Moving Forward

The vision and roots of Wontulp-Bi-Buya College go back to 1974 when Rev. Robert Bos organised a 7-week theological Training Course for Aboriginal Leaders at Aurukun on Cape York Peninsula. Pastor George Rosendale joined Uniting Church teachers for this landmark event. This initiative in the Uniting Church widened through a Chaplain’s Conference of Uniting, Anglican and Lutheran pastors who then encouraged CYP church leaders to attend monthly studies at Nungalinya College and at a camp site at Trinity Beach in Cairns, Queensland.

Wontulp-Bi-Buya began officially in Townsville in 1983 as a low-budget organisation with limited funding and only home-office facilities. Its genius and success has been due to not attempting to develop a campus (impossible financially) but by building on a decentralised model of supported theological extension or distance education studies. This TEE model was pioneered in South America and implemented by Nungalinya College under Dr Keith Cole and Dr Robert Bos. It involves periodic regional gatherings for group seminar studies combined with home-based studies supported by a local tutor. In early years, Regional Education Committees of tutors and local leaders met in six regions around Queensland to foster studies.

By 1990, funding for the College was inadequate and I commenced as Field Officer at Rockhampton on my own in a half-time capacity. Increased funding from church and aid organisations enabled a move to full-time work and a part-time assistant. During the 1990’s we delivered both the Certificate in Theology course and the Community Organising Course (with John Waterton). When we gained access to Abstudy student benefits in 1994, we were able to organise more residential study camps using conference centres around the State. This developed into a pattern of 4 x 2-week study blocks each year for each course together with tutored home-based studies.

In 1998, the College home-office base moved to Cairns to be more central to the majority of students and eventually the study blocks were held at Tropicana Lodge in Cairns during the 2000’s and the office set up in the Lutheran Church Hall in 2003. Rev. Dr Barry Paterson developed studies for the Diploma of Theology program during this time and Indigenous staff developed with Rev. Michael Connolly as the first Aboriginal Principal in 2001. Funding for staff and operational costs has been tight all the way through and remains so today. Each year, we have been very conscious of going forward by the grace of God.

Reverend David Thompson
2015 Study Courses

Are you Indigenous and looking to study in the areas of Theology and Wellbeing, Well WBBC has a course for you!!! All courses are Nationally Accredited and are delivered by experienced and appropriate teachers and support people, who have tailor made the the studies to equip participants with with the much need tools to move forward into your journey today.

**National Accredited Courses**

* Certificate III in Theology and Ministry  
* Certificate IV in Theology and Ministry  
* Diploma in Theology and Ministry  
* Certificate III in Addictions Management & Community Development  
* Certificate IV in Indigenous Mental Health (Suicide Prevention)

**Non Accredited Courses**

* Certificate II in Community Development The Journey of Healing  
* Ministry & Career Pathway Planning  
* Gospel & Culture (Open to all)  
* Cultural Awareness “The Where from to the Here Now"
Principal’s Report

Rev Victor Joseph

Firstly, my acknowledgement to the traditional owners of this land and to our Elders both past and present that have contributed to the life journey of our people.

There are so much changes happening when you work in a registered training organisation whether in a school, TAFE, University or a private College like Wontulp!

How the College have changed so much in delivering training, even before a trainer/teacher could stand up in front of a class. Why? So much of government reforms in the training industry nationally is ensuring that “quality training” is delivered to the Learner. Even as I write this report there are new training standards already out for 2015. So again our staff are required to be aware of these changes and make sure Wontulp-Bi-Buya College doesn’t get left behind!!

I admit I don’t know everything about Vocational Education Training (VET) it is hard enough keeping up with the new changes Wontulp-Bi-Buya as small as it is, continues to suffer through limited staffing, sourcing funding/donors, lack of office space, moving from one accommodation provider to another to find the cost effective service for the college is all in a years work for college staff under the governance of the Management Committee. Yes, prayer (Philippians 4:6) is such a vital important ingredient in the College trying to achieve its goals but it takes a lot of work in planning, meetings, and I could go on and on, but these are two I can mention here for now. The college staff are all trying to do their best in their positions (and they sometime perform their duties more than what is required) and at times we can be in disagreements over decisions but the outcome is for the betterment of this great College, and I want to mention the tremendous support of our casual staff, volunteers and consultants who have dedicated their time for the College and without their support the juggling act of multi-tasking with current college staff only makes it even more challenging.

