

ReconciliationNews

ISSUE NO 27 // August 2013



Indigenous
marathon runners
**inspire their
communities**

Remembering
**champion jockey
Frank Reys**

Richmond's Korin Gamadji Institute
improves AFL culture



**Reconciliation
AUSTRALIA**

CONTENTS

- 3** **Australia's Journey to Recognition**
-
- 4** **The Korin Gamadji Institute: Building reconciliation in the AFL community**
-
- 8** **Remembering Frank Reys: Champion jockey and Australian legend**
-
- 11** **AFL Cape York: High expectations bring high achievements**
-
- 12** **Run. Sweat. Inspire!**
-
- 16** **Imparja Cup: recognising skills and culture**
-
- 18** **National Reconciliation Week 2013**
-

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As the national organisation building relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians, Reconciliation Australia acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respect to them and their cultures, and to the elders both past and present. Reconciliation Australia is an independent, not-for-profit, non-government organisation. Your active contribution and financial support helps us develop innovative programs and resources.

This magazine is compiled by Reconciliation Australia to share reconciliation stories, issues and opinions. Feedback and story ideas are always welcome along with names and addresses of people who would like to receive the newsletter. Please email us at: enquiries@reconciliation.org.au

Caution: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be aware that this publication may contain the images of deceased people.

Cover image: Indigenous Marathon Project (IMP) runners at a New York pre-departure camp in Sydney, 2012. Image courtesy IMP.



Reconciliation
A U S T R A L I A

CEO message

At Reconciliation Australia we often talk about the importance of recognition. Proper recognition can be empowering—but sometimes we can forget to stop and reflect on our own achievements, particularly during busy periods. The past few months have been just that—a busy and productive time. We've launched several websites; revised the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program; held learning circles around the country; launched the Journey to Recognition and celebrated National Reconciliation Week (NRW) and NAIDOC Week.

I am excited and humbled to say that NRW 2013 was the biggest celebration to date. Over 700 events were held around the country to mark the week with hundreds of thousands of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians coming together in the spirit of reconciliation. During NRW we welcomed more organisations to our ever expanding RAP community and I was pleased to see Australian Rugby Union (ARU) launch their inaugural RAP in May. The ARU's RAP shows the sporting body is taking ownership of its role in delivering reconciliation, both within the rugby union community and the broader Australian community.

On Monday 27 May, we kicked off our own NRW celebrations with events in Melbourne and Cairns combining the first ever simultaneous flash mobs who danced to Yothu Yindi's *Djapana (Sunset Dreaming)*.

The day before, on Sorry Day we launched the Journey to Recognition at Melbourne's Federation Square. An epic relay across the country promoting the constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians (see page 3), the Journey was launched with the help of AFL legend Michael Long who, through *The Long Walk* and *Dreamtime at the G*, has demonstrated how sport can bring people together.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have long made significant contributions to the Australian sporting arena. From the first Australian cricket team made up of Aboriginal players to tour England in 1868; to Lionel Rose's great boxing achievements; and our first Aboriginal Olympic and Commonwealth Games gold medallists, Nova Peris and Cathy Freeman—our sporting greats have inspired countless Australians to follow their dreams. But sport is not just about performance and success—its capacity to break down barriers and promote healthy life style choices is having a positive impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

A report recently tabled by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Committee (see page 19) found that sporting programs such as the *Learn Earn Legend!* initiatives are helping to increase the wellbeing of Australia's First Peoples. The report *Sport: More than just a game* calls for long-term funding certainty for sport-related programs and for sporting bodies to do more to increase participation rates, particularly among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

I am greatly inspired by some of the young women who have achieved fantastic outcomes in running through Robert de Castella's Indigenous Marathon Project (see page 11). Not only are these women demonstrating athletic ability—they're also giving back to their own communities by inspiring their family and friends to live more healthy lifestyles.

Another fantastic organisation helping to inspire young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is the Korin Gamadji Institute—an integral part of the Richmond Tigers AFL Club (see page 4). The institute, led by AFL Woman of the Year Belinda Duarte, mentors young AFL players providing training, education and career pathways.

In this issue of Reconciliation News, I was moved by our former Board Director Shelley Rey's inspirational piece as she looks back on the enormously successful career of her father and Melbourne Cup winning jockey, the late Frank Reys (see page 8).

Sport can be a great way for people to come together—whether it's playing together as a squad or coming together to support your favourite athlete or team—it certainly has the power to build relationships and strengthen communities.

Leah Armstrong, CEO Reconciliation Australia





Australia's Journey to Recognition

By Charlee-Sue Frail

Journey to Recognition participants in Adelaide finishing the last leg of the 700km walk from Melbourne. Image, Colleen Raven.

We have embarked on the Journey to Recognition in an historic quest towards the day when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are recognised in the Constitution.

