).



The confluence of the Namoi River on the right, to the Barwon River, Locals call it "The Junction"

Introduction

Walgett is a great place with a proud history. We want to make sure that it continues to grow as a place to be proud of and as a model for other places.

This is a plan for people. We are committed to improving the life opportunities and freedoms of all the people in Walgett. We are particularly focused on improving the health and well-being of the Aboriginal community and providing economic, social and cultural opportunities for our people. We aim to do this while maintaining the respect for the land and all people that is the heart of our culture and identity as Aboriginal people.

Our plan is for the future, for our children and our grandchildren.



"Welcome to our Town"

Vision

A unified, healthy, harmonious, respectful, creative and educated Walgett Community, economically strong and living with care, nurture and respect for the land, for our ancestors, our elders, our adults, our youth, our children and future generations

Guiding Principles

- we leave this place a better place for those who follow
- we work for what the whole community needs, no-one left behind
- we respect the land as the basis of our life and culture
- we respect all people and all cultures
- we remember our history and the values of courage, excellence, and wisdom passed from our ancestors
- we support programs that are relevant, community based and sustainable
- we make decisions in an open, transparent, consensus manner
- we fully utilize the resources that we have
- we are responsible for our youth who are our future and teach them to be responsible and respectful and to provide input for the future as well
- we create equity of opportunity
- we share our ideals

What makes us happy and proud to be Aboriginal in Walgett

- our great culture and heritage, our history,
- our identity, our kinship and language
- our respect for our people and for others around us
- this is our land and our town – many generations have lived here
- spiritual connection to each other and to the land
- our resilience in the face of adversity, our survival – our spirit and determination, our support for each other
- our community united and caring

Main issues we face as a community

- government not working efficiently with the community, particularly a lack of communication and appropriate consultation
- lack of support and recognition for the CWP from government, local businesses and other major goods and service providers
- racism, stereotyping Aboriginal people,
- lack of respect and acknowledgement for our culture, our history and our people
- inequality and lack of opportunity
- no indoor youth recreation centre
- lack of resources, poor living conditions
- welfare mentality
- difficulty in accessing services
- low student retention and achievement rates and high rates of truancy within our education system
- low levels of literacy and numeracy throughout the whole community
- unacceptably high level of criminal activity and anti-social behaviour

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- difficulty in accessing land and waters for traditional cultural activities and economic activities
- difficulty in owning land
- land and waters degradation
- too many liquor outlets and gambling facilities and lack of unlicensed entertainment
- overcrowding in housing leading to poor health and educational outcomes
- below average health care provision and co-ordination from government health providers
- inadequate maintenance of basic infrastructure and services by local and state government agencies
- poor communications and transport infrastructure

Our Community

Walgett is 270 kms north of Dubbo. It is located on the Namoi River close to the junction of the Barwon River.

Walgett is a rural community of 2400 people with approximately 1700 being Aboriginal. About 50 families live at Gingie village, 10 km west of the town, 40 families live at Namoi village, 3km north of the town. The remaining Aboriginal people live in the township.

The Aboriginal people living at Walgett now are mainly Gamilaraay, Yuwaalaraay and Ngjyambaa people, descendants of the traditional owners of these lands. Many of these were forced by the government to leave this country to live in missions and reserves elsewhere, but they kept coming back to live in Walgett. Even in the '60s, Aboriginal people could not enter Walgett after 6pm.

Many Aboriginal people of the town have worked hard to improve rights and services for Aboriginal people here, including the establishment of Aboriginal medical, legal and other services.

There are many local initiatives to maintain and pass on traditional languages and to preserve native vegetation and pass on traditional knowledge about this.

Walgett operates as a service centre for rural properties, mainly sheep, cattle grazing and cropping. This region has been experiencing severe drought conditions for the last three years and the local economy is depressed as a result. The shift to larger agricultural holdings and the consequent reduction in the regional population is also having a severe effect on the town's economy.

