

NAIDOC celebrations is SONGLINES

By Lee Joachim

In Our culture Biami our creator traveled across the country creating, the people, the landscape, waterways, the animals and the law under which our people and non-human society were to live. The journey of Biami across the country makes up a songline.

In Aboriginal culture these sacred stories are passed on as large song cycles. Clans and families might specialise in chapters or sections of a songline which tells the entire creation story that relates to a particular tract of land. People on neighboring land will have the next chapters of what happened to the ancestors as they crossed over to their own part of the country.

In our terms the kinship lineage of the ancestral people from that country had control over that songline. It was their duty to uphold the obligations of passing the song on in perfect form to the next generation. In the initiation processes within Aboriginal culture each generation is taught the entire package of their culture over a series of stages of knowledge, our rites to passage. Through these song cycle's people gradually learn the entire cultural story of their people.

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Today where we stand the songline to this place connects us to the people of the Flats.

It takes us further to our place Cummeragunja.

It takes us back to Maloga.

It takes us back to first contact of white man.

This is a songline of decimation,

Of struggle,

Of determination,

Of resilience

Of hope

Of a strong future.

And in that future, our people will be able to look upon and connect with the songline that we as a community are creating today on this land.

Rumbalara

Our Heart of Community

This songline will evoke the messages of the past and tell a story,

Of survival

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Of pride

Of self reliance

Of self determination

It will tell a story of cultural strength in a community that was able to come together and work toward a shared goal of service delivery all in one place; an integrated service delivery response to the needs of our community.

Importantly, this songline will show that we as individuals and as a community are not hopeless, not helpless and not powerless.

We can all use “Heart of Community” to create opportunities for ourselves, and create opportunities for our community to enliven and strengthen itself.

Songlines

As surely as people in the future will look back at this time, trace the songlines and remember the people who lead our community, the people who struggled and overcame barriers, fought against prejudice, injustice and racism to build a culturally strong, self reliant and self determined community, we too look back and reflect upon the struggles of our

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community and recognise the invaluable contribution all those who have come before us have made.

Our “Heart of Community” would not exist without the strength and wisdom that our community elders have brought and continue to bring to this place.

Our Elders Council reminds us of who we are and where we have come from.

They pass on their knowledge of history, life and culture to us.

They guide us when things get difficult.

We will be seeking the songlines of our Elders and Community to their precious memories. of our community for all to bear witness of our community history, our organisation history. We are creating a Precious Memories library for our community for all to bear witness to our community history, our organisation history. The ability to look back to take ourselves forward.

Recently Rumbalara has introduced a young peoples leadership group into the organization. We have an obligation to build the capacity of the people in the organization and in our community. We have an obligation to build

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the skills, knowledge and abilities of our young people to make sure that what we are creating today remains viable and ongoing into the future. The development of this leadership group will enhance our operations and make sure the lessons of the past, the knowledge and experience gained by all of us in the community are passed on to them, and they in turn can pass it on to their children and other young people.

The passing on of knowledge is crucially important to the future of Rumbalara and our Community.

And in the future, it will be traced through new stories, new history, new songlines.

As Rumbalara grows and develops newer songlines will be created for others to listen to, be reminded of, and be part of.

The first ever published discussion paper tells us a story how Rumbalara solved the solution to Closing the Gap, something Governments have failed to do.

These newer songlines will tell a story of growth and of partnership.

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They will tell a story of working together to assist each other to fulfill ambitions and dreams, of over coming barriers and disadvantage.

They will tell a story of reaching out to the broader community; of partnering with organizations such as,

The City of Greater Shepparton Council – Combined Leadership for region

Goulburn Ovens TAFE – A skills appropriate workforce and community for our organisation.

Lulla's – Bush kinder and health checks

Taskforce – Skill transfer to our workers in areas of alcohol and other drugs, Mental Wellness.

And

The Department of Health and Human Services – Real outcome deliverables through better program planning.

And as we enter this NAIDOC week, let us recall the song lines of the past and remember the songline of decimation that was mentioned earlier, one that reminds us of Cummeragunja, Maloga and of first contact with white man. Reminds us

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Of our struggle,

Of our determination,

Of our resilience

Of our hope

Of a strong future.

And let us be part of creating our own newer songline that adds to the past by delivering a future that is full of

Our Pride

Our Self Reliance

and

Our Self Determination

Welcome to NAIDOC week

Thankyou