While the VET system in Australia faces ongoing challenges that do exist and trying to find the right solutions; RTO’s like Wontulp-Bi-Buya College Inc. a private institution, will struggle under this load unless others are willing to share this burden. What I am saying is not old news as my predecessors also faced their challenges in this role. The outcome of our existence is that the “WORD” must continue to be taught for the sake of the Church to be the lighthouse. The much needed support from our Ecumenical Churches and the wider Community for our Indigenous People to be more active in society is so greatly needed at this present time.

We know that at the end of the day when the King of Kings and The lord of Lord arrives we are not separated into Denominations or Race or Class but the only separation is from God for all eternity; hence why we must work together as one or as Scripture states “The Body of Christ” and be respectful of each other’s faith in the Church and fellow Australians.

This great college is demonstrating the willingness to provide ongoing quality training to Indigenous Christians and Non-Christians and the recent graduates of 2014 again shows the hard work of college staff and the many personal sacrifices of the students enjoying the celebration of their certificates.

Well done to them!!!

Some of our College Staff have also gone about their professional development training as well and I would like to acknowledge their success so far:

Rev Les Baird – Masters in Indigenous Mental Health (Substance Abuse)
Eddie Turpin – Partial Completion of Bachelor of Arts in Community Development
Davina Monro – Masters in Education
Denise Mackey – Cert III in Accounts Administration and Partial Completion of Cert IV Pre-requisites for Diploma in Accounting
Roseanne Naawi – Cert IV in Business Administration

All of our teaching staff also gained their Cert IV in TAE a requirement under the National Training Standards.

2015 will bring new faces of students to the college some not new but overall the ongoing interest of studying at Wontulp-Bi-Buya is still there and I ask for your support and how you feel your contribution can make a difference in the lives of our Indigenous people and write another chapter of this history of Wontulp-Bi-Buya college.

I sum up my conclusions in this statement…

“LEARN FROM THE PAST, SET VIVID, DETAILED GOALS FOR THE FUTURE, AND LIVE IN THE ONLY MOMENT OF TIME OVER WHICH YOU HAVE ANY CONTROL: NOW.”

DENIS WAITLEY

In His Peace!

Reverend Victor Joseph
College Principal
**Good News Stories**

**Never to Old!!**

What is the first thing that pops into your mind when I say ministry?!? Do we immediately think of our Pastor or Reverend at the local church? or the school or hospital chaplain? Well yes that is correct, however there is so much more to Ministry! Did you know that God has a plan and purpose for each and every person, so that includes You!! Traditionally each position within an Indigenous community and family unit had responsibilities to learn, develop and teach, this is also today. We are seeing more and more students both Christian and non-Christian coming through our college doors and developing the skills to effectively fulfil their God given purpose.

A larger percentage of our Elders are taking up the challenge and undertaking and participating in our courses. We are continuously observing the majority of our people having the tendencies and believing that they are to old to learn and develop or contribute. This is so far from the truth, as each person has the experience through life skills in family and community. By studying at the college has continuously contributed to equipping our Elders with the appropriate tools necessary to successfully enhance their much-needed wisdom and experiences.

There are so many awesome mature aged students who have completed their studies and are taking up many vital roles within communities. Throughout their study period, time and time again students are being faced with health and family issues, but this has not stopped them from trudging forward as they have a heart for their families and people wellbeing. The challenge is being willing to open one self to allow God to give you the vision of your purpose. There is much to do and as the scripture says “the harvest is many but the workers a few”, so our Elders are finding that they are in high demand within the family and community, in the areas of youth and counselling. So we at WBBC send out our prayers and ask our Lord to protect our Elders and pray that their wisdom be gathered and given when required, and that our Lord also strengthen and allow our Elders to take up their rightful positions within the family and community in Jesus name!!

_Davona Monroe_

**Admin & VET Manager**

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**Committee Member Profile**

**Dolly McGaughey**

**Where are you from:**
Currently residing at Smithfield in Cairns and have been since 1972 but originally from Hammond Island in the Torres Strait.

