Caution: Readers please be advised this publication may contain the names, images, and words of deceased persons. We apologise for any distress this may cause.

Yamatji Business News

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Talking Business: with Wildfire Director, Roni Forrest

Wildfire is a Geraldton based consultancy directed by Roni Forrest and her husband Simon.

Wildfire consults with the mining industry, government departments and universities to increase awareness of Western Australian Indigenous culture. Simon also runs cultural tours of Geraldton and Perth, with permission from local Elders, giving an Indigenous perspective on the history of conflict sites and other sites of significance.

Roni said, "Our backgrounds are in education and research. Simon has worked in the university sector as a lecturer in Aboriginal culture and education for over 25 years and I have worked with ECU for nearly 10 years.

Our real passion is Indigenous social and family history and we found we were getting a lot of requests for cultural awareness projects. So we decided to 'get serious' and start our business, Wildfire."

Roni said the key to running a successful small business is to have a plan and good discipline.

"If you are working from home it's important to separate your home life and work life. Good record-keeping and staying on top of the paperwork is crucial.

Have a direction for your business. Malcolm Smith at Small Business Corporation in Geraldton gave us good advice on developing our business idea and assisting us in establishing a business plan for Wildfire."

She said that despite the hard work, running a small business has many rewards.

"It's something we love to do. We're working in areas we are passionate about and the diversity of our business allows us to work with many interesting people. We've had excellent feedback so far, and having a business such as ours, gives us lots of ways to expand in the future."

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'Site Ready' participants with representatives from WORKBASE Carnarvon, Central West TAFE, Gascoyne Training Group and Emu Services.

New Programs from Emu Services

In October, Emu Services along with Workbase, Job Futures, the Gascoyne Training Group and TAFEWA commenced two new training programmes:

- **Fresh Start**
  'Fresh Start' is an 8 to 10 week program aimed at Adult Education and 'C' class driver licensing/fine reduction. Fresh Start is considered the starting point for all future projects and has 38 participants so far.

- **'Mine-Site Ready'**
  'Mine-Site Ready' is a 10 week programme developed through consultation with Mining Sector representatives, the Gascoyne Development Commission and the organisations mentioned above. The project has 15 participants who are training in subjects that will enhance their opportunity to secure employment in the mining industry. (See the box below for more details on how to get involved.)

The programs are part of a three year plan to meet regional demands and opportunities for regional employment.

Emu Services aims to have all of their participates graduate through the 'Fresh Start' program and then move onto ongoing training.

"We don't intend to hang our hat on mining sector opportunities alone; the Gascoyne has a great deal of employment and opportunity to offer. Other sectors such as horticulture and retail will be addressed as we continue." said Emu Services Manager, Greg Rose.

Indigenous Business Award

Over the past 13 years, the Mid West Chamber of Commerce & Industry's Business Excellence Awards have become the region's most prestigious accolades for Mid West Businesses.

This year, a new Indigenous Business award has been introduced, with nominations open to any business that is Indigenous owned and operated.

How to Enter the Awards:
Nomination forms are available through:

www.mwcci.com.au
or by calling (08) 9964 6767

Nominations close Friday, 5th December 2008.

Get Mine Site Ready with TAFE >

Central West TAFE's Site-Ready Program provides training and entry-level skills for people wanting to work in the mining industry.

There are currently 13 students in the pilot program which commenced in October.

The Site-Ready program is in partnership with the Gascoyne Training Group, WORKBASE, Emu Services, and Job Futures.

For further information please call Rhonda Richardson at TAFE on (08) 9956 2775.

"It is great to be involved in assisting Indigenous jobseekers to find the job that suits them." *Salvation Army Employment Plus*

Seeking Employment In Geraldton?

On November 26 and 27, Yamatji Land and Sea Council and The Salvation Army Employment Plus Geraldton, will hold a major training seminar for Indigenous job seekers in Geraldton.

The seminar will give information on employment opportunities and will talk about the long-term effects on Geraldton if the current labour shortage continues.

A focus of the seminar will be addressing job seekers' issues with finding employment and giving advice through a number of inspirational Indigenous speakers.

The Salvation Army Employment Plus CEO, Major John Simmons said, "It is great to be involved in the assisting Indigenous jobseekers to find the job that suits them."

The seminar, held on will initially target Indigenous job seekers registered with TSAEP with additional seminars for all Indigenous jobseekers in 2009.

For more information contact Caroline Williams at YLSC on (08)9965 6222 or cwilliams@yamatji.org.au

L-R, Jobseekers Seminar coordinators Caroline Williams, Melissa Bonney, Susan Fallows, Rodney Southall and Coby Baigent.

Progress for Mid-West Partnership Committee

Key Indigenous community, industry and government representatives have formed the Mid West Regional Partnership Steering Committee.

The Committee's name has recently changed to the "Midwest Mining and Aboriginal Economic Development Partnership" (MMAEDP).

MMAEDP will discuss issues relating to Indigenous employment and training in the Mid West and will work to achieve employment outcomes for Indigenous people of the region.

Being a newly formed partnership, MMAEDP's priority is to raise awareness of their proposed projects, which are:

- Mapping and Gap Analysis of Government Services provided to Indigenous Communities
- Indigenous Gateway Feasibility Study/Business Development Plan
- Indigenous Skills Audit for the Midwest Murchison Region

For more information on MMAEDP's work contact:

Jenny at Bundiyarra (08) 9920 7900, or

Wayne at the Midwest Development Commission, (08) 9921 0702

Mullewa Indigenous Tourism

Tourism WA, Central West TAFE and Yamatji Land and Sea Council have met the Mullewa Shire CEO, Tom Hartman, and the Midwest Employment and Economic Development Aboriginal Corporation (MEEDAC) to discuss Indigenous tourism opportunities.

The ideas discussed included an Indigenous walking tour to compliment the existing walk trails and the wildflower season.

L-R Stefanie Schneider, Caroline Williams, Rhonda Richardson and Kingsley Simpson in Mullewa.

The proposed walking tour would be in consultation with local Elders, who would also assist with identifying plant species.

"There is a real demand for Indigenous tourism products, especially from international visitors," said Stefanie Schneider from Tourism WA.

Central West TAFE's Rhonda Richardson encourages people who are thinking of developing an Indigenous tourism product to contact her directly about tourism courses on offer.

You can contact Stefanie: (08) 99643685, Rhonda: (08) 99562775 or Caroline: (08) 99656222.

Gindalbie and Mid West Business Mentoring

Gindalbie Metals is about to embark on an initiative to provide business mentoring in the Mid West.

The tailored mentoring program has been established in conjunction with the Geraldton Indigenous Coordination Centre (ICC) and the Mid West Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI).

The program aims to help existing business owners or start-up businesses develop strategies to assist them to compete for work in areas including the mining industry.

Under the program a mentor, supported by Gindalbie, is appointed to the business owner who acts as an adviser. The business advisors will offer advice based on their own practical knowledge, understanding and experience in business. Their role is not to direct the business, but to act as a guide and provide suport through the start-up process.

The mentoring process will also offer networking opportunities with fellow business owners in the region, encouraging people to build new relationships and generate opportunities.

This program is due to be launched in Geraldton in December. For further information, please email Peter Keane, peter.keane@gindalbie.com.au or
Naomi Hill, naomi.hill@gindalbie.com.au or call (08) 9480 8700.