

**ABORIGINAL ADULT LITERACY
CAMPAIGN PILOT PROJECT
WILCANNIA, NSW**

PROJECT DETAILS SUMMARY

PROJECT INFORMATION

PROJECT TITLE	Aboriginal Adult Literacy Campaign Pilot in Wilcannia, NSW Australia
SPONSOR	National Aboriginal Adult Literacy Campaign Commission
PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND FUND HOLDER	University of New England Associate Professor Bob Boughton
SITE LEAD AGENCY	Wilcannia Local Aboriginal Land Council
COMMENCEMENT DATE OF PILOT	August 2011
COMPLETION DATE OF PILOT	October 2012
COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS FUNDING PILOT	Department of Employment Education and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA)
NSW GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS	NSW Aboriginal Housing Office
SUPPORTING PARTNER ORGANISATIONS	Wilcannia Local Aboriginal Lands Council Wilcannia Community Working Party Wilcannia Central School University of New England The Lowitja Institute Incorporating the Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research IPLAC (Institute of Pedagogy for Latin American and Caribbean)

INTRODUCTION

The Commonwealth government of Australia agreed to fund the University of New England in partnership with the National Aboriginal Adult Literacy Commission, the Local Wilcannia Lands Council and the Wilcannia Central School to pilot an Aboriginal adult literacy campaign in Wilcannia, NSW utilising an internationally-recognised mass literacy campaign model, not previously used in Australia. This model which has been used in over 26 countries has achieved remarkable results eg in Timor-Leste over 120,000 adults gained basic literacy within 4 years.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the pilot is to:

- » Assess whether this model can be applied successfully in an Aboriginal community; and
- » Discover what would be involved in up-scaling it from one community to other communities across Australia over a 3 year timeframe;
- » Achieve a significant increase in the adult literacy rate in Aboriginal Australia which is estimated to have an illiteracy rate of 40%.

Many Aboriginal leaders believe that these low levels of literacy in the adult population are a major impediment to improvements in a range of other areas, including health development, community governance, economic participation, including employment and involvement in school education and post school education and training. Literacy, it is argued is a basic human right and necessary for people to take control and enable them access to opportunities for improved community health and well being.