**What Church are you affiliated with:** Catholic Church

**What’s your role in the community:**
My background experience is from both State and Federal Departments. I am an active member within the church and Aboriginal & Torres Strait Island committees through out Queensland the Torres Strait.

**Where would you like to see WBBC in 10 years:**
I can see WBBC growing in size and hopefully see our college have its own premises and student accommodation.

**How do you think people can contribute to this growth:**
I believe we need to promote the college more by informing the wider community of the positive work that is being conducted. We also need to let people know that we require more assistance as we are struggling with limited resources and funding.

**Word of encouragement:**
As a former student of WBBC, I would like to encourage more Indigenous people to come and study at college as I feel it is culturally appropriate and has the necessary tools and services available to assist people working in our communities and churches. This will contribute with the building up of the body of Christ and wellbeing for our people.
This has been a very busy year as courses have been fitted into a 12 month teaching program and as reaccreditation for our Theology and Ministry courses have begun. We worked in close collaboration with Nungalinya College on reaccrediting our Certificate 3 Theology and Ministry course. Our reaccreditation documents have been submitted to the accrediting body. Again, it has been an encouraging year as students have settled into their studies well and adjusted to the new programs. Their diligence as students is always so encouraging to us as teachers. I am continuing to learn as much as my students are learning. I give thanks for the loving, caring and patient staff and teachers at Wontulp-Bi-Buya College who not only support me so ably in my work but also work so diligently with and for our students. This is such a team effort.

Numbers in the Certificate 3 are good. A number of graduate Certificate 3 students have moved up to Certificate 4, and the Certificate 4 students have moved up to Diploma. We currently have 9 students in the Diploma program which is terrific.

Most of our teachers now have completed their Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. This is a terrific outcome. Kay Graham and Sandra Houghton have moved into mainstream teaching work this year, along with Ps Kevin Slabb and me. We are also grateful that Fr Barry and Janine Paterson have come out of retirement to teach from time to time, as we have needed them. Some new teaching faces have appeared this year: Julie Slabb, Rev Victor Blanco, and Fr Robert Greenuf with support from Deacon Ralph. It has been terrific to welcome them into our larger teaching team. Roslyn Serico, David Clark and Ann Mohun have assisted us ably with literacy and other support. It was sad to farewell our long time literacy support teacher Joan Sweet. We pray God will continue to bless and support her. Please continue to pray for our teachers. May God continue to anoint us for the work we do here, and bless our students as they grow in their knowledge of their faith and of our marvelous God whom we all serve.

Students are coping well with their home based study books. Home based studies is supplemented by “catch-up” in late afternoon and evening sessions during our study blocks. These “catch-up” sessions are well attended. Those students who have shown a disciplined approach to their studies have seen the benefit in their accelerated progress. The Normanton “boys,” as they call themselves, have been wonderful role models in this.

Our daily devotions during our blocks and end of block Fellowships continue to be a wonderful time of thanksgiving and worship of God. It is great to see students discovering their gifts and beginning to exercise them. Thank you for all the musicians who help us so ably to sing a joyful noise unto the Lord.

The number of students graduating is a real encouragement and a number of students are right on the cusp of graduation. We are delighted to see how many students have made very steady progress in their studies. Around 35 students are going to graduate this block or will have their studies completed by the end of this year. This is a wonderful outcome. Thank you students for your hard work. You are indeed worshiping God with your minds. May you find real joy in your studies and your achievements.

May God’s deep peace dwell in our hearts over this Advent season as we await he celebration of our Lord’s birth at Christmas time. Journeying mercies on those who will be travelling. May you and your families truly know the blessings of God and bring those of you continuing your studies with us safely back to us next year.

