

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

Wurreker

Newcastle Aboriginal Support Group

Newsletter No. 163

January - April 2009

YARNTREEN

SUMMARY OF LEAH ARMSTRONGS ADDRESS

Yarnteen in Hunter Street is an Aboriginal organisation, which has been expanding its aims and abilities markedly over recent years. In this they have received support from, and worked co-operatively with Microsoft.

A recent function helped to make many aware of the extent of their programs.

In her welcome Director Leah Armstrong discussed change and challenges, which all communities are facing.

The world in which Indigenous people and all Australians conduct themselves is changing rapidly. The face of Indigenous Australia is not found only in remote and rural communities. The reality is that the greatest numbers of Indigenous Australians are in urban communities. We are in every city and every town and Indigenous people will play an increasingly important role in the future wellbeing and prosperity of Australia.

The challenge facing the broader society is to listen

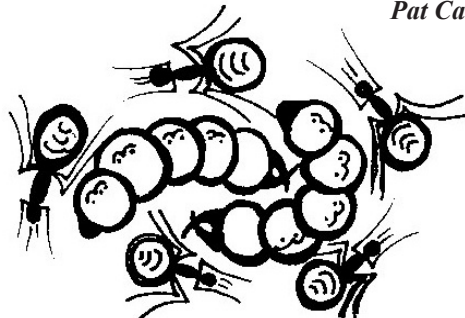
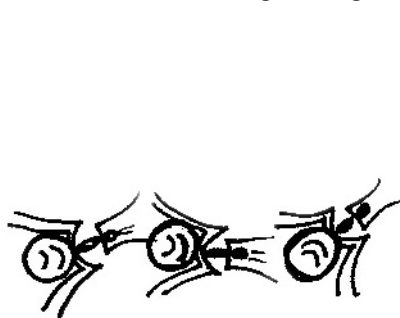
to what our people are saying, be inclusive and work constructively with us. Relationships with Indigenous peoples in the past have leaned towards being paternalistic. The view that things needed to be done for Indigenous people rather than with Indigenous people has proven to be ill conceived.

We must now pursue a new approach based on engagement with building respectful and right relationships. This engagement provides the opportunity to work together and must be built on respect and dignity. This paves the way for improved partnerships, increased trust and mutual respect between Indigenous and all Australians.

To enable greater understanding of the issues and both the successes and the challenges, communication with the wider society is essential. All groups in society must engage to address the issues.

Yarnteen's Reconciliation Action Plan reflects our leadership and commitment to working with our communities to create a better life for all our children and their children.

Pat Cameron



Our next meeting: 5.30 pm Wednesday 18 March 2009

at Wollotuka

University of Newcastle, Callaghan

Indigenous guest speakers: John Doolah, Lecturer at Wollotuka and Sue Hodges, School Teacher

Topic: The International Indigenous Education Conference held in Melbourne last December.

Everybody is welcome and a cuppa is provided.

Buses from Scott Street to University

101 leaves 4.36pm - arrives 5.10pm

226 leaves 5.32pm - arrives 6.05pm

Buses from University to Scott Street

226 leaves 7.14pm - arrives 7.39pm

101 leaves 7.44pm - arrives 8.07

JACK DOHERTY SCHOLARSHIPS

The Jack Doherty Scholarships fund, established in memory of the founder of the Newcastle Aboriginal Support Group, was launched in May 1992, the first awards being made in 1994. Strictly speaking, they are awards rather than scholarships, since they do not support a student from the beginning of their academic careers. They are instead awarded to students who have satisfactorily completed their first year. The amount of money awarded each student (at present \$2000) is certainly not enough to cover their financial needs for more than a short period. However, for those who receive them, the money often gives much needed support in covering expenses such as equipment (especially computers), text books (prohibitively expensive in some courses, such as medicine) travel to keep in touch with their distant families, and innumerable other expenses. The winning of an award is often a morale booster at a time when to continue at University seems increasingly difficult. Past winners of the scholarships, who include the present head of Aboriginal Studies at the University, John Maynard, attest to the value of the scholarships in all these ways.

