

Wurreker

Newcastle Aboriginal Support Group

Newsletter No. 111

June 1998

Bunbilla yarnteen ngurra-yelleeke (Listen everyone and take note)

Anzac March

Anzac Day 1998 started off to a positive start with Aboriginal people from near and far. The weather on the 25th April was in our favour, the sun shone gracefully as the procession took off from the top of Hunter street from Pacific Park heading towards Civic Park where the grand finale unfolded.

Down Hunter Street we marched in solidarity. Nine Aboriginal people meandered past the many unfamiliar faces who gathered in the streets lining the footpaths to pay respect and admire this very solemn occasion.

Proudly, Kathy Marika and Sue Hodges carried the Aboriginal banner, "Lest We Forget Our Black Diggers".

Professor John Lester from Wollotuka, laid the beautiful bouquet of flowers at Civic Park cenotaph. Dianne McNabo from Dubbo and Samantha Hodges followed close behind with two very distinguished gentlemen, bearing medals, who politely asked if they could join us.

Last but not least Auriel Andrew and her daughter-in-law, tied off the end of our small but significant parade, holding the very famous Red, Black and Gold.

Many thanks must go to the people behind the scenes. Donna Meehan, the team from Lake Macquarie District Office and especially Dawn Lewis.

United we stand Divided we fall, an old cliché but true. One voice from the crowd shouted, "We won't forget you love". I glanced across and as our eyes met, I gently smiled and felt tears welling inside.

It was an incomparable moment, I am sure all who were present, would agree.

Sue Hodges



Congratulations

Congratulations to three valiant women! Jean Talbot, Marion Armstrong and Dianne Mannigen described by the Press as the "Newcastle Grandmothers" and known to us as wonderful workers for peace and justice, were arrested on 12th June at the Kakadu blockade.. They had travelled to the Northern Territory to assist the Mirrar People and the environment movements in their protest against uranium mining in the famous National Park. We salute their bravery and their determination to preserve this great area for its indigenous owners and for all Australians.



Reflection

On Sunday 17 May 1998 I attended "The Stolen Children." session at the Writers Festival in Sydney. Several Aboriginal people addressed the audience and shared their experiences but for me the most touching came from the story told by Donna Meehan.

Donna looked too young to have been stolen and it was a shock for me to learn firstly, that she had been stolen from her mother in 1960 and secondly, that Donna had been "given" to new parents in Whitebridge, a suburb near my own home town.. The possibility that a "stolen child" had been growing up in a neighbouring suburb had never occurred to me. I had believed that the "stolen generation" were now elderly and that it had all happened a long way from where I lived.

However these factual insights were peripheral to the overwhelming sadness and empathy I felt whilst listening to this generous woman tell her story through the eyes of a five year old child. Donna recounted how her mother had taken her two brothers and herself to the railway station and how excited they had been to be going on their first train ride. However, as the train drew out of the station, she suddenly realised that her mother was being left behind. She pressed her little face to the train window and watched until her mother became a tiny blue speck in the distance.

This image continues to haunt me as I struggle to understand what it must have been like for five year old Donna to have been wrenched from her mother and to have lived with that fading image over the ensuing years.

I was grateful to have the opportunity of National Sorry Day to have a public opportunity to say sorry to Donna and to all the "stolen generation" for their loss.

Carmel Hanson rsj

Congratulations

Congratulations to Donna Meehan, not only on her triumphal appearance at the Sydney Writers' Festival, but on the forth-coming publication of her autobiography, "It is no secret ". We all look forward to this great event, and will supply further details next issue.

Congratulations to Sister Carmel Hanson, awarded the Order of Australia in this years Honours list for her work with drug addicts, abused wives, disadvantaged groups and refugees. She has worked tirelessly for 29 years, giving help to all who need help.

Jack Doherty Awards and Celebrations of Aboriginal Graduates

This year's Jack Doherty Award ceremony took place around noon on May 1st at Wollotuka, after a welcome to the Aboriginal land by the Director, Laurel Williams.