For my Diploma Studies I undertook research on the Topic of indigenous Aged Care. I interviewed four elderly people as well as a chaplain, who cares for the elderly living independently at home. I found that receiving Holy Communion or at church was important to them. Our elderly have had Christian upbringing and receiving Holy Communion is sacred to them: they are part of the body of Christ. They feel saddened when they cannot attend Holy Communion. They feel excluded. Another important issue that came out of my interviews was that the people had fears of going into nursing homes. They are afraid of sexual abuse, mistreatment, loneliness and being isolated from family and friends. The chaplain felt he had to ensure white people understood about our custom to have the priest or chaplains present to pray with the dying and for them to make peace with God. My study suggests that the church could usefully explore the following:

1. How Holy Communion can be made more readily available to our aged members so they can still feel they are a valued part of the body of Christ.
2. What the church can do to ensure nursing homes are safe.
3. How the church can help address the fears of people going into aged care.
4. How the church can educate non indigenous aged care givers and nurses about the the importance of respecting indigenous customs regarding dying, both from those who are on the final journey home and for their families.

Kate Higgins
Diploma Theology Graduate
“Who” got that Job

Josephine Gela has been studying with Wontulp now for 4 years in this time she has completed her Certificate III in Addictions Management & Community Development; Certificate IV in Alcohol and Other Addictions Counselling; and recently completing Certificate IV in Indigenous Mental Health (Suicide Prevention). It has been through her continuous persistence to better herself that doors have opened in many areas, one being the opportunity to undertake a role within the college as trainee teacher, in which she has shined to the point that now with all of her experience and knowledge was blessed with employment within her own community of Thursday Island working in the field of Mental Health. Wow what an amazing blessing, pray all the best for your future Josephine, staff and students will sadly miss you, but the Lords plans a bigger than ours and we are so happy you are following your dreams and doing awesome things in the process.

Ministries

The scripture states “many are called by few are chosen, Mat 22:14”. What a inspiring and an amazing woman. A former theology student of our college, who was forced to stand up through the most devastating period of her life, many would have fallen or walked away but not for this strong lady. Most would know her by Aunty Lillian; but now answers by another title these days “Reverend Lillian Noah”. Well praise our God for another worker in your kingdom Lord and yes Rev Lillian has most definitely risen to the occasion by doing your will Lord!! Rev Lillian is continuing her ministry at the Pormpuraaw Anglican church situated in the northern part of Queensland, with a congregation of 20 members and others coming and going on occasion. When asked how was it all going, she expressed all was well, however still very surreal regarding her ordination. However concerns related to the alcohol abuse, which is causing havoc within the community. Aunty Lillian, we thank our Lord for you and pray His blessings upon your ministry and community, we also pray His continuous guidance and may our Lord pour down His rivers of life upon Pormpuraaw Lord!!

Now this woman is such a living testimony. Denise Nelson had come to Wontulp-Bi-Buya college such a broken and hurt person, but now oh my, does she glow. Denise has undertaking 4 years of training with Wontulp and in this time we have witnessed first hand a remarkable transformation. Denise lives in Kalgoorlie WA, she had dedicated her time to attend each of her blocks over in Cairns which is on the other side of the Country. There has been many times Denise has wanted to give up, but had decided to push in and now she is reaping the rewards. By successfully gaining employment with the organisation that has assisted her through her journey. How amazing is our God, he turns everything around and make it new and now Denise is supporting others on their journeys. God on you Denise and wish you all the best in your new life.
Wow!! What an exciting, eventful year this was! When first writing my article, I decided to look back through my dairy, immediately turning back to January, Sunday the 12th. In which I wrote, “I came down to Cairns and camped at the flat, ready for work in the morning. I walked over to IGA for some little things”! It suddenly struck me this was my 5th year of teaching! As the saying goes “from little things big thing grows”.

Yes we have expanded in almost every way possible; our staff has grown not only in number, but also in the experience and personal development. The workload has also tripled within the teaching and administrative sections. Our trainee teacher numbers have doubled as well as student numbers has increased significantly. Coming from a various locations across Australia, from inner city, across to the sandy deserts, and the dusty outback bush. To accommodate with the grow we had to lease an extra venue space (3 Sisters) to cater for student training/teaching.

The AMCD class kicked off in February 25th and throughout the year, I got to know some interesting people that showed a remarkable enthusiasm for the course, which made it even better for me as a teacher. With the diversity of students and location I needed to constantly edit an update the study books to cater for the needs and learning styles of my students.

