



WIRADJURI GARDEN OFFICIALLY OPEN

On Wednesday 16 June 2021, representatives from the Dubbo region gathered around the fire pit for a traditional Wiradjuri ceremony, celebrating the official opening of Stage 1 of the Wiradjuri Garden, Dubbo.

Dubbo Regional Council (DRC) Mayor, Stephen Lawrence, and Local Member for Dubbo, Dugald Saunders, attended the ceremony to open the Wiradjuri Garden located within the greater Elizabeth Park precinct. The opening event paid homage to the traditional owners of the land by way of a customary Welcome to Country by local Wiradjuri man Lewis Burns, along with a traditional smoking ceremony and performances by local indigenous dancers.

The Wiradjuri Garden is the result of a joint partnership between DRC and the NSW Government to provide a culturally significant and accessible meeting space for the local community. The space includes large spans of open grass, accessible path systems that represent the key three rivers of the area, two large sandstone yarning circles, native gardens with vegetation endemic to the area, shelters and picnic

benches for gathering, a large fire pit, and a fifty metre rainbow serpent focal piece.

Dubbo Region Mayor, Councillor Stephen Lawrence said he was extremely proud of this special space. “This space is more than just a tourist attraction, it is spiritually and culturally significant infrastructure for our whole community. I believe the garden will provide an inclusive place for the community to meet, talk, share, educate and have a yarn together – a place to build respectful relationships and a space to inspire the whole community. I’d like to thank the NSW Government and Council staff for this extremely positive outcome”, said Mayor Lawrence.

Member for Dubbo Dugald Saunders, said it was great to be a part of the new culturally significant space.

“It’s been positive to collaborate with Dubbo Regional Council on a project that highlights and celebrates the rich Indigenous history of our region. The NSW Government contributed \$900,000 to the Wiradjuri Garden via the Stronger Communities Fund, it’s pleasing that a large number of local groups have been instrumental in turning the vacant land into an activated space for Dubbo,” said Mr Saunders.

Following a competitive tender and procurement process which had a strong focus on indigenous employment, DRC engaged local contractors Dubbo Landscaping who worked collaboratively with community organisations including LeaderLife and Indidg Connect to deliver the project.

DRC contributed approximately \$300,000 in addition to the project management resources to deliver the \$1.2m project. Council will pursue

funding for Stage 2 of the garden, which will include interpretative signage and other significant elements.



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