Professor John Lester, founding Director of the Umilliko Centre for Postgraduate Aboriginal Studies, before presenting the Awards, stressed the importance of the support of groups such as ours, where non-Aboriginal people work together with Kooris, in creating a society of greater equality. His words were a welcome affirmation of the work done by those who established the Jack Doherty Scholarships, and those who have contributed money and/or time to keep them going. Professor Lester was in no doubt that the need for the scholarships would continue and increase, especially in the present economic and political climate.

Since this year only four scholarships of \$2,500 each were offered, and, due to the efforts of Louise Hermann from Scholarships and Prizes, thirteen students had eventually applied, the task of selection promised to be difficult. However, the interviewing panel was happy to announce that Teresa Clay, Bachelor of Teaching/Bachelor of Arts; Melissa Oldham, Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Laws; Keith Cochrane and Rosemary Thorpe, both Diploma in Aboriginal Studies, were the successful applicants. Congratulations to them, and



commiseration to those who missed out this time. The panel was impressed and inspired by many of the submissions, and by meeting the students in the interviews. It is always a privilege to be involved. We hope those who were unsuccessful will try again next year.

Deirdre Heitmeyer then brought to the front all those present who would be graduating this year, and personally congratulated each one. It was pleasing to see among them past recipients of the Jack Doherty award, including Kirsten Thorpe, daughter of Rosemary (Robin) Thorpe, one of this year's recipients. Kirsten was receiving the Bachelor of Social Science Degree. I also recognised Anthony Seiver (Bachelor of Science) and Kerrie Matterson and David Williams (Diploma of Aboriginal Studies) as former Award winners.

Listed in the programme in all were fourteen graduates for the Diploma of Aboriginal Studies and twenty-three

Aboriginal Graduates in other degrees, too many to mention them all by name here. What a wonderful achievement for all concerned: students, lecturers, especially the staff at Wollotuka, and last but not least, the families who gave their support!

(This was something the Jack Doherty interview panel was especially aware of this time in hearing the life-stories of the candidates.)

A delicious lunch followed, and with it a chance to mingle with the Award recipients and their families. Thanks to Cheryl Newton, Laurel Williams and all involved in organising the event, and to Professor Lester for presenting the Awards.

Jean Talbot

Elections in Queensland

The result of the elections in Queensland, the state of "unreason" give cause for great sadness. However much we look with disbelief at the rise of One Nation, the divisions in Queensland may well point to "unreason" in the rest of the land. I can understand those people who feel alienation and insecurity, especially those in country towns. My own fear is despair for a future where economic rationalism means people don't count. The gap between rich and poor grows ever wider. But the horror of One Nation in the person of Pauline Hanson is that of a Medusa whose gaze turns people to stone. Her agenda carries a racist credo of fear and hatred. Mr Bob Katter, Federal National backbencher, said "One Nation was making huge inroads into the Nationals' constituency, running a simple "guns and Wik agenda". Mr Howard "indicated he could live with a One Nation presence in the Senate, possibly holding the balance of power, in exchange for securing his Wik bill through a double dissolution." Pauline Hanson has been advantaged by Howards' 10-point plan to dismantle Native Title rights. The Federal Coalition's hypocrisy could not allow Howard to say too much against Hanson. Still I suppose we are all capable of hypocrisy. *S.M.H. 13 June 1998*

I like what historian Henry Reynolds says "he'd rather take the "black armband" view than wear a white blindfold." *S.M.H. Good Weekend, 13 June 1998.*

Reading 'Human rights and real estate' by Tony Stephens *S.M.H. June 8 98*, was uplifting. The article referred to a symposium called Native Title: Facts, Fallacies and the Future, held the previous week at the University of N S W.

Apparently it was fully booked out and many had to be turned away. "The signs were that Australians wanted to solve the native title problems." The highlight of the day was the discussion between representatives of various interest groups about the problems and possible solutions to the web of issues surrounding native title. The conclusion: negotiation is the key to amicable agreement." Paul Ward, of Rio Tinto said "the main lesson the mining giant had learnt was to negotiate, not litigate."

"Mick Dodson, director of the indigenous law centre at the University of N S W, said that as long as indigenous law and custom existed "governments and lawyers should not fool themselves that a declaration that extinguishment has occurred will make our laws and customs disappear... A fence is not so grand a structure that it can destroy our relationship to our land."

