

ALFABET

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ABORIGINAL LITERACY FOUNDATION

Covid-19

Recovery

The ALF is ready to reengage!

WINTER 2020



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CEO'S REPORT

Aboriginal Literacy Foundation in the COVID-19 year has changed significantly. Our literacy classes in Melbourne, Ballarat, Hamilton, Beaufort and many other locations are now either postponed or online.

Our wonderful Heritage Art Classes run by Aunty Janet in Beaufort and Ballarat have also had to be postponed - although all students are still painting and it is possible we will have our September art exhibition as last year. We have had to alter our work practices and for a time we were all working from home. Most staff have returned to our offices in Melbourne and Ballarat.

So what has been the long term benefit of this difficult time? I think we realise better now how important one on one tutoring really is for our Aboriginal students. Many of them have had little actual schooling due to their remote or transient lifestyle. Some attend school infrequently due to racial tensions or bullying and others tend

to locate themselves at the back of the class and miss out on much of the basic education in primary school. What we offer students is an individualised course based on accurate testing to find out what their real literacy difficulties are.

In almost every questionnaire our Aboriginal students say how much happier they are learning in an environment with students and teachers from a similar background. One student said to me a few months ago, "Just think what it would be like for you if we were the majority and you were the minority - how would it feel?" I suppose this is the truth that can never be dodged.

The schools are going back to full time teaching in June and July, and we are hopeful that we will be able to return to some sort of one on one tutoring observing the one and a half metres isolation distance required under COVID-19 recommendations. It will be different for us as will many other parts of Australian life.

I'm sure we'll talk about "before COVID-19" and "after COVID-19" just as our parents and grandparents talked of life "before the War".

We have to be so grateful for the wonderful support that we have received during this time. We have over 3000 supporters and it's these individuals who have really kept us going and who are part of our future.

On behalf of all of us here at the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation, I want to make a special thank you to you all.

Dr Tony Cree
CEO, Aboriginal Literacy Foundation

Dr Tony Cree with students from Canterbury Primary School after their 2020 book drive.



DISTANCE EDUCATION

WITH NEEDATUTOR.COM.AU



WILUNA IN FOCUS

Need a Tutor has had a proud partnership with the ALF since 2018 providing online tutoring to Indigenous remote students.

Currently Need a Tutor is supporting Wiluna Community School situated in the mid-western region of WA on the edge of the Western desert 731km from Perth.

Wiluna has between 85-115 students and 4 of these students are receiving online tutoring via the school via weekly tutoring lessons with their own dedicated tutor.

All lessons are culturally supportive and is often held by a qualified Indigenous teacher or tutor.

ALF and Need a Tutor recognise that Indigenous children in these remote schools need extra support to meet minimum literacy and numeracy levels, stay in school and complete year 12.

We know that Indigenous students that start behind, stay behind, particularly if they live in remote communities.

Since COVID-19, Need a Tutor has been able to continue their support remotely which has been of great comfort to their students and teachers.

The impact of tutoring on these students has been profound. To access world class tutors from around the country on a weekly basis helps them with their Literacy and Numeracy, learning confidence and mental health.

We are proud to partner with organisations like Need a Tutor and with your support we can access more Indigenous students in more remote locations around Australia.

By Bronwyn Covill
CEO, needatutor.com.au

WILUNA



Population: 681

AFTER SCHOOL TUTORIAL GROUPS



For the past year, Wendy Hope and Jo Campbell have been running our inner city tutorial groups in the Melbourne suburbs of Fitzroy, Footscray and Collingwood. It is never easy to provide tutoring in these inner city conditions when there are so many other distractions for students and so many complications for teachers even getting to class.

In New South Wales and Queensland, rules relating to all teaching have been a little tighter and fortunately through a donation from the ANZ Bank Staff Fund, we have been able to provide many students with secondhand laptops and tablets. It is quite clear that distance education will be no substitute for the real thing but we are doing our best to provide the best level of support possible.

In regional areas, whether it is in New South Wales, Victoria or Queensland, our tutors have faced some imposing challenges. We weren't able to tutor in Southern New South Wales or in Eastern Victoria during the bushfires. Our Queensland tutors were affected by floods and some remote locations were totally inaccessible. For these tutors and their students, Covid-19 is only the latest difficulty.

