

July 2024 | Issue no.08

RUMBALARA COMMUNITY

NEWSLETTER



CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE AT RUMBALARA Staff Awards

On Friday, 3rd May 2024, the Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-Operative came together to celebrate the dedication and hard work of its staff at our All Staff Meeting.

The staff meeting was a heartfelt recognition of the significant contributions made by our dedicated team members over the years.

The highlight of the meeting was the presentation of awards to staff members who have shown exceptional commitment and service to Rumbalara.

This year, we proudly acknowledged the remarkable milestones achieved by the following individuals:

- Ernie Baksh: Celebrating 20 years.
- Joksy Joseph: Celebrating 10 years.
- Robert Sangster: Celebrating 10 years.
- Rutuja Nirale: Celebrating 10 years.
- Shannon Smith: Celebrating 10 years.
- Elizabeth Eliason: Celebrating 5 years.
- Susan Williams: Celebrating 5 years.



Pictured: Elisabeth Eliason



Pictured: Ernie Baksh

Community and Innovation: Minister Gayle Tierney's Visit

Rumbalara had the honor of hosting the Honorable Gayle Tierney, Minister for Skills and TAFE and Minister for Regional Development, along with our partner, Outback Academy Australia (OAA).

This event was part of OAA's Digital Upskilling for First Nations Agribusiness project, held at our Starritt Road Farm. Representatives from Njernda, Eastern Maar, Worn Gundidj, and other government-funded projects across Victoria joined us.

We showcased our digital soil recording and drone technology skills and enjoyed some amazing bush food.



Special guests from Dookie Agricultural College, TAFE, and other community partners attended, enhancing the collaborative spirit of the day.

Thanks to everyone who participated and made the day memorable. Together, we're making our community stronger and more innovative!



REGISTRATIONS
REQUIRED!

KEEP THE FIRE BURNING!

BLAK, LOUD AND PROUD

7TH - 14TH JULY 2024

Scan this QR code to register



Rumbalara NAIDOC Events:

SUNDAY

OPENING/MARKET DAY

Date: Sunday, 7th July 2024

Time: 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Location: Rumbalara Mooroopna
Sand Circle Area - 20 Rumbalara Rd
Mooroopna

PLEASE NOTE: THIS EVENT IS OPEN TO OUR ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITY AND THE WIDER-COMMUNITY. ANY PURCHASES MADE AT THE MARKET WILL REQUIRE PAYMENT.

MONDAY

MAIN FLAG RAISING/BREAKFAST CEREMONY

Date: Monday, 8th July 2024

Time: 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Location: Rumbalara Mooroopna Sand Circle Area - 20 Rumbalara Rd Mooroopna

PLEASE NOTE: THIS EVENT IS OPEN TO OUR ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITY AND THE WIDER-COMMUNITY. THIS IS A FREE EVENT.

TUESDAY

ELDERS LUNCHEON

Date: Tuesday, 9th July 2024

Time: 11:30 AM - 2:00 PM

Location: Rumbalara Elders Activity Centre, Ford Rd Shepparton

PLEASE NOTE: THIS EVENT IS OPEN TO OUR ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITY AND COMMUNITY CONNECTED ONLY. THIS IS A FREE EVENT.

THURSDAY

RUMBALARA FAMILY DAY

Date: Thursday, 11th July 2024

Time: 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Location: Rumbalara Mooroopna - 20 Rumbalara Rd Mooroopna

PLEASE NOTE: THIS EVENT IS OPEN TO OUR ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITY AND COMMUNITY CONNECTED ONLY. THIS IS A FREE EVENT.

REVISED VERSION - UPDATED ON 23/05/2024

IF YOU ARE FEELING UNWELL, PLEASE REFRAIN FROM ATTENDING THE EVENT.
YOUR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING ARE IMPORTANT TO US

Join Us at NAIDOC Celebrations: Free Health Checks

Community members, mark your calendars!

The clinic team will be at the NAIDOC Family Day on Thursday, 11 July 2024, offering free blood pressure and glucose/sugar checks.

We look forward to meeting you at this important event and supporting your health and well-being. Don't miss this opportunity to get a quick health check and celebrate with us!



01.



Meet Samara

What is your role and what are your responsibilities?

My role as Senior Project Officer in the Business Support Team is to lead and manage important projects that help the organisation run smoothly and achieve its goals.

Are you Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander? If so, who is your mob?

Yes, my mob are Yorta Yorta/Dja Dja Wurrung.

How long have you been working at Rumbalara, and what drew you to this role?