To date, 82 scholarships have been awarded, of recent years to five, or occasionally more students, at the amount of \$2,000 per student. (The exceptions were when extra money was provided by a very generous donor). Hence, each year, an amount of \$10,000 is taken out of our ever decreasing University account to cover them. At this rate, we shall only

be able to continue donating them for about another 5 years, though there is enough in the NASG's own account to support one further year's scholarships after that.

The establishment of the scholarships fund and the maintaining of it for 17 years has only been made possible due to the generosity of donors, and one large bequest that was handed on to us. There was never anything like enough in our capital fund to allow for scholarships to be paid for out of the interest, as happens with other scholarships. Our philosophy has been to draw on the capital to support ATSI students at times when there was little else to assist them. Inevitably, the money was going to run out unless we attracted some corporate sponsorship. Attempts to find this have not been successful. A number of other scholarships are now available for ATSI students, but this does not eliminate the need for the assistance we can offer.

Many thanks to those who contribute regular small amounts to the fund, as to all contributors. Every little helps to extend the life of the scholarships for one more year. Last year's award winners were:

Jason Percival, Teela Reid, Briony Burchell, Serene Johnson and Nathan West. The awards were presented by Rodney Knock at a ceremony held at Wollotuka last year.

We encourage this year's eligible students to put in their applications as soon as possible, and look forward to meeting them at the interviews.

Jean Talbot



YAPANG MARRUMA : MAKING OUR WAY

(Stories of the Stolen)

Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery

30 January – 15 March

Most of us will have an enduring memory of last year's National Apology to the Stolen Generations by Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd. Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery marks one year on with a special exhibition initiated by its Aboriginal Reference Group. Curator, Donna Fernando, working with the Aboriginal exhibition team including Ray Kelly, Mervyn Bishop, Cherie Johnson and Rod Smith, have engaged the community in a year-long process that directly confronts many of the issues impacting the Stolen Generations.

It is an exhibition that invites a response through text, photographs, items of memorabilia and even archival material. Cleverly and giving a much wider context, that which is local and recent, is complemented by works by contemporary Indigenous artists like Destiny Deacon, Leah King-Smith, Judy Watson and Tracey Moffat. Like artists have always done, these women artists hold up a mirror to the society that permitted these policies to prevail. Their work is often shocking in what it has to say about the Australia they observe. The way one views a coolamon, for example, may be forever changed.

The five oral histories and the assembled works, provide opportunities to examine how past government policies

have resulted in resonances down through the generations that are still felt today. It is a privilege to engage with these families' stories, but be warned, it is an emotional journey for the viewer! The excellent (and inexpensive) catalogue accompanying the exhibition contains the oral histories of these people to take away and reread, as most will want to do. Additionally, the excellent essay by Ray Kelly has some profound observations that pose important questions as we look to the future as a nation.

At the council meeting following the opening, Mayor, Greg Piper, was said to be fighting back tears when he described this exhibition as a 'defining point in the life and history' of the gallery. It seems his reaction is shared by many as it is difficult to walk around what is on offer and not be deeply touched. The background soundscape, devised by Rod Smith, provides balm for the overwhelming experience of reading the five stories of strong survivors of policies that are frighteningly recent

For those still to make a first visit to this gallery, a fortunate treat awaits. Not only for this thought provoking show, Yapang Marruma, but the gallery itself rewards with its incomparable setting on Lake Macquarie, its intelligent and engaging exhibition and of course the café!

Denise Frost

MICK DODSON AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR, 2009

As crowds tramped up Capital Hill to claim a spot on the lawns outside Canberra's Parliament House, where Mick Dodson would be declared Australian of the Year, an old fellow carrying a blanket paused to peer at the giant stainless steel structure bearing the nation's flag, 'It's a big bugger of a thing for a small town, isn't it?' he remarked.

