



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

Wurreker

Newcastle Aboriginal Support Group

Newsletter No. 124-a

August 2000

Human Rights

The Sydney Morning Herald, 22 July 2000

Main stream media has carried disturbing accounts of the Australian Governments response to United Nations consideration of its compliance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Ms Medina Quiroga who heads the Human Rights Committee, said, "She realised that Australia was trying to make amends for what happened in the past, but there was still much to do."

"The problem of the Aboriginal population is a black mark in a situation which can otherwise only be admired," she said.

"The message that I would like to pass on is that Australia must do more to repair the damage of the past."

She said Australia's past treatment of its native population contravened the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which stated that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."

The Committee questioned Australian delegates over mandatory sentencing laws, the stolen generation, and the disparity between blacks and whites.

The Commission expressed surprise "that Australia had been unable to enshrine the human rights principles of the UN convention in its domestic laws".

The Sydney Morning Herald, 23 July 2000

Within Australia there have been wide recent expressions from community leaders which point out that more than money is necessary to redress past injustice stemming from European settlement.

The National Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia called on the Federal Government to apologise and to develop a treaty. Their Northern Synod said "mandatory sentencing laws have the capacity to undermine the people's confidence in the criminal justice system and question the separation of powers which is essential in a democratic and civil society."

Koori Mail, 19 April 2000

Bill Jonas, Commissioner for social justice, says: "Both the Social Justice and Native Title reports recommended a revised approach to indigenous equality."

Treating people equally doesn't mean treating them the same. The Government needs to adopt special measures for Aborigines. Dispossession doesn't have to be an ongoing problem."

Koori Mail, 19 April 2000

The Human Rights Commission state that they are "Saddened by assertions presented by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in his submission to the Senate inquiry into the Stolen Generation".

"The argument is not about quantity. It is a question of the quality of the response of the Australian people collectively, and through their parliaments, which reflect their understanding of policies of child removal implemented in their names.

Seven of Australia's nine parliaments have decently and in good faith formally apologised for past practices and policies, in direct response to this report.

The only Parliaments not to do so are the Federal Parliament and the Parliament of the Northern Territory."

London Review of Books, 20 July 2000

"The prime cause of poverty is poverty. The impoverished are more likely to be unemployed, to be ill, to die young, to have illegitimate children, to be violent, to be heroin addicts, primarily because they are poor."

Private Members Business, 29 July 2000

Kelly Hoare — The bridge walks were a groundswell of movement to bridge the divide of disadvantage between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. The Reconciliation process seeks to narrow that divide until it does not exist at all.

Pat Cameron



Reconciliation: a Private Members Bill



Government must enter a Dialogue

Introducing her Private Members Bill, Ms. Kelly Hoare said: I move that this House:

1. supports Reconciliation Week and the Reconciliation process
2. congratulates Evelyn Scott and the members of the Council for Reconciliation for their work and commitment to the reconciliation process and
3. further commits the House to continue to foster true reconciliation between all Australians.

Speaking to the Bill, she says "I respect that the national parliament meets on the grounds of the Ngunnawal people, the traditional owners of this land. I acknowledge the culture of the Ngunnawal people and their contribution to life in this region."

After summarising the history and achievements of the Reconciliation Council culminating in the Bridge Walk, she addresses some of the possible interventions open to government. "There are practical means of government intervention to address indigenous disadvantage in the areas of health, housing, infrastructure, life expectancy and infant mortality, access to government services, incarceration rates and education levels.

The list goes on. But, as was emphasised yesterday, true reconciliation requires the human factor; it requires the process of the heart — the emotional process which will lead us all towards the healing process. It requires the acknowledgment of past wrongs, tragic as they were; the massacres which occurred and the stealing of indigenous children, ripping them from their mother's arms in a thankfully failed attempt at genocide.

One Aboriginal lady interviewed yesterday spoke of how proud she was to see the show of support for indigenous Australians and the reconciliation process. For too long indigenous Australians have felt isolated and alone in their struggles. For too long indigenous Australians have tried to strengthen their communities, to maintain their dignity' to right their wrongs and to maintain their culture in what has seemed like a vacuum. As this lady asserted yesterday, they are not alone. The majority of Australians support them in their struggles, and we will do what we can to forge a less rocky and uneven path to reconciliation and true equality between all Australians.