Organizations and programs dedicated to serving the Aboriginal community are now a major part of the town's current economy and wealth generation. These range from the money brought in through employment programs and social security payments, to all the positions employed through government and Aboriginal organizations servicing the Aboriginal community here.

The Walgett region has one of the lowest socio-economic statuses in NSW, one of the highest percentages of Aboriginal population, youth, unemployed and those not participating in the workforce. There has been high truancy rates at both Primary and High Schools, and high prevalence of petty crime, violence, alcohol, gambling and drug abuse.

Our Story, Our Plan

Our ancestors fought hard through their lives for our people and our rights. We wish to acknowledge the strength, courage and wisdom of our ancestors who lived with this land and were nurtured by the spirit here which kept them alive and well, living in harmony and unity.

We need to become a unified community of people, white and black, resting on values of what it is to be better human beings, creating a future for our children and grandchildren through careful husbandry of the resources of this land and through care and respect for all people.

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We acknowledge our elders, and look to them for advice and direction drawn from the experience of their lives and from what they have learnt from those who have gone before.

We honor and support the adults in our community who are working hard to not only be good providers for their families but also who have taken on great commitments to the community through their mainly voluntary contributions to developing better governance and management capabilities in the organizations and enterprises we started. We are particularly proud that they are using the skills they have learnt through the education we made sure was available to them.

In particular we want to care, nurture and teach the young to ensure they build on what their ancestors, grandparents and parents have started so they can continue to create a healthy, responsible, caring, community in the future.

The Aboriginal community of Walgett want to bring together all the people of this place into a harmonious, peaceful, creative, healthy and constructive community which will lead the way as a model around the country for a truly reconciled way to live in this land and with each other. This is a plan for the whole Walgett community.



A famous icon in the centre of Town, commonly referred to as "The Man On The Monument"

Community Working Party

Role and purpose

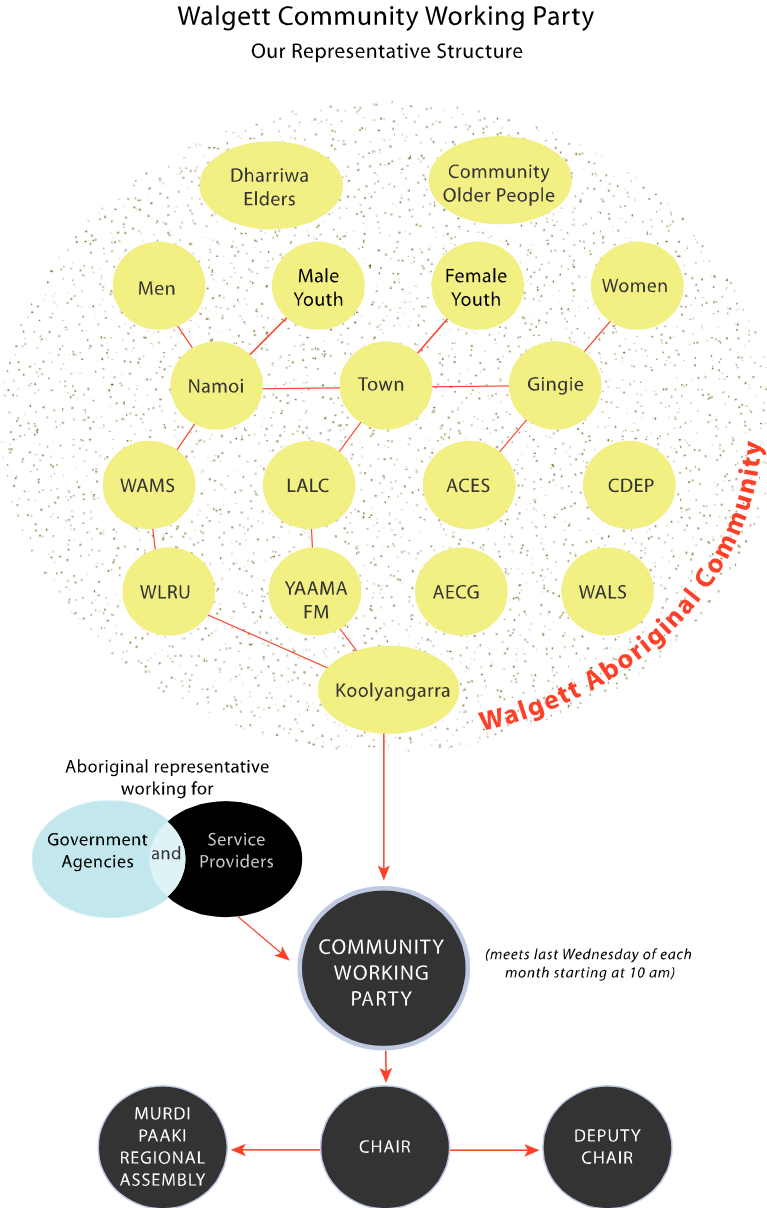
The Community Working Party has been established to:-