"Arguing that native title was a question of human rights

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Our Meetings

Our bi-monthly meetings are one of the chief ways in which we seek to ensure that we never lose touch with the real experiences, feelings, anxieties, suffering, hopes and achievements, of the first people of this land. April 22nd will always stay in our memory as one such occasion.

That our AGM would coincide with steady rain had to happen sometime. It did in 1998. Despite that, and the unavoidable absence of some regulars, 23 of us were privileged to hear, and experience the presence of, Kathy Marika, nationally acclaimed artist from Arnhem Land. The weather prevented her bringing her art with her, but nothing could lessen the impact of her address. As always happens, we may know the common theme: dispossession, degradation, an imposed culture, economic servitude, and then the regaining of dignity; but a speaker like Kathy has only to tell us her experience, unadorned, and the impact is new and deeply moving.

Kathy does not consider herself a speaker: English is her second language; but she began with a brief prayer in her own language, and was given the power of utterance. She had been introduced by Donna Meehan, our Goori woman's liaison.

Kathy is from Yirkala, 800 km from Darwin. Her middle name, Balngayngu, indicates her clan. She is co-author and researcher of six books.

Her story was one which revealed the strength of her family, and her people's survival, despite the harsh and degrading contact with white culture. Her father used to take them every school holiday to Nullunboy to hunt. They used to sleep under the stars, with a shelter from wind and rain. "before we had everything on the land." Her father took the pain for the land with him: he did not show it.

The mine came, with the accompanying VD, asthma, chicken pox, small pox, rubella, diabetes, alcohol, drugs (kava makes your skin peel like a snake's), and stealing, and much gambling (in a circle, to "get rich"). The welfare school was harsh, with beating the back for being late, soap in the mouth for speaking your own language; and a poor education which produced youth despair and suicide.

"Our culture used to be strong". Young people became 'smart', and no longer listened to their elders.

Paternalism came, with whites "bossing us around", with money to "set up their own solutions". Teachers were not trained in the Aboriginal culture, and "we don't tell teacher our secrets".

Change in administration and white attitudes finally came. Jobs in the mine, formally monopolised by whites, have come to include the Aboriginal people. Where the land is restored, there are no problems. Indigenous effort has set up groups to help the violent, the drunk. There are places no places like Wollotuka, Awabakal, Yarnteen. One baleful legacy of privilege and policy was favouring one clan over the others, and moving all together in one place, creating warring factions (as her husband, Brian, who accompanied her, said, we can only win these arguments if we are one people, walking together).

Whites and Aboriginal people are now working on Native Title and Reconciliation. "This is why giving this talk is very important to me."

The talk finished with questions, Kathy embracing those who were moved to share with her. And we learnt how Brian, a former white miner, astonished the doctor when his injury was healed by a bush poultice from "not quite a mangrove tree". hy's phone number for those who seek information.

National 'Sorry Day'

'Love or fear' was the choice placed before us by Sir Ronald Wilson, as he challenged us from the Christian 'Dreaming', at Christ Church Cathedral's Sorry Day service on 26th May.

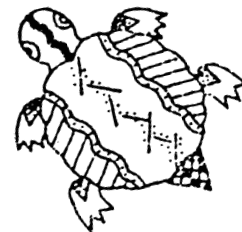
The overflow congregation stood without fatigue throughout the ordered yet spontaneous liturgy. The welcome, the dance, the presentation of Sorry books to the Elders... these were planned; but not the process. Bill Smith censored the cathedral, but his thurible was a reconciling coolamon of eucalyptus leaves. Words of welcome were spoken, but our humble guest was involved in the greeting. In rows we might have been, but how we shook hands! In the Peace, and at the end.

Everyone seemed to be there, from all walks of life, from all the churches (some boycott, this!). Most of all, people from every part of the Aboriginal community, so many of our friends, came to show faith and hope with us who are newcomers to the land of their ancestors.

Tears were shed as Di and Donna told their terrible story from the many thousands. We felt the forgiveness as the concluding procession became a mighty tide of meeting, clerical and lay, white and indigenous. May our yeast of love on this night help to leaven our community and our nation. The spirit of the Coming Together of '93 on the foreshore, lives on and gives new life.

A footnote... Thankyou to the lady who gave Bill Smith a privately compiled sorry book of 38 signatures and full comments.

