

Spotlight

people, arts & heritage



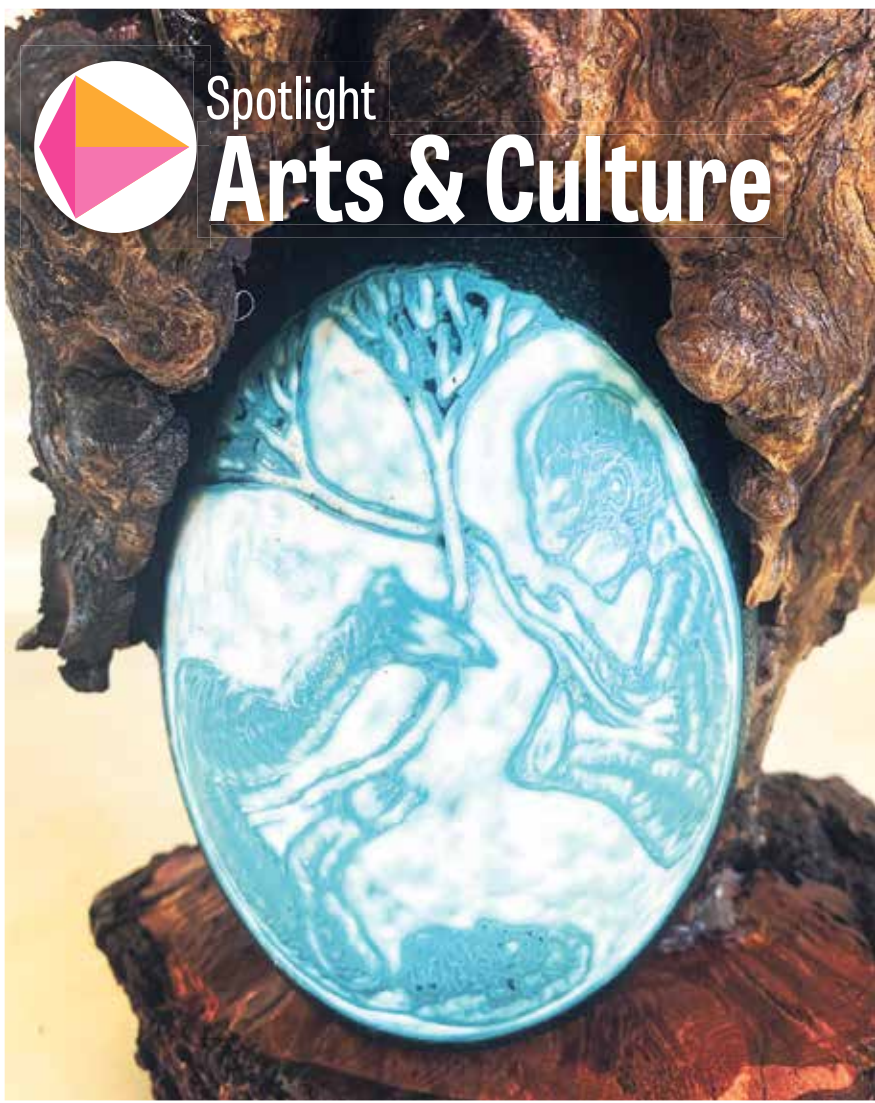
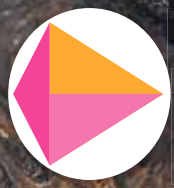
Dave's got wood
(and a lot of other stuff too)
The art of Dave Doyle

PICTURE: Dan Schulz

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"Birthing tree." This sculpture is made from 3 separate pieces, Redgum, mistletoe and a carved emu egg. This piece was accepted into the Outback Archies.

PICTURES: Supplied

Dave's got wood (and a lot of other stuff too)

The art of Dave Doyle



'Wirtu' (Old man) - carved in Gidgee wood .

Dan Schulz

Dave Doyle will turn his hand to anything. He started wood carving in 2018 but has explored metalwork, weaving, jewellery, casting, poetry, drawing, painting, clothing design and recently he's been making soaps and lotions from traditional bush medicines.

"I used to watch my great Grandma carve emu eggs," he said, "usually with a box cutter knife. She didn't start till she was about 80."

Dave is heavily influenced by the art-making of his mother, Nan and great grandmother but he also takes influence from wherever an interesting material or technique can be found. His house is abundant with finished works, some experimental, such as a traditional coolamon made from aluminium, or a boomerang made of copper. Others are more straightforward wood carvings made from redgum, mulga or mallee wood.

Dave is always looking at the sculptural quality of timber whenever he's out on country, "I try to use pieces that people tend to overlook, like a piece of redgum that's been through a bushfire. The textures are different when the charcoal's intact and I like the effect and the colours that come through where it's been burnt."

In 2019 he was awarded Second Prize in the Maari Ma Indigenous Art Awards for a mulga wood carving of a Murray Cod.

In 2019, he made a trip to the Museum of South Australia with fellow woodcarver, Anthony Hayward, to look at the world's largest collection of Australian Aboriginal cultural material. There, he was able to see some of the Barkindji artifacts from the river country region which are entirely unique in their mark-making, "We called it chattering as the lines are very finely zig zagged," and he created a mirror depicting a yellow belly by scratching into the back of it, "I thought I could imitate [this mark making] by using Barkindji words."