The bridge walks were a groundswell of movement to bridge the divide of disadvantage between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. The reconciliation process seeks to narrow that divide until it does not exist at all."

Kelly Hoare finished her address by quoting Evelyn Scott: "We extend our hands to other Australians. Those Australians who take our hands are those that dare dream of an Australia that could be. In true reconciliation, through the remembering, the grieving and the healing we can come to terms with our conscience and become as one in the dreaming of this land.

What a rich and valuable heritage to leave our children, a 56,000 year culture, thriving in a country at peace with its conscience.

Will you take our hand?

Will you dare to share our dreaming?"

Pat Cameron

In 1938, a 'Day of Mourning and Protest' conference was organised by Aboriginal people to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the First Fleet. The issues were agreed and clear: Equality and Recognition - The Right To Be Aboriginal People along with the right to enjoy the equality, responsibility and quality of being an Australian citizen.

The Day of Mourning and Protest, like many other gatherings held by Aboriginal people since, was about rights. The demands and petitions may have varied in language but never in content and intent. For Aboriginal Australians, the search has always been for Governments to enter into serious dialogue about our position in the Nation, for the Constitution to recognise us as the First Australians with our Indigenous rights, obligations and responsibilities respected and recognised.

The Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation will present to the Australian People the fruits of its labour of reconciliation over the past nine or so years. It presents an Australian agenda for reconciliation, not an exclusive Aboriginal one. Hopefully, references to a treaty and self-determination will give these matters some credibility with those who will march in favour of reconciliation.

Getting a set of words right is a difficult task but achieving their adoption and implementation is the real issue here. It is for Government to commit to finding the path of lasting reconciliation. Its hour has come. Will we again see, as so often in the past when Aborigines protested and mourned, that there is no action? Will Government simply revert to its traditions of superiority rather than face a new spirit of reconciliation and lead the nation to the healing and unity it requires?

If the Prime Minister wishes to retrieve the current situation, he needs to state clearly that he is fully prepared to interact with Aboriginal people. It is not in any way acceptable that the Council statement was redrafted in his office to satisfy his own personal or political needs.

Let there be no misunderstanding. The anger and disappointment that many Indigenous Australians have with the handling of the 'Declaration Towards Reconciliation' is not with the Council. We are angry and disappointed at the cynical manipulation of the process that has been employed by the Federal Government and, in particular, the leader of that Government. A manipulation that is an affront to the millions of Australians of goodwill who have sought a genuine reconciliation between our peoples.

It may well be beyond the imagination of this current government to grasp what the consequences of the continued denial of the rights of the first Australians will be. But the leaders of 1938 taught us that unless we have the courage to persevere and confront the denial and prejudices placed before us, a just future for our children will not be secured.

Now is the relevant period of the reconciliation process, when outcomes have to be focused upon and made real. We should not be distracted by political posturing but argue for an effective Government response. What matters is whether there is a way for our people to advance these matters with Government.

Patrick Dodson (Adapted from his Wentworth Address, Canberra, 12 May 2000)

Why 'Practical Reconciliation' is bad Policy

The Coalition Governments indigenous policies are essentially assimilationist, a perspective which can be traced directly to the Prime Minister.

John Howard's personal view, expressed frankly in 1988, is that "Aboriginal people should be brought into the mainstream of Australian society." From such a viewpoint there would be no reason for a formal apology to Aboriginal children who were simply 'brought into the mainstream' and no need to fund ATSIC to administer programs for Indigenous communities which can be provided through mainstream Government departments.

In keeping with this approach, the Government is running a policy it calls 'practical reconciliation'. As far as the policy has been explained, it involves the Government making isolated grants for Indigenous health, education, housing and other basic services.

There is no doubt that funds for basic services and programs are desperately needed. Indigenous communities rank with many of the most disadvantaged in the world.

However, 'practical reconciliation' is simply highlighting funding for services which are automatically provided to the rest of the community. ATSIC Chairman, Geoff Clark, puts it this way:

"Practical reconciliation ... [is] part of the politics of division, by specifically accentuating services to our peoples but not to others. In truth the Government must provide these services in its duty of care as a government to all Australians."

