

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

Wurreker

Newcastle Aboriginal Support Group

Newsletter No. 130

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www.aboriginalhunter.com

Treaty - lets get it right

ATSIC recently issued an informative booklet on 'treaty', to 'encourage national and local discussion and debate on this issue'. The web site, www.treatynow.org., National Treaty Support Group, ATSIC, May 2001. One area of the discussion centres on forms of treaty.

"There are four possible legal forms that a treaty between Indigenous peoples and the Australian government could take. These are:

- an agreement under international law
- an agreement that is supported by the constitution
- an agreement that is supported by legislation
- a contract."

An agreement under international law has been contested by those who say that the Aboriginal and TI. peoples are not an independent nation, and therefore cannot negotiate a treaty. Many Aboriginal people believe they have never ceded sovereignty, and therefore are a nation. The United Nations Study on Treaties, Agreements and other Constructive Arrangements between States and Indigenous Populations, concludes that where Indigenous peoples had not entered into treaties under international law with colonising countries, they should be treated as nations and assumed to have the ability to enter such treaties until proven otherwise.

An agreement that is supported by the Constitution.

1. The entire text of a treaty could be inserted into the Constitution itself.
2. The Constitution could be amended to give the Commonwealth the power to negotiate a treaty with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples.

Any amendment to the Constitution will need to be agreed to by the Australian people at a referendum and will only succeed if agreed to by a majority of voters in a majority of States. However, the benefit of having a treaty incorporated in the Constitution is the strong legal protection that will then attach to the agreement. Unlike a law made by the Parliament, a constitutional provision cannot be changed or repealed by legislation; it can only be changed by a referendum.

An agreement that is supported by legislation. A treaty may take the form of legislation; this requires the will of the Federal Government to negotiate and then pass the legislation, but it does not require the broad support of the Australian people that a referendum requires. A treaty can be amended by further legislation and this may provide flexibility when new issues arise, but it also means that provisions can be amended or overridden by the Government without the support of the indigenous peoples. These difficulties were illustrated by the Native Title Act 1993 which was amended in 1998 with no consultation with indigenous peoples.

A contract negotiated between the Federal Government and Indigenous peoples, the contract could deal with issues identified by the parties. It would not require a parliamentary process to be implemented. The contract could create legally enforceable rights and obligations, to be interpreted by the judiciary. Indigenous communities and organisations already enter into contracts with parties, including the Federal Government, on a wide range of issues. A treaty in contract form would be a more comprehensive agreement between the Federal Government and Indigenous peoples and it may build upon some of the agreements and contracts already in place.

Pat Cameron

Last Showing

Get to know your fellow members... Join us at the Regal Cinema to see 'Yolngu Boy', the last showing of this excellent film. The film commences at 4.40 pm, on Sunday 9th September, thence to dinner.

For further information call Julie Castles on 4954 0717.

NAIDOC Week

NAIDOC week, 8 - 14 July, so well planned and supported, was special this year. The Aboriginal flag was raised on both cathedrals, on city hall and council chambers: no longer just a right secured but a proclamation of faith in present and future.

The writer was not present at the Sacred Heart Cathedral on the Sunday, where joy would have abounded, but on the 'Hill' for the Monday march, and at Speers Point on Tuesday. All agree the Newcastle march was the best ever. In Christ Church Cathedral Father Graeme prayed and blessed the flag, supported by Pastor Rex Morgan and Bill Smith, before several hundred in the narthex and back pews. Led by friendly police we then marched to Civic Park, with onlookers curious or friendly.

With Jim Wright as MC there were many speeches, all good, from sitting members and ATSIC representatives. Through the trees, in the beautiful weather, we hailed the flag now flying on the city hall. There was much dancing, finely painted, dressed and choreographed; and Koori country and western. How much did we eat? 30 kg sausages and 30 loaves I'm told. Thank you Kevin McKenny and the Awabakal Cop for the great time we had.