Australians are a wry and often self-deprecatory people. It seems fitting for a nation that traces its beginnings to the arrival of a ragtag convoy of convicts and soldiers from the other side of the globe, 221 years ago, quite overlooking that they were claiming a land already the home of the world's oldest living culture.

Yet in those 221 years, something astonishing has evolved: a democratic country of immigrants more diverse than almost any on earth, and the only continent federated into one nation.

And yesterday, that journey took another astonishing turn when Mick Dodson, an Aborigine who has spent much of his life confronting Australia with the injustices meted out to his people, was named Australian of the Year. His is a story as large and as unlikely as the nation's own.

Born to an Australian mother and an Irish-Australian father in Katherine, Northern Territory, and orphaned at 10, he escaped the affront of what he later helped to dub the 'stolen generations' when he and his older brother, Pat, were granted an education by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart at Monivae College in far away Hamilton, Western Victoria.

The Dodson brothers would later emerge as leaders of Australia's reconciliation movements, but their inner strength was recognized early.

Pat was made captain of that large, overwhelming white boarding school in the 1960's and Mick became a prefect and house captain, each elected by their fellow students. Mick went on to study law at Monash University, becoming in 1981, Victoria's first Aboriginal barrister. He is now a professor of law at the Australian University, Canberra, where he is also director of the National Centre for Indigenous Studies.

Along the way, Professor Dodson gained national attention as counsel assisting the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, an inquiry, which began the day after Australia Day in the bicentennial year of 1988, and rocked the foundations of Australia's understanding of its treatment of Indigenous people. Later as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, he co-authored the 'Bringing Them Home' report that shone a light- too bright for some- into the shadowed history that became known as the stolen generations.

He has since taken his advocacy of Indigenous causes into the international arena and is a member of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous issues.

The flagpole atop Parliament House is indeed a big bugger of a thing for a city of 240,000 people, but the story of the boy from Katherine who stood in its shadow, is at least as impressive.

Australia Day, has never been a celebration of triumphalism - as say, is America's Fourth of July. There has been a long debate about the suitability of the very date, 26 January. Many Indigenous Australians turn their backs on it, calling it Invasion Day or Survival Day.

And now, an Australian of the Year, believes the date should be changed, too. Professor Dodson's earlier work

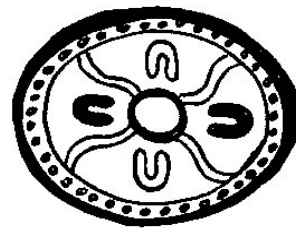
may have helped Prime Minister Kevin Rudd to make his parliamentary apology to Indigenous Australia last year, but this turned out a step too far.

When Mr Rudd got wind of Professor Dodson's view, he hastily issued a statement declaring the Government would change neither the date nor the name of Australia Day.

From an article by Tony Wright.

Mr Dodson says his views on changes on the naming and date of the National holiday, were just to initiate a conversation. Mr Rudd has as yet shown no interest in joining the conversation, but it is remarkable how many of Mick Dodson's 'thoughts' have come to fruition, and many may want to join him in the conversation.

Pat Cameron



ENJOYING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

In November 2007 Wurreker published a short article by Anthony Greentree of Stockton on a course he had started at the Geelong campus of Deacon University. He visited recently to report on the program and how it had changed his life. Tony had drifted through his early youth interested only in having a good time. Then realising that he was getting bored and developing bad habits, he undertook a modelling and fashion design course and did well at that. We published an account of a great fashion show he held at Karuah and it seemed that his chosen career would be a success.

But then he heard of the scheme that would extend his expertise. It is run by the Institute of Koorie Education (usually known as IKE), and he now is in his second year of a Bachelor of Arts degree at the Geelong Campus of Melbourne University and is very enthusiastic about the course in which he studies Art, Literature and Drama. He attends Geelong for regular two-weekly blocks interspersed by six weekly breaks at home in Stockton in between. He has a tutor who reads, corrects and assists him with his home assignments. They meet at the Newcastle Regional Library regularly and Tony enjoys both aspects of this unusual scheme.

