

Year in Review

INDIGENOUS: A YEAR OF POSITIVES

Murri Centre is achievement

THE Gladstone region has a proud indigenous community.

While they haven't always found it easy to get their positive stories out in the media, 2012 was perhaps a watershed year in that regard.

Front and centre in indigenous news this year has been the progress of the Gladstone Murri Centre.

Construction still seems to be a fair way off, but nonetheless massive progress has been made especially the official transfer of the land to The Gladstone Goorie Centre Indigenous Corporation (GGCIC).

The land on Police Creek in Kin Kora has special significance for the Goreng Goreng people, and gaining official ownership of it was a huge shot in the arm for morale of the traditional owners.

The Murri Centre is one of the most ambitious indigenous projects of its kind ever in Australia.

It will feature a range of buildings, housing services including indigenous health, an art gallery, a restaurant, sports facilities, an indigenous business incubator and much more.

The project was quietly backed right from the beginning by Rio Tinto.

Look for more great news in 2013 about the Murri Centre as it has undeniably gathered momentum.

As always, NAIDOC Week in July was a great celebration.

The march down Goondoon St was a proud and colourful event further unifying Gladstone's indigenous and non-indigenous residents.

Watch for more of these next year.



COME A LONG WAY: NAIDOC Week March down Goondoon St, Gladstone.

PHOTO: BRENDA STRONG



Lockyer Dempsey, 7 months, with grandmother Valerie Dempsey.

“The Murri Centre is one of the most ambitious indigenous projects of its kind ever in Australia.”



GGCIC secretary Suzana Williams with her sons Kallum and Eli on the site for Gladstone's planned Murri Centre.

100 rallied in support of same sex rights

IT'S an issue that divides opinion.

And it's also a topic The Observer covered closely over the past year: gay rights.

Dylan Carmichael, 27, organised the city's first Marriage Equality Rally in November.

More than 100 people marched at Apex Park, where several speakers shared their views on marriage equality.

Same-sex couple Emilie and Mikayla Glossop spoke to the crowd of the love they shared for each other and their baby daughter, Ella.

Nerrilyn Diefenbach spoke about her gay son.

“He certainly didn't choose to be gay,” she said.

“There's not many who would choose to deal with the daily discrimination that they face.”

ALP candidate Glenn Butcher also expressed his belief in equality.

Mayor Gail Sellers was also



at Apex Park. Questioned about her attendance, she said she had been invited and accepted.

Cr Sellers added that she felt sympathy for people prevented from marrying because of their sexuality.

In the park adjacent to the rally a handful of churchgoers with placards protested.

Organiser Steve Muller said the goal was to give those who supported the traditional definition of marriage a voice.

“We feel it is important to stand up for the rights of children to have a mum and a dad,” Mr Muller said.

Harbour health in the spotlight

WHEN talking about Gladstone Harbour as a news story, it is difficult to know where to start.

Perhaps it is fair to say the issue cooled down as 2012 ticked away.

Twelve months ago, perceptions about the health of Gladstone Harbour were at a low. It was only three months since the harbour had reopened to fishing after the infamous “red spot disease”.

Early this year, UNESCO sent a delegation to Queens-

land to inspect sites where it felt industrial development might affect the Great Barrier Reef. When they arrived in Gladstone, they were mostly concerned with the massive Western Basin Dredging Project that would make way for the LNG projects on Curtis Island. However, commercial fishermen and environmentalists remain convinced dredging has affected water quality.

Expect to hear more in 2013.

Was 2012 our biggest boom?

DID Gladstone go through a bigger “boom” in 2012 than ever before?

The boom during construction of QAL in the 1960s also caused severe growing pains.

Suffice to say, 2012 was definitely “big”. Thousands of new residents arrived in town for work on the major projects and the spin-off industries.

Gladstone Regional Council was left tearing its hair out as it struggled to find funding

for new social infrastructure to cope with the population boom. In particular, the proposed retirement village on Philips St, the need for more child care, suburban roads struggling to cope with heavy traffic and the struggling hospital were all hot topics caused by Gladstone's boom.

Small businesses were getting plenty of work, but they simply couldn't find the staff. Rents for business and residents also soared.

Health payroll fails

ALTHOUGH the Queensland Health Payroll debacle began two years ago, its problems still trickled well into 2012 and had adverse effects on Gladstone health care.

The former Bligh government initiative to introduce a streamlined payroll system backfired when 75,000 Queensland Health workers were either under or over-paid thousands of dollars.

Queensland Health said it would spend two years to reimburse or reclaim funds from employees.

One of the most significant changes to health in central Queensland was the amalgamation of localised hospital boards. Gladstone residents

claimed the new LNP government initiative would rob Gladstone Base Hospital of its autonomy.

The Central Queensland Hospital and Health board service and the Central Queensland Medicare Local board were established as independent entities, with members appointed in June. In August the transparency of management at Gladstone Base Hospital came into question after the board failed to invite the public to its first board meeting.

After media coverage, the CQHHS board extended an invite to the public and medical community to the meeting.



CHANGES: Gladstone Base Hospital, Park St, Gladstone.