



Booroongen
Djugun Ltd

NEWSLETTER

March, 2026

RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE FACILITY

Our community has been walking strong together these past weeks. The men have been gathering at Durri with AJ, sharing stories, laughter and good yarns that keep culture and connection alive.



Our women have also been meeting at Durri, sitting together in strength and respect, and taking part in a special Cultural Healing Group that honours spirit, story and sisterhood. We were grateful for a visit from the Seventh-day Adventist Church, bringing fellowship and kindness into our space. And now, we've added a splash of fun and fitness to our week, heading to the Kempsey Pool for water aerobics, keeping our bodies moving and our spirits lifted. It's been a beautiful season of connection, culture and community.

And through it all, our day to day life keeps humming along nicely. Bingo remains an absolute essential, with eyes sharp and friendly competition in full swing. There's cooking filling the rooms with good smells, painting that brings colour to our walls, plenty of yarning that keeps stories strong, and games that keep minds active and spirits bright. Behind the scenes, we continue with maintenance and bathroom renovations, making our home safer, fresher and more comfortable for everyone. Our care and clinical teams are working hard to maintain accreditation standards, putting in a great deal of work behind the scenes to ensure our service remains strong, sustainable and here for our community long into the future. We stay committed to providing safe, culturally appropriate care as we look after our Mob with respect and heart.

COMMUNITY CARE SERVICE DELIVERY

Our CCSD team continues to focus on strengthening consistent, culturally safe support for our Elders and community. We are working on improving communication, coordination, and service reliability to ensure our mob feel respected, supported and heard. We remain committed to delivering person-centred care that reflects our values and honours community connection. In the coming months, we look forward to expanding social and wellbeing activities that bring our Elders together and strengthen community spirit.

We continue to work with our Elders around the Age Care Reform with the recommencement of Elders Yarning meetings starting in January, receiving direct feedback and complaints to improve services and care. This gives our Elders a voice and say around how our services are working or need improving.



Next Elders meeting proposed for
Thursday 16 April 2026.



(left to right: Fiona Beston – Clinical Advisor, John Clancy – Director, Joanne Adams – Secretary Director, Annette Lawrence – Director, Kylie O'Bryan – Chief Executive Officer, Kevin Smith – Acting Chair Director, Adrian Lucchese – Citation Legal & Workshop Facilitator)

The Board and CEO held a Governance Workshop in January to collaborate around current and future Strategic and operational goals, maintaining the original and core foundations as an ACCO was the primary focus while ensuring all Government Regulatory Compliance is upheld. Ensuring Cultural, Safe and Quality of service delivery across all BDLs core business.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

We are working on, implementing the Quality Age care advisory sub committee where our Elders, family and community will have an opportunity to communicate directly to the CEO and Board of Directors. Contact Darren Holten to express your interest.

BDL College is preparing for new business with the NSA – Ctg (Close the Gap) implementation plan bringing new training funding.

Key focus areas for BDL across the company is building Self growth pathways, financial stability, cultural safe and quality of care and services.

Partnerships with local, regional, State and National committees have increased with the CEO travelling regularly between March to June to ensure Age care, disability, education and employment remain a key focus for all our Dunghutti community.

We will be distributing a community survey soon to engage how we can improve all our services, please fill them in.



DARREN'S YARNS FROM DUNGHUTTI

As the new BDL Cultural Partnership Project Manager and Dunghutti local man, Darren Holten will be penning this new segment. In Darren's Yarns from Dunghutti, he'll offer his perspectives on working with community in research, promoting healthy ageing, fostering community engagement, and honoring the vital role of Elders. Darren's reflections provide a unique lens on integrating community values with research, rooted in respect, heritage, and a deep connection to Country.

Darren will also talk about community representation, Cultural advice as well as Leadership. He will also be offering advice such as mentoring or even catching up to have a yarn and a cuppa.