He likes the university life on campus but also appreciates the chance to keep in touch with his family and friends at home. Air travel and all boarding expenses are paid by IKE and students receive the Federal Government Ab-Study allowance. Tony would like to spread the word to all Aboriginal youth that they should take advantage of any opportunities to take tertiary studies. His brother Jai, his cousin Dion Larrigo and friend Timmy Bond have now enrolled with IKE and they all are enjoying their courses. Tony finished his report with this statement: 'I now have a life through IKE. We all love IKE!'

Pat Keating

SAMARITANS AND WANDIYALI SIGN COMMITMENT

AT ST. THOMAS', CARDIFF, ON 24TH APRIL 2008

Mainstreaming? No, 'This is a better way,' said Cec Shevels. 'It's not a bit of paper, it's people that make it work,' said Steve Kilroy.

So spoke the director of the Samaritans and the Head of Wandiyali ATSI Inc at the signing of the commitment between them.

The Support Group has a newspaper photo of Cec Shevels signing our commitment against racism in 1993, the year of the 'Coming Together'. But the Samaritans did not rest satisfied with this gesture and have steadily been strengthening their ties with Newcastle's Indigenous community. The 2008 agreement is therefore not a new path but a formal affirmation of work over ten years in establishing Wandiyali as an unfunded agency. Samaritans also works with Disabilities, and will help any agency, which lacks government funding. Nor is the work with one tribal people alone: it bridges Awabakal and Worimi; Mindaribba will be joining.

This Wandiyali/Samaritans co-operation includes the following in their statement of what full Reconciliation requires. It is recognition that

1. Indigenous ownership of lands and waters is unique
2. we occupied these without consent
3. a multitude of disadvantages has to be overcome
4. respectful partnership can assist self-determination.

Among the concluding sentences we read: - Samaritans... also have a commitment to respect Indigenous cultures and traditions, and we hope to deepen our understanding through cultural education to be provided for all Samaritans staff, board and affiliated agencies. We believe services to Indigenous people are most effective when they are delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies.

In government-funded services where both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people are the target group, Samaritans agrees to work with Wandiyali and other Indigenous groups as equal partners. Whenever the two agencies take on new challenges together, Wandiyali will share equal responsibility to address and overcome cultural misunderstandings, whenever they occur.

Summary by Rodney Knock



INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE – MELBOURNE 2008

The biggest international gathering of Indigenous educators and education policy makers was held in Mid-December 2008, in Melbourne. The massive five day event featured keynote speeches from some of the world's leading experts on Indigenous education.

Australian speakers included Indigenous educator Chris Sara, west Australia health researcher Colleen Hayward, and Social Justice Commissioner Tom Calma.

Amongst the challenges to emerge from the conference were a national bilingual education policy, legislation to protect Indigenous languages, abandonment of low expectations for Indigenous students, 'truth telling' within the Indigenous education community, a revision of curricula to properly respect Indigenous identity, and better training for the education workforce.

Education was considered key to improving the social and economic circumstances of Indigenous people world over, but only if it incorporated Indigenous values and knowledge systems in a meaningful way.

In the first keynote speech Emeritus Professor Colin Bourke called for Aboriginal people to be educated 'as Aborigines as well as Australians'.

On the second day Bruce Pascoe, Aboriginal teacher and author, delivered a sobering reminder of the precarious state of Aboriginal Indigenous languages. 'In the languages are our ideas and we need them, the world needs them' he said.

'This is not a call to arms, for after all our ancestors were the great peacemakers, instead it is a call to tongues, to learn our languages, find its secrets and remember them.

Pursuing and protecting our culture will not undermine the Australian nation but enhance its understanding of itself.'

Challenges to Indigenous communities flowed from both sides of the Tasman, with influential Maori professor Graham Hingangaroa Smith calling for a more frank discussion within Indigenous circles, and Australia's Dr. Chris Sara encouraging communities to lift their expectations of Indigenous students.