Unfortunately, whereas distance education is often easy for city students, in remote areas the internet is hard to access and there can be problems with reliable electricity. Tutors have shown remarkable dedication when reverting back to the older type of

tutoring involving work sheets sent through the mail.

We are especially grateful to our tutors based at our Ballarat Centre. Lisa McGlade, Anne Eagan and Lynne Kelly have managed to continue tutoring under difficult circumstances. Lisa has recently relocated to Melbourne so this has left Anne and Lynne to run the Western Victoria programs. Fortunately, Aunty Janet who primarily teaches Heritage Art is also able to contribute and has been able to drive tutors to the Beaufort classes.

As with all other areas, there is so much to learn from these present circumstances and all teachers and students now realise how important the one on one tutoring is to get the results we need. As we have said in the past, a Year 7 student with good literacy skills is eight times more likely to finish his or her schooling and go on to do Further Education.

Above: Tutoring in Ballarat
Right: Students and tutors at Bacchus Marsh Homework Club

CLOSURE OF BACCHUS MARSH AFTER SCHOOL HOMEWORK CLUB

After nearly seven years, the Bacchus Marsh after school homework club led by Sue Bacon has closed. For this period of time, two teachers had driven from Ballarat. It had been a wonderful class for many years, based at the Neighbourhood House in Darley. Initially, it had just been for the local community, but at it's height had catered for children from as far away as Melton.

The key teachers had been Lisa McGlade and Lynne Kelly, with Cathy White joining them after several years. The Homework Club also catered for junior students with a special emphasis on early learners. Sue Bacon provided a wonderful afternoon tea, as well as birthday celebrations for students and an annual Christmas party.

Unfortunately, last year things began to change: Sue became ill and could no longer commit to the program.

We tried repeatedly to engage with the community but could not attract enough interest to justify the expense of tutors and rental costs. In the end, we felt our resources would be better used in Beaufort which supported students from as far away as Ararat. It is always sad to close a program, and we have so many wonderful memories of the Bacchus Marsh classes.



WORLD LITERACY SUMMIT

Since 2012, we have been represented at the World Literacy Summit, held every two years in Oxford, UK. Sadly, this year's Summit was cancelled due to crowd restrictions relating to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Organisers took the Summit to online with panel discussions and keynote addresses open to all delegates. The World Literacy Council Literacy Awards were also presented in this online format and introduced by our own CEO, Dr Tony Cree.

THE WORLD LITERACY SUMMIT ONLINE EXPERIENCE

From July 1, 2020 the World Literacy Summit will open registrations for a new online streaming service including over 100 presentations created by experts in the literacy sector, 6 panel sessions, alongside podcasts and teacher tools and resources.

This is an incredible opportunity to connect literacy experts and learners to the #WLS20 content, keynotes, and presentations.

WLSOnline will be a vital resource to assist educators who are struggling to find new ways to engage their remote students. This situation may be uncertain, but one thing remains true: together, we can improve global literacy.

For more information, visit worldliteracysummit.org

WORLD LITERACY COUNCIL AWARDS

- AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT BY A LITERACY ORGANISATION WAS PRESENTED TO **FREE LITTLE LIBRARY.**
- THE ALBERT SCHWEITZER AWARD AND LECTURESHIP WAS PRESENTED TO **ARMENE MODI.**
- AWARD FOR A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO LITERACY BY A NATION WAS PRESENTED TO THE **HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN.**
- AWARD FOR A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION BY AN INDIVIDUAL WAS PRESENTED TO THE ARTIST, **SHAKIRA.**



INDIGENOUS SCHOLARSHIPS

Approximately twenty years ago, we were asked to find a boarding place for a talented girl from the Northern Territory. Unfortunately, that wasn't possible at the time, but we found a family who were happy to board her, and also a school, Loreto College in Ballarat, that was prepared to provide her education with a subsidy from the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation.

The gifted student graduated and found

a place at Deakin University. She later transferred to the University of Western Australia where she completed a Medical Degree and became a trailblazing female Indigenous doctor.

We are keen to establish an ongoing scholarship for Indigenous students who are keen to enter either medicine or teaching. We feel that this is a way we cannot only provide for a future generation of Indigenous Australians

but can also be of real service to the wider community. We are keen to make contact with any of our supporters who may be willing to discuss the structure of a future scholarship program, as well as institutions who may like to be involved or make a contribution.