Next day 80 - 100 walked from Pippy's at Speers Point to Lake Macquarie Council Chambers. Again fine speeches, and very young Koori dancers, learning so fast. Bill Smith involved us all, crossing frontiers of age and race, encouraging us along the track to be followed with care and nurture. The point was made that the focus had moved from Land Rights to a treaty, or Makarrata, quoted by Ald. Kirkpatrick: "the coming together after a fight". The emphasis was on local treaties, but a treaty of some kind was needed to show our maturity (John Tate). There is still 'unfinished business' remaining: an apology, recognition of indigenous law, and a genuine attack on degrading poverty and poor health (Bryce Gaudry). With wry humour Ray said his people's listing before 1967 as flora and fauna was "probably the best place for us". Lyndall Coan, our president, giving a plug for the Support Group, urged all people and parties to press for dual signage and to attend the walk against Racism on Saturday, 1 September. Our buoyed spirits were expressed by John Tate, Lord Mayor of Newcastle, who declared his faith in the advance of Reconciliation beyond words, to the feeling in the heart which so many of us present and elsewhere now share.

Rodney Knock

William Deane speaks

Sir William Deane proved himself to be not only our most impressive Governor General, but also the most compassionate and sincere public figure of the past five years. His speech on retiring reflects those characteristics.

He said that though great progress towards reconciliation had been made, there was still a long way to go. The past must be confronted if Australia was to move forward. He rejects any attempt to pass off the disadvantage suffered by indigenous people as being somehow their own fault.

'The more you see it, the reality of indigenous life, the more apparent it becomes that present disadvantage is to an extraordinary extent, the product of past oppression and injustice and of course dispossession.' He goes on to say that underlying the discredited notion of 'terra nullius' was the belief that the Aborigines were somehow sub-human. We must acknowledge and face up to those past injustices and oppressions that led to the plight still suffered by the indigenous people. We must not only regard reconciliation as overcoming present disadvantage but of facing up to and admitting the past.

Reconciliation to him means 'the reaching a stage where the future prospects of each Aboriginal child is equal to those of a non-Aboriginal one'. He fears that he will not see that happen in his generation, but if we can reach a consensus, an overwhelming national consensus, we can go forward together into the future.

When this national consensus on reconciliation does arrive, it should be officially recognised by a formal ceremony and an appropriate document., Sir William stated,

His views were contradicted by our Prime Minister, who does not want formal recognition ceremonies or documents, [perhaps fearing that they may include that forbidden 'SORRY' word]. He said that actions were more important than words and it's what you do for people that matters, not what you say.

The Koori Mail, 27 June 2001

What happens if you neither say nor act at all? Does disadvantage go away if we all, including our leader, shut our eyes to it and ignore the present inequalities as effectively as we have hidden past injustices?

Pat Keating

Community Computer Centre

We wrote of 'A Story to Tell' in the June issue. Here is the sequel.

On 10 July at the Yamuloong Resource Centre, Garden Suburbs, there occurred the launching of the new Community Computer Centres. This was facilitated by the Federal Government initiative 'Networking the Nation'.

Speaking to the opening, Ron Gordon, chair of Yarnteen, remarked how, 26 years ago, at Brewarrina, the boring brown envelope would turn up. Now, however, we have the latest technology, and "my grandkids can use it".

Well, what sort of thing can be done? Our host and guide, Daryn McKenny, said some of us can now record the elder's stories before they die. We can help businesses get going, because we are a 'business incubator'. Idle, bored Koori kids

in Kurri can play the didge straight on to the computer (Barkuma). The facility would assist those who work in the prison system and in post release programmes (Yalawirri). Anyone can now do laser printing and video conferencing, and use the digital camera. Worrimi is accessing it now, having spent six months overcoming the problems of the area's size and remoteness. Wonarua is joining.

Unfortunately the talented young men of the Awabakal dancers won't be there as they were for us at the opening, but from now on, whether white or Aboriginal, you may visit Yamuloong, overlooking its peaceful valley, and use the computers, enjoying Internet access five days a week, in the restful atmosphere of art work and gentle didge.