My name is Darren Holten, and I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and inform you all of what my new role is at Booroongen Djugun LTD, and how the role can assist you and me as well. I am a proud Dunghutti man with immediate and external family ties to other communities such as the Gumbaingerri, Widjabul wia-bal and the Yuin clans. I have worked in many indigenous roles over the years both here and in other communities abroad ranging from Childcare, Family Services, Durri Medical service, Out of Home Care, Mentor and Family support roles as well as owning and running my own business. I have also been involved with my community through Sports, Cultural Activities and community events which over the years has given me the skills, knowledge and experience to continue working towards building relationships and partnerships. My aims and objectives in this new role is to help achieve meaningful, beneficial outcomes to help better our community for our children, youth and young parents and more importantly our Elders, who have paved the way for us to reach greater heights and milestones along the way. I look forward to working with everybody within the Booroongen Djugun workforce as well as assisting those who may need guidance with our community members and Elders respectively.

Part of my new role will be to provide the following tasks and KPI's, which I hope to share my experience, skills and knowledge, as well as build a great rapport with positive feedback and team morale building influences to help strive for better workplace standards and practices too.

- Develop, implement, and maintain culturally respectful engagement strategies for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Elders in aged care
- Provide cultural advice and support to BDL staff on culturally safe services
- Attend Leadership Team meetings and provide specialist cultural advice
- Represent BDL in community and government forums
- Provide cultural advice for Aboriginal men's programs
- Build and nurture partnerships with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations
- Provide supervision and support to NeuRA BDL Research Officer and Assistant
- Provide guidance to internal teams on best practices for engaging Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Provide cultural advice to ensure unity and collaboration across BD
- Ensure alignment with national frameworks (Aged Care Standards, Closing the Gap, etc.)

My name is Annette Lawrence and I'm committed to serving as a director at Booroongen Djugun Limited.

I am a proud Dunghutti woman, born and raised in Kempsey, with deep cultural ties to community. My connection to Booroongen Djugun began at 16, when I completed two business traineeships and worked across the organisation in administration, the college and aged care facility, where I gained my AIN and business qualifications. These early years shaped my commitment to Aboriginal community-controlled care and to the values that continue to guide BDL.

My professional experience spans across aged care, disability, youth justice, training and education programs, life coaching/mentoring and community development. I work within DCJ in planning and commissioning where I support ACCOs and other departments navigating cultural responsive commissioning. I bring extensive experience in grants, tenders, strategic direction and policy development as well as community partnerships.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, I helped fill a critical service gap by coordinating medical and food supplies for our mob when communities were cut off, securing sponsorships from multiple organisations and ensuring vulnerable families were supported. I have also contributed over the years through my chair role on the NAIDOC Yarning Circle and Dinner Dance Sub-Committee, helping deliver culturally significant community events and gaining sponsors.

I currently serve as the Deputy Mayor of Kempsey Shire and bring extensive governance training that strengthens my contribution at the board table. Since joining the BDL Board in 2022, I have carried a deep sense of responsibility to uphold our community's expectations and ensure all who access our services receive the care, respect, and opportunities they deserve as well as ensuring staff are supported in their roles.

As a Director, I see my role as a responsibility to protect, strengthen, and grow the organisation that helped shape me. I focus on building strong governance, elevating Aboriginal leadership, and ensuring decisions are grounded in culture, community needs, and long-term sustainability. I bring lived experience, strategic insight, and a commitment to accountability so that BDL remains a safe, respected, community-led organisation for generations to come.

My name is Joanne Adams and I am honoured to serve as Secretary and Director on the Board of Booroongen Djugun Limited. I am a proud Darug and Gundungurra woman who has lived, worked and raised my children on Dunghutti Country for more than 21 years. My connection to community care began at 18, when I worked at Booroongen Djugun as Assistant to the Director of Nursing, grounding me in Aboriginal-led service values from the very beginning.

I bring over 16 years experience across the APS, NSW Government and Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations, with strong capability in governance, risk management, community engagement and culturally informed leadership. I completed Governance Workshop Training in January 2026. My leadership approach is collaborative, empowering and centred on wellbeing, continuous improvement and innovation. I have mentored staff, supported transformation initiatives and contributed to projects that improved service access, communication and productivity for Mob.