'Practical reconciliation' is assimilationist at a fundamental level in that it directs funds for Indigenous services away from ATSIC to mainstream government departments. The level of funds allocated so far - the recent Federal Budget offered next to nothing - is only a fraction of the amount necessary to put Indigenous Australians in a position of equality with other Australians.

These grants may include funds which have *already* been earmarked for Indigenous programs anyway.

The name 'practical reconciliation' also implies that measures which do not provide basic services are not useful because they are not practical. This indicates an inability on the part of the Government to comprehend basic elements of Reconciliation, particularly the need for recognition of the social, spiritual and cultural devastation caused by removal from traditional lands and the destruction of families. It ignores other dimensions of Indigenous rights and aspirations.

In the words of Peter Yu, Director of the Kimberley Land Council:

"If the Prime Minister looks only at health and housing, without recognising the things that make us Aboriginal, then he will not be allowing us to come together as equals to plan a future. Immunisation programs mean nothing if a people are denied the law, the culture and the land that give them life. You cannot immunise against the death of the spirit."

ANTAR News, *May-June 2000*



Developments in the Struggle for Boobera Lagoon

A number of things have happened since the publication of my "Boobera Lagoon: A Focus for Reconciliation." You are probably aware that, despite Hal Wootten's clear declaration in his comprehensive Report of April '96 that there was no possibility of compromise between interests of power boat owners and the Aboriginal interest, Senator Herron appointed George Menham to try and find one.

When he failed to do so, Herron, on 24 December 1998, finally got around to banning power boats from Boobera Lagoon as from 1 July 2000 — to be reviewed two years hence. He also announced that \$3 million would be available to develop an alternative site for water-skiing etc. on the Serpentine, a flood branch of the Macintyre near Goondiwindi. The Member for Maranoa, Bruce Scott, said that he had "been working closely on this for some time with my Cabinet colleagues" (Herron and Anderson): and that "We're dead serious about delivering on this commitment, even if it takes \$4 million". On the other hand, Wal Murray, former local State Member and Deputy Premier, called on Howard to "reprimand" Herron, "cancel his actions. The decision had done "irreparable damage to any possible reconciliation in the Moree Plains Shire area". He would be "at the front of people objecting" if police tried to enforce the ban: and that the Aboriginal people would not use the area but simply sell the water in dry seasons. Unfortunately, he faithfully reflects the sentiments of many residing in the area.

Since then, responsibility for the ATSIC Heritage Protection Act has been transferred to Senator Hill, Minister for the Environment and Heritage. If you don't get the Moree Champion (16/5/00) or the Goondiwindi Argus, you may not have seen the advertisement, announcing a review of the starting date for the ban.

This opened yet another chapter in the saga! Delicious timing! Ten days before Corroboree 2000, four months away from the Olympics!

Kevin Meade's report in *The Australian* (24 May 2000) says that Senator Hill's office was seeking a delay of one year. I suspect that delays with the Serpentine project is behind this review. Back in October '96 a spokesperson for Senator Herron excused the delay in implementing Wootten's recommendation for an immediate ban by saying that Herron perceived "no immediate threat given that there has been water-skiing on the lagoon for more than forty years".

It appears that when it comes to matters of desecration and degradation, the same mentality rules in Senator Hill's office. People adversely affected by future Government reports exposing corruption, tax evasion, child abuse, heroin smuggling and other activities which have been going on for a similar period may be able to appeal to this principle to delay Government responses to those reports.

Mr Hastie's report has now been used by Senator Hill to justify delaying the introduction of the ban on power boats until 1 May 2002 — with a firm (?) declaration that there would be no further postponements.

(Richard has enclosed a copy of a letter, with space for signatures, to Senator Hill which is being circulated by the Aboriginal people of Toomelah/Boggabilla. Or people could

continues page 7

Draft Ideas for a Hunter People's Inquiry into a Treaty (as at 24 July)

Strategies to take the debate forward:

Following close consultation with Aboriginal Community Groups in the Hunter area, it is proposed that a public hearing into this debate could be held in the Hunter. The date is yet to be finalised, possibly October, but watch out for a media release!

Aims to

- provide a forum for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, particularly from the Hunter region, to air their views on the pros and cons of a treaty between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, how a treaty might be negotiated, and on what might be in such a treaty, as well as on what alternatives to a treaty they might favour.
- help ensure that the views of ordinary Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians about a treaty are heard.
- provide information to experts and possible negotiators about the fears, concerns and issues which need to be addressed if they are to carry the Australian population with them.
- clarify, for the people of the Hunter, and particularly those who attend, what issues should be taken into account when the idea of a treaty is being considered.
- convey its findings to Governments and to the wider public.