Rodney Knock

The GURAKI Performers

We have all heard of the Sister City scheme and know that Ube is Newcastle's sister city in Japan, and mostly have ignored it as an irrelevance, a waste of time. But this year's Council visit to Ube should change our minds. Laurel Williams has given us an account of this venture, which though unnoticed by the general public, was an exciting and important step towards promoting international goodwill and understanding

Laurel and Craig Aspinall, the Guraki representatives, were asked to work on a theme for the visit, a theme that would involve the Aboriginal Newcastle community. They came up with a great concept, a story of Aboriginal occupation in Newcastle starting from invasion, with its massacres, dispossession and alienation, through the settlement schemes to the modern day, city-dwelling Aboriginal community. All this had to be done in slivers fitting into a forty minute time slot, and, to complicate matters, it had to be presented without language!

When they had worked out the general concept they found the dancers, actors and musicians who could tell the story through mime and dance and asked Donna Morris from the Community Arts Centre to be the producer and director of the show. The troupe was named the Guraki Performers, and of course, with all that talent on hand, it was a great success. John Hancock from Yamuloong was the stage manager, taking on the task of assembling the backdrops, the props, and the costumes and shipping them over to Japan.

During the week at the Yamaguchi Expo in Ube their four performances received a phenomenal reception by the Japanese hosts and a group from the Chinese city of Weihai, another sister city to Ube, who had also been invited to the Expo. Language wasn't needed. The spectacle, the dance, the singing and the acting overwhelmed the audience. Between performances the three groups mingled freely, laughing, talking and making friends in spite of the language differences. These young people from the three countries exchanged names and addresses and acted naturally and spontaneously with no barriers.

This surely did more to encourage friendly international relationships than a host of stiff and formal diplomatic visits. John Hancock said they had such fun and felt so much at home with both the Japanese and Chinese. Laurel remarked that the whole group agreed that they had never ever felt more welcome or been accepted so readily at any gathering of non-Aboriginal people before.

(This doesn't say much for our highly vaunted egalitarian Aussie society, We have lots to learn from other races . My sentiments, not Laurels PK)

As well as performing, members of the troupe show-cased Aboriginal culture. Mini Heath held workshops on Aboriginal Art; Mick Davidson demonstrated the art of didgeridoo playing. They both played their didges to entranced audiences. The Mayor of Ube, himself an artist, joined Mini with an exhibition of screen-printing. The Mayor of Weihai attended as many performances as he could and issued fervent requests that they all come to visit his city. So we could say that the Guraki performers were a great success socially as well as artistically.

One interesting engagement was a visit to a Primary school, where 600 pupils were enthralled by the Guraki Performers. Laurel was given a translated copy of an article from a local newspaper describing the visit. It is illustrated by a photo of Ray Kelly Jnr and Melissa Wright surrounded by a host of smiling Japanese children.

Great interest in different culture

Newcastle City to Hara Primary School – 17 July 2001

17 members from Aboriginal Australian Group called Guraki and 6 members from Newcastle City Council and Sister City Society visited Hara Primary School today. All the students from school were there and the school invited some children from Hara Central Pre-School and Hara Pre-School to share the time.

Principle Mrs Yukie Tokunaga announced to the students, "Use your ears and eyes to experience the authentic Australian culture and feel it with your heart." On behalf of the students, Miss Haruna (6 Grade) introduced her school and welcomed everyone from Newcastle.

Aboriginal Australian performers performed their life, history and dance. Performers went down stage to ask school children to come out and dance with them. Just about everybody danced together. The gym where they had performance was full of joy and happiness.

Students gave garlands of paper crane, which they made to all performers. One performer responded, "We had such a wonderful time with you all today".

Guraki presented their Aboriginal flag to Hara Primary School as recognition.

Laurel has the last word: "We were all nervous about going overseas and performing before crowds in a strange land." But we took heart from the last words we heard from the people who farewelled us as we got in the bus at Marathon Stadium. Kevin , Mandy and Ray spoke and were echoed by everyone. The parting words were: "We know that you will do us proud. We kept that in mind and we were determined to do them proud." And we think we did.

Pat Keating



Wollotuka Indigenous Scholarship Fund established

We've done the walk, are keeping on with the talk but now you have the opportunity of making a commitment which will assist in the establishment of a lifelong perpetual Indigenous Scholarship Fund at the University of Newcastle. The process started with the Black and White Indigenous Reconciliation Ball, which raised \$6000 and had some 100 members of the University, business and the community involved.