I have worked 16 years at Rumbalara Positive Ageing & Disability Services. I completed year 12 and began my career with a traineeship in admin support. Over time, I progressed through roles in case management, business support, and management within the Home Care Package Program. Recently, I transitioned to the Business Support Team to pursue project management, seeking a new challenge and change of pace.

What unique skills/expertise do you bring to your role?

I take pride in my reliability and reputation for being someone others can depend on.

Can you share any success stories or achievements from your time?

Achievements in my time include completing my Dual Diploma in Alcohol and Other Drugs and Mental Health, and I will have completed my Diploma in Leadership and Management in October. Also, being able to work for and support our community is a significant achievement for me.

What do you enjoy most about working at Rumbalara? What keeps you motivated in your role?

I enjoy the friendly work environment and I am motivated by the opportunity to contribute to our community through my role at Rumbalara.

Samara Mackay

Senior Project Officer
Business Support Team

02.



Meet Frances

What is your role and what are your responsibilities?

My role as a receptionist is answering incoming calls, greeting customers, ordering online stationary supplies for each department in Rumbalara and making bookings for meeting rooms, cultural tours, and catering.

Are you Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander? If so, who is your mob?

I am a proud Yorta Yorta and Wemba Wemba woman.

How long have you been working at Rumbalara, and what drew you to this role?

I started working at Rumbalara in August 2023 in the Health and Wellbeing Services-Medical Administration Team. I moved to corporate services as a trainee receptionist in October 2023. After finishing year 12 I was looking for employment opportunities and was encouraged by family members that were currently working for Rumbalara.

What unique skills/expertise do you bring to your role?

Multitasking, Good customer service, problem solving, friendly, polite, and patient.

Can you share any success stories or achievements from your time?

Last year I started off as a casual receptionist then I was offered to work as a full-time trainee receptionist. I'm also currently studying Cert III in Business.

What do you enjoy most about working at Rumbalara? What keeps you motivated in your role?

The people I work with are very welcoming and supportive and I enjoy my role as a receptionist.

Frances Atkinson

Trainee Receptionist
Corporate Services



Feeling overwhelmed? Did you know we offer support through Gamblers Help?

Gambling can significantly impact the health and wellbeing of both individuals and families. When considering the effects of gambling, several concerns may arise.

Are you dealing with:

- Financial worries
- Relationship difficulties
- Other serious issues

We are here to support you and your family.

Our program is culturally safe and specifically designed for our Aboriginal community.

We provide basic budgeting assistance, advocacy for utility bills, guidance on URGS grants, and referral pathways to a Gambling Counsellor.

 Lana Scott
0488 600 875

 Email
lana.scott@raclimited.com.au

PLAY A PART IN CONNECTING OUR KIDS.

By becoming a foster carer at Rumbalara you can play a part in ensuring that if our children need foster care that they can remain on Yorta Yorta country helping them to maintain important connections to family, community, and culture.

Contact Us

 (03) 5831 2010

 fostercare@raclimited.com.au



SYDNEY DANCE COMPANY BANGARRA BRINGS REKINDLING DANCE PROGRAM TO SHEPPARTON IN 2024

The Rekindling Dance Program, established in 2013, has been fostering cultural connections through dance across Australia.

Rekindling collaborates with local communities, starting with the team spending time onsite to build relationships with Elders and community members.

This ensures the program is tailored to local needs and respects cultural protocols.

The program is integrated into school schedules, enhancing students' cultural awareness and engagement. It begins with an audition workshop involving local Elders to select a diverse group of participants.

In 2024, Rekindling in Shepparton involved three gatherings between February and May, engaging 15 students from grades 6 to 11 from six schools.

Elders and community members, including Aunty Pam Pederson, Aunty Rochelle Patten, Tammy-Lee Atkinson, Aunty Cheryl Bourke, Uncle Lance, Aunty Marlene, and Uncle Rolland, shared their stories and knowledge during On Country Days.





Revving Up Dreams

Uncle Ron's Harley Adventure with Alan!

In the spotlight this month is Uncle Ron Pedder, who recently had a dream come true thanks to the kindness of Alan Walters. Alan brought out his Harley Davidson motorbike to help Uncle Ron, aged 80, fulfill one of his long-held wishes. This special event took place on May 18, 2024.

But that's not all! Alan also gifted Uncle Ron a Vietnam vest, adding a meaningful touch to the day. In a moving moment, Uncle Ron raised the flag for Anzac Day alongside Scotty, a fellow Vietnam veteran.

It's stories like these that remind us of the power of community and the importance of supporting one another. We are so proud to be a part of making these dreams come true for our elders.