Rodney Knock



Newcastle Aboriginal Support Group...

was formed in September 1980. It meets bi-monthly and sends out a newsletter shortly before each meeting. Membership of the Support Group is open to all who share its objectives:

- Promoting better understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.
- Giving support to initiatives proposed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups both locally and nationally.

Contacts for NASG

Yamuloong

Lorraine 4946 8417 Sue 4942 4207

Jack Doherty Scholarships:

Jean 4957 5562 Zeni 4957 1466

NASG Finances:

Lyndall 4950 2545

Koori History Awareness:

Pat 4928 2837

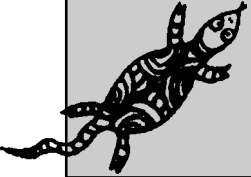
Editing Wurreker:

Moya 4957 1098 Anne 4929 1123

General Enquiries, Subscriptions:

Rodney 4963 6143

Wollotuka Page



Dear Readers

Welcome to the first addition of the Wollotuka page since February. Some of you may be wondering why the Wollotuka page has been missing since the March edition of Wurreker. Sadly I lost my dear Dad, Bob Barwick in early March. Dad was a Kamilaroi man and our people came from the Namoi River region. I miss him dearly. As an opening to this page and as a tribute to my Dad I would like to share with you a few special words I wrote for him. I also have some great stories for you written by our very talented first year students at Wollotuka and I hope you take the time to read them. Please remember, if anyone from Wollotuka has anything they would like published in this page I can be contacted at home on 49526728 or by leaving a message at the Wollotuka centre at the University of Newcastle. ThankyouDebbie Doyle.

To Dad, Love from your Daughter Debbie

I remember when I was a little girl and every thing seemed so big, especially my dad. He was bigger than everything. He made me feel so safe and, he was always there. And while ever he was around I knew, no-one could ever hurt me. I treasured and believed in everything he ever told me, and I always will.

Dad, I'm not a little girl any more, but you are still so big, you are still my hero. You were the first man I ever loved, and to me, you'll always be the best. You are everything to me and I am going to miss seeing your big beautiful face so much, and I'm going to miss kissing your big bald head, but I have enough beautiful memories and lessons on life to see me through. Thankyou for that.

Dad, remember all the times you said to us kids, especially in the past few years, "you make me a proud old Dad!" Did you ever realise how proud we were of you and how proud our kids and partners were of you? I know that nothing gave us greater pride than when we could point at you and say, "that's my dad, that's my Pa" Dad I love you and want to thankyou now for everything. I especially want to thankyou for choosing our mum.

Mum, please don't ever be too lonely, because each one of us kids and our kids is dad. And when you want to hold his hand, reach out and hold one of our hands, when you want a cuddle, we will cuddle you, if you want to be angry, we are here, when you're sad we're here and when you can feel happy again we'll be here and dad will be here. Remember all those times you said, "your just like your father!" and dad would say you're just like your mother!" Well I'm proud to say you were both right. Each of us is a part of both. Mum we love you and we need you to lean on now more than ever and now more than ever we need you to lean on us.

Debbie Doyle

One reason (among many)

He's got a bed and a 40 watt light globe
he sits at home and drinks to a time gone by
he tells me about it when I ask him nice
Tells me about how he was taken from his home
stolen away when he was just 5 years old
they said it was an act of god .

He's holding onto things
things they tried
to take from him
like the language he once spoke
and a tattered sense of hope
you know they tried but they can't break him

One reason to apologise is in the lines that mark his face
you know that I can't understand it
We must accept some blame
now that things are not the same
Our privilege comes from their destruction

He's got a bed and a 40 watt light globe
it isn't much but it's something that he calls home
but that's a concept he's yet to know
he'll drink enough to forget all that he knows
think of a time with his mother when he was at home
he'll drift to dialects that I've never heard

He's holding onto things
things they've tried
to beat from him
like the language he once spoke
and a tattered sense of hope
you know they tried but they can't break him

One reason to apologise is in his eyes, it's on his face
you know that I can't understand it
We must accept some blame
now that things are not the same
Our privilege comes from their destruction

How hard can it be

Nathan Paff

Dear Editor,

I am a first year student in the Diploma of Aboriginal Studies at the Wollotuka Aboriginal Education Unit of the University of Newcastle. The first day I walked into Wollotuka, I was as nervous as a child on their first day at school. However, I soon found everyone there to be very friendly and helpful. It wasn't long before I felt that this was what I would enjoy doing.