Due to a large intake of students from Bamaga, we took the opportunity to deliver part of the course at Sessia, which is a far north community. A beautiful place right by beside the sea, which was particularly special to me while I watched the Blues beat the Maroons under the stars. What could be more exciting? We sure do have fun whilst working for Wontulp and for the Lord amen.

Our entry-level course for the Nyungkal people on country still continued throughout the in the first part of the year and completed in July. Teaching and delivering this course has taught me many valuable lessons, with one being the major difference in delivering without the classroom environment, many positive areas to teaching on country, however there were also many barriers too. I’m truly blessed to be able to plant the seed and pray the Lord water it.

Well yes for me this exciting year has been made up of traveling, promoting, recruiting, teaching and having a whole lot of fun, with the big finale of the biggest graduation that WBBC as seen to date, which was total amazing. Oh what a night!! One of the biggest high light of my 5 years working here... and there is no end in sight yet...

May God richly bless you

Eddie Turpin
AMCD Coordinator | Teacher
Cert IV in Indigenous Mental Health (Suicide Prevention)

In 2014 the of the delivery of a brand new course of 1046NAT Certificate IV Indigenous Mental Health (Suicide Prevention) was possible with a 2yr funding received from the Dept of Health and Ageing.

Twenty three (23) students acquired the broad factual, technical and theoretical knowledge required to work in the specialist field of Indigenous mental health, with particular attention to youth suicide prevention through the core CHC08 Mental Health Skill Set involving counselling, youth work and responses to a variety of addictions.

Students have gained employability skills in communication, teamwork, problem solving, initiative and enterprise, planning and organising, self-management, learning new ideas and how to accommodate change and technology as well as having obtained their certificate in First Aid. IV  Their graduation is a major achievement, especially as there are no other courses like this for Indigenous people in Australia.

What some students have said:

Student 1 – ‘I have learnt a lot about code of ethics, procedures and policies in regards to duty of care in organizations.’

Student 2 – ‘Learned about duty of care, negligence, and basically how to assess and respond to clients.’

Student 3 – ‘I have learnt a lot about mental health in these three blocks, gaining valuable information from all areas – teachers and fellow students.’

Student 4 – ‘Having dealt with people who have mental health issues, it is good to know that strategies I have used, is similar to what I am learning.’

Student 5 – ‘Once again another great impact of learning and understanding to assess and respond to individuals at risk of suicide.’

Student 6 – ‘I have learnt the importance of you being educated on the organizations legislation. To keep accurate records of clients details, and update all the time, this is not only for the client and counselor but the stakeholder and auditing purposes.’

The students were asked to describe how this study has changed them:

Student 1 – ‘A lot of insight and depth to the contributing factors and elements that are associated with a client/Individuals who are at risk, especially the different levels of suicide risk.’

Student 2 – ‘This has given me knowledge and insight into suicide and people at risk.’

Student 3 – ‘More aware of the signs to recognize when people need help.’

Student 4 - ‘I now have a better understanding’.

Student 5 – ‘These blocks have changed me so much in my understanding about mental health, more knowledge and insight into mental health issues.’

Student progress in the community after graduation:

Two students have obtained new employment: Josephine Gela for three years as an AFTERCARE Coordinator for the “AFTERCARE” Torres Strait Islands and Northern Peninsula Area community support program which is part of the AFTERCARE Personal Helpers and Mentors (PHaMs) program funded by the federal government, operating throughout Australia in partnership with non-government organisations.

Lee Ann Hughes has been employed by ANGLICARE in Roma, Queensland as a full-time carer for clients with mental disabilities, a challenging job, especially working with people who need her help to do things for themselves.

Denise Nelson has the prospect of being employed by RED CROSS in Kalgoorlie as a counselor, and Shanthi Bernard has been involved in development of HEADSPACE (National Youth Mental Health Foundation) promotional material in Broome in Western Australia.

Three graduates in Yarrabah working in the Family Life Promotion (Suicide Prevention) and one men’s group assistant employed by Gurriny Yealamucka Health Service. The training program has enhanced their skills and empowered them to be more confident in dealing with a variety of mental health issues other than just suicide prevention. Two young ladies work at the Yarrabah Primary School and are involved in church activities.