BOOKS TO THE NORTH

Our Books to the North program continues in Western Australia following our success in the Northern Territory and Queensland. Over one hundred and fifty remote and regional schools applied to be involved in the program which provides books and literacy resources to schools in need.

COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

To comply with government ordered restrictions, our office and warehouse has been operating at a greatly reduced capacity. With most staff working away from the office, we have had to stop donations and limit our deliveries. In the coming months, as restrictions are hopefully eased, we expect to continue our deliveries and once again accept donations from the public.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Often the most successful programs are grassroots initiatives. In recent years, we've heard of such things as breakfast and bus programs and also school curriculum incorporating Indigenous heritage and language. These initiatives have had a marked improvement on attendance in remote and regional schools.

We're so fortunate to work with partners who are aware of the specific needs of their community. In Western Australia, we have supplied books to organisations such as the Department of Child Protection and Family Support, Pooninie Community Learning Centre, Fremantle's Discovery Book Club. Recently, we have also contributed books including our own Healthy Living Series to Robe River Kuruma Aboriginal Corporation's Primary School Support program.



THE FOLLOWING SCHOOLS HAVE RECEIVED RESOURCES FROM THE ABORIGINAL LITERACY FOUNDATIONS'S BOOKS TO THE NORTH PROGRAM.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

St Philip's College
Mamaruni School
Yipirinya School
MacFarlane Primary School
Xavier Catholic College
St Josephs Catholic College
The Essington School
Pine Creek School
Karama School
Clyde Fenton Primary School
Kintore St School
Bulla Camp School
Malak Reengagement Centre
Lajamanu School
Epenarra School
St Pauls Catholic Primary School
Rosebery Middle School
Mackillop Catholic College
Centralian Middle School
Tennant Creek High School
OLSH Catholic College
- Traeger Campus
- Sadadeen Campus
- Bath Street Campus
Milyakburra
Kormilda College
St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School
Northern Territory School of Distance Education
Bradshaw Primary School
Forrest Parade School
Tipperary Station School
Woolianna School
Ludmilla Primary School
Yarralin School
Wulagi Primary School
Mutitjulu School
Taminmin College
Manunda Terrace Primary
Rosebery Primary School
Katherine High School
Yirrkala School
Yirara College
Henbury School
Belyuen School
Driver Primary School
Tivendale School
Ross Park Primary
Alcoota School
Baniyala Garrangali School
Adelaide River Primary
Mulga Bore School
Sacred Heart Primary School
Dundee Beach School
Douglas Daly School
St Francis Xavier Catholic School

QUEENSLAND

St Joseph's Catholic School Clermont
Mount Garnet State School
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Collinsville State School
Capella State School

Mer Eruer Uteb -Tagai State College
Cunnamulla State School
Scottville State School
Pentland State School
Lakeland State School
Murray River Upper State School
Isisford State School
St. Michaels Palm Island Catholic School
Townsvie State School
Dajarra State School
St George State School
Barcaldine Prep -12 State School
St Joseph Catholic Primary School
St Mary's School
Longreach State High School
Alpha State School
Calen District State College
St George State High School
Mitchell State School
Collinsville State High School
Longreach State School
Wandoan State School P-10
Forsyth State School
Charleville School of Distance Education
Mount Isa Central State School
St. Patricks Catholic School
Capella State High School
Windorah State School
Tagai State College
Mornington Island State School
Wallumbilla State School
CYAAA - Coen Campus
CYAAA - Hope Vale Campus
Normanton State School
Tagai State College - Kubin Ngurpay Lag
Clermont State High School
Tagai State College -Thursday Island Campus
Camooweal State School

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Millers Well Primary School
Pegs Creek Primary School
Tom Price Primary School
Hedland Senior High School
Yakanarra Community School
Pia Wadjarri RCS
Yiyili Aboriginal Community School
Wyndham District High School
Holy Rosary School
Kururrungku Catholic Education Centre
Birlirr Ngawiywu
Karratha Primary School
Baler Primary School
Ngalangangpum School
One Arm Point R.C.S.
Roebuck Primary School
Jigalong Remote Community School
Carnarvon Christian School
Meekatharra District High School
Yandeyarra Remote Community School
Cassia Primary School
North Tom Price Primary School
Purnululu School
Nyikina Mangala Community School

KIDS' CORNER

WEME

BACKGROUND

The Walbiri people of Central Australia played a bowling game. One player threw a stone which was used as a target by the second player. Players alternated turns with each aiming at the other's stone.