The lectures and tutorials were interesting and educational. Then came the assignments. I thought I was confident enough to find the knowledge and words to complete these tasks. But with pen and paper in front of me, I started to doubt myself and to question if this was what I really wanted. Was this something I could do? After all I am a mature aged student. At the age of forty-eight years, maybe I should be at home baby-sitting my grandchildren instead.

Then on Friday, 2nd May I attended the graduation of students in the Great Hall. The first students to be called up to receive their Diplomas were the students of Wollotuka.

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A rose by any other name ...

The NASG executive has been taking a hard look at the name of the group in response to a comment from an Aboriginal member that the name “Newcastle Aboriginal Support Group” comes across as paternalistic and patronising. The April meeting agreed that we keep thinking about the issues involved in a name change.

Some Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal participants in the NASG have made the point that it’s what the NASG does and how non-Aboriginal members conduct themselves in Aboriginal circles that determines how the group will be regarded. If non-Aboriginal members are being patronising and paternalistic, the grooviest name in the world won’t build good relationships between white members and Aboriginal members. It’s worthwhile revisiting our goals which were set up back in 1979 under the guidance of members of the local Goori community.

- Promoting better understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians
- Giving support to initiatives proposed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups both locally and nationally.

We need to constantly check the activities of the NASG against those stated goals — that’s one reason why they’re printed in every Wurreker. Whatever we call ourselves, those are the goals. If our name is actually getting in the way of our first goal of promoting better understanding and we can think of a name that doesn’t trip us up, then that would be a good reason for changing the name. If using the word “support” gives the impression that one party is weaker or needing help, it would be better to have a name that implies an agreement between equals from which both parties stand to gain. But it would be a mistake to put everything else on hold while we discuss our name.

In thinking about all this, it has occurred to me that a far bigger obstacle than the name is the real extent of separation between white and black lives here.

This was brought home to me many years ago when I visited a lady who had lived for some forty years in suburban Newcastle and was told that I was the first white person to ever come into her house. Maybe this was not so extraordinary given that currently Aboriginal and Torres Strait people form less than 2% of the Australian population. However, on visiting *my* house this lady commented that this was the first white household *she* had ever entered. My life experience as a white Australian woman with six brothers has given me some idea of the gulf between my generation’s different expectations for men and women and the strife that sexist oppression causes in our lives. But at least men and women see each other day in day out and constantly have opportunities for learning to understand each other and negotiate new ways

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Opinions on the name of the N.A.S.G

The Newcastle Aboriginal Support Group shares with other similar groups the word :”Support” .There have been suggestions that this title is paternalistic

Koories consider what we call ourselves is our business, but Ray Kelly finds the suggestion that we are patronising puzzling, and says that there is no feeling in the Awabakal community that he is aware of for a name change.

Craig Ritchie – praised the existing name, because it expresses our purpose clearly ie we support, we’re not out front, taking the lead. It certainly does not have to be apologised for: it is neither patronising nor demeaning.

Jeff Bradford – We are known far afield. Change the name, and people will say “Who are they?”

John Heath – In discussing the term ‘Reconciliation’, he said that Reconciliation is perceived by the Indigenous community as government driven and one-sided.

Another Koori – A supportive person is not paternalistic but caring.

Moya – ‘Support’ could be seen as referring to people who have a common problem, as in ‘cancer support’

Diana Mannigel – Concerning this point, our work and role in the NASG is two-sided. That is, both sides need the support of the other. “I need Aboriginal support in my understanding of issues.” Therefore she favours retaining it.

Debra Goodsir – Any word will be an issue for some people. Against the charge of paternalism, in fact one of our roles is educating non-Aboriginal people who are perhaps paternalistic.

Stephanie – Any change has to be driven from within our hearts. Our title must indicate the way we’ve gone. ‘Solidarity’ has connotations of communism.

Lyndall – Look at what our goals are again.