Wollotuka (Department of Aboriginal Studies) at the University is working towards a \$1 million scholarship fund that will fund four to five students a year through full-time University study. The fund will take 10 years to establish but scholarships will be offered as soon as sufficient capital funding can be established to support a perpetual scholarship.

The fund is specifically designed to assist those students who in more increasing numbers fall outside the eligibility for ABSTUDY and who could not continue into tertiary study without scholarship funding. Scholarships will cover both undergraduate degrees and post-graduate research degrees across all disciplines offered by the University's comprehensive programs. Currently Indigenous students are enrolled in all disciplines across the University.

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Land Rights

We all need to listen to what Aboriginal people say about their relationship to the land so that true healing and reconciliation can take place. Many non-Aboriginal Australians remain unclear on the issue of land rights. The following is a brief explanation provided by Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation.

In its 1992 Mabo decision, the High court recognised that under Australian law, indigenous people had a right in their land—a right that existed before European settlement and which still exists. This property right is called “native title”.

The decision brought Australia into line with the United States, Canada, and New Zealand in recognition of native title. In 1993, the Commonwealth Government passed the Native Title Act, which introduced processes for dealing with native title.

The Act was the result of an agreement struck between the Commonwealth and indigenous Australians— that past grants of land away from indigenous ownership would be made valid, in return for an indigenous right to have a meaningful say about future on native title land.

Native title is no longer recognised where freehold title has been granted. Native rights however, still exist on much crown land (government-owned), national parks and other public land, where the traditional owners have maintained their cultural and religious connections.

But whether native title continued on pastoral leasehold land was unknown until 1996, when the High Court in the Wik case, held that native title rights may still exist on that land. When pastoral leases were ‘invented’ last century, the colonial law-makers expressly intended them to support coexistence.

Pastoralists are tenants who pay a small rental to the government. The rights of pastoralists to graze cattle or sheep, fence their land, build dams and so on, can exist side by side with native title rights— in other words, the two rights can ‘coexist’ on the same land.

Where any inconsistency arises between the two sets of rights, the pastoralists’ rights to conduct grazing and related activities will prevail over the native title rights. For this reason, native title rights cannot have any impact on pastoral activities.

It also needs to be recognised that Aboriginal people do not own the land in the way non-Aboriginals think of ownership. Aboriginal Australians are a part of the land and the land is a part of them. They care for the land and the land provides for them.

Seeking a Shared Spirit
an Aboriginal Social Justice Paper
released by the St Vincent de Paul Society

We should not think of this relationship as something ‘traditional’, but as a contemporary need and right.



AWAAR – Update

From the organiser’s perspective, the AWAAR Quiz and Auction night was a huge success. And, it would not have been the success it was without all those who participated. A big thank you to Ray Kelly who made the highest auction bid for the Newcastle Knight’s jersey. Another big thanks to South Newcastle Leagues Club for providing the venue for free – and, a great venue it was. Thanks to the Newcastle Knight’s players who attended and to Karen Cameron from Newcastle Knights for donating, on behalf of the Newcastle Knights, a Newcastle Knights jersey signed by the first grade squad. I also wish to note the wonderful support that we got from various businesses around Newcastle who donated the quiz prizes.

Whilst I am thanking people – thanks to the hard work of Ashley Gordon – another success story was the recent public launch of AWAAR at the Newcastle Knights home game against the Brisbane Broncos on Friday 6 July. Ashley Gordon organised an impressive array of ethnic and indigenous dance performances as pre-match entertainment at the Stadium entrance and mid-field. Information about AWAAR was distributed to the crowd and an official announcement about AWAAR was made prior to the commencement of the first grade game.

The AWAAR team has put together an impressive program of events to get the Newcastle community to focus on the issue of racism during the World Conference Against Racism.



AWAAR Program of Events 31 August to 7 September

Friday 31 August, *Official Opening Declaration of AWAAR*, Guest speakers and performers, 6.30pm at New Lambton Community Centre (Old Savoy Theatre) Alma Road, New Lambton.