While experts and politicians will be welcome to make a presentation it is not intended to be primarily a platform for experts, nor is it envisaged that they will be given a longer timeslot than anyone else.

Process

A public hearing, where any individual or representative of a group is welcome to address a panel for up to 4 minutes plus up to 2 minutes for questions of clarification (but NOT cross examination) from the panel, and/or to contribute up to three pages of notes. The hearing to be open to the public.

Sponsors

NASG, ANTAR, Newcastle City Council, Aboriginal groups, Trades Hall, church groups, other non politically-aligned groups with a peace and justice focus. Sponsors to be asked to contribute at least \$30 (?) each, in cash or kind, to the costs of the hearing.

Panel

Three or four, including a non-politically aligned chair with a national profile, at least one Koori and one non-Koori.

Questions to address

- What are your hopes and aspirations in relation to a Treaty?
- What are your fears and concerns about a treaty?
- What would you want to get out of a treaty if one comes about?
- What are some of the steps to be taken to further the treaty process (including how to get people interested, how to allay people's fears, how to kick start the process, how negotiations might proceed etc.)?
- What are some of the things you want a treaty to address?
- What alternatives, if any, to a treaty do you suggest for furthering reconciliation?

Venue for Hearing

A room in City Hall.

Please ring with any suggestions for changes/deletions/additions to the above to Bob Berghout on 4957 1098, or Anne Too on 4929 1123.

Bob Berghout

NAIDOC Week 2000

Naidoc week began with the raising of the Aboriginal flag to the Cathedral tower, sending a message to all in the city. Dark clouds threatened that rain would fall on our parade, but the growing crowd was smiling with anticipation as they wrapped themselves in Auntie Norah Doolan's brilliant scarves and waved the Antar ribbons. Who cared about rain? It was Newcastle's chance to walk together in the spirit of Reconciliation.

Inside the Cathedral, the gathering was addressed by Ray Kelly who, after acknowledging that we were on Awabakal land, welcomed everyone on behalf of the Aboriginal people. The Reverend Graeme Lawrence, the Dean of the Newcastle Anglican Diocese, extended a welcome to the Aboriginal community and their supporters. A circle of young people held the outstretched Koori flag. It was blessed, a prayer was said and the fitter half of the congregation climbed the tower to join in the raising ceremony. The rest of us watched the flag rise slowly up to make a vivid splash of red, gold and black against the grey sky.

And the Power Above, by which ever name He or She is known, relented and we all walked in sunshine through the streets to Civic Park. It was a time for greeting old friends, making new, regretting that some supporters have gone to their final Walk-about, but rejoicing that so many young faces, both Aboriginal and Gubba, were evident in the crowd. The importance of these public occasions is not only that they provide a great opportunity to make a statement of unity and support, but they provide a meeting place for all, where both communities can mingle and exchange and make friends. This is a rare opportunity in our busy, impersonal world.

The formal proceedings began with a welcome by Ray who asked Pastor Rex Morgan to bless the food, to ask a blessing on the people gathered together in unity. Elder Jim Wright added his words of greeting on behalf of the Newcastle Aboriginal community and then introduced Cathy Allen who after eight years of working with Newcastle Aboriginal projects such as Yarnteen and the Awabakal Co-op, is now returning home to Tamworth. Cathy responded, saying that although she was looking forward to once more living with and working with the Tamworth mob, she will always have fond memories of the Newcastle people.

Councillor Margaret Henry spoke on behalf of the Council, welcoming everyone and apologising for the unavoidable absence of the Lord Mayor. Cathie Murray and Louise Campbell from Antar spoke of the Reconciliation process and the Naidoc week activities.

Then the smell of the barbecue drew everyone to lunch. People sat around eating, laughing and talking, wandering from group to group among the trees. Except for the distant roar of traffic, we could imagine that the last two hundred and fifty years had vanished and we were back in that natural, innocent time now gone forever.

Then the music of the didgeridoo caused a sudden hush. We were being summoned to a wonderful display by the young Awabakal Dancers, with their traditional Welcome to their land, followed up by the Kangaroo Hunting and Honey Bee dances. The concert continued with the more traditional Aboriginal items interspersed with line-dancing.