I served as Chair of the Aboriginal Interagency in Kempsey, strengthening local partnerships and coordinated responses for community needs. I also contributed to the Kempsey NAIDOC Yarning Circle and Dinner Dance NADIOC Subcommittee, supporting large-scale cultural events. I was formally recognised for my leadership during the 2025 floods, where I supported opening evacuation centres, community recovery and guided staff working under crisis conditions.

As a Director, I strengthen policy, strategic planning, compliance and board development to ensure our organisation upholds accountability, cultural integrity and community-driven decision-making. I lead with integrity, cultural responsibility and a deep commitment to improving outcomes for our mob. My priorities include transparency, cultural safety, strong governance and ensuring Aboriginal voices remain at the centre of every direction we take.

I place strong emphasis on building leadership aspiration, particularly for Aboriginal staff and I am committed to creating genuine pathways for Aboriginal leadership development at all levels. Accountability is central to my practice. I set clear expectations around workplace behaviour, professionalism and integrity, ensuring our company operates in a way that is safe, respectful and consistent with our values. I am deeply focused on maintaining a culturally safe environment, from the Board level through to frontline service delivery, where our mob feel respected, heard and represented.



KEEP A LOOK OUT IN NEXT MONTHS NEWSLETTER FOR OTHER DIRECTORS' PROFILES. AND CLINICAL ADVISORY: KEVIN SMITH, JOHN CLANCY, CHRISTIANNA CARTWRIGHT AND FIONA BESTON

COLLEGE



Congratulations to Our Recent Graduates!

We are proud to celebrate the outstanding achievements of our learners who have successfully completed their qualifications. Your commitment, resilience, and dedication to developing your skills are truly inspiring. Congratulations to all graduates who completed:

- Certificate II in Workplace Skills
- Certificate III in Individual Support
- Certificate IV in Mental Health

Your hard work has paid off, and we can't wait to see where your new qualifications take you. Well done, everyone!

Still taking enrolments for Cert IV Mental Health (contact for potential fee-free options or payment plans, and flexible learning options), speak with our staff today to learn more!

EOI for Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Trainers and Assessor, please contact careers@booroongendjugun.com.au or drop in for a yarn



FIRST AID

- Thursday 19th March 2026- 9:00 am to 4:00 pm
- Thursday 16th April 2026- 9:00 am to 4:00 pm
- Thursday 14th May 2026- 9:00 am to 4:00 pm
- Thursday 18th June 2026- 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

If your First Aid is Expired, don't forget to enrol at the college!

DOES YOUR BUSINESS AND STAFF NEED FIRST AID TRAINING? COME AND SEE US OR CALL US ON 02 6560 2000



PARTNERSHIPS!



Pictured: John Clancy, Kylie O'Bryan and Jack Beetson

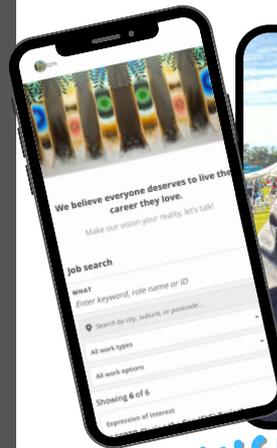
BDL has proudly partnered with:

- Literacy for Life
- AES, which is soon recruiting for an HR Trainee—KEEP A LOOKOUT!

CAREERS @ BDL

WE'RE HIRING

- Support Workers
- Cleaning and Laundry Assistants
- Assistant in Nursing (AIN's)
- Ctg Project Coordinator



VISIT OUR WEBSITE

Recognising team members who've gone above and beyond this month. Thank you for your dedication and teamwork

Blake Donnelly, Jackie Vergara, Karen Dickson, Peggy Ticehurst, Toni Robinson, Dinesh Dahal, Brian Foran, Jamie Cooper, Lisa Crane, Di Kerr, Elly Harris, Dwayne Eggmolesse, Sianna Dickson, Dan Cook, Lisa Norwood & Rose Hoskins