- Endorse, support and advocate for projects and programs that work towards achieving the outcomes developed in this plan
- Provide a forum for the leaders of the Aboriginal community to meet together and support each other in developing our community
- Create a community that is just, safe, alive, healthy, respectful and enjoyable
- Work towards developing and implementing the clear, unified and long term aims and essential outcomes of our whole community
- Provide direction to government and other service providers for the provision of services to the Aboriginal people of Walgett
- Monitor, evaluate and review the operations of service providers to the Aboriginal people of Walgett



"The Weir" on the Barwon River, a great fishing spot, when the water is on the rise!

Our structure and role



Graphic 1: Representative Structure of Walgett Gamilaroi Community Working Party.

The Walgett Gamilaroi Community Working Party has representatives from the community as well as from the major Aboriginal service organizations and also Aboriginal

representatives from Government and non-Government agencies.

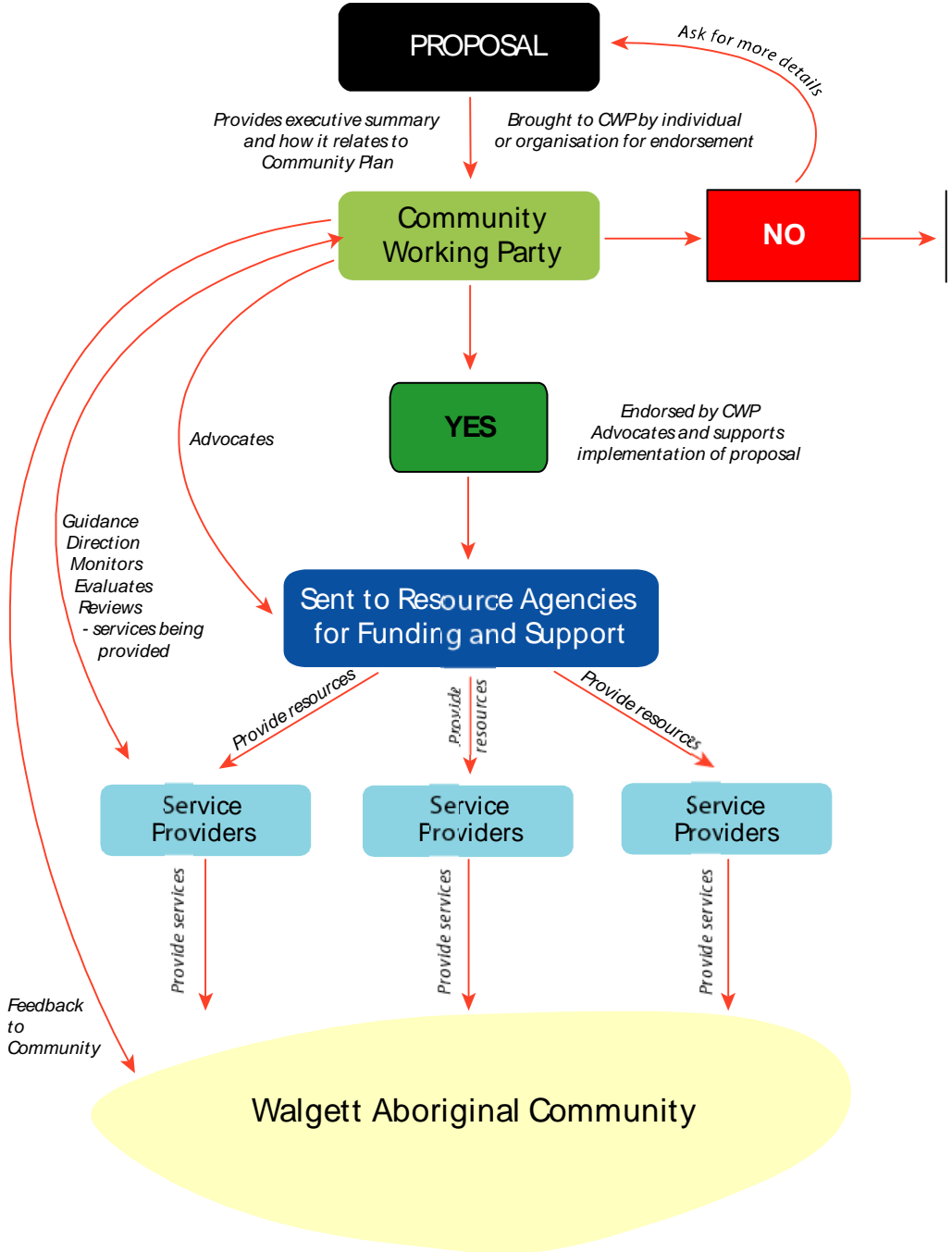
Our decision-making

Our decision making is based on consensus and respect for the individual and family. As the Community Working Party this means ensuring that all sections of our community have a voice and that everyone knows what is going on and have an opportunity for their voice to be heard.

This can mean that some decisions take longer than in the western world. However, this process creates decisions that are more effective in the long term. Consultation and participation in all our decision making is crucial to effective and long term community development.

The main role of the CWP is to endorse strategies, programs and projects, that are in line with our main aims and essential outcomes. Proposals for these will be presented to the CWP with an executive summary as well as more detailed outlines. The CWP will then formally endorse the proposals, request more information, or not endorse if it is felt they do not fit within the general aims and directions of the Strategic and Action plans.

