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"A SELF-DETERMINING COMMUNITY, STRONG IN CULTURE & WALKING TOWARDS A DEADLY FUTURE"

A REAL PLACE AND A REAL PLACE AND A REAL PLACE BEAUTIFUL SHAWLS AREBACK **STORY PAGE 4**

ALSO INSIDE

PATH TOWARDS TREATY LOCAL ARTISTS TO ILLUSTRATE BOOK PARTNERING WITH OUTBACK ACADEMY FUN AT YARKA YAKA DAYA WORK WITH US!

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GIVING ELDERS THEIR VOICE

Here is your chance to be part of a significant moment in our history.

On Wednesday 22 March at the Rumbalara Elders Facility in Shepparton North from 10am, you can join this Elders' Voice gathering and help shape the Elders' Voice – a council of Elders to guide the First Peoples' Assembly on the path to Treaty. Lunch will be provided, and all Elders are paid a sitting fee for their time and contribution. The contact person for this important event is Drew Berick.

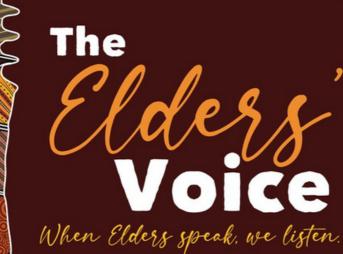
If you have any questions, you can reach out to Drew on 0476 811 368 or email him at DrewB@firstpeoplesvic.org

You can also learn more about Elders' Voice Gatherings and register here:

https://www.firstpeoplesvic.org/events/elders-voice-gathering-shepparton-north/

Transport is available for Echuca Elders wanting to help guide the path towards Treaty. Contact us for more information.

ELDERS' VOICE GATHERING SHEPPARTON





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ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS COMING UP

Treaty is our opportunity to make sure we always have the freedom and power to make the decisions that affect our communities, our culture and our Country. The next step on the shared journey to Treaty is to elect the next Assembly so negotiations with the Victorian Government can begin later this year. For people wanting to put their hand up to be a candidate in the elections, the nomination period will be from 3-24 April 2023.

Voting will take place from 13 May to 3 June 2023, with Mob able to cast votes in person, online or in the post.

Enrol at https://www.firstpeoplesvic.org/enrol/

LOCAL ARTISTS CHOSEN TO ILLUSTRATE NEW BOOK



Beautiful, locally produced First Nations artworks will illustrate our new children's book highlighting the benefits of keeping foster kids on Country.

Njernda last year asked for submissions from artists who would like to contribute to the upcoming book, Keep our Kids on Country. Written by Njernda staff member Sharyn Kelly and collaborator Karen Lee Mills, the book follows the story of Billy, a boy who lives on Country with his Nan.

When his Nan falls ill, the eight-year-old is moved into foster care in the city and struggles while living away from his home by the Murray River.

After receiving a wide range of submitted works, a Njernda panel has selected Aunty Neva Takele and her daughter Desrae Atkinson to illustrate.

"I'm honoured to be part of it," Neva said. "It was a story that resonated with me because of my own experience trying to keep my grandson on Country," she said.

"I read the story and thought to myself, this is my story!"

That personal connection inspired the artist and her daughter to develop the illustrations for the book.

"My daughter and I do a lot of collaborative artwork, so we decided, let's have a go at the book," Neva said.

"We decided on using the turtle – a grandmother and a boy – and the little turtle had a smile on his face, and I just thought well, we'll go with that, and we were chosen!" Author Sharyn Kelly said she was thrilled to have Neva and Desrae on board.

"The panel loved their submission and the way they were able to relate so closely to the story," Sharyn said.

"We hope the story will inspire more Echuca-Moama people – those who are First Nations as well as those who are not – to become part of the Njernda Foster Care Program," she said. "It's such a critical service and we know the benefits of having young people raised with a strong connection to their Mob, their Culture and their Country.

"Delivering foster care is challenging, but we have a fantastic support team here to help those looking to get involved."

TAKE YOUR SHAWL OFF THE WALL

Our next Beautiful Shawl event is coming up from Tuesday 14 March until Friday 17 March at the Njernda Medical Centre.

