
Injidup Residents Association, Inc
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20 July 2021

Mike Archer
CEO, City of Busselton
2 Southern Drive
Busselton WA 6280

Cr Grant Henley
Mayor, City of Busselton

Dear Mike and Grant,

Recently the Association held its AGM almost a year after it's inception. Originating from concerns about serial arson events in the neighbourhood, the Association has engaged with actions which strengthen our community's resolve to combat the risk of fire. This will be an enduring mission given our location on the Naturaliste Ridge.

The purpose of this letter is to put on record our gratitude for the efforts by the City in the past year to collaborate with the Association in building resilience to face this primary risk.

I append my Report to the AGM where I outlined the accomplishments of the Association over this period and noted in general terms the interactions between Injidup and our partners: kindred Associations, Agencies, the City, and others who, collectively, have helped improve through education or action the well-being of all within our small precinct.

Here I wish to accord specific appreciation to you both for your visit out to Injidup following the deliberately lit fires above Yallingup township and at Injdup in March of this year. From this you helped promote the concept of safe egress along Wyadup Road which has been actioned through a mechanical verge clearance program, extending throughout our road networks.

At the risk of not noting everyone I would like to record the positive interactions with several of your colleagues within your operational sections. To Justin Smith for advice and advocacy with Main Roads WA on road safety initiatives along Wyadup Road which resulted in centre line marking & speed re-zoning to 80km/h; to Tanya Gillett, Blake Moore and Andrew Hunt, for their successful bushfire mitigation program which, among numerous actions, has seen the creation of a strategic egress route away from the coast by the formation of Injidup Spring Road [west] – in effect a loop road around the precinct. The critical significance of this specific initiative to address community safety cannot be underestimated; to Mathew Twyman and Kevin Bowser, for their on-site visit to discuss verge mitigation and drainage concerns around the Injidup precinct and subsequent comprehensive program of works.

Externally, we have received constructive advice from Ed Hatherley and Jason Mant at DBCA [PWS]; Joy Hamlyn, DFES [Manjmup] and Blake Moore for their strategic input to the Association's bushfire education initiatives; and from Peter Campbell and his cadre of BushFire Ready Coordinators for their tireless advocacy and bushfire education programs for landowners. To Mark Fisher and Matt Muir, co-captains of the YRVBFB for their experience, counsel and help to the Association with priority setting of bushfire initiatives within the Injidup precinct.

Finally, and very specifically, my appreciation to both Jacquie Happ and Paul Needham, respectively, for their considered advice in helping me develop a rapport with Bill Webb, Elder and Custodian of the Wardan Aboriginal Centre. To The Hon Barry House AM, and Mr Robert Issacs, respected Noongar Elder, for their insights into the development of the Centre and to Dr Wayne Webb, Elder from the Undalup Association in Margaret River, all of whom have provided an important context to my engagement with the Centre and it's community at Injidup. For your interest I am including a recent community Newsletter which sought to highlight the historical background to the Wardan Aboriginal Centre and the respect owed to Vilma and George Webb for their leadership role in the community.

The Association is optimistic that funding applications to Lotterywest and other agencies may eventually provide the means to safeguard the history, the resources and the potential survival of the Centre against the threat of fire. Not to do so would be a tragedy for everyone in our region and so I hope that we can achieve this outcome. In that the Webb family forbears lived and prospered across these lands it seems a small task to honour that legacy by protecting the Centre and thereby underpin the potential for future outreach programs.

The Association acts as a partner with the City to achieve good for residents and visitors alike at Injidup. Thank you both for your support of our initiatives and to your many colleagues for their respective contributions over the past year.

Best regards



Kevin Singer
President, Injidup Residents Association, Inc

President's Report ~ 2020-2021

The Association set out with four key objectives: to unite our community through effective communication, to network with other local Associations and Agencies in order to present a single voice to the City on shared concerns, to focus on matters of safety that benefit everyone within the Injidup precinct and to seek funding for special initiatives that help protect residents and visitors to Injidup.

The semi-regular Newsletter as a communication platform has been well received and carries information that helps to educate the community about our local history, on key issues, initiatives, concerns and of our advocacy.

