

Village transforming thanks to new waste management model



An old car body being removed from Alice Edwards Village earlier this week

There is a long way to go, but a transformation has begun at the Alice Edwards Village thanks to a new approach towards managing waste on Aboriginal land.

The new waste management model is a community partnership between the Bourke and Enngonia Aboriginal Communities, Council, other government agencies and Waste Aid - a charitable organisation formed just last year to improve health, environmental and social outcomes in disadvantaged communities through improved waste management.

The project is focused on making long-term changes within the Bourke and Enngonia communities, by providing the proper infrastructure and educating the communities about waste.

Thanks to a donation from Sulu, Waste Aid have organised for new wheelie bins to be given to every household in the Alice Edwards Village and Clara Hart Village.

Metal bins have been purchased for public areas in both communities as well as a new collection trailer for Enngonia, who manage their own waste collection.

And NSW Health have provided funding for two Aboriginal Community Environmental Advisor positions to act as a conduit between the community and Council.

But the first step has been to remove the large amount of 'legacy waste' from the villages and surrounding land, including illegally dumped mattresses, white goods, building materials and general waste.

"We have already removed over 50 cubic metres of illegal dumping on Aboriginal-owned land around Bourke," said Alistair Ferguson, Chairman of the Bourke Aboriginal Community Working Party.

"This is a Bourke and Enngonia Aboriginal-community led project and the little clean-up in Alice Edwards Village is being undertaken by our local aboriginal enterprise, the Murdi Paaki Regional Enterprise Corporation and it is fully supported by Nulla Nulla Land Council and Bourke Shire Council. Everyone in the Bourke community is playing a part."

This week has seen the relocation of over 50 car bodies from within the Alice Edwards Village, some to the tip and others to a new pad at the rear of the village, created thanks to \$29,000 from the Rural Fire Service.

The clean-up of the car bodies and other large waste items has had a positive impact on village residents.

"That's made a lot of difference because all you'd see when you come in to the village is dirty old cars, broken down cars and it's making the village look dirty, but I'm glad that we've got the Waste Aid people come on board and help us move the cars down the bottom end of the village to clean up the top end," said Sharon Smith, who is helping coordinate the cleanup work in the village.

"We've been doing a lot of cleaning up and a lot of mowing and gardening and that, trying to make it a bit decent and tidy and since we've started it is starting to get there slowly."

Lillian Lucas, another village resident helping with the project, said it has got residents thinking about other ways to improve the village surrounds.

"The feedback I've got has been really positive especially with the young fellas down here, they actually have some hope," said Lillian.

There is even talk of restoring the village football oval, she said.

"They are seeing potential things that could happen down here. They are actually chucking out ideas and I mean it is the first time I've heard the young fellas talking footy and using the field, having games with the kids and I mean that's just one highlight on its own," she said.

"I've seen a lot of projects come and go, some that were successful but then it all came down to funding rounds where projects just stopped and everything went back to the way it was. But with this Waste Aid one, everything is happening - the cleanup and it is just non-stop positive outlooks. I should say everyone is talking positive."

New roads for