

JOY TRUDGETT

& our Aboriginal History

Joy Trudgett:

Joy Trudgett was a proud Wiradjuri woman and a respected leader within the Gilgandra community. She spent her early years living in The Pines along the Castlereagh River. After devastating floods in 1955 destroyed the area of The Pines, Joy and her family relocated to Balladoran. It wasn't until 1970 that they returned to settle in Gilgandra township. Joy completed her schooling in both Balladoran and Gilgandra.

Throughout her life, Joy was a passionate advocate for Aboriginal affairs and worked tirelessly to improve outcomes for both Aboriginal people and the wider Gilgandra community. Her efforts were instrumental in securing a grant to establish the Jack Towney Aged Care Facility—named in honour of her late father—ensuring culturally appropriate care for Elders.

From 1991 to 1995, Joy made history as the first Aboriginal person to serve as a councillor on Gilgandra Shire Council. She also held several significant positions, including:

- Chairperson of the Central Area Training and Accounting Resource Aboriginal Corporation (CATARAC)
- Director of the Western Aboriginal Legal Services
- Member of the Gilgandra Local Aboriginal Land Council
- Elected Regional Councillor for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC)

Additionally, Joy played a key role in coordinating the Warana Community Development Employment Program (CDEP), helping to provide employment pathways and community development opportunities for local Aboriginal people.

Today, her legacy is honoured at the Joy Trudgett Gallery, which celebrates Aboriginal art, culture and storytelling within the Coo-ee Heritage & Visitor Information Centre.

Pines History:

The Pines is was the first known settlement of Aboriginal people in Gilgandra on the banks of the Castlereagh River. The name reflects the Cyrpress Pine trees, a native tree to NSW.

When the flood of 1955 swept through Gilgandra township it decimated the houses on the banks of the Castlereagh River. The people living at The Pines found accommodation where they could with friends and family and many were relocated to tents at the Showground.