Congratulations to our Koori hosts. The atmosphere was great, and the speakers, singers, dancers and the didge players

continues page 7



The Myall Creek Memorial

As the northern frontier of colonial expansion became established on the Gwydir upstream from present-day Moree in the late 1830's, many of the stockmen engaged in a genocidal "bushwhack" against the Gamilaraay and Wirrayaraay people of the area. Some found refuge on stations like Henry Dangar's Myall Creek. But a group of Aboriginal women, children and old men were found there by a gang of 11 stockmen of convict origins led by a squatter, and taken over a rise, where they were systematically shot, bashed and hacked to death on 10 June 1838. Their bodies were later burned.

Now a path winds from a parking area just off the road to Delungra, 25km from Bingara, past seven granite boulders, each bearing an illustrated plaque telling part of the story. A bench at each boulder enables visitors to sit quietly under trees, and reflect on the story. At the end of the path, a large granite rock with an inlaid memorial plaque, overlooks the site of the massacre.

Perhaps the most significant and moving feature of the establishment and dedication of this memorial on 10 June last was the involvement of descendants and relatives of many of those involved: of the Aboriginal people who survived the massacre; of William Hobbs, the young Superintendent of the station who suffered for reporting it, and for giving evidence which helped convict the seven who were eventually hung; of Denny Day, the investigating magistrate; and, most significantly, of some of those who had carried out the massacre.

These last included a descendant of John Blake, who escaped execution; and of a brother of John Fleming, the squatter who, despite the offer of a reward, was never arrested. They had been surprised to discover the relationships in the process of researching family history: and with some trepidation met with descendants of the Aboriginal people, helped plan the memorial, and, participated with them in the ceremony of dedication.

Roger Milliss' massive *Waterloo Creek* (UNSW Press, 1994) deals primarily with another larger massacre of Aboriginal people by Major Nunn, Mounted Police troopers and stockmen 50km south west of Moree. This set the stage for the massacre at Myall Creek, 120km to the east, 19 weeks later. Roger's account of the Myall massacre, its context, aftermath and effects, is the most complete in print.

As he was intending to come up to Myall Creek for the dedication, I took the opportunity to organise a speaking tour for him in the preceding week. ANTaR and Reconciliation groups and others organised evening public meetings in Tamworth, Armidale, Inverell and Moree, attracting crowds mostly in excess of sixty. We also spoke at UNE, and High Schools at Inverell, Bingara and Warialda. The response, publicity, and the sale of a considerable number of copies of Roger's book (RRP \$49.95) and my *Boobera Lagoon: A focus for Reconciliation* (ACSJC, 1997) which deals with the events on the frontier 100km and ten years further on, all made the effort worthwhile.

But much remains to be done if Australians are to own their history in this land. Myths surrounding Myall Creek abound. It was not an exception, a one-off, except in the sense that it was reported, investigated, the perpetrators found guilty, and punished. It did not deter the squatters and their servants from engaging in such ventures, but taught them to ensure that anyone likely to report such actions did not find out about them, and how to intimidate them as potential witnesses. And the squattocracy were able to intimidate Governor Gipps, and his

successors, into not pursuing investigations into other massacres with any zeal. The subsequent inquiry into Major Nunn's behaviour was allowed to become a white-wash and cover-up.

The history to be owned can have personal links: there are probably some thousands of descendants or relatives of the Myall Creek 12 alone living in central-northern NSW who do not know, and a proportion who do not want to know, or own, the involvement of their ancestors. The Dangar family was not represented at the dedication ceremony. But as a result of our tour, some people in Armidale will, as they walk down the main street, Dangar St., recall Henry Dangar's dismissal and virtual blackballing of William Hobbs who reported the massacre at Myall Creek, in contrast to the character reference he gave for Charles Kilmeister at the trial of the seven, and reflect on how the Dangar pastoral empire, and others, were built.

The tour strengthened my conviction about the importance of local history. Events that occurred at places in the area in which one lives have a unique potential to get people to reflect on and own history. Local "True Stories" (cf Inga Clendennin's 1999 Boyer Lectures) of the colonial conquest, exploitation and exclusion of Aboriginal people. These are also underpinned by the plethora of untrue, partial and romanticised local stories, which persist and are clung to by many people, and need to be exposed.