Professor Smith told of a Maori program where all babies and preschool children were immersed in Maori language. He said more positive attitudes had flowed from this. He also referred to the need for Indigenous people to pursue a moral and ethical leadership, to speak the 'politics of truth'.

Dr Chris Sara from Brisbane railed against a culture of low expectations of Indigenous students by Principal and teachers, and in some cases, Indigenous parents.

Dr Sara also referred to a recent controversy over his criticism of some of the teachers sent by Education departments to Aboriginal communities. He said 'Stereotyping is a despicable phenomenon, but if we in Australia are going to get precious about it, we have to be precious about it when Aboriginal people are stereotyped too. For him 'stronger and smarter was an identity that was closer to the truth than one where Aboriginal students acted like delinquents.'

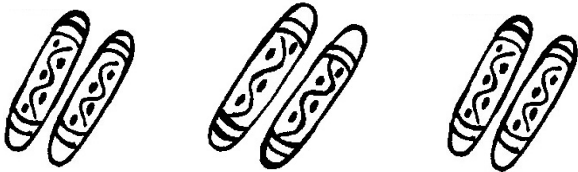
The issue of bilingual schools came in for a lot of discussion, especially following recent NT Government emphasis on English teaching in schools. Ms Sandy addressed conference in her own language and then offered an English translation.

Immediate support for her views came from Social Justice Commissioner Tom Calma who described bilingual schools as models for sustainable Indigenous education the world over.

LORRAINE ROBERTSON

Since the launching of that great book *D'harawal*, written by Frances Bodkin and illustrated by Lorraine Robertson, we have been asked about these two talented women. Hearing Lorraine speak with such erudition and enthusiasm at the launching at Wollatuka we decided she deserved more than a passing reference. As Lorraine and I joined the support group about the same time I agreed to write a brief resume of her career as an artist and a member of NASG.

She studied Art at high school and then went on to get a Diploma of Education in science and architecture at the university. She is now completing a PHD in print making, and natural history illustration. Her interest in our Indigenous people began with her contact with the Aborigines she met when she went on a tour of northern Australia. On her return she wanted to become involved with the local Aboriginal community, and asked her fellow artist, Mini Heath, who advised her to start by joining NASG. Her warm and sparkling personality enlivened the group and we embarked on many projects. She was often accompanied by her budgerigar called Pumpkin, who always addressed me as 'Arshoo' as I sneezed loudly at our first meeting. He would remark 'Pumpkin will go shopping', when meetings went on too long. He attracted more attention than the artist at one of her big exhibitions and I had to take him for a walk so that Lorraine could continue her talk. Life seemed easy and carefree for the Robertson family.



LORRAINE RILEY-OLDHAM — ILLUSTRATOR

The new illustrations in this issue of *Wurreker* were drawn by Loraine Oldham. Like her cousin Michael Riley, the highly respected and well-known photographer, she grew up in Dubbo. Following school, marriage and family, she moved to different areas, before returning to Dubbo.

Here she further developed an early interest in art, graduating top of the class in her TAFE diploma year, and immediately selling work.

After coming to Newcastle, Loraine became involved in working with children at Worrimi, the children's court, and with convicted young people. She now runs her own art school 'Red Ochre', based on traditional Indigenous art forms, but available to all.

I first met Loraine during one NAIDOC week when she was teaching a class of women at Yarnteen, to do traditional dot painting, with varied success, but with much enjoyment shown by all participants.

We are grateful for her input to the Newsletter, which will no doubt further develop in the future.

Pat Cameron

Then disaster struck. She contracted Motor Neurone disease and we were devastated by the thought that paralysis would put an end to her career as an artist. But we underestimated her unyielding tenacity. With the devoted help of her husband Hugh and her two children Anne and David, the family overcame many difficulties. They invented ways to help her draw and paint, they moved house and arranged domestic routines so that Lorraine could live a normal home life. But she could no longer participate in the support group activities and we gradually lost contact.

