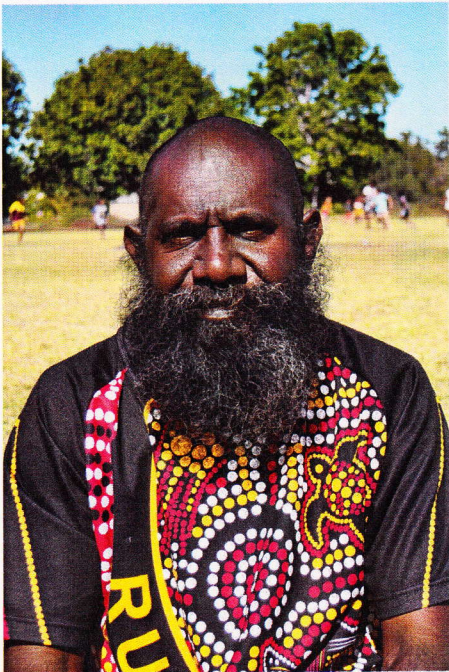


naidoc week 2014



Kenny Kennedy looks forward to NAIDOC week every year.

Breaking barriers will draw our community together: Kennedy

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FOR Kenny Kennedy, one of many Gudjala people in Charters Towers, NAIDOC Week is about breaking down the barrier and coming together and celebrating.

The 56-year-old is well known in the community and can often be seen wearing a pair of Ray Bans while sporting a grin behind his beard.

For the past 13 years he has worked as a teacher aide, seven of those years he has worked with underprivileged children.

"I love kids, black and white," he said.

"It was different when I was growing up because everyone was sort of looking at you like there was something wrong with you," he said referring to his heritage.

"But nowadays everyone just mingles, black or white all come together, it is a good thing and to knock the racism on the head, that is all out the door."

Kenny said he would like to see more opportunities open for indigenous youth in the community, whether it be working on the land, in local

stores or in the mining sector.

"Just to give our kids opportunities to go into these sorts of things and break down the barrier," he said.

"We will break the barrier down and we will all come together."

"All these mines are on our land, so I can't see why they can't give us the opportunity."

"Not so much me, I am a bit long in the tooth, but I've got my daughters."

"I would like to see my grandkids given the opportunity to work out at the mines growing up, and I have about 11 of them."

In March this year, after a long awaited battle, the Native Title rights of the Gudjala people were recognised by the Federal Court of Australia and they were granted title over 20,000sq km of land near Charters Towers.

"I grew up in Charters Towers. This is my mother's country here," he said.

"I was stoked because, I have two mums still alive — my mum's sisters. I don't call them aunty I call them my mums."

"It's good to see we got the land and they got to see it before they pass on, otherwise it would have been sad."

Kenny said his mums are elders in the community and one day he may take on the responsibility of becoming an elder himself.

CELEBRATION HITS CITY STREETS



Eight-year-old Mathias Hero-Santo took part in the NAIDOC march on Friday by performing a traditional dance.



Marchers traversed Gill Street.



INDIGENOUS community members, their families and friends took to the streets of Charters Towers on Friday to

celebrate NAIDOC Week. A highlight of the annual march was the young indigenous boys performing

cultural dances in Gill Street. Up to 100 people took part in the march, many draped in flags and carrying balloons.

Charters Towers

SHOW

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