The Association has networked with many other communities along the Naturaliste Ridge who seek engagement by the City with bushfire mitigation as the major priority. Through this consortium access to the CEO of the City and the senior management group has been readily facilitated. Requests to prioritise Wyadup Road as a 'critical evacuation route' was reinforced when the Mayor and CEO of the City visited with the Association immediately after the last deliberately lit fire at Injidup. In response the City recently completed mechanical verge mitigation works along Wyadup Road and all secondary roads throughout the precinct, from Whittle Road to the north and Marri Rise to the south. Using *DFES Mitigation Activity Funding*, Injidup Spring Road [west], a gazetted road, has undergone a substantial upgrade by the City which confers additional safety for residents and visitors to our precinct.

While the City can be commended for these actions, it is also imperative that we as landowners at Injidup undertake our own rigorous bushfire mitigation program. This must include absentee landowners with the remaining bush blocks – as accumulated fuel load compounds fire risk for everyone. To this end we are working with our Bushfire Ready Coordinators and our local Brigade to offer a demonstration burn as a means of educating safe burning techniques. We will advise on a proposed date and location in due course. For those who are unable to perform mitigation due to absence then we recommend the list of contractors available on the City website who can readily undertake this work.

Safety is a cardinal concern be it on our road networks, in the surf, along the coast, or from the ever present risk of bush fire. The Association advocated with Main Roads WA to improve safety along Wyadup Road with the resultant addition of centre line marking and re-zoning to the generic area speed of 80km/h. Concerns about visitor safety at Wyadup Rocks has been raised with DBCA and the City. However, public education relies upon the age old concern – an ability to comprehend risk and act accordingly! In terms of community safety, we must record our thanks to Marie McSweeney who initiated the NeighbourHood Watch program at Injidup.

The Association has worked with our local Volunteer Brigade to add critical fire-fighting resilience to the Injidup precinct, with funding for additional water storage in the north-west corner of the precinct solicited from the Minderoo Foundation, supported by generous donations from our members. This new 200k Litre tank will complement other stored water supplies at Injidup and be available to be ferried as required to assist with fire-fighting throughout Injidup. It is therefore timely that we should note our appreciation to our local Brigade members who volunteer their time and expertise in the safety of all in our immediate area.

INJIDUP RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION Inc

Meeting with the City's section heads of the various departments on site at Injidup has resulted in a recognition that Wyadup Road merits special treatment. The Association will press to ensure that this standard is maintained on an annual basis. I take every opportunity to express appreciation to the Mayor, the CEO, to all the section heads of departments and through them the contractor teams engaged for their results.

Advocacy on behalf of the community is a very effective lever with local government if it reflects a community and is supported by everyone in that community. Your Association acts in a voluntary capacity and is limited only by what is reasonable for volunteers to undertake. Constructive feedback is always welcomed. Examples of our advocacy have been with the request from the City for input on the BushFire Notice revisions, on improving safety along Wyadup Road, and on Lighting at various points around our precinct.

Special thanks are due to the Executive committee for their contributions in helping the Association meet these objectives. Although we are a small community we have a membership of over half of all landowners and encourage *everyone* to be involved as *everyone* is the beneficiary. Indeed, on a 'membership fees for outcomes achieved' our Association must be rated as an excellent investment.

During the course of this year I have met with many across the shire in neighbouring Associations, within the City administration, across multiple agencies and indeed within our Injidup community. Communication happens in idiosyncratic ways: in response to an event, at meetings, through our occasional Newsletters, informally over coffee.... The Association uses these various approaches to meet our objectives stated above. However, and I must press this point, we are but a structure built upon goodwill and voluntary effort.

