

MEDIA RELEASE

Our Ref: T15:0032

13 December 2011

Attention: News Editor

New home for Noongar heritage

Noongar cultural heritage is set to find a new home in Gnowangerup next year.

Work has started on the Gnowangerup Cultural Heritage Centre, a project supported by the Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC), Lotterywest, Regional Development and Lands, the Department for Culture and the Arts and the Shire of Gnowangerup.

The project involves restoring the former Baptist minister's house as an interpretive centre to house and display artworks and cultural artefacts associated with local Noongar heritage and with the Gnowangerup Mission.

Gnowangerup Aboriginal Corporation (GAC) chairman Robbie Minitier said the project was a constructive development for local Noongar people.

"Heritage is significant among all Aboriginal people, including among people who have moved away," Mr Minitier said.

"Putting Aboriginal cultural heritage on display builds self-esteem and makes people want to return and reconnect to where they came from.

"Employment through the project is having a positive impact on the young blokes involved, building their commitment and attitude," Mr Minitier said.

Displays at the heritage centre will include Aboriginal art, along with photos and mementoes associated with Noongar life.

Mr Minitier said non-Noongar families had offered artifacts such as stone cutting implements from personal collections of material found on local farms.

GSDC Chief Executive Officer Bruce Manning said the development, under project manager Lawrence Cuthbert, offered significant benefits to Gnowangerup.



Gnowangerup's Jerome Williams is part of the work crew for the Cultural Heritage Centre project.

“The project includes renovations to the existing GAC building next to the heritage centre,” Mr Manning said.

“Landscaping will link both buildings and create a cultural heritage precinct around an important meeting place for Noongar people.

“Development of a business plan is part of the project and will help to ensure that Gnowangerup Noongar people and the wider community gain the maximum benefit from the new heritage centre.

“Mr Cuthbert has shown a strong commitment to helping the Gnowangerup community move ahead with this project,” Mr Manning said.

Mr Cuthbert and four part-time employees drawn from the local Noongar community started work on the site in September.

A gazebo and verandah have been added to the GAC building.

Brick paving and hard landscaping elements are under way around both buildings.

Exterior works will be finished by early in 2012 and the fit-out of the heritage centre will follow, pending the completion of cultural research that will help in the creation of the centre’s displays.

Media contact: Bruce Manning ph. 9842 4888