



What is 'Yabber'?

On Saturday 30 July, 1910 it was reported in 'The Queenslander' that an Aboriginal Parliament had been formed in Yarrabah - named 'Yabber'. The aim of Yabber was to build a Yarrabah nation of self-respecting people. Members of Yabber were elected and meetings were held "with dignity".

Yarrabah Leaders' Forum steps up



Opening up dialogue and continuing the legacy around leadership in Yarrabah were just a few of the objectives around the Yarrabah Leaders' Forum held at the Community Hall last month.

More than 100 local CEOs, board and staff members as well as the Gungganji and Malingalbay Yidinji PBCs attended and contributed to the meeting which was led by Council.

Mayor Ross Andrews said they should expect a marathon run which would be worth it in the end. "If we can make a small contribution to community life

out there and take a mature and steady approach," he said.

"If we can set the foundations for some of these kids that come through and have a succession plan to allow their leadership qualities to flourish.

"What we hoped for at this Forum was a snapshot of what's out there, so while our aim is clear, we're taking small steps.

"We had a good conversation which picked up from the previous forum in 2015, so this is a continuation of that.

"With the support of Council, who now have a mandate to lead the process, local organisations and other agencies can build on common understandings to try and address some of our issues."



Traditional Owner input 'obvious'

Gunggandji Aboriginal Corporation CEO Anthony Satrick said TO involvement in the Yarrabah Leaders' Forum was obvious.

"This gives us an opportunity to key in with a wider audience and give an update of exactly what we're doing," he said.

"We have good opportunities and if we can all connect we can actually build a stronger community.

"It's all about the relationships.

"I think we're all doing some great work in the community, but this is about sharing our practices and tools and seeing how we can all join those dots together into a shared vision.

"The Gunggandji Aboriginal

we think is an opportunity to work collaboratively with government, but more importantly we're going to be in control of what our destination may look like using our land tenures.

"If we're going to build something, we have to build it together.

"We would like to share what we're doing and work out how we can all be involved."

Gunggandji Mandingalbay

Yidinji PBC Chair Vince

Mundraby said the Forum

demonstrated consensus.

"The Leadership Forum actually demonstrate the consensus that we had all along, and confirmed that the service providers and the Councillor have a unified voice to go

forward and engage on various levels of government – local, state and federal," he said.

"It actually demonstrates that

there will be one voice and there will be a framework for a negotiating forum to occur, addressing major issues such as the town plan, economic development, housing, health, education..."

"Contribution to moving the



community forward could be described in one word – certainty.

"For far too long we've – that uncertainty arose through no fault of anyone in Yarrabah.

"We're in the middle of a paradigm shift, not only in the historical cycle of what Yarrabah is and what makes a Yarrabah person, but also land management and how to achieve the big ticket items that the Federal Government is talking about – home ownership, working and living on country – sustainable."

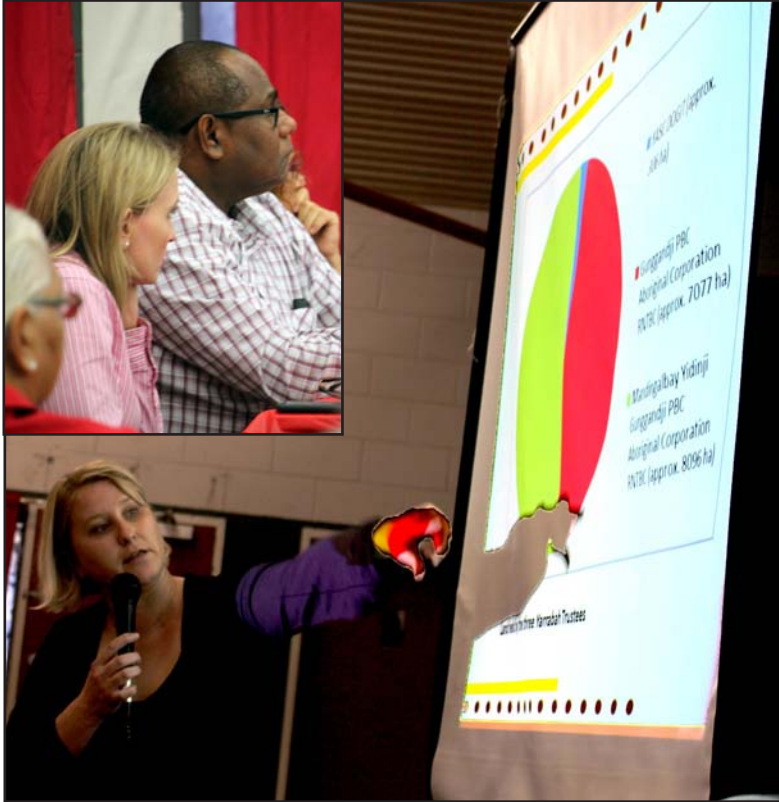


Corporation has our own vision in terms of managing our land tenure and our responsibility as a Body Corporate.