The initiative was first brought to Njernda in 2021 to raise awareness of breast cancer in Indigenous women aged over 40, and to promote breast screening services. Each Indigenous woman who attends for a breast screen will receive a shawl, designed by local artist Alkina Edwards, and a gift bag. "The shawl was developed to give the women privacy when they're going in there and having their breast screening done," Njernda community engagement officer Kristie Hearn says.

"The Yorta Yorta name of our shawl is Winyarr Malka - which means "Women's Shield" in English. The design represents the strength and support given to women who are affected by breast cancer.

"You can see in the design two women putting their hands on the middle woman's shoulder, symbolising giving strength and empowerment to the fighters and survivors, and honouring the women who have lost their lives.

"The symbols behind represent family, friends and community support."



Beautiful Shawls is delivered in partnership with Breastscreen Victoria and VACCHO. Women who have received a shawl previously are asked to bring them along. New shawls will be presented to those attending their first breast

screen. A special women's health and wellbeing day is being held on the Wednesday, with presentations, music and information sessions to promote health prevention and community support. For more information, or to book in, please contact the Medical Centre on (03) 5480 6252 and select option 1.



ADVOCATING FOR IMPROVED HOUSING SERVICES

Housing remains a significant challenge for many members of our Mob, so it was pleasing to be part of a recent forum called to help tackle the issues.

Working under the theme 'Every Aboriginal person has a home', representatives from a range of agencies - including our own Njernda CEO Tracey Dillon - gathered at Rumbalara in Shepparton for the Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forum. The forum heard from speakers such as Colin Brooks, Minister for Housing; Raylene Harradine Deputy Secretary, Aboriginal Selfdetermination and Outcomes, DFFH; Ben Rimmer. CEO Homes Victoria: and Nicola Young, Deputy CEO, Homes Victoria. It was a great opportunity to raise the particular challenges we face here in the Echuca region and connect with other people trying to reach the same goals.

What is the Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework?

The Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework comes from a new perspective, while trying to meet demand



for 27,000 new Aboriginal homes in Victoria by 2036.

Its goals include:

- Secure housing to improve life outcomes
- Build supply to meet the needs of a growing Aboriginal population
- Open doors to home ownership and private rental
- An Aboriginal focused homelessness system
- A capable system that delivers Aboriginal housing needs



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COLLABORATING FOR A BETTER FUTURE



It was a thrill to have Njernda and Outback Academy staff meet at the Baroona Farm recently.

Outback Academy is a not-for-profit majority Aboriginal-led organisation. It supports Aboriginal owned or led farms with their agricultural and horticultural business, education, employment, and health and wellbeing for Community. Njernda will be trialling a partnership with Outback Academy's Follow the Flowers program - bringing bees and native flowers to the Baroona Farm. Outback Academy will provide support for us to regenerate the farm and make it more economically independent, and develop education and training programs for Community.

This is just one of the many steps we're taking to bring the Baroona Farm back to Community!



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT BRODY - 0437 262 965

BAKING UP A STORM WITH BAROONA WATTLESEED

"Treat the food with respect and it treats you good back."

We'll soon be launching a new video on our website and social media channels showing off a delicious recipe for a traditional damper incorporating our very own Baroona Wattleseed.



And where else would you film but the Baroona Farm? The short film shows a group of young people being taught the art of making a good damper - mixing the ingredients gently and cooking on a coal fire.

And the good news is the dampers taste just as good as they look with the earthy, chocolate flavours from Baroona Wattleseed.



"Every pod we pick, every seed we separate, every package we seal, is done on Country with pride."

Our Wattleseed is locally grown, harvested and packaged on our 320-acre farm Baroona, on Wollithiga (Echuca) Yorta Yorta country. With production now in full swing we are also growing the number of local stores stocking Baroona Wattleseed.

The product is available at Monkee and Co on High Street in Echuca.

Baroona Wattleseed is driven by a vision – of a business that supports our Mob, shares our culture, and preserves our traditions and knowledge for future generations.

BERRIMBA NEWS - AN EARLY YEARS UPDATE

From: Skye Cemino Berrimba Child Care Centre

I hope you'll all enjoy these photos of a cultural session held at the central kindergarten with some of our deadly children who graduated from bushkinder back in **2022**.