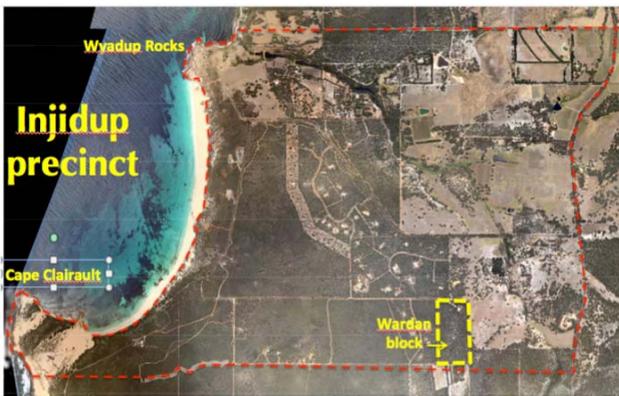
I would like to end this inaugural report by noting a very special relationship with Mr William [Bill] Webb, elder and custodian of the Wardan Aboriginal Centre. Bill very kindly opened up the opportunity for the Association to help develop fire mitigation strategies on his block and we are hopeful that future funding opportunities will ensure that his Centre is protected from serious fire events. To acknowledge the fundamental Wadandi relationship with Injidup, The Executive unanimously conferred Honorary membership of the Association to Bill Webb.

Kevin Singer
President
Injidup Residents Association Inc.

History of the Wardan Aboriginal Centre, Injidup

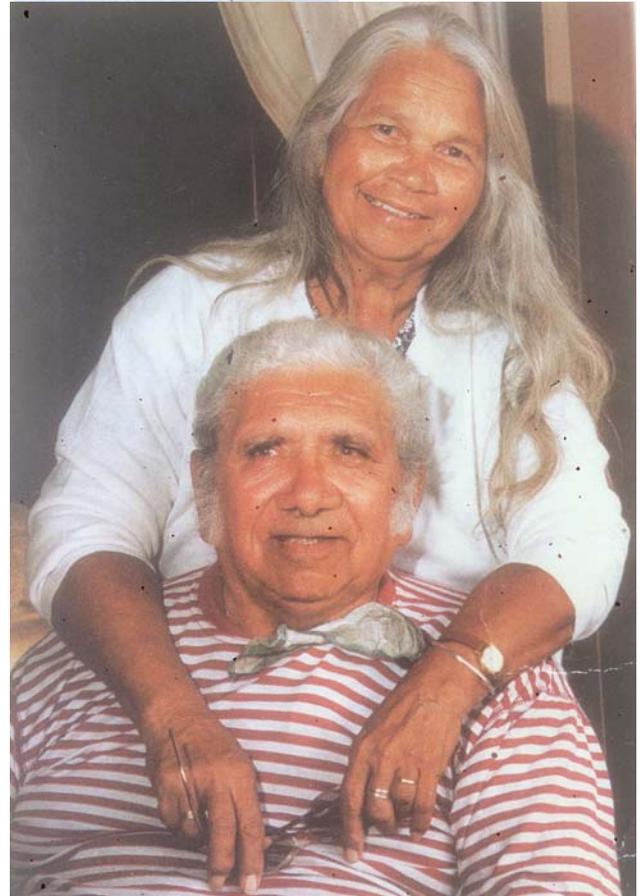
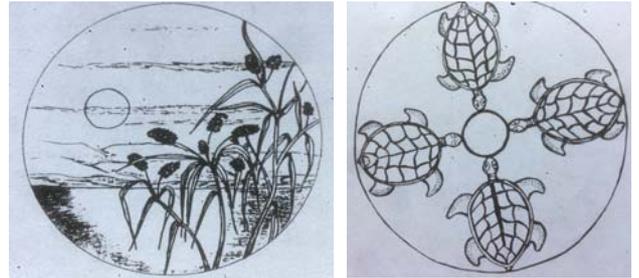
The Wardandi, or Saltwater peoples, are the traditional owners of the land and have lived across the Southwest region of Western Australia for tens of thousands of years. Every generation appreciated the natural resources of the coastal precinct from Cape to Cape. They lived and flourished taking sufficient for life, referring to the land, skies, rivers and sea as 'Mother'. As a spiritual emblem, the Waugal, or sea serpent, represents the pathway to becoming reunited in death with their ancestors. They believed that the Waugal gave life and sustenance to the people who in return became custodians of the land. A marked feature of this culture is respect: for land and sea, for traditions, for their elders, ancestors and all creatures, and for knowledge passed faithfully across the generations through *Nyitting* or dreaming stories.