FIND your CAREER

Go to our website www.rumbalara.org.au/jobs or call us on 5820 0000 and speak to our People & Culture team.



Rumbalara Elders Facility at Kaiela Arts

Here at Rumbalara, we're excited to share this collaboration with Kaiela Arts since June 2023. This collaboration focuses on exploring new avenues of cultural arts practices to enhance the wellbeing of our beloved Elders and inspire the younger generations.

This partnership places culture and collaboration at its core, aiming to support the social and emotional wellbeing of Elders at the REF (Rumbalara Elders Facility).

Led by the esteemed Yorta Yorta creative and cultural practitioner, Lyn Thorpe, weekly sessions

at the Elfers Facility and visits to Kaiela Arts provide Elders with a space to connect, share stories, and explore various creative mediums—from painting and ceramics to photography and music.

Together with our Elders, we are crafting meaningful artworks that celebrate their lives, and preserve their stories.

Read more at:
www.kaielaarts.org.au

*Pictures by Belinda Briggs & Lyn Thorpe (Kaiela Arts website).



The Koorie Big Day Out 2024 was a standout event, and Rumbalara's Workforce Development team played a pivotal role, hosting an engaging stall at the careers day that left a lasting impression.

Across two days, they connected with students and stakeholders, sharing insights into career pathways and opportunities within our community at Rumbalara.

It was a great success with a turnout from approximately 30 schools across the Goulburn Valley. The event drew a remarkable crowd of 2500 students, including about 250 Koorie students.

Rumbalara's involvement was not just about information-sharing but also about creating meaningful connections and memories, evident with the popular selfie frame.

Our team brought an interactive twist with a fun Rumbalara quiz, rewarding winners with \$50 Kmart vouchers and sparked conversations about future aspirations.

Heartfelt thanks go out to everyone who contributed to making the Koorie Big Day Out 2024 a resounding success.



What I can say is that this diabetes educator (me!) is super proud of the many people with diabetes who have worked very hard to keep their diabetes on track.

Living with diabetes is not easy, so my message to the many community members who have recently kicked inspiring diabetes-related health goals is,

'Be very proud of yourselves - you are deadly role models for your mob'.



-Belinda Moore
DIABETES EDUCATOR

CURRENT & UPCOMING STUDY UNDERTAKEN BY RUMBALARA STAFF

12 Currently Undertaking Course
Certificate IV in AOD

2 Currently Undertaking Course
Diploma of Nursing

5 Currently Undertaking Course
Advanced Diploma of Community Sector Management

1 Currently Undertaking Course
Certificate IV Stolen Gen Family Research & Case Management

2 Currently Undertaking Course
Diploma of Leadership & Management

1 Currently Undertaking Course
Diploma of Payroll Management

5 Currently Undertaking Course
Certificate IV in Ageing Support

1 Currently Undertaking Course
Certificate IV of Marketing & Communication

5 Currently Undertaking Course
Diploma Community Services

1 Currently Undertaking Course
Certificate IV in School Based Education Support

2 Currently Undertaking Course
6 Enrolled Staff
Certificate IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practice

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EMPOWERING CAMP *Adventure*

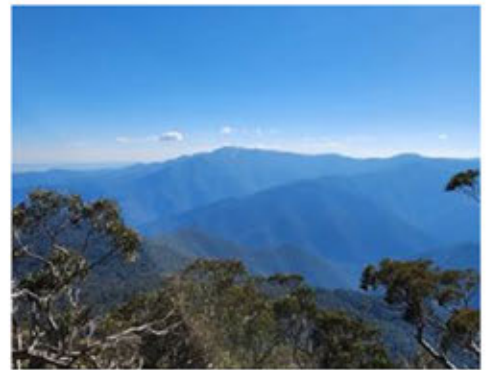
We are thrilled to share the inspiring story of Youth Justice team member Brad Armstrong, who recently took part in the Giz A Break, Empowering Communities camp from April 30 to May 3, 2024. As both a driver and mentor, Brad played a pivotal role in this transformative experience.

The camp welcomed three young Aboriginal males from our community. The adventure took the group on a thrilling 4x4 journey deep into the stunning Victorian High Country. This setting provided a perfect backdrop for meaningful conversations about their personal journeys and futures.

Among the many highlights, the group visited iconic landmarks such as Paradise Falls, Bindaree Falls, and Craigs Hut, the latter famously featured in the movie *The Man from Snowy River*. The young participants also faced the formidable Bluff track hike. One young man, despite his fear of heights, made a courageous attempt to conquer the climb. Although he didn't reach the summit, his bravery and determination were celebrated by the group.