Saturday, 1 September, ‘Walk Against Racism’, 10.30am for an 11.00am start at Pacific Park (top of Hunter St) to Civic Park, followed by free BBQ for walkers at Civic Park. AWAAR Folk Concert, 7.30pm at Fellowship Hall - Beaumont Street, Hamilton.

Sunday, 2 September, AWAAR Picnic and Family Fun Day, Building a ‘Wall About Racism’, 11.00am at Newcastle Foreshore (near Nobby’s Beach).

Queer Group Discussion Forum, ‘Racism in the Queer Community’, 4.30pm – 6.30pm at ACON, 129 Maitland Road, Islington

‘Healing the Hurts of Racism’ Workshop, 7pm at Joy Cummings Centre, 61–63 Scott Street, Newcastle.

Monday, 3 September, Newcastle Co-counselling Community Open Evening - Racism, how does it affect you? 7.30pm at 7 Teralba Road, Broadmeadow.

Wednesday, 5 September, Playreadings – local performers Organised by the Drama Department, University of Newcastle, 7.00pm at 10 Wood Street, Newcastle West.

Thursday, 6 September, Film Screening - ‘Long Night’s Journey into Day’ - 7.00pm at Regal Theatre, Moore Street, Birmingham Gardens.

Friday, 7 September, AWAAR Family Entertainment Night, Performers and other live entertainment - 6.30pm at Palais Royale – Hunter Street, Newcastle.

For more information contact: Deirdre Howard on 0414 608 847 or email awaar2001@yahoo.com.au.

The day HREOC came to town

On Friday 27 July 2001, a team from the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) came to Newcastle as part of national activities for the United Nations World Conference Against Racism. The theme of these national community consultations is *Racism and Civil Society*. The local consultation brought together a broad range of civil society, including Indigenous and ethnic community leaders, academics, human rights activists and representatives from business, education, religion and community organisations. These community consultations are important, as Dr Bill Jonas (the acting Race Discrimination Commissioner) noted, because HREOC's report to the World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) 'can only be meaningful if related to everyday experience, as in the Hunter'.

Dr Jonas reminded participants that, 'whilst Australia has the longest established human rights unit, our states all have legislation and we've just completed a 10 year reconciliation process, the Australian government and Australians shouldn't be expecting to hold our model up as a good example for the rest of the world to follow'. Australia has come under considerable scrutiny in recent years for our human rights record.

Dr Jonas pointed out that: Australia appeared before the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in March 2000; the Human Rights Committee in July 2000; the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in August 2000; and the Committee against torture in November 2000.

The various Committees expressed the following concerns about Australia's compliance with its existing human rights obligations:

The lack of an entrenched guarantee against racial discrimination, which would override any subsequent legislation at the federal, state or territory levels. While there exists a Racial Discrimination Act this can be overridden by a subsequent piece of federal legislation that expresses contrary intentions. It is quite extraordinary to think that a government would override a guarantee of non-discrimination on the basis of race but this is exactly what happened with the amendments to the Native Title.

The various Committees also raised as specific areas of concern: the inadequate response of the government to the Bringing them home report; over-representation of Indigenous people in the criminal justice system; the extent of continuing disadvantage of Indigenous Australians, and the lack of equality in Australian society that it reflects; inadequate protection against racial hatred in Australian law; the poor response of the government to individual communications lodged with UN human rights committees, especially relating to our obligations of non-refoulement; and the manner in which the government interprets and implements the Refugee Convention.

An important message that we can take from this local consultation, and national consultations, is that 'the struggle against racism is central to the struggle for the whole range of human rights. Ultimately, work against racism cannot be separated from any of the human rights concerns within our mandates' (Dr Jonas, 2001).

Moreover, it was apparent from people's accounts that racism is still very much an everyday experience - racism in Newcastle manifests as racial discrimination, racist taunts and

public surveillance. Participants also related evidence of overt and covert forms of systemic racism in the media, education system, criminal justice system, and in local, state and national government discourse, policies and programs.

The local consultation provided an opportunity for people to discuss the causes and issue of racism in Newcastle, as well as examine what is being done locally to overcome racism and what can be done to address racism locally and nationally. It was an opportunity for people who work hard within the community to address issues such as racism, but don't always get the time to discuss the issues, to get together and talk.