Rodney – Other ‘support groups’ flourish eg Manly-Warringah-Pittwater. The word “Support”. Ever since our foundation in 1980 we have tried to support All Aboriginal people in their struggle for justice. Now Aboriginels, even more than other groups in the community, possess a diversity of needs, life style and priorities which must give rise to differences of opinion, sometimes sharp, within the community.

Inevitably, therefore, the Support Group has sometimes found itself in hot water with some of our Koori friends because we have innocently supported a Koori cause which turned out to be opposed by others.

We always try to consult Kooris on all issues, but our friends, busy people like everyone else, are not always easy to contact. Therefore sometimes what has seemed a simple issue has turned out to be a mistake. To others we have appeared to take sides when we were merely supporting a cause or a proposal which we later found had strong opponents within the Indigenous Newcastle community. Being devious is entirely foreign to our executive or our members. We hope our friends accept our bona fide’s and our sincerity at all times.

Rodney Knock



My Journey to Jabiluka

I was inspired to visit the Jabiluka blockade in Kakadu when I attended a showing of David Bradbury's film- Jabiluka where Jaqui Katona — spokesperson for the Gundjehmi Aboriginal Corporation, and Yvonne Maragarula — senior traditional owner of Mirrar country, were on a speaking tour appealing for support in their fight to save their land. Jaqui gave a powerful representation of the Mirrar clan- a people for whom this struggle means everything; the health of their land, people and culture. She extended an invitation on behalf of the Mirrar to visit their country and join the blockade.

From the outset this seemed like a battle of David and Goliath proportions- a downtrodden indigenous minority up against the might of rich mining companies hand in hand with the government. Somehow in the face of such odds it is easier to act on what you believe to be basically just. Adding your voice to the many ordinary people (nationally and internationally) who oppose this mine is a worthwhile thing to do.

Visiting the blockade meant experiencing the magic of the country around Kakadu. The incredible beauty of the escarpments at the Jabiluka site reveal the sacred nature of this place and reaffirm that it should not be disturbed.

Similarly the spectacular Nourlangie Rock area, famous for its many rock art sites, is also the target of uranium mining exploration.

The injustice is blatant. Money and power drives men to ignore and destroy a place, its people and its culture.

The Mirrar designated blockade campsite is 5km from Jabiru (a town built around the existing Ranger uranium mine) , away from National Park visitors and down the road from a local Aboriginal community. It is close to rich billabongs and wetlands where locals fish (as is the proposed mine site).

Mirrar permission to camp on this land is granted after an induction session where Mirrar guidelines- relating to our behaviour towards the land and people- are agreed to. Any actions planned also need the approval of the Mirrar. The Blockade Camp is amazingly well organised with an emphasis on health and shared decision making. The population of the camp fluctuates with regular busloads of supporters arriving from around Australia. with a strong contingency from Darwin co-ordinating. It is intended that this camp remain until the next wet season.

It was wonderful to meet so many different but like-minded people gathered from all walks of life to show their support for the traditional owners. Because this battle encompasses ; native title, world heritage protection and nuclear disarmament issues- people feel passionate about stopping this mine.

While I was there efforts were made to raise awareness of the mine proposal amongst locals and tourists. Meanwhile actions were mainly focussed on blocking the entry to the mine site where crossing the boundary meant a trespass offence. Construction on the site was being prepared for despite no official go-ahead, environmental reports outstanding , and a Federal Court case with traditional owners pending. Conflict with police was beginning to escalate though it was obvious from early on that the police and ERA security were working hand in hand.

On National Sorry Day Yvonne Maragarula and Jacqui Katona among others were arrested for trespassing on Mirrar land. This outrageous contradiction should initiate groundbreaking legal debate but judging by its media coverage

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Traditional owners say no to Jabiluka

Traditional owners who hold native title to the land endangered by the Uranium ore deposit at Jabiluka, in Kakadu, oppose the opening of the Jabiluka mine. The Mirrar Gundjehmi, Mirrar Erre, Bunitj and Manilakerr clans came together to make the following statement:

“Previous mining agreements have not protected us or given our communities strength to survive the development. A new mine will make our future worthless and destroy more of our country We have no desire to see any more country ripped up and further negative intrusions on our lives Our cultural values cannot be traded for money We say no to mining at Diabulugku (Jabiluka).”