The group enjoyed immersing themselves in our Aboriginal History and Culture. The children were interested in how our people survive and live off the land. The children loved looking at all the artefacts. They were particularly curious when asking questions about different styles of artwork on boomerangs. The group also enjoyed learning some of our Yorta Yorta language and painting their faces with the ochre, which they took turns with grinding.



Our goal: 'Children have a strong sense of identity and are culturally supported.



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YARKA YAKA DAYA



From: Emma Taylor Best Start Facilitator

Yarka Yaka Daya returning to Berrimba has started in great fashion. Berrimba is where all early years learning and engagement begins for Aboriginal families living in the area. All community families are welcome with children from infants to school age. During term one we are focusing on singing and reading and exploring the new playgroup space. Echuca Regional Health will be surveying families about their experiences.

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HEALTH AND AGED CARE UPDATE

Two new cases of mosquito-boarne Murray Valley encephalitis (MVE) virus infection show just how important it is to protect ourselves from bites.

By early March, three cases of MVE virus infection and two deaths had been reported in Victoria this mosquito season. Several suspected cases were under investigation. The second case was a woman in her sixties who died in late February, and the third case was a man in his seventies who is receiving treatment in hospital. Both cases were likely exposed to mosquitoes in northern Victoria. The risk of diseases such as Japanese encephalitis (JE), MVE and West Nile (Kunjin) virus infections is high this summer, particularly in northern Victoria where viruses are being detected in mosquitoes. These viruses can cause a rare but potentially serious infection of the central nervous system and are spread to humans by infected mosquitoes.

There are simple steps to protect against mosquito-borne diseases, including wearing long, loose-fitting, light-coloured clothing, using mosquito repellents containing picaridin or DEET on all exposed skin, and limiting outdoor activity if lots of mosquitoes are about.

Symptoms may include fever, headache, nausea, vomiting and muscle aches, although most infected people do not have symptoms. In serious cases, people can develop meningitis or encephalitis which can be fatal. Anyone with symptoms should seek urgent medical care.

Growing our GP team

Hello everyone! My name is Sujeeth, and I have started with Njernda as a GP.

The holistic care which Njernda has been offering to the community motivated me to join the medical centre and I am very privileged to have this opportunity. I come from India – after medical education I worked as a doctor in India for a few years before migrating to Australia. I have been working in Australia since 2019. I have worked across a few emergency departments in Victoria. Outside work I love to spend time with friends and family, watching and playing cricket. Meet... Dr Sujeeth





Vhat things help make me feel strong and resilient?

- SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS AND A
 SENSE OF BELONGING
- CONNECTION TO LAND, CULTURE, SPIRITUALITY, ANCESTRY
- STRONG COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE
- PASSING ON OF CULTURAL PRACTICES

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HEALTH AND AGED CARE UPDATE



Meet... Felicity

Staff profile

Felicity Hawkett is a Yorta Yorta/Dja Dja Wurrung woman.

She has just started the new role as the Koori Maternal Services Support Person based at Njernda Medical .

Her role includes:

- Supporting pregnant Aboriginal women before and after birth
- Advocating with other maternal and medical appointments
- Liaising with Echuca Regional Health midwives

• Running Mums and Bubs programs Felicity is very excited to be in this position and can't wait to see what the future will hold for all Aboriginal Pregnant Women.

It's that time of the year again to book in with the nurse to receive your annual influenza vaccination (flu).

As the virus changes over time and protection from the vaccine can dimmish after several months, you're encouraged to have your flu shot annually.

The best time to get vaccinated is in April or May so that you and your family are most protected. Keep an eye on our social media pages for upcoming dates and times that this will become available. COVID booster doses are also available for those eligible. Bookings for these are essential with appointments on Tuesday or Friday with one of our friendly nursing staff - this can be done alongside your annual flu vaccination. If you've had COVID within the past six months, you will still have some immunity. As detailed on page 10, mosquito-borne illnesses also remain a risk to our commuity. Japanese encephalitis cases are still being detected in Victoria.

We currently have vaccines available for this virus.

PLEASE DON'T FORGET TO BOOK IN FOR YOUR ANNUAL HEALTH CHECK - 20 MINUTES WITH AN AHP AND 40 MINUTES WITH THE DOCTOR TO RECEIVE A \$25.00 GIFT CARD.