A number of important recommendations came out of these discussions. The report from the local consultation will be available later in August, and will form part of the discussion at the next Newcastle Aboriginal Support Group meeting - a Forum about Racism. The document will also be handed over to the three levels of government at the opening ceremony of AWAAR on Friday, 31 August.

What is evident, as Dr Bill Jonas advised participants, is that: 'Racism today is more complex and diverse. However, the fight against racism is not as strong as it once was, but that doesn't mean that the fight doesn't exist, it is happening in a less united way'. In light of Dr Jonas' comments the theme for AWAAR, 'UNITE TO END RACISM', delivers an important message.

Deirdre Howard



Aboriginal Boat on Sydney Harbour

Redfern Aboriginal Corporation (RAC) is an Aboriginal organisation based around The Block at Redfern. RAC is a registered charity, operating a Community Development Employment Program, with goals to provide sustainable employment and training opportunities, while developing a sustainable economic base for the future. All income derived is returned to the community to further these goals.

One of the small businesses run by RAC is Harbour Dreaming Aboriginal Cultural Cruises which operates the MV Eora Star on Sydney Harbour. This vessel is Aboriginal owned, crewed and operated. The crew has substantial knowledge of the Aboriginal history and culture of the harbour.

Harbour Dreaming is a great vessel for reconciliation. People can involve themselves in learning about Aboriginal history and culture while partaking in a beautiful day on the harbour.

Harbour Dreaming is also a great opportunity for fund raising. A bare-boat charter with BYO alcohol and food is very affordable and would allow a mark up to raise funds for a group.

For information and bookings: Contact Harbour Dreaming cruises and charters on (616) 9698 3752 or 9318 1496.

Harbour Dreaming is a trading name of Redfern Aboriginal Corporation.

(The above information is offered in response to a letter received by our group, from the Redfern Aboriginal Corporation.)

Need for Jobs

Speaking at the University of Newcastle on the role of full employment in the reconciliation process, Mr Whitby (ATSIC commissioner) said: "It is widely accepted that the indigenous unemployment rate is about 23 per cent - more than three times that for all people. Indigenous unemployment would approach 50 per cent if it were not for the 33,000 participants in the Community Development Employment Projects scheme (CDEP), which masks the true unemployment rate. Furthermore, the vast majority of people on CDEP are under-employed because CDEP funding only provides work for approximately two days a week.

To make an advance — that is, to achieve employment equity comparable to the rest of the Australian population, a total of 77,000 jobs need to be created."

From The Koori Mail, 27 June 2001

When we consider this report, together with the high unemployment rate, particularly that of youth, in some sections of the total Australian population, it is obvious that there is a paramount necessity for new approaches by governments, and united action by all communities.

Pat Cameron

Employment Opportunities

The Blue Mountains International Hotel Management School has trained students of 31 nationalities to become proficient in hospitality skills. It now is offering a scholarship for an Indigenous student to study for three years at its Leura campus.

It is working with the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group to set out guide lines for the course and to find ways to collaborate with Aboriginal and Islander communities in choosing potential students. AECG president Charles Davison welcomes this decision which will enable Aboriginal people to participate in this growing and important industry.

In parts of Australia where land has been handed back to its traditional owners, the communities will be able to develop economic activities such as hospitality and tourism opportunities which would empower them economically and culturally. This course will be designed to give the students all the skills needed to manage these projects. The course starts next year and more information is available on (02) 4780 1659.

Pilbara Initiative

In Western Australia's Pilbara Region another scheme for training Indigenous students in well-paid skilled jobs has been working successfully for the past year. A joint venture between ATSIC, Hammersley Iron, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and the Ngarliyanu Bindirra Aboriginal Corporation is training twenty-two apprentices at present and intends to increase numbers each year. These young people, both male and female, are enthusiastic about their course and their supervisor is pleased with their progress.

ATSIC has provided \$200,000 towards this STEP programme and plans to use the Pilbara initiative as a model for similar programmes across Australia. The Port Hedland regional chairman, Adrian Brahim, believes that the scheme

is important in targeting indigenous unemployment and breaking the welfare cycle, saying that, 'in a region of high unemployment, it has opened a whole new world for these young people. STEP shows what can happen when the private sector joins with ATSIC to deliver creative solutions to the challenges facing many indigenous peoples'.