Walgett Community Working Party Endorsement and Advocacy

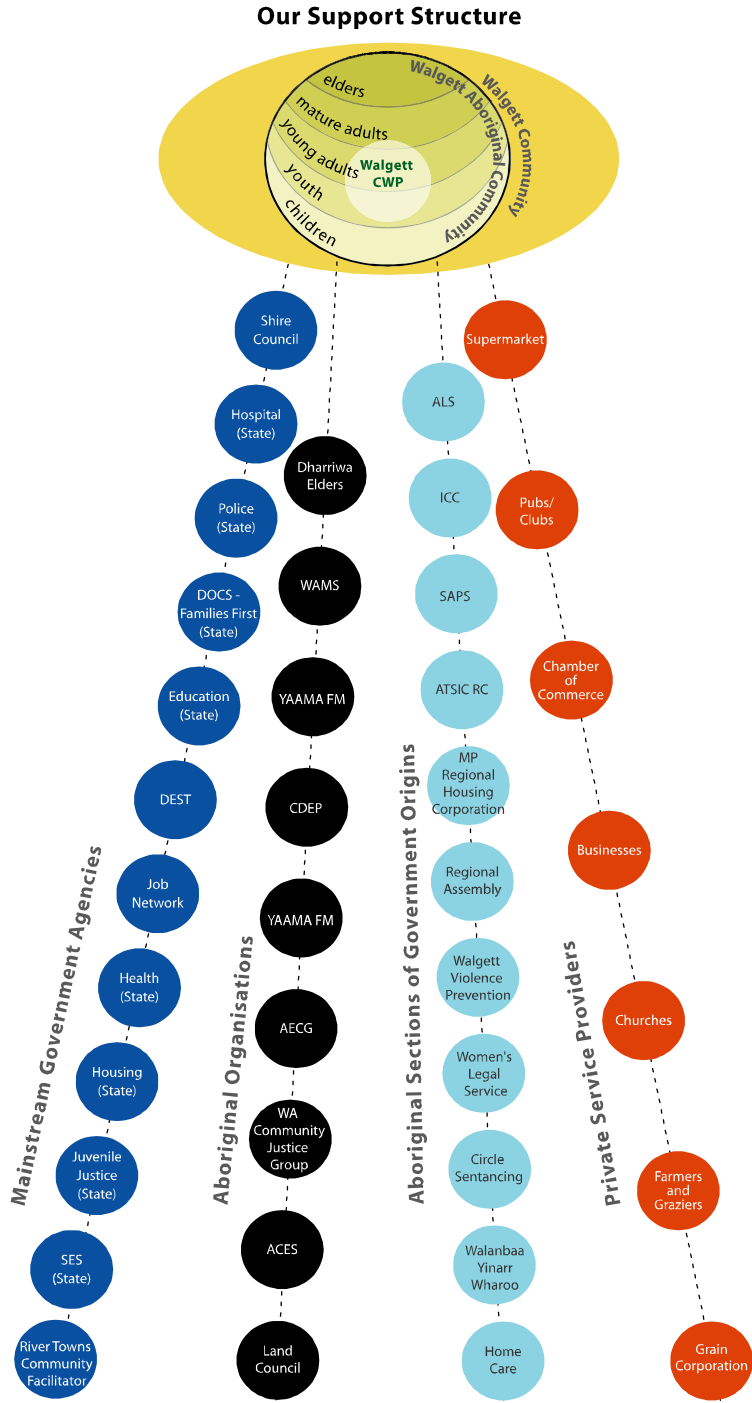


Graphic 2: Walgett CWP decision making process

Stakeholder Relationships



Graphic 3: Main roles and relationships



Graphic 4: Map of how organizations support the Walgett Aboriginal Community and CWP to achieve their aims.