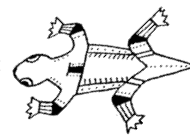
Despite this opposition the federal government has given the mining company, ERA (Energy Resources of Australia), the green light.

ERA's present mining proposal differs considerably from the original, which was negotiated in 1982 between Pancontinental and the Northern Land Council. This negotiation was contentious in that the traditional land owners felt that undue pressure was brought to bear on them to sign the agreement. The opening of the mine was then put on hold due to the Labour government's 'three mines policy' . However, with a change of government, the policy was discarded and the threat of a second uranium mine in Kakadu became a reality.

In 1996 the Mirrar initiated the Stop Jabiluka campaign. The Mirrar have refused to accept lease payments from ERA and have instructed the Northern Land Council to return Jabiluka lease monies. They have also taken direct action on the Jabiluka lease. An appeal against a federal court ruling is currently in process regarding a Mirrar challenge to the validity of the Jabiluka mineral lease. The Mirrar are now extending an invitation to those opposed to Jabiluka to join with them in the blockade.

“Mirrar people have fought to protect country and people from uranium mining for many years. Now, we are defending our country against the proposed Jabiluka development. We invite you to come to our country to join our struggle to uphold the cultural and environmental values of Kakadu.” Mirrar Clan

Grace Owolade



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rather than real estate, Dodson said the problem of extinguishment arose from the collision of two systems of law but respect for human rights provided a way for the courts to reconcile the two laws.”

“In any case, the native title issue will never go away, regardless of what happens to the Prime Minister's 10-point plan. The Aboriginal people think of the Earth as mother. While there is an Aboriginal culture, there will be a land agenda. True reconciliation depends on a resolution of native title. Negotiations must go on.”

Any further information about Wik can be found in the ATSIC Homepage (<http://www.atsic.gov.au/native/wik.htm>).

Anne

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of relating. Given the extent of the separation of our society along racist lines, we have to work a little harder, make a special effort, to set up opportunities for getting to know each other. And at the same time we have to be ready to outwit tensions that might lead to fragmentation of any group.

There are plenty of opportunities. The NASG has a history of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members working together on outreach to the schools through the Yamuloong Project. This project could do with some helpers to build on its existing achievements. Talk with Sue or Lorraine if this is your bent.

The Jack Doherty scholarships, a Koori initiative promoted by the NASG, offer another readymade opportunity. It is clear that Aboriginal students are very encouraged by receiving these scholarships. The NASG does however need to revisit the philosophy behind them from time to time and reconcile some different views of what is culturally appropriate. This presents great possibilities for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal participants in the process to gain more understanding of each other's viewpoints.

Another activity, which was requested and warmly acknowledged by several members of local Aboriginal communities, was prison visits. At this point these have stopped with the closure of Maitland Correctional Centre. Those who were making the prison visits strongly recommend that if people can be found to make regular visits to Goori detainees at Cessnock Correctional Centre there always be at least one Goori in the visiting team. If you would like to set aside one or two half days a month for this, let Barbara Lumley (4947 2193) know.

Joining in the local activities organised by Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation in consultation with the National Working Party on Native Title, such as the Sorry Day ceremony, furthers non-Aboriginal understanding of the history we have to come to terms with. Building this understanding with as much guidance as Aboriginal people can make time to give us is probably the main responsibility of non-Aboriginal members

Another avenue comes to mind with the article in the SMH 25 May 98 on the work of Rural Landholders for Co-existence. There are a few members of the NASG who have bush blocks up the valley. Maybe these members could talk with members of Local Aboriginal Land Councils and locate traditional owners in these areas and work with them to build

a zone of increased understanding of the possibilities of coexistence. While the landholdings involved may not be huge, there is still an opportunity for bridging the divisions and what better basis than the land which we all love. Let Bob Berghout (4957 1098) know if you are interested in this.

If members of the NASG are forging black and white alliances, I suspect it won't matter too much if our name is a bit old fashioned. That being said, we might still manage to come up with a name that reflects our goals better, and maybe has a pronounceable acronym. Anne and I dug through a thesaurus looking for words which imply working together as equals and found: *partnership, affiliation, union, coalition, league, compact, pact, alliance, affirmation, affinity, link, liaison, connection, association, fellowship, solidarity, cooperative, concord, community of interest, joint effort.*

Here are a few names that have been put up, mostly not so much for serious consideration as for getting the creative juices flowing.