From The Koori Mail, 27 June 2001

These two initiatives would seemingly be ideal for this city which is an important industrial area and which also aims to attract the lucrative tourist trade. It is several years since we attended a big meeting sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, chaired by the Awabakal Co-op and attended by representatives of Melbourne firms who had successfully initiated Aboriginal apprentice and training schemes. How many young Aboriginal people have been trained and employed by industrial firms and hospitality centres for the worth-while permanent career paths envisaged at that conference?

Pat Keating

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Making a difference does require, vision, commitment and drive - values the fund wishes to reward amongst Indigenous peoples through the provision of academic opportunity. With the communities' and industries' support we will be able to make a difference.

The Scholarship does not replace the excellent and ongoing work of the important Jack Doherty Scholarship Fund (A memorial fund established to provide one year scholarships to assist worthy Indigenous who have commenced successfully their undergraduate program.). Indeed the Jack Doherty Scholarship Fund will be given an even higher profile and encouragement for donations to make it even stronger.

The fund hopes to secure its ambitious target by the donations, annual ball, bequests, merchandise sales, innovative fund raising and industry sponsorship. The fund will be managed by a majority Indigenous committee through the University's scholarship system.

So keep your eye out for ways in which you can be involved and support the fund.

John Lester

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

President:

Lyndall 4965 3682

Secretary:

Deirdre 4969 5989

Jack Doherty Scholarships:

Jean 4957 5562 Zeni 4957 1466

NASG Finances:

Sharon 4927 8691

Editing Wurreker:

Anne 4929 1123 Pat K. 4928 2837

Pat C. 4920 1642

General Enquiries, Subscriptions:

Rodney 4963 6143

Gelam Ngzu Kazi - Dugong my Son

The Newcastle Aboriginal Support Group request the pleasure of your company, at the exhibition at the Damien Minton Gallery, 8 Pacific Street, Newcastle, on Friday, 24 August 2001, 6-8 pm. Entry \$10, (couple or single). This includes your entry in a 'lucky door prize - a limited edition Aboriginal print. Contact: 4928 2837 or 4920 1642.

This function has been arranged to raise funds for a retrospective exhibition of the work of Aboriginal artist Bill Reid, jnr. Gelam Ngzu Kazi is the first exhibition of limited edition linocuts by the artists of the Mulgau Minnaral Artist Collective from Moa island in the Torres Strait, it was staged at the Australian Museum and has been made available in Newcastle by the Damien Minton Gallery.

The Mualgai Minnaral collective comprises four men with various degrees of training as printmakers and artists, who have developed an art workshop in Kubin Village on Mao, the largest of the Western Torres Strait Islands. The group is led by Dennis Nona, a young man still in his late 20's, who has been described as the artist who has 'set the standard for the development of the new contemporary Torres Strait Islander art movement'.

While mainland Aboriginal tribes entered the spirit world through body painting and personal totemic representations during ceremony, spirituality amongst Torres Strait Islanders has always been given form through the creation of ritual objects especially ceremonial masks. These masks were often made of composite pieces of intricately carved turtle shells. The incising seen in the surrounds of the masks is also found as decoration on old pearl shell ornaments, drums, bamboo

pipes, stone spinning tops, shell knives and effigies. The patterns are specific to each object and tradition, clan, and tribal group, and can be interpreted in terms of specific meanings and affiliations.

These traditions are both represented and redeveloped in the work of the Mualgau Minnaral artists who are described as 'traditional urban artists'. They have studied art on the mainland and have gained knowledge of new mediums and techniques, yet they are vitally concerned with traditional themes, such as the creation story, as well as with contemporary events.

The work and life of Bill Reid jnr. has many parallels with that of the T.I. Moa artists. He is an Aboriginal man from western NSW, who has sought to maintain his cultural traditions through art forms which draw on contemporary techniques and materials.

