



MEDIA RELEASE
10 July 2020

First Nations women celebrate connection to Northern Rivers

A group of Aboriginal women from Northern Rivers have celebrated their spiritual and cultural connection to the land in a video created for NAIDOC Week.

Originally scheduled for July 5 – 12, NAIDOC Week has been postponed until November 8 -15 to enable people to gather for cultural events and activities.

This year's theme – *Always Was, Always Will Be* – pays tribute to the oldest continuing culture on the planet, with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living across this continent for over 65,000 years.

Members of YWCA Australia programs in Lismore said taking part in the video was a way to honour their ancestors, while also strengthening current community ties on Bundjalung country.

“We want everyone in our local community to join us in celebrating the real history of this country, a history that dates back thousands of generations,” said YWCA’s Our Happy Women Coordinator Aunty Mim Bolt.

“NAIDOC Week is also a time we celebrate the passing of our culture and knowledge of the land on to the next generation to continue our people’s legacy that started at the dawn of time.”

Our Happy Women, one of the YWCA’s many community programs in Lismore was created in 2015 to provide Aboriginal women in the Northern Rivers region with a culturally safe and supportive environment.

“We aim to also become a social enterprise by sharing our cultural heritage and art through printmaking and design,” Aunty Mim said.

“Through this, we hope to create meaningful social change within the local Aboriginal community, as well as provide Aboriginal women in northern NSW with opportunities for employment and training, to support greater economic security and increased decision-making and leadership.

“In this way, we help build a future for the next generation.”

YWCA Northern NSW Regional Manager Kayeleen Brown is a local Bundjalung woman and says that Aboriginal women face particular challenges in accessing the resources, pathways and training necessary to transform their dreams into reality and opportunities to platforms to celebrate and share their culture.

“A social enterprise is a proven sustainable business model,” Ms Brown said.

This special NAIDOC celebration video will be launched on the YWCA website on Friday 10 July: ywca.org.au

YWCA invites all interested people and communities to contact their Northern NSW office on lismore@ywca.org.au or 02 6625 5800 for more information about how to get involved with Our Happy Women and other community programs.

YWCA has worked in collaboration with local Bundjalung film production team, Onetime Productionz (facebook.com/onetimeproductionz) to showcase the local Aboriginal culture and landscape for NAIDOC Week.

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About YWCA Australia

YWCA Australia is a leading intersectional feminist organisation focused on improving gender equality for women, young women and girls. For 140 years, we have challenged the systems, structures and policies that act as barriers to women, especially young women, achieving their full potential.

Our high-impact evidence-based programs and services are inclusive of all women and offer support with housing, homelessness, safety, wellbeing and leadership. We aim to positively impact the lives of more than two million women, young women and girls by the end of 2023.