

Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council Newsletter



INAUGURAL ISSUE

Vol. 1: Issue 1, June 2020.

DOI: [10.6084/m9.figshare.13027571](https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.13027571)

WELCOME !

The Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council wishes to acknowledge your contribution as a Newsletter subscriber in protecting the Martuwarra Fitzroy River.

- Please encourage others to visit our main website -

<https://www.martuwarrafitzroyriver.org>

Community Storytellers

Profile: Edwin Mulligan



Who are you?

Edwin Mulligan

Why do you want to become a digital storyteller and how can this help your strengths for example, artist, poet, ranger, performer?

I'm an Artist by trade and I've been involved in a number of art projects over the years. Through digital storytelling I have an opportunity to gain experience using different art mediums, and with mining companies wanting to take from the River it is a critical time to share stories about the Martuwarra.

What is your relationship with the Martuwarra Fitzroy River?

The River is a big part of my life. The River is meant to be there. Meant to stay there. River has been there from the past. It's got to be there now and into the future. Nature will always bring attention to you. By closing your eyes and feeling the vibration and feeling the energy flow. It will connect your sensibility. All your meaning will attach to it by smelling, hearing, seeing, tasting and feeling.

Who are your traditional owner group/s along the Martuwarra Fitzroy River?

My tribal groups are Walmajarri and Nyikina. There are many other tribal groups along the River that play a significant, important and vital role for the integrity of the River.

What is their relationship to the Martuwarra Fitzroy River?

It is a physical and spiritual entity we share. By having this relationship it gives us the co-existence of being a human being and the reason to be who are.

What message would you like to send to the world about the importance of the Martuwarra for current and future generations?

Do you know the River is a living entity? Or have you ever thought in your mind or a moment in time that the River is a living soul? What is it about the River that brings us together as common people?

What are you interested in learning and experiencing, for example would you like to be a community researcher/story teller, travel Australia and internationally?

I'm already doing it through my art and my work as a Cultural Interpreter and Mediator and Tour Guide, where I take people on Country with my own tours.

View Edwin's Community Storyteller short film at
<https://www.martuwarrafitzroyriver.org/stories/edwin-mulligan>

Community Storytellers

Profile: Hozaus Claire



Who are you?

My name is Hozaus Claire. I am Gooniyandi, Bunuba, Walmajarri.

I spent my childhood growing up in communities in the Fitzroy Valley alongside my mother, learning things that helped me understand my identity. I have always been connected to many families because of my respect for the two men that I'm proud to call my Fathers that I started to become really close to as I became a young adult. I am one of eight siblings who have supported me through my journey. I have always been good at hunting fishing and knowing the seasons, especially traditional cooking. Until this day I only became better with my ideas on how to be creative and now I'm a father of three I can be a teacher of my own in the way I've been taught. The Martuwarra Fitzroy River is an environment that always takes away negativities when life is hard.

It will always be my comfort zone and provide me with strength. It teaches me and the environment, it makes me the smartest person I can ever be. It gives me positive inspiration when I am with the River, I can achieve by providing for the family I created, families and friends.

“River relates to everything that I can provide and everything I can take”.

Why do you want to become a digital storyteller and how can this help your strengths for example, artist, poet, ranger, performer?

As an artist I'd like to tell stories, share my thoughts about my strengths and challenges. Locally and globally. I want to tell stories in ways for people to recognise Indigenous/Aboriginal Australians more. Digital story telling will help me develop my skills and give me more opportunities to share my experiences living in remote communities and explaining our ways of compromising between communities and families. For the Martuwarra, by telling stories people can express and appreciate what Country has done for them. Identity, Country, Culture – this is all important. We need to help Government understand that there are people willing to see healthy Country and communities. Our community needs a voice that they can identify with and have the same level of understanding. This can help for them to become more involved and share our stories, connection to land and River as well as the challenges we face in our communities. We want to start being noticed as leaders to be speaking up for fairness. This is needed for our next generation. There are stories to be told and a society that is our reality - we listen and speak to be supported.

What message would you like to send to the world about the importance of the Martuwarra for current and future generations?