"We're trustees of our land and we're developing a future and aspiration around what



Council highlights issues



To house the 700 families on the waiting list and get all existing houses back to condition Council requires:

- 700 houses and trunk infrastructure
- A minimum of 52 hectares of developable land
- A minimum of M\$210 to develop the 700 houses (not including associated infrastructure e.g. roads, services)
- A minimum of M\$56 to get all houses to the correct standard

Transport & Main Roads Needs

- Early School Bus Upgrade
- Funding & Assistance with Establishing Public Transport Ferry / Bus
- Funding for Road Sealing
- Funding for access road upgrade
- Funding for Drainage upgrade
- Funding for footpaths and bicycle paths

Council's Role

- Work with key community partners
- Support and facilitate local level planning and community decision making
- Advocate to government through the Government Champion initiative as well as via regular channels

Housing Issues

4000 Residents living in 302 Social Homes (Aver 13.25); 700 on waiting list; \$2M needed for Repairs & Maintenance; \$150,000 for Paint Program; Social Housing not up to national housing standards; 10 new houses over the next 2 years.



Local Government, Infrastructure & Planning Concerns

- Water & Sewerage at end of life
- Loss of Municipal Services Funding
- Lack of Serviced Lots
- No Recycling

State Development Needs

- Funding for small businesses to start up
- Training and mentoring for small business
- Funding for business and tourism Infrastructure
- Funding for Road Sealing

The 2016 Yarrabah Leaders' Forum was a follow-up to the Yarrabah Summit held in July 2015 and was co-facilitated by David Baird and Elverina Johnson.

Ms Johnson said the first forum had tried to put some work into finding some positive solutions. "We've worked on the Coalition model for the three years before coming to that last summit," she said. "And to come to this point now is actually quite good because this one now involves more community members.

"The other good thing was we were able to get the Ministers thoroughly involved.

"It's always going to be small steps, we've always got to try and take every opportunity to

then to break the cycle of selective hearing and actually start acting.

"How many times have we all seen people come in here, promise us this, that and everything, and we're still talking about the same thing, years later.

"Overall I think today was very positive, it was good to have the elders here, we have a really good, strong Council willing to participate and engage and to help the process move forward, so it's been good."

"All the presenters were very informative," co-facilitator David Baird said.

"I think a lot of frustrations came out but there was a willingness to

work together, to work with Council, to form partnerships.

"You're always going to get questions where people who are frustrated if they don't see things being done or they might have a perception that changes are not happening.

"But, I think if you look closer, there are changes that are happening.

"There's always the same challenges we have to deal with when it comes to government departments and funding.

"For me, looking at the overall Forum



today and the purpose of this Leadership Forum, it's a concept that we have to go with; we don't have any choice. "We can't continue to work in silos or we can't continue to try and develop in silos because one string by itself is not going to hold the weight.

"But if we string together and more collaboratively, more with that vision and purpose and attitude of serving the community for the community benefit, the better for us.

"It was a really good workshop, well-planned, issues were put on the table along with some of the solutions and the next work we need to do is work out how we can begin to come together, more collaboratively and in a strategic way, and move forward."



try and do something to make a difference.

"I think today was pretty good.

"Obviously people are overloaded with frustration and concerns for unresolved issues and needing solutions to the same-old, same-old problems that we've been talking about for the last 10-20 years.

"People have been frustrated for a long time.

"This was an opportunity to say, 'okay we have people in this room today who are decision makers, who pull the purse strings, let's give them the opportunity to hear what we say'.

"So our hope now is people in those positions have the guts

Community Presentations...