The Richard Bligh Bridge over the town creek at Warialda exemplifies the hooks on which "True Stories" can hang. As a result of our visit, students at Warialda High School will read at least the three pages of the Report, Bligh the Warialda based Commissioner for Crown Lands, wrote on the Condition of Aborigines. He describes the "system of assassination" on the Macintyre, which he uncovered while investigating a death resulting from a raid on a "Blacks' Camp" on Umbercollicie, 12km north west of Goondiwindi, ten years and a day after Myall Creek. Despite having one of the participants turning Crown witness, obstruction frustrated his attempts to even get a trail for the five men arrested. His statement: "I feel justified in stating that could these miserable savages give evidence in a court of justice or even support their case with a little of the eloquence employed against them the balance of injury and crime would be fearfully against the white population" may come to mind whenever they cross the bridge. Some will learn much from having that Report placed in context: some, hopefully, will be inspired to take research further, change their lives, and help to remove the white blindfolds for many others.

There are suggestions that monuments should be erected at other known massacre sites. But these are often in locations difficult to access: and hence of limited effectiveness as invitations to the owning of history. But there are names of streets, rivers, mountains, towns and suburbs which can be used to do that. Eventually we may reach the stage of decolonisation Frantz Fanon called for, and remove the names of those who shame us as a nation. What would be a good name for Morisset?

Richard Buchhorn

(Richard suggests that it might be worthwhile looking into the history of Morisset re involvement in suppressing the Wiradjuri.) Richard's book is available from Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, (ACSJC), 19 Mackenzie St., North Sydney 2060 (Tel: (02) 9956 5811) for \$4.95, incl. postage.

Other suggested reading are Peter Read's *A Hundred Years War*; and Judith Wright's *A Cry From the Dead*.

Deidre Heitmeyer. On the current state of Reconciliation she can best strip off the rhetoric. Reconciliation: "Yes, that's great but actions speak louder than words." The Harbour Bridge walk was, she concedes, historic, but she must speak because of Government misinformation. So she'll speak about coexistence.

In coexistence no one supplants the other. Since 1778 three philosophies, 1. the land; 2. technology, which was a necessary factor, 3. coexistence, to allow Aborigines the space to create their own direction, to pass on their own culture, as well as to adopt new things.

Those of our people who are speaking about a treaty are spokes-persons not leaders. What we say is never about looking out or denying, but our land is to be acknowledged within this new discourse. Reconciliation is about promoting and encouraging, and the Support Group is part of this space. Forget about artificial dates and Time-lines, eg. the centenary of Federation. Lets not be seduced by what happens on the media.

Sharon Claydon spoke of her talk with Patrick Dodson. She was quoting only her understanding of what he said. He shared a number of Deidre's concerns, plus the reasons for not walking and for walking on the Bridge. Despite its success he felt no reason in his heart to celebrate, in view of the Govt.'s attitude. A few months away we knew the PM was not going to sign (The hand prints on the day were merely for the Vision Statement). There are but 7 months left in the formal process of Reconciliation. Patrick understands clearly how the Council of Reconciliation, of which he was Chairman, was formed. Hawke Government failure....Makaratta...Barunga...It was the CAR's task to find a path through all this. "All their work has not gone any further than these previous calls." (Sharon).

There must be a way to lock Parliament into a process independent of PM, a way of trying to resolve "unfinished business". What are the ground rules for coexistence? With every new government people are locked into short-term views. Pat Dodson's use of "Treaty" brought an incredible reaction eg. Evelyn Scott.

There have been two surprising polls concerning a treaty, which, amazingly show support as high as 45%.

Pat said reconciliation is operating at three levels, 1. personal, 2. the call for structural changes, 3. the political level. There's got to be some bottom line of political agreement.

Native Title "talking Common Ground". The achievements described in "Rural Landholders for Coexistence" are by those who are choosing to operate outside the legislative process, with meetings and discussions between those who are most directly affected. (Once they got rid of the lawyers and politicians they found they could talk to each other). The pastoralists who've stood out in this way receive much flak from their communities and no support from the National Farmers Federation.

