

Talking Together - Elder Profiles Auntie Lurlene Lingwoodock-Henderson



Auntie Lurlene is a member of the EVPAB representing the Bunya Mountains. She is also a Board member for the Bunya People's Aboriginal Corporation, a member of the Fitzroy Basin Elders Committee and Board member of a natural resource management group in Rockhampton.

Where are you from and your connection to the Bunya Mountains?

Well Lingwoodock is my maiden name and I am from the Kabi Kabi tribe on my father's side through his mother and on my mother's side I come through the Wakka Wakka tribe through her father. My mum passed away in 1957 and we moved to Gladstone, Central Queensland where my father worked and we lived with relatives.

My connection to the Bunya Mountains is through the Kabi Kabi and Wakka Wakka tribes who as we have been told, and through our storylines, that these regional tribes travelled to the Bunya Mountains for law and celebration every two years for the Bunya Festivals. It was the parliament for our People.

What is your professional story working with community?

At the present moment I am on the Board for the Bunya Peoples Aboriginal Corporation, which has been running for a few years now. We formed that corporation to get Traditional Owners interested in the management of the mountains and keeping the area pristine and beautiful for generations to come, as all the generations before us have done this. We are working toward reviving the Bunya Festival in the near future.

I am a member of the Fitzroy Basin Elders Committee who I have been involved with since around 2001. The wonderful staff there works towards bettering lives for Indigenous people in and around Central Queensland. We have membership at the council which covers a lot of the Traditional Owner

groups in Central Queensland. We aspire to being the peak body for Aboriginal natural resource management in that region. As an executive member I see our duties to be a serious matter, we have to keep an eye on things as a responsible corporation. We recently purchased a bus to assist our Elders with transport, to travel to different parts of their country for outings, and sometimes the Elders offer to pay towards their trips. Recently the Elders travelled to the Carnarvon Ranges.

The Fitzroy Basin Elders have a Junior Ranger Team under one of our projects. We encourage the junior ranges to be responsible and learn to care for country, to build rapport with country. We have clean up days around the beaches and do other activities with art, language, and other culture.

I am also a board member of Fitzroy Basin Association for natural resource management in Rockhampton. I was recently appointed a member of this board on a term of three years. Over that time I hope to visit communities throughout the region to learn about their natural resource management strategies, find ways to create opportunities for our youth and develop ways this knowledge can enhance educational outcomes for our youth. For example, Korrawinga had within their constitution that they could do language and culture, so I started to apply for grants and we were successful. I started to set up the language program including a teaching strand, media strand and production strand. We presented it to the Elders for feedback, which saw the program endorsed and we have never looked back.

What kind of things are you involved with at USQ and how can USQ be involved with your community?

I was invited by Uncle Darby McCarthy and the Vice Chancellor to be a part of the Elders and Valued Persons Advisory Board; we have taken an interest in the higher education system and want to know how things are progressing for Indigenous students at USQ. I would like to learn more about what the types of study options are available and the types of financial support options available to students. I am interested in ways we can work with USQ to encourage and entice Indigenous students to transition from secondary to tertiary education and see regular visiting of secondary students at High Schools, to get a mindset about bettering themselves and supporting students to go further with their education. We are also in the process of working to revive the Bunya Mountains festival and USQ are more than welcome to be a part of this journey. With a strong partnership and dialogue together we can enhance all of our interests in the region.

Profiles produced by Elders and USQ Indigenous Curriculum, LTS

Visit the Indigenous Curriculum site @ <http://indigenous-curriculum.usq.edu.au>