LOOKING FOR SOME COMPANY?

Our Elders and Commonwealth Home Support Program participants love getting together for our social outings and get-togethers. If you would like to be involved in HACC/CHSP Programs, or know someone who would, have a yarn with Hope Briggs our Primary Healthcare Manager/Health and Ageing on 0448 444 208.

Don't forget Yarka Yaka Daya!

Yarka Yaka Daya (Children Come Play) is back at Berrimba during March. It's a positive play space for kids and families. More information from Emma: 0407 462 711

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

Nyini Health and Wellness Centre

Grand Opening Friday 17th March 2023 Incorporating Close the Gap 2023

CLOSETHEGAP

Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony will be held at 11.30am followed by a BBQ Lunch

Fitness challenge competitions Smoothie bike on site for delicious drinks Personal trainer advice and programming Gym sign ups, static displays And Much More!!

10.00am - 2.00pm





2/55 McMillon Road

Abergenet Street, Bervice of Njernda Wellbeing Unit 34 Annesley Street, Echuca

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COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

Health & Wellness Day







As Part of The Beautiful Shawl Project Njernda Medical Centre will be hosting a

Women's Health & Wellness Day

Wednesday 15th March 2023 Youth Hub, Annesley Street Echuca 10am - 2pm

We will have discussion about Women's Health Guest Speakers from Breast Screen Vic, Cancer Council Arts & Craft activities, Yarn Safe & Strong & Djirra Yarning Circle

ENTERTAINMENT BY: MADDI COLVILLE

LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED

NJERNDA MEDICAL CENTRE 84 HARE STREET, ECHUCA 03 5480 6252 #1



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COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

MUMS AND BOORAIS

12 week Cooking Program

Njernda Medical Centre

At

84 Hare Street Echuca Fridays Ilam-Ipm

(Not during the School Holidays)

EXPRESSIONS **OF INTEREST**

If this is something you would like to attend ring Felicity 0477 994 849

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

DARDI MUNWURRO IN ECHUCA



DARDI MUNWURRO (Strong Spirit) is a great supportive program for our men, and it's here in Echuca.

The Dardi Munwurro Program is on each Thursday at 11am at Apex Hall.

Dardi Munwurro is a specialist Aboriginal family violence service. Its vision is to build stronger families and safer communities.

Dardi Munwurro aims to empower and inspire individuals to heal the past, acknowledge the present and create a positive vision for the future.

It delivers a range of family violence programs to break the cycle of inter-generational trauma in Aboriginal families and communities.

If you would like more information, contact Colin Atkinson - Community Justice worker at Njernda phone (03) 5480 6252 option 3.



Njernda HACC/CHSP Aqua Aerobics Classes.

Join Us for free

A Class will be held every week for HACC/CHSP clients and Elders of the community Tuesdays at 10:00am – 10:45am Starting on the 7th of March 2023 at the Echcua War Memorial Aquatic Centre.

Only 25 spots per class. Contact us if interested ! 0419 187 755 or 0427 130 929

WORKING AT NJERNDA

A career at Njernda can take you anywhere! And we love to support our Mob to step up into real jobs that make a huge difference.

Check our website and follow our social media channels to keep up with what's available.







FOR OUR ELDERS

2-9 JULY 2023

WATCH THIS SPACE!

NAIDOC 2023 will be here quicker than you can imagine!

We've got some HUGE community celebrations planned, and we can't wait to share them with you in future editions of Njernda News and on our social media channels.

But if you would like to get involved and be part of the planning, have a yarn with Uncle Keith Hearn, who is now our Community Engagement Officer.



We Are

M: njernda.com.au E: jobs@njernda.com.au P: (03)5480 6252

We encourage applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, but unless stated, our jobs are available to all gualified applicants.

If you're interested in any of our listed jobs, or want to know more about what it's like to work at Njernda, have a yarn with Aunty Trish or the HR Team.

Get all the details of all our jobs and apply on our website. www.njernda.com.au

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CONTACT US:

Njernda Aboriginal Corporation 51 - 55 Heygarth Street Echuca (Corporate Office) Phone: (03) 5480 6252 www.njernda.com.au

Njernda