Tammy O’ Brien has been employed as Development Officer/ATSI Education Officer for the Eastern Goldfields College in Kalgoorlie, Western Australia, using her skills to be more effective in providing education programs to young students and staff at the college on mental illness and suicide prevention.

Other students are working through their local community to spread the knowledge and skills they have gained to their families and other members of the community.

Merry Christmas and have a Blessed New Year for 2015.

Reverend Lesley Baird
Indigenous Mental Health Coordinator | Teacher
The “Gathering” canvas painting (by Australian Aboriginal artist Roslyn Serico). The painting depicts Biblical prophesies, Gospels of Jesus Christ and Christian fellowship.

The large circular dots represent the different nations of the world, while all dots represent today’s increasing numbers of Christians who believe Jesus is the Messiah. (1 John 5:1-5/GNT).

The white circular bands represent Angels ‘gathering’ GOD’s chosen people. (Mark 13:24-27/GNT). The blue circular bands represent a New World governed by GOD’s Laws - the Ten Commandment (Deuteronomy 5:1-22/GNT). The inner large red circles of each dotted circle, symbolises the Blood of Jesus Christ and ‘Eternal Life’ - for all GOD’s chosen people (1 John 5:18-20/GNT). The painted green leaves are a remembrance of Noah times (Genesis 8:8-11/GNT) and; Christians in the New World - as branches of ‘The Vine’ (John 15:1-17/GNT).

Reverend Wayne Connolly

WBBC Vice President

Where are you from?
I grew up in Yarrabah, however have connection to the Gulf Country and Northern Territory “Ropper River”

What Church are you affiliated with?
Anglican Church Kowanyama North Queensland

What’s your role in the community?
Priest in Charge

Where would you like to see WBBC in 10 years?
I would like to see WBBC be self-sufficient and have office and student facilities.

How do you think people can contribute to this growth?
Prayer is vital, however we need people’s support with donations, as well as more financial support from the churches. I would also like to see bigger percentage of student become more involved in community organisations and to show a great involvement and leadership with in all areas of family; community & the church.

Word of encouragement:
I would like to send a word of encouragement to all our First National people to come and have a go and to not allow your fears or lack of schooling stop you. Just call the college office and they will help you get started and if unsure get in touch with one of your organisations or churches and they will help you get there.
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Call with your orders today (07) 40414596
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Send your order form
Help Wontulp-Bi-Buya College Grow

Wontulp Mugs $15.00 Plus Postage ........ Please send me ____ mugs
Wontulp Pens $ 5.00 Plus Postage ........ Please send me ____ pens
Wontulp Notepads $15.00 Plus Postage ........ Please send me ____ copies
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Wontulp Magnet $ 2.00 Plus Postage ........ Please send me ____ magnets
Wontulp Tee-Shirt $35 Plus Postage ...... Please send me ____ shirts/sizes ____
Colours include:- Red; Black; White; Pink; Purple; Dark & Sky Blue; Maroon; Yellow; Aqua
(comes in all sizes)

Books for Sale

Please send me ____ copies of Dhubbi Mischievous Adventure at $26.00 posted
Please send me ____ copies of Rainbow Spirit Theology at $21.00 posted.
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Forward gifts to: Wontulp-Bi-Buya College, PO Box 960N, North Cairns Qld 4870

Please advise change of address. Enclose mailing label if possible.
Help us sow the seeds of education and training into our People

Why? Probably one of the questions we ask ourselves is why give to Wontulp-Bi-Buya College?

There are many biblical scriptures that remind us of the importance of giving into something or someone. I have often shared with our students that one of the reasons they are here is firstly their yearning to study in their preferred course and secondly without the giving of someone, church, school or an organisation interstate or in our neighbourhood this College would not be here.

After 30yrs we are still here!

Wontulp-Bi-Buya College still do not have it’s own place of residence as we continue to lease premises in Cairns for our students to study each year. The costs associated with leasing is huge and our prayers are always for Wontulp-Bi-Buya to have a permanent campus soon. I am reminded of the Israelites who wandered for forty years until they settled in the promised land; hopefully the college reaches it’s promised land soon(er) than the Israelites and that’s another 10yrs away!

