

Helping Remote Indigenous Communities is no small thing



Ken Duncan started the Walk a While Foundation to help indigenous kids in remote Australian communities learn skills in the fields of creative arts and technology so they had better prospects for employment in the future. That work continues and we are negotiating with the NT government to lease a building in the Ikuntji community at Haasts Bluff which will become the hub for a creative technologies centre. Meanwhile, we are helping the families of Haasts Bluff and Papunya to realise their dream of erecting a giant Cross on top of Memory Mountain, a site that has enormous significance for them.

Update on the Cross:

Here's the latest news on the continuing work at the Cross site and the Centre at Haasts Bluff, from our Director and Project Manager, Dennis Woodward,.

"After the December to February rains and flooding cleared and roads re-opened, the Ross Engineering construction team were able to complete the next stage of the Cross track work. This now leaves only one last stage to be completed before the track reaches the top of the mountain, where the Cross will stand. We expect work to re-commence late this month and it should only take about 3 weeks to complete this final stage

When Tim Morris-Smith and I were in Haasts Bluff from March 14th to 16th, we visited the Cross site with Dave Rilstone, the project manager for Ross Engineering. It was good to walk the track with him and see the amazing job they have been doing, and to be able to discuss and visualize the remaining stages.

Our thanks go to the team from Ross Engineering who have done an excellent job under very difficult conditions. With the changing makeup of the base rock, each footing and post has had to be individually assessed, drilled and placed, so that the walkway it supports is properly founded. Part of the walkway has had to be off set from the mountain to allow turn backs to be put in place. This is so that the small vehicle used for transporting people, materials and the 3.5 tonne rubber-tracked excavator has room to turn.

These turning bays have created beautiful viewing platforms which will be delightful rest and viewing spots for those intrepid souls who wish to make the long walk up to the top of the track. The view from the top is certainly worth the trek as you can see from the photo at the top.



We also looked at the sites ear marked for car parking, and for shade, amenities and information structures so we can better plan the layout of the entire site and decide what else may be needed for those who travel long distances to come to the Cross.

It has been a long and arduous process so far, but we are thankful that the hardest stages of the track work are now behind us. And we are ever thankful for the ongoing flow of donations that always seem to come in at just the right time. Two large donations received within the past month have enabled us to give the green light for this next phase.



While Tim and I were in Haasts Bluff in March we also met with Community members and Central Lands Council to discuss finalising our lease of a building there for the Creative Technologies Centre. The meeting went very well, with a 100% vote of support from the community. And we met another team who want to set up a shed to train the local lads to fix their cars. Many cars sit unused because no one has the knowledge to carry out the necessary repairs. It's wonderful to find other groups willing to assist the local indigenous communities in practical ways.

It was a big week and a very hot one, with daytime temperatures hovering around the 40C mark!

We are so thankful that the vision God gave some beautiful Aboriginal brothers and sisters is now coming about.

*Blessings to you all, **Dennis Woodward***

It's hard to explain how tough life is in these remote communities. Never mind third world conditions. We have people living in fourth world conditions, right here in our own nation. This not OK!

Walk a While Foundation operates solely on private funding, without government assistance of any kind. We Aussies have a reputation for giving generously to help people in need all over the world. By donating to Walk a While, you can make a difference in our own backyard. [Click here to Donate Now.](#)

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