Injidup was one of many headlands along the coast that conferred a protected bay, access to seafood, abundant local native foods and shelter from the weather. Well before European arrival the area would have looked very different to today with alternating tracts of open pastureland and woodland; a reflection of seasonal burning of the land which engendered new vegetation and consequently food for animals and their hunters.



During his time as the Governor of Western Australia, Major General Michael Jeffery AC, had a special interest in indigenous affairs, particularly for youth education programs, and supported the then elders of the Wardandi clan, George and Vilma Webb, with their proposal for a cultural Centre. A 40 acre block of land arising from an early subdivision at Injidup was set aside for the purpose of protecting the Wadandi history and cultural traditions, and to educate the wider community.

The Wardan Aboriginal Centre consequently has been an early feature of the Injidup precinct and has facilitated education and outreach designed to share the traditions, knowledge and cultural history of the Wardandi people with the broader communities within Western Australia.



Elders of the Wardandi peoples, George & Vilma Webb, regarded by many as royalty within their clan. Images from *Nunyahboogera* written by George Webb, and used with permission.

George married Vilma (nee Gillespie) in June 1950. They had two daughters and four sons. The oral history archives recorded on the Busselton Library site detail the extraordinary life experience of George and Vilma, which is also described in his biography – titled: *Nunyahboogera*, illustrated by Vilma.

Vilma Webb was the matriarch of the family and was reported to be a walking encyclopaedia of Wadandi history and culture. Through the Wardan Aboriginal Cultural Centre she helped instigate programs for indigenous children at risk, create employment for cultural custodians and provide an opportunity for indigenous artists to showcase their talents. Her illustrations shown above, highlight her own considerable talent in the visual arts.

Bill Webb tells of the occasion when Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip visited Busselton in 2000 and his parents were invited to the official welcoming party. Vilma Webb used the occasion to remind George that he was always in the presence of royalty!



Photo from 19th May 1993, shows The Hon Barry House AM, handing the title deed to George Webb, for the land on which the Wardan Aboriginal Centre was to be built. His son, Bill Webb took over the management of this project with his family. *Image courtesy of the Augusta Margaret River Mail. Barry House and Bill Webb kindly gave their permission for the use of this image which was taken in the amphitheatre at Wave House, Injidup.*

The Wardan Aboriginal Centre, opened in 2001, was developed with funding support from the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders Commission and a substantive capital grant from the Lotteries Commission of WA. The rammed earth construction uses panels that depict sea motifs.

The Centre, named after Wardan – the sea god – was developed to promote educational visits from schools, community groups and visitors to the region, to showcase Wadandi culture including for example, such elements as: art, bush lore, legend, indigenous food practice and tours.

Educational resources at the Centre include a gallery of art works, early examples of food utilities, and hunting weapons. Models describing the hunter-gatherer lifestyle and seasonal movement patterns along the coast and forest paths of the Capes region are on display. Some items within the Centre have been deemed of unique historical and cultural importance, and are irreplaceable. Activities at the Centre included corroboree performed in a nearby bush amphitheatre, a trail through the bush to explain the Dreaming stories, and spear and boomerang throwing.



Bill Webb, elder and custodian of the Wardan Centre in front of several exhibits depicting early life in the region and holding a spear found in the lower SouthWest area of WA.

Bush fire mitigation strategies at the Centre

Two strategic firebreaks, designed into the Injidup Fire Management Plan, confer protection to properties to the north and west of the firebreaks, from fires within the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park to the south. The Wardan Aboriginal Centre is not protected by such firebreaks apart from a farm property which forms part of the eastern boundary to the Wardan block.

Protection of the Centre is key to preserving the legacy created by George and Vilma Webb and their family for the Wardandi peoples, for the Injidup precinct, the City of Busselton and for the wider community. New programs at the Centre are planned for coming years however a serious limiting factor is the high fire risk of the site and consequent risk to visitors.

Recent advice, following an invited DFES inspection of the site, reinforced the importance of fuel load mitigation works and for consideration of a fire suppression system across the facility.

Acknowledgement:

It is noted, respectfully, that elders George and Vilma Webb are both interred on the Wardan block at Injidup, in proximity to the Centre. Special thanks to Bill Webb for historical advice and permission to use images included in this Newsletter.