But then came joyful news. She had been misdiagnosed and the form of the disease she had contracted was curable. The vital person we saw at the book launch has not had an easy time and we pay tribute to her and her great family,

Lorraine is holding an exhibition of her art and displaying *D'harawal* at the Regional Botanic Gardens for a month starting on Saturday, 4th April 2009. So if you want to buy a treasure or just meet a remarkable woman, please go up to Heatherbrae.

Those who may wish to buy Lorraine's book other than at the Gardens, may do so directly from her at 4946 1769 or at gharawal@tpg.net.au

Pat Keating

TWO BOOKLETS RECEIVED

The University of Newcastle has published an informative 24 pages entitled *Indigenous Collaboration, 2008*. There are around 450 Indigenous students enrolled at the University. This publication highlights more than a dozen interesting and inspiring achievers, largely Indigenous. In it one reads background and attainment of staff and various highly successful students. For example, a Jack Doherty Scholarship made possible for one the invaluable experience of studying in Canada. We learn how David Needham earned the 2007 University of Newcastle Leadership Award. Their 'country' always benefits by their achievements. Charles Perkins' freedom ride has never ceased to inspire. Of the non-Indigenous, Lorraine Robertson has a page and a picture; and we are encouraged to read former Dean John Ramsland's 'Remembering Aboriginal Heroes'.

Anyone who wants a copy should contact <<mailto:Kevin.McConkey@newcastle.edu.au>>Kevin.McConkey@newcastle.edu.au ; or <<mailto:John.Maynard@newcastle.edu.au>>John.Maynard@newcastle.edu.au

Several months earlier appeared a *Guide to Research and Research Training at Umulliko*. In the splendid Birabahn building, so familiar to the Support Group, our friends are engaged in academic, cultural, historical and pedagogical studies. For further information: <<mailto:Wollotuka@newcastle.edu.au>>Wollotuka@newcastle.edu.au

Rodney Knock

The Commissioner called for the federal government to take a leadership role and develop a national policy on bilingual education.

One of the final speakers was the Federal Indigenous Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin who said that the national apology had been the first step in building trust and respect

between Indigenous and non-Indigenous, but that it was things like education that would move the country forward, helping to close gaps in Indigenous disadvantage.

The Conference ended with a parade of Nations, with delegates dressed in traditional costume.

From the Koori Mail, Wednesday, 17 December 2008

GEORGE ROSE 1926 – 2008

A life of activism for the Aboriginal people gave George Rose many fights, some he won, some he lost - and he thought all were worth the effort. But the first fight of his life was his mother's.

In 1935 George and his younger brother Harry, were taken to the notoriously tough Kinchela Boy's Home in Kempsey. Their mother, Linda Fernando, with the aid of the early Aboriginal activist Bill Ferguson, fought the law and got her boys back home.

His mother had also come through the system of the Aboriginal Protection Board – at Cootamundra Girls Home close to Kinchela, and just as tough on the children. There she had been taught to 'think white, look white, act white' as part of the plan to breed Aborigines out of existence.

George Rose, often also known as Bandit, who has died at aged 82, was a Yuwaalaralaay man born at the Angeldool Mission near Walgett. His father Rolly Rose died when he was very young and he was raised by his mother and her second husband, Jack Simpson. Angeldool was closed in 1936; by the time the boys left Kinchela his mother and stepfather were living at the Brewarrina reserve.

The family was given a house made of corrugated iron, with nothing in it, too hot in summer and too cold in winter, and later lived on the banks of the Barwon River, where homes were made of flattened kerosene tins, with cornbags on dirt floors and newspaper for wallpaper.

Rose was sent out young to work on stations, where he was often badly treated. After the war started, he volunteered under the Manpower Act 1942, and was sent cane cutting. He joined the Army in 1946 and left in 1948 when he went cane cutting with his stepfather. He learnt politics from prominent communist shearers and in 1949 was voted chairman of the local AWU shearing committee, and led a strike that got the shearers better wages.