Sharon has been involved in a plan for a media centre to give an Indigenous perspective for the Games. There'll be thousands of journalists in Sydney. The one issue they all want to discuss is Indigenous affairs. So we can provide for and work with them. They know we are "in deep shit with the U.N." The Bridge walk has gone round the world. The German media are especially interested.

Sharon then showed a video on the process of agreement between the Pedersens and the Yanuji people.

Rodney Knock

At the July meeting Deirdre Heitmeyer spoke of coexistence. She challenged us to think about the philosophies that have been the experience of both Indigenous and later Australians – and invited us to be open to a possible third way of looking at our life. I believe she was suggesting openness to change.

As a nation, we have begun to recognise that Aboriginal people have been at the receiving end of injustice and harm. Many white Australians are willing to express sorrow, recognising that the life benefits we accept and enjoy have come to us at a cost of lives and a way of life for Aboriginal people. Henry Reynolds refers to the distress this awareness brings us but acknowledges that "it enables us to know and understand the incubus which burdens us all". John Howard's present stance is really 'white-out history', as he shies away from the reality of our past. Inga Clendinnen describes his position well.

But while we are rightly embarrassed by our past, I believe we are now ready to acknowledge that there were some who behaved with honour and concern. *The Sydney Morning Herald* of 10 June 2000 carried an article, "The White Blindfold View", about the long-hidden story of the Myall Creek Massacre and a reconciliation some 162 years after the event. A small but important aspect of that story was the horseback journey to Sydney of one Frederick Foot, a white landholder, to report the atrocity to Governor Gipps.

Stories of such honourable actions, rarely appreciated in their day, are now beginning to be told — the other side of history. In our own region, the Reverend Threlkeld ended his career a disappointed man, his serious reports to Governor Gipps about injustices being ignored and, finally, lost'. Henry Reynolds records many stories of similarly dogged and much-maligned heroes.

The other side of our story gives us strong hints of the persistence and courage of a people defending their rights in the face of an implacable force that believed it had 'right' on its side. Consider the magnificent Pemulwy. When will white Australia be ready to establish plaques and memorials honouring these war heroes as well as those honouring the dead of other (white?) wars?

As I mull over these issues, I've tried to describe the situation in few words and that attempt is offered here as a 'work in progress', open to change.

Dianna Mannigel

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

Jack Doherty Scholarships:

Jean 4957 5562 Zeni 4957 1466

NASG Finances:

Lyndall 4969 7965

Koori History Awareness:

Pat K. 4928 2837

Editing Wurreker:

Anne 4929 1123 Pat K. 4928 2837

Pat C. 4920 1642

General Enquiries, Subscriptions:

Rodney 4963 6143

New and Exciting

www.aboriginalhunter.com – is the new Hunter Website which was opened on 4 July 2000. Its location is the Yamuloong Resource Centre, Garden Suburb. The “Aboriginal Hunter” Gateway Web Site is a portal site, which has been created and driven by the Aboriginal community of the Hunter to provide information and showcase the culture and history of the region’s three main tribal groups, Awabakal, Worimi and Wonarua.”

Vicki Heath facilitated the afternoon’s program and introduced the speakers. Dr Bill Jonas spoke of the continuing plight of Indigenous people eg. 40% of racial complaints come from Aboriginal people. He also spoke of the national stature of the leading Aboriginal figures in various fields in the Hunter.

Kim Yeadon MP addressed us. His department, that of Information Technology and Management, has funded stage 1 of the project. It is making the technology available to remote communities, and is setting up 55 centres in country towns. (A local example: Mini Heath’s work can be bought in Sydney or New York.) Kim thanked Yarnteen for its perception and initiative.

Dr. Allen Pattison, chairman of the Hunter Economic

Development Corporation, praised the efficient hard work which had brought this about “in budget and on time”, adding “we can get in touch with communities in ways which just were not possible before.”

Then Bill Jonas and Kim Yeadon began the multimedia display. Every item of political, economic, social and cultural value is now available. The land councils are linked . Our NASG is on the website. Want to send a ‘happy Naidoc’ postcard? It’s all there, linking the Indigenous community to the world, and the world to the Indigenous community.

And so, as Bill said, the ‘get up and go’ of our Aboriginal grandparents continues, in the energy, hard work and skill of today’s generation. If the standard of dancing of the three gracious Mullabimba girls and six Awabakal men and boys who began the ceremony is any indication, we can expect only excellence from this website.