Mother nature works with us as we adapt. The River gives us the resources we need to help with our health, hunger and healing. This is not just our health but also our education. It is important to society that, as First Nations of Australia, we share our gifts and knowledge (like every other country does). The Martuwarra provides life skills and education that's needed to represent and be independent for our culture.

What are you interested in learning and experiencing, for example would you like to be a community researcher/story teller, travel Australia and internationally?

I am interested in seeing tropical places in Australia and experiencing different countries to build a network around the world to support remote communities in the Kimberley living with and alongside the Martuwarra Fitzroy River.

View Hozaus's Community Storyteller short film at
<https://martuwarrafitzroyriver.org/stories/hozaus-claire>

Community Organising Fellowship



In early March, along with 24 other community organisers working for social and environmental justice around Australia, the Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council was represented at the Community Organising Fellowship 2020, run by the Change Agency.

Some of the organisations that are represented include: *Australian Youth Climate Coalition, Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, Original Power in SA, Central Australian Frack Free Alliance, Lock the Gate, Environment Australia, Climate Reality, Healthy Rivers Dubbo, Stop Adani, Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union, School Strike 4 Climate movement in Western Australia, Friends of the Earth Australia.*



To date, the past six cohorts have included representatives from the climate, environment and union movements, for Aboriginal self-determination and justice efforts, refugee and asylum seeker campaigns, urban and rural communities, and other social movements. Community Organising involves the movement and coordination of a number of people and groups driven to create positive change and working towards a bigger picture to shape our own destiny.



Community Organising activities include listening to what the community wants, identifying local leadership and creating a set of networks and relationships which then empowers people to continue making positive changes in their community and improve the lives of many. The Community Organising Fellowship run by the Change Agency includes workshops around:

- Building and maintaining effective alliances and coalitions
- Techniques for interacting with power holders and allies
- Developing situational and problem analysis
- Engaging, mobilising and sustaining grassroots activists

The Community Organising Fellowship has created a national network of 150 expert community organisers who are leading many of Australia's high-impact campaigns as strategists and organisers.

At the Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council National Heritage Management Planning workshop in Broome on 27th – 28th November 2019, the Council endorsed the opportunity for the Martuwarra to be represented at the Fellowship with the goal of building a network of supportive alliances nation-wide (and potentially globally) to help protect the Martuwarra.

With the Government, Industries and a number of developers now showing a renewed enthusiasm for broad scale agriculture in the Fitzroy Valley, it is important that the Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council builds a coalition of support which includes all sorts of people with different perspectives and talents (including Traditional Custodians, lawyers, scientists, researchers, artists and other interested people) who want to share in new ways of governing.



Unabated water development without involvement and guidance from Native Title holders throughout the catchment area will threaten culture, country and, many endangered species - and also the lives of people that live with and honour the ancient wisdom of the river and the catchment. The unique cultural and environmental values of the Fitzroy River and its catchment are of national and international significance. The Fitzroy River is a living ancestral being and has a right to life. It must be protected for current and future generations, and managed jointly by the Traditional Owners of the river.

We want to share with as many people as possible that the Council is open to sustainable development which includes non-invasive pastoralism, cultural tourism, education of our youth on Country and other community and Country balanced approaches. The Martuwarra can continue to strengthen relationships within our communities and support employment, education and two-way learning opportunities.



Our first workshop was in Sydney and together we heard from five First Nations' participants and presenters who shared the work that they do for a range of organisations such as Original Power, GetUp and SEED. We also covered a range of different subjects on how we can work together in building an effective campaign and movement through the power of storytelling and creating connections.

During this workshop we were challenged with the COVID-19 and, due to financial constraints, we cannot continue to participate in the Fellowship. We feel very grateful to have established a strong, dynamic and passionate network of people who want to continue to hear the stories about the River and we look forward to staying in touch with them and continue to also hear about their campaigns and projects.

Report from the Community Organising Fellowship 2020 written by Grace John.

Thank you for reading our newsletter.

Please encourage others to visit the
Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council website at
<https://www.martuwarrafitzroyriver.org>

**This newsletter has been brought to you by the
Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council located in
Fitzroy Crossing in the Kimberley Region of
Western Australia.**