Later that year he moved to Walgett and in 1950 married Mavis Nicholls, who became one of the first Aboriginal Health Workers in NSW. The couple lived in a tent in Nicholl's mother's backyard, and later built a small house in a nearby reserve, where initially there was neither electricity nor ablutions block. When the Rose family had grown to five children they were allocated a Welfare Board house, and later moved to an Aboriginal services home.

In 1960 Rose was instrumental in setting up the Walgett Aborigines Progress Association and the Walgett branch of the Aboriginal Advancement Association. In 1971 he became the NSW Aboriginal Legal Services first field-officer (Voluntary) for the north-west region, setting up offices in Walgett, Moree and Brewarrina.

In 1972 he retired from shearing to become the first permanent field officer, and in 1974 he became manager of the service's north-west and far-west regions.

Rose also started the Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service in 1980, the Koolyangarra Preschool, the Walgett Local Aboriginal land council and the North-West Regional Land-Council. He served in various positions with the Torres Straits and Islander Commission and was chairman of the Walgett Community Development Employment Project and inaugural chairman of the Gamilaroi Goondi Community Working party.

Mavis Rose died in 1979 and in 1984 Rose married

Margaret Dodd. In 1998 the couple helped found the Dharriwaa Elders Group for Aborigines over 60.

Rose spent his life working towards the recognition of Aborigines right to services and their original ownership of the land.

In 1997 he was awarded an order of Australia medal. In 2002 he received the Citizen of the Year from the Walgett Shire Council.

George Rose is survived by his children Daniel, Karen, Cynthia, Deborah, Cheryl, Julianne, and James and an adopted son, Alan, 27 grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren.

Margaret died in September and a son George predeceased him.

Harriet Veitch

This obituary appeared both in Time Lines, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, and in *Land Rights News*.

Pat Cameron



ANTAR PUBLICATION, SUCCESS STORIES IN INDIGENOUS HEALTH

A recent ANTAR publication is of considerable interest. In the introduction Social Justice Commissioner points out that, while many stories of Indigenous communities feature difficulties and failures resulting in poor community health, few focus on the many success stories. The recent ANTAR publication does just this.

Each story is from a different community and as Commissioner Calma says in the Foreword 'it gathers useful information on successful programs currently in place in Indigenous communities.'

The stories are the voices of Indigenous people telling of their own experiences and successes. Commissioner Calma continues, 'This publication is a substantial contribution to advancing understanding among the general community and government, and in contributing to evidence based policy.'

continues page 8

Newcastle Aboriginal Support Group...

was formed in September 1980. 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.

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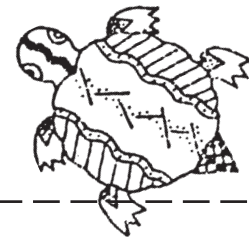
SOME RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GETTING THE NORTHERN TERRITORY INTERVENTION RIGHT

PROF JON ALTMAN, 2008

1. A rapid statutory reform process should be instigated to replace any blanket measures, especially those that might contravene the Racial Discrimination Act, on a voluntary basis. Such measures include compulsory income quarantining and compulsory leasing of townships. Such a discretionary approach might help the Australian government in its commitment to support the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples without fear of International opprobrium.
2. The Australian government must recognize that government processes are intercultural and not just 'western'; that is that there is an ongoing tension between western and Indigenous forms of government and accountability that need to be carefully negotiated if community and economic development is to be sustainable and productive.
3. An immediate moratorium should be placed on top down reform pressures. Such pressure is inefficient and unfair and is diverting scarce human resources from urgent organizational business. There is a need to relieve the pressure on organizations and their 'thin' leadership ranks and the counter-productive insecurity generated by constant review.
4. There is a need to slow-down ill-conceived policy ad hocery. Recent initiatives like the proposal to create 50,000 full-time jobs in the private sector in two years contingent on government training is symptomatic of such an approach.
5. There is an urgent need for current policy to learn from evidence publicly available, eg. The Miller report, 1985, and E K Fisk 'The Aboriginal Economy in Town and Country' 1985. The former highlighted the need to build an economic base for development in remote Australia; the latter warned that Aboriginal people are likely to be the last hired and the first fired in mainstream labour markets.
6. There is a need to consider the benefits of the hybrid economy model. This framework not only incorporates the lived reality of remote communities, and kin-based relations of production but has also the potential to reduce risk during a time of economic uncertainty.
7. There is a need to shift the broad framework of policy from 'governance for dependency' to 'governance for development'.
8. There is a need to rigorously assess the extent if the capital shortfall in remote Indigenous communities in the NT, and then commit to a multi-year capital plan, possibly funded from hypothecated shares of Futures Fund, to systematically address this shortfall.
9. There is an urgent need to resource Indigenous communities throughout the NT to externally engage. Urgent consideration should be given to redirecting funds currently committed to Government business Managers accountable to the Australian Government, to the employment of community brokers by the communities.