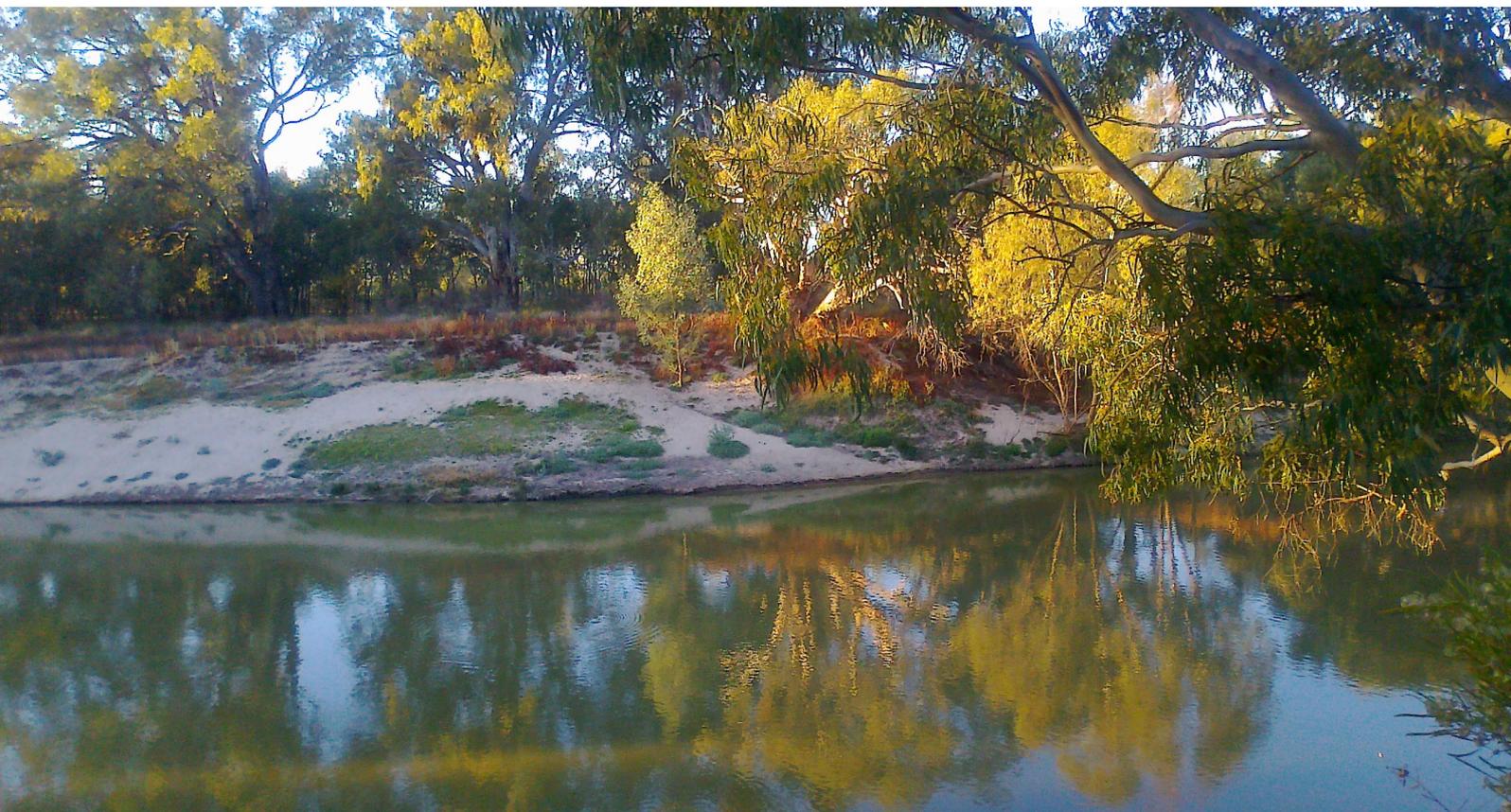
SUMMARY

1.

THE LEAD AGENCY IN WILCANNIA for the Campaign is the LALC in partnership with the Wilcannia Central School. Jack Beetson, a member of the National Aboriginal Adult Literacy Commission will be the on-site pilot leader working with a Local Literacy Campaign Working Group. Jack will be supported by the Project Team consisting of an onsite Literacy Campaign model specialist; local literacy facilitators; a part-time post-literacy coordinator; and visiting technical advisors.

2.

THE LOCAL LITERACY CAMPAIGN WORKING GROUP consisting of a range of local Aboriginal education and community leaders will provide leadership and advice to the Project Team. They will lead the promotion of the Campaign engaging the whole community in the pilot; launch the campaign and the celebration of the literacy class graduates; assist with the establishment of a Network of Campaign Supporters; provide support to the participants and local facilitators; advise on the literacy household survey and contextualisation of the literacy materials; and work to ensure that agencies including government, non-government and businesses provide post-literacy opportunities for the neo-literates. The Commission will be supported by the Project Team and the existing National Commission.



3.

THE CAMPAIGN USES A 3 PHASE MODEL:

- » Phase 1 is community mobilisation and awareness raising or socialisation of the importance of adult literacy and its role as a pathway to improved social and economic well being.
- » Phase 2 involves 13 weeks of intensive basic literacy classes' delivered by trained local facilitators. There will be two (2) intakes with two (2) classes per intake giving a total of four (4) classes. Each class will enrol a maximum 15 learners. A total of 60 participants will be enrolled with an expectant 80% retention rate.
- » Phase 3 is the Post Literacy component with up to 12 weeks of extra activities for each participant to consolidate and extend the basic literacy skills gained through a range of opportunities provided by local agencies. Possible options include:
 1. youth group programs eg computing, art, radio, music;
 2. vocational courses at Certificate-2 eg employment ready skills, horticulture, childcare, hospitality;
 3. work experience eg building sites, pastoral industry;
 4. participation in community groups, eg mothers group, schools parents group, pre-school reading, women's group, men's group;
 5. life skills programs eg cookery, sewing, market gardening, tenancy agreements;
 6. functional literacy programs; and WELL programs;
 7. literacy promotion activities;
 8. Shire and school library activities

4.

OUTCOMES:

- » 50-60 learners with basic reading and writing skills in English language
- » A post-literacy pathways plan for each literacy class participant
- » A cohort of locals ready to access further vocational and / or enterprise traineeships or employment, or community services and life skills programs upon completion of the post-literacy component of the pilot.

BACKGROUND

In April 2009, then Commonwealth-funded Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health (CRAH) sponsored a national workshop in Alice Springs, at which Aboriginal health and education leaders examined the relationship between adult literacy and health, the international experience of the impact of mass adult literacy campaigns, and the details of how campaigns were conducted to optimise success. The Aboriginal leaders present agreed on the need to research, deliver and evaluate a pilot Aboriginal Adult Literacy Campaign accompanied by a parallel research project to measure the impact of the pilot Campaign, both on literacy and on other indicators of social and economic wellbeing, including health development. The workshop established a National Aboriginal Adult Literacy Campaign Steering Committee, chaired by Ms Donna Ah Chee, then Deputy Director of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress (CAAC), now the CEO of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations peak body (NACCHO). Other current members are: Ms Pat Anderson, Mr Jack Beetson, Ms Stephanie Bell, and Professor Peter Buckskin. The Lowitja Institute granted the Committee \$50,000 to get the pilot off the ground. Their work has resulted in \$334,000 to pilot the Campaign over the next 12 months plus \$50,000 in kind support from the Wilcannia Central School.

MONITORING & EVALUATION

A participatory evaluation will take place in parallel with the Campaign pilot to both document the rollout and assist those responsible to reflect upon and deal with challenges. This evaluation will be led by Associate Professor Bob Boughton, University of New England along with colleagues Ms Stephanie Bell, Br Ben Bartlett and Associate Professor Anne Hudson.

The evaluation will involve active participation by the Local Literacy Campaign Working Group, Project Team and the participants.