

Issue 1 - April 2021

MILIBUD



A NOTE FROM

MILIBUD

(‘OUR MOB’ IN KRIOL)

Welcome to our inaugural edition of Milibud.

‘Milibud’ is Olabud Doogethu’s monthly magazine, dedicated to sharing the latest updates and stories from Olabud Doogethu, the first justice reinvestment site in Western Australia.

Established in 2019, Olabud Doogethu (‘All of us together’ in Kimberley Kriol) is located in the Shire of Halls Creek, WA.

Olabud Doogethu is an Aboriginal designed and led initiative involving the Aboriginal communities of:

- Balgo/ Wirrimanu
- Billiluna/ Mindibungu
- Mulan
- Ringer Soak/ Kundat Djaru
- Warmun/ Turkey Creek
- Yiyili
- Red Hill
- Mardiwah Loop
- Yardgee
- Nicholson Block

Olabud Doogethu is supported by the Shire of Halls Creek and is partnered with Social Reinvestment WA, an Aboriginal-led coalition of 25 not-for-profits working to end the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in WA’s justice system.

Olabud Doogethu is an Aboriginal community designed place-based initiative that seeks to reduce incarceration and provide better outcomes for the young people in Halls Creek.

Since Olabud Doogethu began in the Shire of Halls Creek, there has been a 58% reduction in burglaries; 35% reduction in stolen motor vehicles and 28% reduction in stealing offences.

This edition highlights Olabud Doogethu’s work in April 2021:

Key program updates

- Mibala, Learning On Country
- Professor Harry Blagg’s (UWA) visit to Halls Creek
- Community Navigator’s Project, named ‘Kutjungka’

Featured stories

- Thomas Bradshaw: Youth Engagement Night Officer
- Dean Mosquito: Learning On Country Coordinator

From the heart of the Kimberley, we hope you enjoy our inaugural edition of Milibud.

- Olabud Doogethu

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge Aboriginal people as the traditional custodians of the land of Australia and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We particularly acknowledge the Kija and Jaru people, the traditional owners of the Country upon which the Shire of Halls Creek is located.



MIBALA

LEARNING ON COUNTRY

The first of its kind in Australia, the Certificate II in Mibala ('Us Together' in Kriol) Learning Country is a nationally accredited course that provides an alternative education pathway.



The purpose of the course, developed by Olabud Doogethu is to develop children's sense of identity and connection to culture, while re-engaging them in schooling.

'[Through Mibala], we want to help empower the children to become the next generation of leaders... and to help find their voice through their sense of identity and through a stronger connection to culture' said Arron Little, On Track Coordinator.

On 12-15 April 2021, Olabud Doogethu leaders, including Arron, have completed formal training to develop their skills to teach children on country.

'We learnt how to create lesson plans, learnt how to break skills down for children, and the different ways of teaching,' said Arron.

The first of its kind in Australia, the nationally accredited - Certificate II in Mibala Learning Country - is led by Olabud Doogethu in partnership with the Shire of Halls Creek.

Through its accredited status, this course will be soon be able to be adapted and implemented in any language and Country in Australia. Olabud Doogethu will work closely with the schools to

identify the children that need the additional support and what they can do to help.

'We'll correspond with the schools... [children] being in the right headspace and a lack of attendance at school are some of the key issues faced by teachers working in Halls Creek,' said Arron.

A team of men and women in Olabud Doogethu will ensure that Mibala can work effectively to identify the children falling through the cracks and provide that support that isn't available through mainstream education. 'People drop off school... due to whatever circumstances... it can be hard for kids to get back into it,' said Arron.

Mibala will bring children out on Country to pass down traditional Aboriginal knowledge to them while helping children develop a strong sense of identity and connection to their culture.

The teaching units that are included in the Cert II in Mibala Learning Country involve students learning about local community leaders, exploring their own family history, learning how to use digital devices and more.

Watch this space.





COMMUNITY JUSTICE

Professor Harry Blagg from the University of Western Australia visited Halls Creek to learn from the community about how the justice system can change to better serve the community and its people.

'I was blown away by the warmth of the welcome I received on Jaru and Kija country. It was an unforgettable trip, seeing the massive levels of commitment by Aboriginal people to making their community a safe place to live in for everyone. Local people are making a major difference to their quality of life,' said Professor Blagg.

Professor Blagg travelled to Halls Creek on 20-23 April 2021 to meet with Olabud Doogethu and the community to talk about the justice system, their challenges, and what can be changed to support their community.

'Early indications suggest that Aboriginal people want a system based on genuine partnership between Aboriginal law and white law,' said Professor Blagg.

'Local people I met with want to see a greater role for Aboriginal Law and Culture, rather than just Gardya law. For example, having Elders sit with magistrates in the court. People commented that the new court in Halls Creek was an example of colonial thinking, there are no toilet facilities for people waiting outside and the area has little shade,' said Professor Blagg.

While Professor Blagg's research is still in its early stages, there are a key number of themes that have emerged from his discussions with community so far. This included Olabud Doogethu and other organisations meeting regularly with police, justice and courts to develop local strategies to keep kids on country, keeping families strong and involving Elders as co-educators to help support the learning of children.