Priorities for our Community

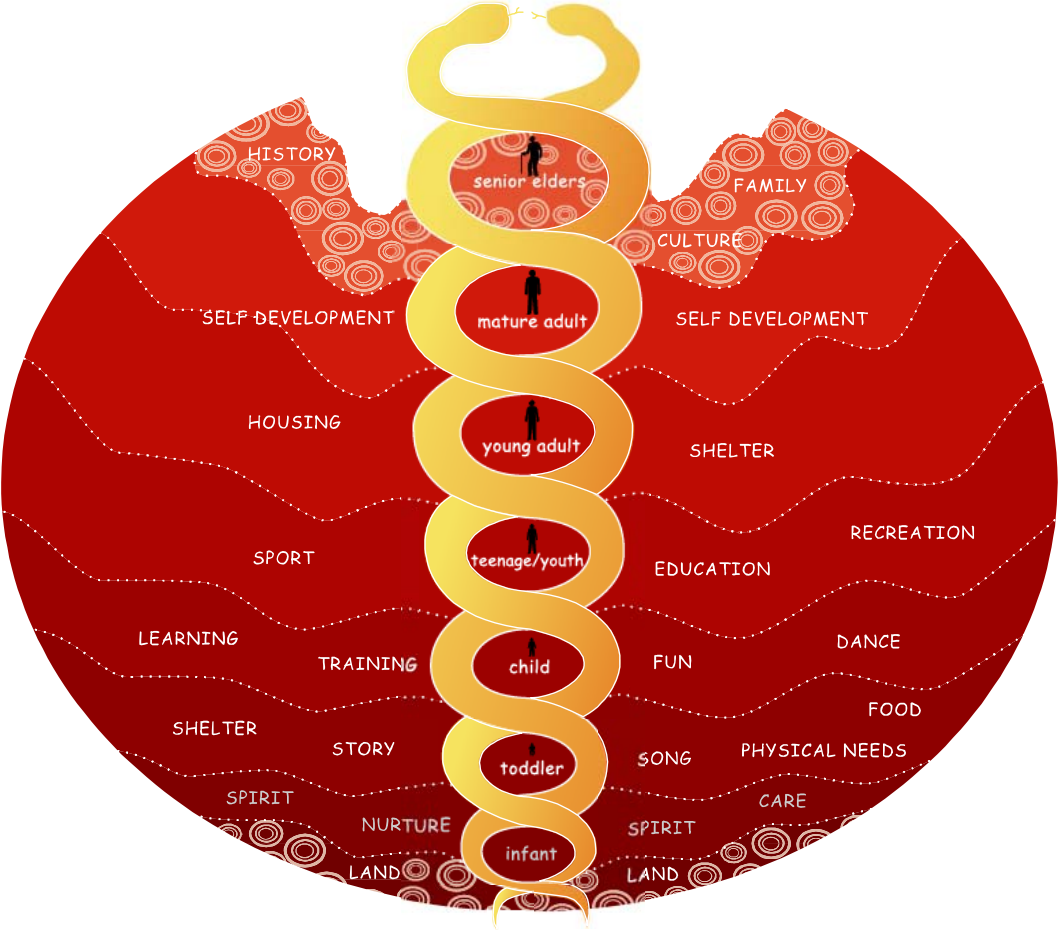
Urgent and Important - Immediate

- reduce abuse of drugs, alcohol, gambling
- unite as a community
- reduce anti-social behaviour
- reduce domestic violence
- improve school attendance and achievement
- retention and recruitment of professional staff

Important – longer term

- youth achieving their potential
- creating functional families
- better public transport
- better transport especially for sporting and recreation events
- reduce school suspensions
- create employment and enterprise opportunities
- improve employability skills
- improve community confidence and self-esteem
- improving and caring for the environment

Walgett Main Aims



Graphic 5: Main Aims and focus areas for action of WGCWP

Our Main Aims and long term essential outcomes

The Whole Community

Ensuring that our basic human freedoms are being met – for a healthy and long life, for worthwhile and meaningful employment, a respectful and crime-free community, access to essential services of good food, shelter, education, transport, communications, sport and recreation, and political and legal representation.

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

Our community:

- clean, safe and pleasant
- with access to meaningful employment
- with access to infrastructure and services
- respecting our culture and identity

WHAT WE CAN DO TO ACHIEVE THESE AIMS:

- looking after the environment/ landcare