The formalities ended, we regrouped, some to surf the net, some to view the business display, but most to celebrate and to sample the superb delicacies of the kitchen.

Rodney Knock



continued from page 4

were admirable. And Ray’s pre-school teacher was there! We would love to hear from her. She must be proud of her pupil.

So that was how Naidoc Week started. There were many fascinating happenings planned for the week, which grows in stature each year, high-lighting the achievements of the Koori Community and their important contribution to this city.

Pat Keating

continued from page 3

write there own letter to anyone who might listen: and send copies to Toomelah-Boggabilla LALC, PO Box 261, Boggabilla NSW 2409.

Further information: Richard Buchhorn, 9 Cameron Street, West End 4101. Tel: (07) 3844 5526. (Also available copies of *Boobera Lagoon: A Focus for Reconciliation*. \$4 (\$5 posted).

Richard Buchhorn

Our next meeting: 7.30 pm Wednesday 23 August 2000 at Wollotuka

Guest speaker will be John Maynard. He will speak about ‘historic research’ a focus of postgraduate study.

Everybody is welcome and a cuppa is provided.



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 \$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:

Suburb: Postcode:

Enclosed \$ for NASG Membership Bulk order Wurreker Subscription only

Bits and Pieces

Pottery in Australia

Speaking this week with Jim Ridgeway, he mentioned that SOCOG had commissioned him to make a series of pots to be exhibited at the Olympic Village venue. Jim has completed this commission. His work will also be seen in the ceramic magazine "Pottery in Australia", in the near future.

Jim also works tirelessly in schools, where he is a great roll model for all students. At present he is artist in residence at a North Lakes school.

Our congratulations Jim!

Acknowledgment

Many thanks to all those involved with the production of this newsletter, particularly Anna Kaemmerling, Chris Keating, Pat Keating, Pat Cameron, Dianna Mannigel, Richard Buchhorn and Rodney Knock.

Footnote: Due to a clerical error, our June issue appeared as No. 124 instead of 123.

YAPUG: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Health Professions Enabling Course

Yapug is a course designed to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to gain skills for entry into one of the health professions. Yapuga began in 1999 and is a one year full time course including subjects important to the development of both a professional and educational orientation to health professions and practice in them. We take a very wide view of health issues and encourage people into areas including, medicine, social work, occupational health and safety and many other areas.

Yapug is for Aboriginal and Torres strait Islanders wanting to become familiar with:

- the role of science, medical and health professionals
- the University of Newcastle and its environment
- different learning methods and skills, including that of problem based learning whilst enjoying a supportive learning environment (culturally, personally and academically).

The course is based at the University of Newcastle on its Callaghan campus. This campus is set in a bushland environment, 12 kilometres from the Newcastle city centre. It is easily accessed by public transport.

There is no requirement for starting in Yapug. Some students may however like to brush up on their reading and writing skills before starting this course. The course is only available for Australian Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. Sometimes evidence of Aboriginality may be required.

A coordinator and administrative assistant are employed in the program and they are there for the support of Yapug students. There are also a number of computers and other resources available for use by students.

There are other resources available for the use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students on campus including Wollutuka Aboriginal Centre and a Nursing Liaison Officer. There are also other short courses which can assist you to prepare for University. These courses are designed to provide knowledge and skills necessary or desirable for students entering university, whether Yapug or another course. These cost a small fee and are available in January and February. The courses cover both the development of academic skills and subject areas such as mathematics. For more information and a bridging course booklet telephone (02) 49215558.

How do I apply?

For further information and an application form ring (02) 4921 7232. Complete and return it to the Enabling Programs Unit, McMullin Building, The University of Newcastle, Callaghan Campus, NSW 2308. Applications close December 2000, but you may apply any time before that.

For further information : Stephanie Gilbert (02) 4921 5356 or email: sgilbert@mail.newcastle.edu.au. Krichelle Gardner (02) 4921 7232 or email: kgardner@mail.newcastle.edu.au

Stephanie Gilbert



If you do not wish to continue receiving this newsletter, please return to:
Newcastle Aboriginal Support Group
PO Box 79
Broadmeadow NSW 2292

Wurreker April 1998

Print Post Approved
PP 229460/00080

**SURFACE
MAIL**

**POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA**