PLAYERS

Between 1 and 4 players

The game can be played alone, one player against another player, or in pairs of players against another pair

PLAYING AREA

A designated area

EQUIPMENT

- Use two sets of lines (each 5 metres long) marked 10 or more metres apart — the distance depending on age and ability of players
- Use balls/bowls such as bocce balls

GAME PLAY AND BASIC RULES

The game is a bowling game where balls are rolled underarm along the ground. Players may toss a coin for choice of start. Turns are taken from behind designated lines.

One player starts the game by rolling their ball toward the line marked on the ground 10 metres away. If the ball passes beyond this line then the other player scores a point.

After a fair roll which stops before the line, the second player rolls their ball to try to hit the first ball. If the ball is hit, the second player scores a point.

Both players then collect their balls and the game is restarted from the other end.

Players alternate turns. The second player now has the first turn.

If the game is played in pairs one player from each pair stays at each end. Teams alternate turns.

One point is scored for each hit. The first player or team to reach 11 points is the winner. Play continues until the game is decided.

LANGUAGE

The game is named weme after a word from the Eastern Arrernte language of Central Australia which refers to 'throwing something at something else and hitting it'.



BEQUESTS TO THE ABORIGINAL LITERACY FOUNDATION

The Aboriginal Literacy Foundation is most grateful to individuals or organisations who choose to make a bequest. We would recommend that you inform your solicitor to include a bequest in your will – If you prefer, you can use the form provided below.

I _____ wish to bequeath _____ dollars to the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation.

I would like this bequest to contribute towards:

A library for a remote school

Extending the tutoring program

To provide a school or post-school scholarship

All work currently undertaken by the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation

Other (please specify)

Please forward a copy of this form to your solicitor and a copy to the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation at info@aboriginalliteracyfoundation.org

or

P.O. Box 315 Flinders Lane
Melbourne, Victoria, 8009

We thought it would be interesting for our readers to hear of some of the wonderful bequests we have received in recent times and what it can mean for our Indigenous students (names have been changed).

Betty Braithwaite, who has spent a lifetime as a nurse, a matron and finally as the proprietor of an aged care facility left a bequest to the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation of approximately \$50,000 and asked that it might be spent for a library at a remote Aboriginal School in Northern Australia. Not only were we able to fulfill her request, but we were able to establish two libraries one in Katherine and one in a remote settlement 150 kilometres south known as Coolabah. This has made such a difference to the students, and both

libraries are open to the entire community centering as they do on subjects of interest to Aboriginal people. (Aboriginal biography, sport, animals, nature and traditional history and art)

Mrs. **Rachel Wenzel**, who had been married to a businessman in Melbourne left \$100,000 to the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation, and asked that it might be spent on fees for an Aboriginal girl to attend a private school. As she did not elaborate, we offered this as a scholarship at one of the Aboriginal Co-Ops, and found that several girls were keen to participate. We contacted a number of private girls schools, all of whom indicated that they would contribute towards the fees and ensure that the girls complete their education. We were even able to use some of the money towards uniforms.

Jim McArthur, retired farmer in Western Victoria made a generous donation of \$20,000. He had Aboriginal employees on his farm for many years and felt that he'd like to contribute something towards young Aboriginal people interested in working on the land but who had poor literacy skills. We approached the Aboriginal Community in several country towns and found that there was a group of young boys and girls who did want to work on the land but whose literacy skills were not up to entry into a TAFE or an Agricultural College. Special classes in this town were held and were well attended for about a year. At least three of the students were able to enter TAFE at the culmination of the program. This would not have been possible without such a wonderful donation.

PHILANTHROPIC SPONSORS



CORPORATE SPONSORS



COCA-COLA AUSTRALIA FOUNDATION
 MERCY FOUNDATION
 RM ANSETT TRUST
 LORD MAYOR'S CHARITABLE FOUNDATION
 GANDEL PHILANTHROPY
 AUDA FOUNDATION
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 ANZ STAFF FOUNDATION
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 MEDIBANK COMMUNITY FUND
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 PIERCE ARMSTRONG FOUNDATION
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 THE BALLARAT FOUNDATION & UNITED WAY BALLARAT
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