- landscaping and beautification
- developing sport and recreation facilities and programs
- improving communications and transport services
- representation in levels of government

MAIN FOCUS AREAS FOR ACTION:

- **GOVERNANCE**
- **HEALTH**
- **EDUCATION**
- **CULTURE AND IDENTITY**
- **LAND**

- **LAW AND JUSTICE**
- **EMPLOYMENT**
- **ENTERPRISE**
- **SPORT AND RECREATION**
- **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**
- **INFRASTRUCTURE**
- **HOUSING**
- **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**
- **WELFARE**

Our Culture and Identity

Caring for the land and maintaining and enhancing our culture and identity as Aboriginal people and also as important members of Australian society.

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

Our culture:

- Taught in schools
- Respected and acknowledged
- Seen as an essential part of the whole community
- Consulted for issues around land and cultural and natural heritage

WHAT WE CAN DO TO ACHIEVE THESE AIMS:

- Representation on regional and local land development advisory boards
- Development of Culture Centre
- Support and maintenance of traditional languages, art and craft and culture (songs, stories, dances, radio and other media)
- Culture camps and programs

- **Cultural awareness training**

MAIN FOCUS AREAS FOR ACTION:

- **CULTURE AND IDENTITY**
- **LAND**

Our Children – (0-10 years)

The precious gift of our future to be nurtured and cared for with delicacy and reverence.