For two of the young adventurers, camping in a swag in the bush was a first-time experience, adding to the array of unforgettable moments. Brad's guidance and support were instrumental in making this camp a memorable and impactful journey for all involved.

We commend Brad Armstrong for his dedication and the positive influence he has had on these young lives. His efforts embody the spirit of community and empowerment that we strive to foster.



VICTORIAN RURAL HEALTH AWARDS



Merinda Harrison-Drake
Rumbalara Clinic Manager

Outstanding Contribution To Rural Practice Management Award

Merinda Harrison-Drake OAM, a proud Yorta Yorta and Gunaikurnai woman, is a qualified Aboriginal Health Practitioner and Clinical Practice Manager at Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative in Mooroopna.

With 17 years of experience in Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations across rural Victoria, Merinda is dedicated to strengthening Aboriginal-led health and well-being.

In 2020 Merinda received an Order of Australia as recognition for her years of hard work. She continues to be a role model inspiring her team. Rumbalara's medical clinic has over 4,000 active patients as a result of her efforts in re-engaging the community.

Merinda has singlehandedly transitioned the workforce at Rumbalara Medical Clinic from relying on locum doctors and casual nurses to now reaping continuity of care from having permanent access to GPs, nurse practitioners, practice nurses, chronic care and health promotion staff, early years staff, mental health nurses, psychologists, podiatrists, diabetes educators, maternal child health nurses, paediatricians, endocrinologists and nephrologists.

Merinda has also established a late evening clinic, giving more accessibility to health services.



Shannon Balfour
Rumbalara Woongi Unit Manager

Outstanding Contribution To Aboriginal And Torres Strait Islander Health Award

Shannon Balfour, a proud First Nations woman, is the Manager at the Woongi Unit at Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative in Shepparton-Mooroopna. Here, Shannon oversaw various mental health and social and emotional well-being programs, including Alcohol and Other Drug support, counselling, post-discharge care from Goulburn Valley Area Mental Health, family violence, and other healing programs.

Shannon has bolstered group yarning sessions, clinical care, language lessons, and holistic approaches to well-being.

She has forged partnerships with mainstream services, securing a psychiatrist, linking Woongi to First Nations patient discharge plans, and partnering with the University of Melbourne and local TAFE for student placements.

She has significantly increased service use by the local First Nations community, with the Woongi Unit now triaging referrals, checking in on waitlisted patients, employing additional staff, and innovating new strategies to meet community needs.

Shannon also serves on the Board of Management for the Bridge Youth Services in Shepparton and actively engages in the local community.

The Victorian Rural Health Awards, hosted by RWAV every year since 2005, recognises outstanding contributions made by rural health professionals working in rural communities.

A huge congratulations to Merinda Harrison-Drake and Shannon Balfour for receiving their awards. We are very proud of our Rumbalara staff!

Rumbalara Office in Seymour: Opening July

65 Anzac Avenue, Seymour

☎ 03 5820 0000

✉ contact@raclimited.com.au



Open by appointment (only)

Teams/Services

- ✓ **Justice & Community Services:** Family Violence
- ✓ **Health & Wellbeing:** Woongi Unit (Alcohol & Other Drugs)
- ✓ **Positive Ageing & Disability Services:** NDIS (National Disability Insurance Scheme)
- ✓ **Family & Engagement Services**

Stay tuned for more details to come!

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



RUMBALARA WEBSITE



FACEBOOK PAGE



INSTAGRAM



LINKEDIN



Heart Of Community | Holistic | Integrated | Respectful

We commit to work in partnership with individuals, families and community, to support them in achieving an optimal quality and standard of living. Through active partnerships we will strengthen Health & Culture. Our People, Our Way!

Artist: Aikina Edwards

BECOME A MEMBER

It takes just a few minutes to join Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative and get culturally appropriate care and support whenever you need it. As a community-controlled organisation, becoming a member allows you to contribute and have a say in how we operate.

To register as a member online, you must have a valid email address and your Certificate of Aboriginality.

Once your application is processed, it must be approved by the Board. You can expect a response within 6-8 weeks.

HOW TO APPLY

➤ Apply online - www.rumbalara.org.au

📍 Drop into Corporate Services and fill out a form

📄 Download the membership form from our website - email your application to contact@raclimited.com.au



EXISTING MEMBERS

To get the latest information and organisational updates, please let us know your email address.

Call the Corporate Office on 5820 0000 or email the Communications Team at chanoa.seala@raclimited.com.au or natalie.visentin@raclimited.com.au