

5 April 2015

Councils along the route of the 'Journey to the G'
As Addressed
Via Email

Mullagh Wills Foundation – 'Journey to the G' project

The 'Journey to the G' is a year of commemoration to recognise the Aboriginal Cricket Team match against the Melbourne Cricket Club at the MCG on Boxing Day 1866 and the journey the team made from Western Victoria to Melbourne.

As you know your municipality was part of the journey from Western Victoria to Melbourne 150 years ago and, as per our correspondence in February, will be part of the 2016 'Journey to the G' project.

The 'Journey to the G' was launched on March 13 in Harrow, at the annual Johnny Mullagh Cricket Championship weekend. The launch was attended by Aboriginal Communities from Western Victoria, representatives from three municipalities, together with Hon Dan Tehan Member for Wannon and Emma Kealy MP Member for Lowan in addition to local Harrow organisers and other special guests.

The launch generated very positive local media coverage, including in the Wimmera Mail Times and on radio in Melbourne.

The Message Book, a special commemorative book which was presented to the West Wimmera Council at the launch, will be handed to each municipality on the journey and will be presented to the Melbourne Cricket Club (the MCC) on Boxing Day. The Message Book is an important part of this project and we are seeking your support in ensuring this provides an historical record of the 'Journey to the G' and promotes reconciliation through sport in regional Victoria.

Message Book at Your Council – 'How it will work'

There will be an official presentation of the Message Book from Council to Council – This could be small function with local Aboriginal representatives and community representatives prior to the nominated Council meeting as per the schedule provided. This is a symbolic function and may provide some positive media coverage demonstrating your council's leadership in reconciliation. A representative from the Mullagh Wills Foundation will attend this community function.

Your council records a formal message of congratulations on the journey and of the original Aboriginal Cricket Team journey in the 1860s as well as a message of reconciliation.

It's a great opportunity to encourage local community, sporting groups and schools to include a message of support and/or reconciliation in the Message Book – there will be ten pages available for each Council.

Other potential activities to promote Council and the 'Journey to the G'

The following are ideas that you may wish to consider as part of your involvement in the 'Journey to the G'. These are designed to provide promotional opportunities for the Council and the community/sporting groups involved.

Encourage local sporting groups to add to a match day event (football, netball, hockey etc.) by playing for the Mullagh Wills Cup or similar. The Mullagh Wills Foundation will provide support and provide a suitable trophy for any such event.

Encourage local Schools to engage with this project through activities around the Aboriginal Cricket Team of the 1860s and the role sport plays in reconciliation.

These are just some ideas and we will provide support wherever possible as we do not want this to be a burden on Councils but rather to add to your activities; providing positive outcomes for Council, while helping to bring communities together. We will soon publish a Mullagh Wills Foundation 'Journey to the G' website which will provide more details and help to promote the activities in your Council.

Please find attached an outline of the Mullagh Wills Foundation objectives and a generic media release to assist your planning, together with a copy of the proposed route of the Message Book as it passes through Western Victoria. Please contact me as soon as possible to confirm the proposed dates are appropriate for your Council and the scheduled time.

We encourage your feedback or questions you may have in relation to this exciting project.

We look forward to working with you during 2016, ensuring a positive outcome for Council, helping your community and celebrating this significant event.

Kind Regards,

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MULLAGH WILLS FOUNDATION

JOURNEY TO THE 'G' PROJECT - 2016

The Route

Municipality	Date	Venue
West Wimmera	Thursday March 24	Edenhope
Southern Grampians	Wednesday April 13	Hamilton
Ararat	Tuesday May 17	Ararat
Corangamite	Tuesday June 28	Camperdown
Pyreness	Tuesday July 19	Beaufort
Golden Plains	Tuesday August 23	Linton
Ballarat	Wednesday September 14	Ballarat
Moorabool	Wednesday October 6	Bacchus Marsh
Melton	Monday November 14	Melton
Brimbank	December	
Melbourne	December	

Melbourne Cricket Ground – Monday December 26

All Municipalities involved in the 'Journey to the G' will be invited to be involved in the presentation of the Message Book to the Melbourne Cricket Club on Boxing Day.

The Mullagh Wills Foundation

The Mullagh Wills Foundation was established to coordinate the historical and cultural commemoration and to recognise the achievements of Johnny Mullagh and Tom Wills in early indigenous cricket in Australia.

The basic purpose of the foundation is to:

- Provide an opportunity to bring together communities across Victoria
- Recognise the contributions different cultures have made to our Nation
- Increase community awareness of the contributions made to sport and the community by Johnny Mullagh and Tom Wills
- Promote a message of reconciliation through sport
- Recognise and commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the Aboriginal Cricket Team's Boxing Day match at the MCG in 1866; and
- Recognise and commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the Aboriginal Cricket Team's tour of England in 1868

The Message Book

Examples of the messages included in the Message Book

From the Hon Dan Tehan

I congratulate the Mullagh Wills Foundation in celebrating the 150th Anniversary of the 1866 Boxing Day match between the MCC and the All Aboriginal Cricket Team followed by the 150th Anniversary of the first Australian Cricket Team to tour England in 2018. This unique event celebrates and recognises the achievements different cultures have made in Australia's sporting and cultural history. This event provides a wonderful opportunity to bring people together, break down barriers and promote the message of reconciliation and understanding.

From Emma Kealy MP

It is important that we recognise and celebrate this story of how sport in a rural community lead by example to take early steps towards reconciliation and racial harmony.

I am extremely proud that the story of Australia's first Aboriginal Cricket team is being taken from the West Wimmera to the rest of the world. In future generations I hope that all school children grow up knowing the story of cricket legend Johnny Mullagh and the first Aboriginal Cricket Team, as I did.

I wish this message book, and the story of Australia's first Aboriginal Cricket team a safe journey.

From the Harrow Community

The Harrow Community recognises the traditional custodians of this land, the Wotjobaluk, Marditjali, Jardwadjali and Gunditjmarra people.

We celebrate the rich Aboriginal history of our region; we are proud to learn from it and honoured to share it with visitors and newcomers to our community.

We recognise Unaarrimin, 'Johnny Mullagh' and his brothers who, more than 150 years ago, embraced the sport of European settlers and stood on the cricket pitch, shoulder-to-shoulder with the Europeans, on foreign soil.

We learn from them to trust the man, not the colour of his skin or the deity he worships and to respect other cultures, while remembering and celebrating the history of your own.

Today, we honour them with a gathering on the cricket pitch of Australians of Aboriginal and European descent, to play in their traditions of trust and friendship. It is our hope that their story inspires all communities and we will stand, shoulder-to-shoulder and as equals, in all of life's arenas.