JUNIOR T:

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT NIGHT OFFICER

Thomas Bradshaw, known commonly as 'Junior T', left Halls Creek for Gippsland when he was just 11 years old. Now, at 19 years old, Junior T has returned home and is a role model for the children in Halls Creek working as a Youth Engagement Night Officer.

'I was really excited at first... But actually, I was homesick for two weeks straight. I had the phone right next to me when I would go to sleep. Then whenever I would wake up, I just called Mum,' said Junior T as he recalled how he felt about moving from Halls Creek to Gippsland, Victoria.

Today, Junior T is one of the youngest members of Olabud Doogethu. Junior T joined the YENOs only three months ago, but he's seen as a young and rising star in Olabud Doogethu.

Walking the streets at night, the YENO team began two years ago as an initiative to keep local kids out of trouble. Growing up in Halls Creek, Junior T has fond memories of Halls Creek, especially with his Grandfather.

Junior T recalls, 'It's changed a lot. I used to be out bush with my Granddad a lot. Now he's got work and that, he's a very busy man. Back in the day, I used to go road trips with him and now, not anymore.'

'As a Youth Engagement Night Officer, it's been really good - being a role model and stuff. Trying to teach them the ways. Some listen, and some don't. But they all get there,' said Junior T.

As part of the YENO team, the YENOs rely on their ability to connect and engage with the children. Sometimes, this involves a bit of creativity.

'We're actually thinking... like one weekend with a couple of fellas and kids and take them out bush and go camping. So we were planning on doing that - and then, telling the kids, if we get your name down and you have three ticks - you're not allowed to come,' said Junior T.

While it's hard work, Junior T hopes that the children grow up knowing their impact on the community.

Since YENO began two years ago, Halls Creek has successfully achieved a 58% reduction in burglaries; 35% reduction in stolen motor vehicles and 28% reduction in stealing offences.



KUTJUNGKA: COMMUNITY NAVIGATORS

The Kutjungka ('as one') project will support the remote desert communities of Mulan, Wirrimanu (Balgo), Mindibungu (Billiuna) and Kundat Djaru (Ringer Soak) to improve access to services in each community through local Community Navigators.

Community leaders from Mulan, Wirrimanu (Balgo), Mindibungu (Billiuna), Kundat Djaru (Ringer Soak) and the Tjurabalan Native Title Land Aboriginal Corporation joined Olabud Doogethu in Halls Creek on 28-29 April 2021 to discuss the Kutjungka ('as one') project.

The two-day meeting was an opportunity for the community leaders to identify a governance committee that will help steer the future of the Kutjungka project, to identify the key priorities in each community, as well as the shared key priorities at a broader strategic level.

Mulan, Wirrimanu (Balgo), Mindibungu (Billiuna) and Kundat Djaru (Ringer Soak) identified similar issues in terms of what they would like the Community Navigators to focus on – from short-term to long-term priorities. This included key priority areas such as housing, health, and local community infrastructure.

The Community Navigators will work on the local level within their own communities, while the governance committee will advocate and lobby for issues that are shared among the communities.

'When you work together, you learn from each other,' said one of the community leaders at the meeting in Halls Creek.

The development of Kutjungka project is led by the local community leaders of Mulan, Wirrimanu (Balgo), Mindibungu (Billiuna) and Kundat Djaru (Ringer Soak). Kutjungka is funded by the National Indigenous Australians Agency and is supported by Olabud Doogethu and the Shire of Halls Creek.



DEAN MOSQUITO:

LEARNING ON COUNTRY COORDINATOR

When Dean Mosquito left school at 15 years old, he worked as an Aboriginal Teacher's Assistant (ATA). Finding a passion to help others succeed in life, Dean wants to use his lifetime of experience to help children build a better future through Mibala Learning On Country.

Dean is a Kija and Jaru man who grew up in Warmun and Halls Creek. When Dean left school at 15 years old, he quickly found a passion to help children learn and succeed which he has carried through his entire life.

'The best part was helping kids get jobs.... I'd help the teacher by translating the lessons to the kids and help break down the English, since most kids were from out of town,' Dean recalls from his early days as an ATA.

Dean is Olabud Doogethu's Learning On Country Coordinator for the Mibala Learning On Country program, which aims to help children engage in schooling and to develop a strong sense of 'self' by taking them out on to Country to reconnect them to their Aboriginal culture.

'Mibala will be teaching kids cultural stuff. We'll try to get them ready [for life]... to identify who they are, where they're from... because most of our kids don't know who they are and they're missing out on what's really important - which is our identity and culture,' said Dean.

'I hope when they come out of Mibala, they feel proud of themselves, what they have achieved, where they're going in life and to learn how to respect their land, their culture and their language,' said Dean.

Dean is excited to see how the Mibala program can make an impact on the children in Halls Creek. But he also knows that it's ultimately up to the next generation to build the future that they want.

'At the end of the day, it's all about choice. We can teach you all of this. But as a matter of fact, it's up to you how you put it together,' said Dean.





Olabud Doogethu

For more information, please visit
www.olabuddoogethu.org.au