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

Our children:

- being healthy, respectful and obedient
- attending school
- nurtured by functioning families
- learning our culture and identity
- with high self-esteem

WHAT WE CAN DO TO ACHIEVE THESE AIMS:

- Effective Parenting Programs
- Reducing domestic violence
- Reducing alcohol abuse and gambling
- Good nutrition
- Safe and healthy housing and services
- Womens Homemaking Programs
- Appropriate pre-school and child care facilities

MAIN FOCUS AREAS FOR ACTION:

- HEALTH
- WELFARE
- CULTURE AND IDENTITY
- EDUCATION

Our Youth – (10-20 yrs)

Educating and training our young people to be responsible, healthy, compassionate, adventurous, responsible and exciting members of our community.

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

Our youth:

- being fit, healthy and respectful
- developing life skills
- achieving in education
- supported by functioning families
- learning our culture and identity
- learning from and supported by mentors and elders

WHAT WE CAN DO TO ACHIEVE THESE AIMS:

- Making school fun and attractive
- After school sports and recreation activities
- Tutors and homework centers
- Rewarding excellence
- School and community camps
- Art and craft workshops
- Good sport and recreation facilities and programs
- Vocational training and work experience
- Reducing out of school suspension
- Better sexual education
- Early intervention for criminal and anti-social behaviour especially domestic violence

MAIN FOCUS AREAS FOR ACTION:

- EDUCATION
- SPORT AND RECREATION

- **HEALTH**
- **LAW AND JUSTICE**
- **EMPLOYMENT**
- **YOUTH**

Our Young Adults – (20 – 35 yrs)

Developing enterprise and responsible lifestyles through meaningful employment, appropriate housing, community infrastructure and opportunities for economic development.

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

Our young adults:

- Meaningfully employed
- Functioning and healthy families
- Living in safe, clean housing
- Independent, supportive, responsible
- Supporting our culture and identity
- Becoming leaders in our community

WHAT WE CAN DO TO ACHIEVE THESE AIMS:

- Better Housing
- Ongoing learning about cultural practices and values
- Effective parenting
- Responsible alcohol use and gambling
- Reducing legal and illegal drug use
- Creating meaningful employment and training

MAIN FOCUS AREAS FOR ACTION:

- EMPLOYMENT
- YOUTH
- HEALTH
- LAW AND JUSTICE

- **HOUSING**
- **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**
- **CULTURE AND IDENTITY**
- **GOVERNANCE**
- **SPORT AND RECREATION**

Our Mature Adults – (35-55yrs)

Taking responsibility for guiding, leading and managing our community into harmony, enjoyment and creativity through generous offering of time, energy and resources.

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

Our mature adults:

- Leading our community
- Responsibly managing our organizations
- Secure and independent
- Learning from and supported by elders

WHAT WE CAN DO TO ACHIEVE THESE AIMS:

- Continuity of employment
- Learning and applying principles of good governance and management
- Mentoring younger people
- Volunteering services for community events and activities
- Community development
- Sustainable economic enterprise development and support
- Ongoing training and learning

MAIN FOCUS AREAS FOR ACTION:

- GOVERNANCE
- COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
- ENTERPRISE
- EDUCATION
- CULTURE AND IDENTITY
- EMPLOYMENT
- HOUSING

The Elderly – (55+)

Care, honor and respect within our community for older people who have created this community and provided the opportunities we enjoy and who pass on the essence of our culture, identity and heritage.

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

Our elders:

- Being well and healthy
- Respected by the wider community
- Advising on cultural and heritage issues
- Being cared for in the community
- Mentoring mature adults in their roles in the community
- Mentoring our youth in schools and the community

WHAT WE CAN DO TO ACHIEVE THESE AIMS:

- Developing language and cultural programs
- Support for elderly living in the community
- Health programs
- Membership on land, heritage and cultural advisory boards

MAIN FOCUS AREAS FOR ACTION:

- CULTURE AND IDENTITY
- LAND, WATERS and the ENVIRONMENT
- WELFARE
- HEALTH
- GOVERNANCE
- HOUSING