Your tax-deductible support would be of tremendous help to our College and I would like to leave you with the following scriptural passages:

2 Cor 9: 11 as you are enriched in every way for all generosity, which produces thanksgiving to God through us. 12 For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing in many acts of thanksgiving to God.

It is wonderful to see God work through our College changing many lives of our students from broken to remoulded jars of clay that are bold, proud of who they are and sent out into the harvest field.

Your support as a first time giver or continued giving blesses the homes of our students who arrived into our college seeking hope and now live in the renewed hope of Christ to whom we give him all the glory. Amen!

Principal.

Name:________________________________________
Address:____________________________________________________Post Code___________
Ph:(___)_______________Mob:____________________ Email:__________________________

Please send your tax deductible donation to:
Wontulp-Bi-Buya College, Po Box 960N, North Cairns  QLD  4870

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Credit card donations may also be made by calling 1800 065 607 in Qld or (07) 4041 4596.

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To be paid: ☐ Monthly ☐ Quarterly ☐ Half Yearly ☐ Once
“Who are you working for?” is the follow-up question I’m always asked when I mention the name of my research client, Wontulp-Bi-Buya College.

Wontulp is a small training institution and it doesn’t have the profile of some, and it’s quite powerful in its ability to transform the lives of the many hundreds of trainees who walk through its doors each year.

The College offers a range of community development courses designed specifically for Indigenous community leaders and their people. The College staffed by Indigenous Australians and relies on very little government funding.

Trainees enrol from across Australia to complete a Bridging Pathway course, for those returning to study and may have confidence issues; a Certificate III or IV in courses that have included Addictions Management and Community Development, Alcohol and Other Drug Counselling, Community Organisation and Development, and Indigenous Mental Health (Suicide Prevention).

The Coordinator and developer of many of these courses, the Rev. Leslie Baird, has been with the College since 2006. Rev. Les has been helping researchers from the Cairns Institute, Prof Komla Tsey and Dr Anne Stephens to study the impact the courses have in empowering students, and finding the most culturally appropriate pedagogical practice for teaching adult Indigenous men and women.

“Our courses appeal to women, many are Aunties. Our oldest graduate this year, she will be 74 years of age,” said Rev Les.

“They are wonderful people to have in our classes, as they have so much life experience. Some were stolen children and remember life on the missions.

“Our courses do more than make young people ‘work ready’ or people qualified to work with a department. Whilst many of our graduates go onto work for councils and social service agencies, we also offer people hope.

“Our graduates are empowered leaders. They have dealt with a whole host of issues and grown in strength to recognise the needs of their communities and start filling in those needs.

“Our courses teach more than practical skills.”

The research goes back to 2007 and shows that where past students have a good social and supportive networks and institutional support, for example from the local council, community development projects are maintained, and some even spread and thrive.

The College produces mentors and role models for learning, with at least five students enrolled and/or completing University studies, and many others going on to undertake further vocational training studies.

Rev. Les completed his Masters of Indigenous Studies at the University of Sydney in 2013. He has enrolled in a PhD programme at JCU under Prof Tsey and will commence his candidature in 2015 here at TCI.

Training for Impact: Building an understanding of community development training and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community development outcomes: 2012 - 2014, will be released early in 2015.

Dr Anne Stephens
James Cook University

Rev. Les completed his Masters of Indigenous Studies at the University of Sydney in 2013. He has enrolled in a PhD programme at JCU under Prof Tsey and will commence his candidature in 2015 here at TCI.

Training for Impact: Building an understanding of community development training and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community development outcomes: 2012 - 2014, will be released early in 2015.
To keep your memories alive, you can order your own DVD copy of your graduation ceremony by completing the order form below and send it to “DVD Production by Sosure” or contact the office on (07) 40517256.

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Wontulp-Bi-Butya College wish to apologise for the delay in sending out the 2014 Newsletter due to factors out of our control. We wish to thank each person who has assisted throughout the 2014 and pray many blessings upon all of our readers and supporters for 2015.

Photo taken by Rev Les Baird in 2014 over Darnley Island, the bright cross is lit up over the beach where historically the gospel came into the Torres Straits, which today is called the “Coming of the Light”.

2014 Fellowships