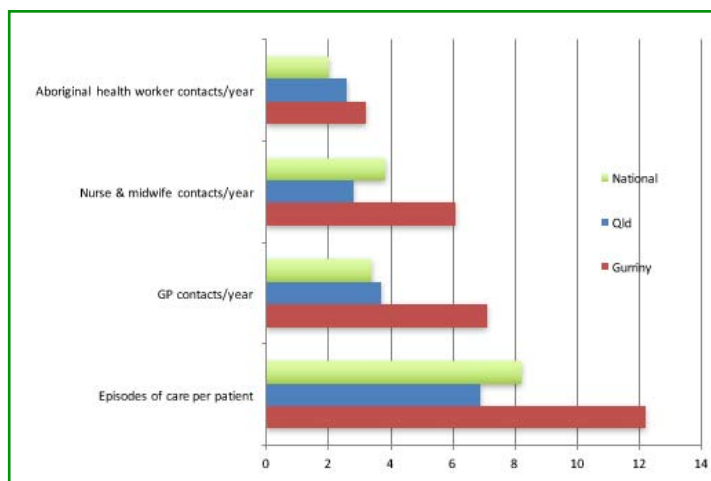
Gurriny Yealamucka Health Services Aboriginal Corporation

As of the end of June 2016, 4,171 people had ever attended the Gurriny clinic and 3,472 (83%) were active clients who had visited the clinic at least three times in the past two years. There are slightly more females than males with 106 women to every 100 men. Close to 80% of the total workforce at Gurriny is local.

Gurriny contributes \$100,000 to the local economy every fortnight.

Challenges

- The State Government funds a % of total budget via the Health Hospital Services every 3 months and paid in ARREARS
- Requesting that the State direct funds to GYHSAC not through the Health and Hospital Service
- Communication infrastructure



Gindaja Treatment & Healing Centre

Challenges and Risks: 2015 – 2018 include...

- Develop Skills and Programs to Manage Emerging Drugs eg. ICE
- Develop and Formalise Strategic Partnerships and Relationships
- Explore Options for Service Expansion and Delivery
- Strengthen Our Programs

Demographics

- Total number of clients = 663
- Total number of visits = 990
- Mostly male (72%); Mean age = 38 years
- Mostly unemployed (43%), completed high school to yr 12 (20%) and were single (65%)
- Mainly self-referrals to Gindaja (40%)
- Average length of stay is 59 days

Drug and Alcohol Use

- Principal drug is alcohol (79%), method of use is eat/drink (73%)
- Second drug of concern is cannabis (12%)
- Most clients have never injected (69%)
- Most clients are on the Newstart Allowance (55%)
- Self-referred (47%) or referred from ATODS (23%) or have been referred from Probation and Parole Far North Queensland (12%).
- A small percent clients have sexual offences (2%)
- 21 % of clients have a DVO or AVO



Future

- Continue to work collaboratively with other Local, State and Federal organisations in addressing the needs of our people with AOD issues
- Continue to lobby for more funding to expand our service to cater to the needs of future clients with AOD issues



Department of Employment

Overview of Yarrabah - Duncan Chalmers - Queensland Office, Department of Employment

Labour market

- Challenging regional environment:
- High levels of unemployment – particularly for youth
- Employment centred around only three key industries

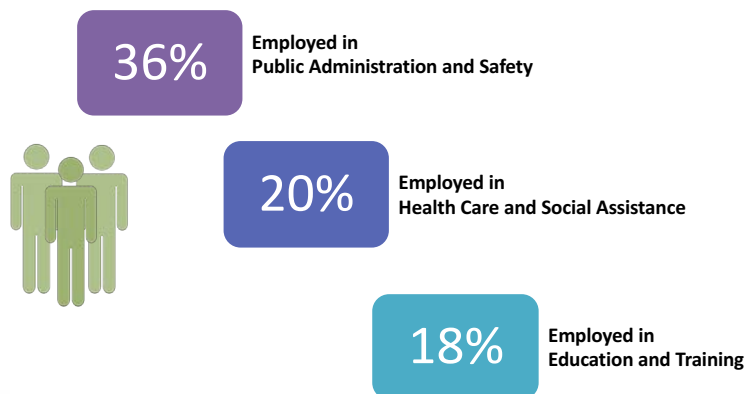
Future outlook

- Capitalise on further growth in several industries in the broader region
- Provide further assistance for job seekers, and encourage labour force participation
- Continue to encourage education and training

More information:

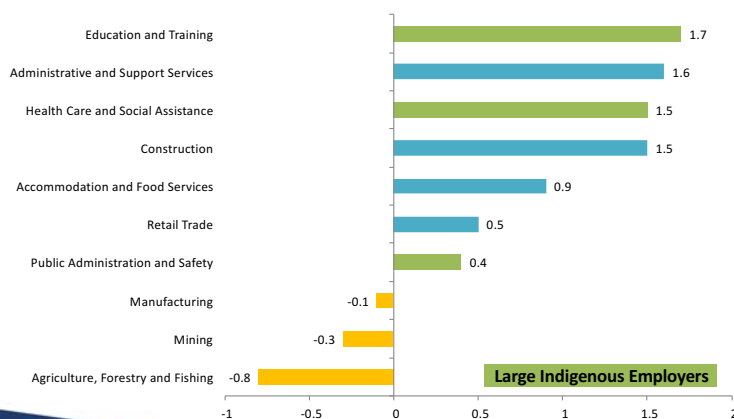
<http://www.employment.gov.au>

Majority of employment in Yarrabah in three industries



Future areas of growth – opportunities?

Cairns, projections to 2020 ('000)



Queensland Police Service

Yarrabah Police Station current strength...

- 1 x Officer in Charge; 2 x Sgts; 7 x S/ Constables/Constables; 5 x Police Liaison Officers
- State officers new to Yarrabah undergo cultural awareness training.
- Police Liaison Officers are valued members with a vast knowledge of the geographical areas, cultural values and social structures of Yarrabah

Main Issues

- Current social challenges include prevalence of Domestic and Family Violence
- Alcohol Management Plan
- Truancy
- Noisy Parties

Projects include

- Facebook not Fightbook
- Shanghai Muster
- School Breakfast Program
- Police Social Club funds used to support locals
- Local Yarrabah dance group trip to Laura



Yarrabah State School

Explicit Improvement Agenda:

Attendance; Behaviour; Curriculum

Academic Growth NAPLAN 2016

- Year 3: Best ever results Reading and Grammar & Punctuation
- Year 5: Best ever results Numeracy and Grammar & Punctuation
- Year 7: Best ever results Spelling and Grammar & Punctuation
- Year 9: Best ever result reading + Improvement Spelling and Grammar & Punctuation

Attendance is not the problem. Attendance is an outcome.

The problem is 'Valuing Education'

The school cannot work alone in tackling the issue of attendance at our school.

Elverina Johnson's WEB of DYSFUNCTION was a part of research done ten years ago into why students weren't attending school.

Five of the six main issues preventing students from attending school were community-related.

The issues of almost 10 years ago are similar to the issues that prevent children from attending school in 2016.

I believe that with our collective strengths we can tackle the issue of student non-attendance at school.

The key to having engaged students is having engaged family members and engaged community members.

We invite you all to come down to the school to participate in our Learning Walks.

You as a community hold the key to your children's engagement at school.



Minister vows to advocate for priorities

Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games Kate Jones is also the Ministerial Champion for Yarrabah and attended the Yarrabah Leaders' Forum for about three hours.

"The Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk said she wants Ministers to be directly involved," she said. "There's two things I want to communicate.

"One is I'm deeply humbled by this opportunity; the second is to say thank you for the opportunity to work in partnership with you. "I see my role as being an advocate for some of the concerns that have been raised here today at the highest levels in



government.

"When you look into the profile of the local community, when you think that it is such a young community – your children are everything – and education is such a big part of that.

"What I've heard since I've been made a Champion is that Yarrabah is getting so much right, and we can see that with the passion and the dedication, the professionalism of the leaders in your local community.

"Part of the Leaders' Forum today was about getting that investment mapping right, so

we've got a very strong and coherent argument to give to government to say: 'We've done the work; if you don't fund this, it's not going to happen'.

"I see a strong correlation between housing and educational outcomes and that's probably one of the key messages that I think, to

take on your behalf to the Housing Minister out of this.

"I'm very happy to commit to doing some advocacy in regards to getting better NBN and telecommunications in the community.

"I came here with an open mind; I'm happy to look at community views about how we best engage with our young people,

particularly aged 12 to 17, the skills set in the community, where skills are going to be needed into the future and how we can provide that to our young people so they can stay in community and work in community.

"The one thing I want to communicate to you is that I genuinely feel that this is a real opportunity for me to support you; I don't take it lightly and I can make an honest commitment to you that I will do that."



For more information about Yabber contact the Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council on 4056 9120 or ceo@yarrabah.qld.gov.au

This edition of Yabber News was photographed and edited by Christine Howes (<http://www.chowes.com.au>)