He was also impressed by the work of Albert Namatjira who mastered European watercolour painting techniques and often painted landscapes onto traditional wood carvings. Dave made a copper woomera and used a chemical application to create a landscape image on it, inspired by a piece by Namatjira.

Dave is a Barkindji man and grew up in Menindee where he sources most of his materials.

"Pretty much everything I get comes from around Menindee. Most of my jewellery is from the mussel shells I collected while the river was dry. I started making broaches, then earrings and necklaces," Dave said.

His shell carvings were exhibited in the Fresh Bark Exhibition at the Broken Hill Regional Gallery, and are very detailed representations of river animals which he carves using a Dremel.

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Amelia Butler

By Andrew Bruggy

How does one express in words
About an identity we all know,
When Amelia walks into a room
With her warmth and happiness -
we all glow.

Let's be honest Broken Hill
This lady is truly unique,
We all feel better when she's around
One could never ever feel bleak.

If you are feeling game and
Join her on the dance floor,
Don't try and escape her
You'll hear her say "just one more".

Supporting kids in sport
To achieve their very best,
Leaving no doubt at all
Her dedication has been expressed.

When the game is over
And points are all done,
"As long as you had fun lad"
Whether or not you had won.

One teacher at a swimming carnival
Did try to stop Amelia's cheer,
That's fine and dandy she said
I'll just notch it up another gear.

Speaking from experience
And seeing her on the side of the track,
"I'd better run like bloody hell", I'd think
"And don't you dare look back".

Another time a soccer team
Weren't getting the job done,
So onto the field comes Mrs. Butler
And boy could she damn well run.

Soccer, softball, netball
Coaching or in the canteen,
There is nowhere in these activities
That Amelia hasn't been seen.

2020 NSW Senior Volunteer
Another credit to her long list,
We cannot fit it all here folks
I trust you get the gist?

Helping others in need
Through Vinnies, Salvos or Red Cross,
Pardon the pun people, but;
Under her will never grow moss.

Broken Hill is so much brighter
That Amelia came here from Fiji,
Thank you from each and
every one of us
Broken Hill does decree.

If you'd like to submit a poem for
publishing consideration, please
email to editorial@bdtruth.com.au

“
...I used to
watch my great
Grandma carve
emu eggs, usually
with a box cutter
knife. She didn't
start till she was
about 80.



Dave holding a river red gum canoe made by Barkindji artist Badger Bates. Dave and fellow woodcarver, Anthony Hayward assisted Badger Bates in making the traditional bark canoe - a project to show the Wilcannia Central School students and staff from the Art Gallery of NSW, the incredible art of bark canoe-making. PICTURES: Supplied

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“They [the mussel shell carvings] are a good way to be able to explain to people about the river mussels. We've got two different types of mussels here - one that lives in the lakes which are a bit smaller with a thinner shell wall, whereas the river mussel is a really thick shell which is what I use to carve with. These mussels are usually about a hundred years old to get to the size that I use to carve. When the river and lakes were dry there were thousands of them dead. They're quite interesting. They are the filter of the river and take a lot of the toxins and algae out.”

For Dave, art and culture - like his beloved mussels, are a filter for the toxins that build up in a system under stress. “It's all self-therapy. When something's bothering me I usually write it down or carve it, or chop it up to get my mind back on track.” Dave works closely with the Menindee Central School and Men's Shed in town. He's also the Senior Aboriginal Health Practitioner with the Royal Flying

Doctor's Service and works throughout the far west, demonstrating various art techniques as well as promoting the health services available in the area - connecting community well-being, environmental health and cultural practice through the arts.

Caring for community and country goes to the heart of everything he does. A recent collection of poetry, Borne Of The Baaka, demonstrates his deeply-felt grief with the history of colonisation and the ongoing destruction of the Darling-Baaka river system and Menindee Lakes.

“Three years ago, on Christmas eve, I wrote my first poem. The river was really dry and things had been annoying me and it was a good way to get it out. It's a good way to get stuff off your chest in a productive way.” His poetry collection is published by West Darling Arts and is available at the Under The Silver Tree bookstore in Broken Hill.

His recent enterprise, making soaps and lotions from traditional bush medicines such as the emu bush,

quandong and butter bush, comes from an old family recipe he learned from his Nan and Mum. “I've been making soaps and creams for a while but usually just for the family. I get eczema and had been using bush medicines for it, which helped, but I noticed that the soap I was using was too harsh. I use two base oils, shae butter and jojoba oil and boil it up with the dried medicinal plants to extract the medicines.”

This year Dave was selected for the Cementa Regional Artists Mentoring Program, a twelve-month program that delivers professional development in the lead up to a group exhibition at Firstdraft Gallery, Woolloomooloo in early 2022. Dave is part of an exciting community of cultural practitioners, fearless in their exploration of materials and techniques, and deeply rooted in their appreciation for tradition, love of country and community. His work can be found at his facebook page 'Dave's got wood - and other stuff' and on his Instagram 'Doyley1979'.



Dave Doyle's sculptures use various materials and techniques; emu egg carving, fine jewellery work using river mussel shells, wood carving and metalwork.