Reid is a fine line artist, drawing in the western tradition, he uses pencil, charcoal, ink, crayon and wash. Although he has received recognition from his own community, and from academics, particularly in the areas of health and education, his work has not been accessible to a wide public or to his peers in the art world.

In his introduction to *Shade and Shelter*, (illustrated by Reid), Professor John Cawte, University NSW says: "Born on the banks of the Darling River, Billy Reid jr owes his artistic skill partly to inheritance and partly to a childhood of ill-health, deafness and absences from school. Billy consoled himself as a child with his pencil, capturing the trees of a landscape in which the wail of the plains wind was to him but a whisper.

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Our next meeting: 7.30 pm Wednesday 22 August 2001 at Wollotuka

Topic: "Racism in Newcastle"

Report back from Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's Community meeting on 'Combating racism in Australia' held in Newcastle on 27 July 2001.

Discussion "What can we do about racism in Newcastle?"

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

Corroboree

Dear all,

The following gives details regarding Bangarra Dance Theatre's Sydney season of our new triple-bill, "Corroboree". As this is the first time Bangarra Dance Theatre has 'self-presented' on such a scale any assistance provided in circulating this information is greatly appreciated. Fliers, posters and study kits are available on request.

A new triple-bill from Bangarra Dance Theatre, September 12th-15th, 2001, Theatre Royal, King St. Sydney, 7 shows only. Tickets on sale now!

Bookings through Ticketmaster7. Phone 136 166 or book online at: www.ticketmaster7.com.

Performance details and prices: Thursday 13th 1pm (matinee), *Thursday 13th 8pm, Friday 14th 8pm, Saturday 15th 2pm (matinee), **Saturday 15th 8pm

Adult: \$49, Conc: \$35, Group (10 or more): \$40

*School students: \$25.90 (Thursday matinee only)

** Saturday night adult prices only

"Corroboree explores the transformation of the human spirit, the relationship between Aboriginal people, creatures and the land and what it is that unifies us as one" says Stephen Page, Bangarra's Artistic Director, *"Corroboreeis about challenging, awakening and cleansing the spirit."*

From Clare McGregor, Bangarra Dance Theatre...

Change of phone number

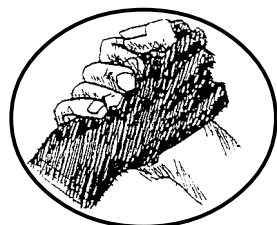
Lyndall Coan, President of NASG. We regret the previous contact number for Cyndall was incorrect. Lyndall can be contacted on phone/fax: (02) 4965 3682.



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Newcastle Aboriginal Support Group
PO Box 79
Broadmeadow NSW 2292

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According to plains tradition, the souls of departed tribesmen return in the form of trees."

Reid's father, Bill Reid sn was 'Australia's leading for exponent of intaglio art using the emu shell. It was customarythe arid-zone clans to save emu shells for the storage of water in caches in the sand. These shells were engraved with tribal designs. Bill Reid with the eye of a true lapidary, brings out the full beauty of this exquisite jewellery." (These shells are now in the keeping of the Institute of Aboriginal Affairs, Canberra). Late in life Reid sn speaking of his youth said "My emu meat totem guided me in several ways as a youngster. My presence was in the emus, and their presence was in me."

In 1939 Reid sn joined William Ferguson in Dubbo, and taught himself to read and write by copying pamphlets for the Aborigines Progressive Association. From that time he sought the betterment of the lives of Aboriginal people in the Western area. In 1971 he played a decisive role in the formation of the Bourke Aboriginal Advancement Association. In 1978 he became the first field officer in the area with the Dept. Aboriginal Affairs.

These were the influences on Bill Reid jr, the struggle to revitalise aboriginal culture and economic life, the traditions of the Darling and the arid plains, his childhood beside the river.

For Western people, indigenous or not , the river, the red gums and the coolibahs, have a presence and a significance beyond the every-day. Reid's paintings are another facet of the 'tree of life'.

Pat Keating and Pat Cameron

Acknowledgement

Thank you to all contributors to this edition of Wurreker and also to Anna Kaemmerling for final presentation.

Anne Too

Sorry, we are late

Our apology for the delay of this edition of Wurreker, due to unforeseen circumstances.

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