

Walking together to support working together

Wagga Wagga Urban Landcare Group



A cultural walking tour to help promote understanding, respect and collaboration

The issue

Many people involved in our Landcare group are interested in building a deeper understanding of Wiradjuri culture. However for many it is difficult to know where to start, or who to ask, in order to build this knowledge. As a result, we have only had limited collaboration with local Indigenous groups.

The solution

Several years ago, the newly formed Wagga Wagga Rail group approached Wagga Wagga Urban Landcare about the possibility of working together to rehabilitate a section of the Murrumbidgee River bank which had been highly degraded as a result of the recent levee bank upgrade. This section is to form part of the Wagga Rail Trail, and is also a highly visible section of the riverbank in the centre of town. We have worked together to restore this area through ongoing working bees over the past two years, and have created a thriving native riparian area, which is appreciated by the many local and visiting walkers and cyclists who use the adjacent track.

Following on from this partnership, our two groups came together to develop the plan for a Cultural Walk along the Murrumbidgee River corridor. We successfully applied for a small grant through Landcare NSW's "Working Together" Aboriginal Communities Engagement Program. This allowed us to pay Mark Saddler, a professional Wiradjuri guide, to lead our walk.

The impact

Our walk along Marrambidya Bila (the Murrumbidgee River) started at "The Rocks", a place which was traditionally used by women for washing. Throughout the walk, we learnt about Wiradjuri history, culture, language, lore and customs. We stopped to hear stories about the significance of local sites including Wollundry Lagoon, Tony Ireland Park and Marshalls Creek. We learnt about the importance of different species of flora and fauna found along the river corridor, before ending our tour at a place now bordered by the Wagga Lawn Cemetery, which has traditional significance as a sleeping place.

The walk highlighted to us all the deep connection Wiradjuri people have with the land. A quote by Pastor Cecil Grant (Wongamar), shown in a sign adjacent to Marshalls Creek, sums up this connection:

Ngangaana-gu karrai billa's, dya karrai billa's durai, ngangaana ngingu

(Look after the land and the rivers, and the land and the rivers will look after you)

Key facts

- 5 groups collaborated to deliver the event
- 30 attendees, with more on a waiting list
- A rich learning and sharing experience for all involved

Project Partners



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