

Beswick Store: a story of success

"WE'VE come a long way and here we are."

What is a success story without challenges? For the Beswick Community Store, challenges were aplenty which only made the desire to succeed stronger.

In 2008, Outback Stores arrived on the scene to manage the shop after it fell into voluntary administration.

The retail service provider helped alleviate financial pressure, assist with training of staff and implemented new retail methods.

According to Wuduluk Progress Aboriginal Corporation (WPAC) chairperson Peter Lindsay, the challenging nature of the store was brought on by the continual 'taking off' of managers.

"That was the problem in the beginning. We had managers just come in and run the store before taking off. Nobody knew what was going on," Mr Lindsay said.

"The shelves were empty and the shop was probably



BACK IN THE DAY: Staff members of Katherine and Darwin's community stores pictured in 2012 in the Beswick facility. Photo: Supplied

around three hundred thousand dollars in debt."

After Outback Stores jumped on board, Peter said the change in store was almost immediate with fresh produce and everyday products filled on shelves.

"In a matter of weeks, you

noticed a difference in the store. It was full of products that people need in their everyday lives," he said.

"We managed to slowly pay off the debt and then we bought the store back."

Mr Lindsay said business skyrocketed when COVID hit

and credits the store's managers for much of its success.

"We have to give credit to our managers, Ross and Sandra, because we've hit the mark and are the talk of the town because of their work," he said.

Mr Lindsay is adamant

the Beswick Store belongs to nobody other than the communities who utilise it, and said they would continue to reap the benefits.

"To be able to splash this amount of money and for the community to see their money being spent on them

themselves, you start to realise that the store belongs to them. I have no words for it to be honest because if it wasn't for the people, the store wouldn't be where it is today."

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- JAY-ANNA MOBBS

Locals embrace Pride Fest

The inaugural festival welcomed people from all walks of life

BY JAY-ANNA MOBBS

■ From front page

Hundreds appeared at the various events throughout the three-day festival including, but not limited to, Katherine Pride Story Time, discussion forums, Pride Picnic Day, Drag Queen Bingo and more.

"We had people come, some go, some stay but I think most people stayed because there was something

to see at every turn," Top End Pride chairperson, Amber Sayers-Hunt said.

"Of course we had all the dogs turn up for the Pride Pooches which was fantastic, they were all dressed up and had make up on. Some even had spray-painted eyes on their bums.

"It was received so well by everyone in Katherine. The local businesses and Council supported us, the Library decorated the inside

and made sure they had some nice areas for us to use along with a display of LGBT-QIA+ books."

People of all ages and communities joined in the festivities, building on the momentum to normalise how the LGBTQIA+ community are perceived in society.

"The most heartwarming thing was seeing all the kids there, there were so many young teenagers who had showed up and were happy

to wear a pride flag and own it," Amber said.

"Then there were the older members of our community who have experienced some awful things, persecution and things like that, so it's nice to see them come out as well.

"Pride started 50 years ago in NYC, it was an uprising against the police, so it's not all about glitter and g-strings, it's about our history and understanding why it's held.

"It's about people seeing us as normal human beings who aren't here to hurt anyone. We're just here to live our lives the best we can in the minds of who we are inside."

It is likely the festival will return in 2022 but before any promises are made, Top End Pride along with the Katherine Pride sub-committee members, Ben Herdon, Christine May, Melissa Favero, will determine the

financial viability before confirming.

"We have to cross the t's and dot the i's to make sure that the event paid for itself," Amber said. "We intend to send a survey to some of the participants to see if we can get some constructive feedback. It's their festival, we can only hazard a guess at what they might like to see."

The Darwin Pride Festival will be held from September 3 to 5.

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