- Newcastle Aboriginal Non-Aboriginal Mutual Support Group NANAMSG
- Hunter Non-Aboriginals in Solidarity with Aboriginal Australians HNASAA
- Newcastle Aboriginal Issues Support Group NAISG
Newcastle Aboriginal Non-Aboriginal Alliance NANAA
- Newcastle Non-Aboriginal Aboriginal Alliance NNAAA
Newcastle Goori and Gubba Alliance NGAGA.

What are your thoughts?

Moya

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That is when I moved forward in my seat for a better look. And look I did! I looked at how proud those students walked onto the stage. I saw the pride in their faces, as well as the happiness. I sat and realised that no matter what, that is where I would like to be in the future.

So, I would like to take this opportunity to say **THANKYOU** to a group of students, who don't even know me. To thank them for their inspiration to be a student and to try my best; to keep going so that one day I might take my place on that stage with the same pride of achievement.

Yours sincerely

Colleen Quinnell

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Membership Subscription Form

Members of the NASG receive the bi-monthly NASG newsletter, Wurreker, and agree to support the stated objectives of the NASG.

Membership: what you can afford, eg \$20 - \$25 for waged, \$5 - \$10 for unwaged, organisations \$30 - \$50. Bulk orders: 5 copies for \$30 per annum, 10 copies for \$50 per annum. Non-member subscription: \$25.

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seems bound to be ignored. It is hard not to be distressed by the power that the media wields in important social justice issues such as this.

The legalities involved in the mines approval processes are confusing and seemingly illogical. I was dismayed to hear on Friday 12th that the Northern Territory Government has refused to extend the Mirrar injunction on the mine proceeding and that construction would begin this Monday 15th. Environmental reports are still outstanding and the Federal Court case yet to be heard!

I am confident that the blockaders will do what is left for them to do- in this situation where legal options prove hopeless- that is put their bodies on the line and (if need be) break the law. Stalling tactics are sadly looking like the last chance to save this land for the Mirrar. Stalling construction till a new government or the wet season stops the mines progress.

Returning to Newcastle from the Blockade I feel very distant and frustrated by the lack of media coverage this campaign receives. We have a Newcastle Jabiluka Action Group that meets every second Monday (next meeting June 29) at the Widerness Society Hunter St at 7pm - where everyone is welcome. We receive campaign updates through a national fax link-up and are working on raising the public awareness on Jabiluka as well as fundraising. (Donations can be sent directly to Gundjehmi Aboriginal Corporation- PO Box 245, Jabiru NT 0886.) A screening of David Bradbury's Jabiluka- is being planned for July at Newcastle Workers Club. Anyone interested in joining the Blockade can contact me on- 49622851. We have not given up.

No Jabiluka Mine!

Marion Giles

Bits and Pieces

Watch Big Dog and Friends on the morning of Monday 29th June

Koori children from the Awabakal Child Care Centre, Wickham, the Glendale pre-school and the Kooloora pre-school at Toukley will star in the show.

Acknowledgment

Thank you to Newcastle City Council for the donation of a computer and chair to the N.A.S.G.

Thank you also to Alan Morris and Bryce Gaudry for the use of their offices to print out our material.

Our grateful thanks to Anna Kaemmerling for her generosity and time to help publish this edition of Wurreker. Also thank Su Hill for her gracious help in producing this Newsletter. Many thanks to all involved in the production of this Newsletter.

NAIDOC Week 5th - 12th July

On Monday after the flag raising ceremony at Christ Church Cathedral and the march, there will be an Open Day at the Awabakal Health Centre at Samdon Street (cnr Dennison Street) Hamilton.

The NASG Statement

The Income and Expenditure statement will be given at next weeks meeting. The Net Surplus for the year 1997 is \$969.30.

Our next meeting: 7:30 pm Wednesday 24 June at Wollotuka



Chair: Trevor Dunn

Jeff Kildea Update on Wik and the 10-Point Plan

Everybody is welcome and a cuppa is provided.

If you do not wish to continue receiving this newsletter, please return to:
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Wurreker April 1998

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