These recommendations are here shown out of the full context of Prof Jon Altman's report to the Review Board, which is available on the web.

Pat Cameron



Membership Subscription Form

Members of the NASG receive the NASG newsletter, *Wurreker* three times a year, and agree to support the stated objectives of the NASG.

Membership: what you can afford, eg \$25 - \$30 for waged, \$8 - \$10 for unwaged, organisations \$35 - \$55.

Bulk orders: 5 copies for \$35 per annum, 10 copies for \$55 per annum. Non-member subscription: \$30.

Non-member: individuals or organisations may subscribe to *Wurreker* for \$30 per annum. Send renewals or non-member subscriptions to: NASG, PO Box 79, Broadmeadow 2292.

Name: Date:

Street: Phone:

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Enclosed \$ for NASG Membership Bulk order *Wurreker* Subscription only

I would like to receive *Wurreker* via email. My Email address _____

Bits and Pieces

DOCTOR'S ADVICE – A COLUMN FROM THE INDIGENOUS DOCTORS ASSOCIATION

Welcome to the first column by an Australian Indigenous Doctors Association (AIDA), Doctor. It's such an honour for us to be invited to contribute a regular column in the *Koori Mail*, said AIDA's first author.

As Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors from across the country, we really look forward to talking to families and communities about health and well-being issues.

Over the coming months we've got doctors lined up to talk about their areas of expertise as well as how they got into medicine.

As an Aboriginal doctor, I think it is really important to start off this first column by acknowledging our people who have been traditional healers since time immemorial.

It is this history and heritage that we draw upon as practitioners of modern medicine.

To us health is about so much more than simply not being sick. Its about getting a balance between physical, mental, emotional, cultural and spiritual health. Health and healing are interwoven which means that one can't be separated from the other. We think that the most successful health outcomes are those that uphold the importance of cultural continuity and people's control over their own lives.

We also believe that health and education go hand in hand. By this we mean that you need good health for good education, and you need good education to have good health.

AIDA is proud of the work and partnerships that we've formed with the heads of all the medical schools in Australia. AIDA and the Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand have just signed an agreement to work together to recruit and retain more Indigenous medical students and its been fantastic to see a non-Indigenous body like the Medical-Deans recognize the significant and unique contribution of Indigenous doctors.

We still need more Indigenous doctors, so for those readers out there who might be thinking about becoming doctors, we really want to hear from you. Write to us c/- the Editor, Koori Mail, PO Box 117, Lismore 2480 or email editor @koorimail.com.

This column will appear in each issue of the *Koori Mail*.

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To that end it is with great pleasure that I commend this publication to you.'

The book is copyright, as the ideas, stories and knowledge that come from Indigenous people are considered by them to be their intellectual property.

Enquiries to ANTaR, Tel: 02 9555 6138, Email: antar@antar.org.au, available online from: www.antar.org.au/success

ANTaR and the Indigenous communities represented in the stories are to be congratulated on such an interesting, useful and uplifting publication.

Pat Cameron

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