This epic relay traversing the length and breadth of the country began on 26 May, calling Australians to join the grassroots movement, which now has more than 140,000 supporters.

Following the annual *Dreamtime at the G* AFL match between the Richmond Tigers and Essendon Bombers, more than 2,000 people came to the launch of the Journey at Melbourne's Federation Square. A host of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders from across the nation, non-Indigenous leaders and everyday Australians stepped up to play their part in supporting recognition.

AFL legend Michael Long took the first symbolic steps, leading the way to Batman Park before the next team of Recognise walkers took the figurative baton westwards. This first leg of the journey saw campaigners walk from Melbourne to Adelaide, then through the centre of the country via Coober Pedy, Uluru and up to Nhulunbuy, where they arrived at the Garna Festival earlier this month. It will ultimately travel to every State and Territory.

There have been many wonderful people and inspiring stories on the road, affirming for us just how significant the desire for recognition is for so many people.

“This is our chance to recognise local stories, local history and acknowledge the oldest continuing culture on the planet in our founding document.”

Uncle Bryon Powell, a Wadawurrung man, welcomed us to country in Ballarat with a moving smoking ceremony. After the welcome he pointed to Shannan Dodson, a young campaigner working with Recognise, and

handed her some white ochre wrapped in bark. He said that our team must take the ochre with us around the whole country, and paint up when we win the referendum, to celebrate.

Uncle Bryon also told us he remembered watching his mum's reaction to the 1967 Referendum and how happy and relieved she was. She has passed on now, but asked him to continue her story. “I'm doing that, and this is part of that. If we can get constitutional recognition, it means one hell of a step in the right direction.”

Constitutional recognition is more than words on paper—it's about acknowledgement and respect. As Uncle Bryon sees it, it's about continuing his mother's story and continuing our story as a nation. This is our chance to recognise local stories, local history and acknowledge the oldest continuing culture on the planet in our founding document.

If you would like to show your support for constitutional recognition of the First Australians, sign up at recognise.org.au and be moved and inspired by the stories at recognise.org.au/thejourney.



The Korin Gamadji Institute

Building reconciliation in the AFL community

KGI trainers take REAL program participants through a boxing session. Image courtesy KGI.

Richmond has a long and proud history competing in the AFL competition. For over 100 years Punt Road Oval has been home to the Tigers, and during that time they've had a strong representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players—including one of AFL's finest players, Maurice Rioli, which the Club's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is named after.

In 2011, Richmond joined the Essendon Bombers to become the second AFL Club to adopt a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The Fremantle Dockers, Geelong Cats and Subiaco Football Club have since launched RAPs too and more are in pipeline. Richmond's RAP builds on their existing work promoting reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians both within and outside the AFL community. It also builds on the success of the *Dreamtime at the G* match the Club plays

against Essendon, held during the AFL's *Indigenous Round*.

While the Tigers have focused on engaging with Aboriginal communities in Central Australia, the establishment of the Korin Gamadji Institute (KGI) last year has allowed the club to build on their engagement with local Aboriginal communities in Victoria. It also saw them become a leader in developing programs and initiatives specifically designed to support young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Located at Punt Road Oval, the KGI uses AFL as a way to involve young people in education, health and leadership programs, career pathways and cultural strengthening activities. KGI Director Belinda Duarte says their programs take a holistic approach to supporting the next generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders.

"The KGI is a really unique facility and it gives us an opportunity to use the power of sport to encourage our young people to be their best," she says. "It's also about giving

participants the chance to think about what it means to be a young Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person—and how we can celebrate that as a collective.”

The KGI currently runs four programs: career transition, accredited training, the Richmond Emerging Aboriginal Leadership (REAL) Program and the Laguntas program. The REAL program is designed for 13-17 year olds and is delivered in partnership with the YMCA in school and in short camps held during school holidays. As part of the program students also complete a Community of Excellence program which gives participants access to the Institute's pathway partners in health, physical activity, employment and training.

“It's an opportunity for young people to explore leadership, think about active participation in their local communities and consider what their career aspirations might be,” Belinda says.

“Almost 200 young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from Victoria and Alice Springs have gone through the REAL Program to date. We've received some really positive feedback from students and their schools as well.”

The KGI's Laguntas Program (Lagunta means tiger in the language of the Palawa people of Tasmania) is designed for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men aged under 18. It focuses on cultural strengthening, leadership, health, education and training, and employment pathways. Participants also form an all-Indigenous team, playing invitational football games which pave the way for larger competitions like the TAC Cup (Victorian under 18s competition), the VFL and the AFL.

“The Laguntas is an opportunity for us to ensure we're providing these young men with ways of exploring new skills sets and passions so they can work out what sort of career path to take,” Belinda says. “We want them to celebrate everything they can be.”

This year the Laguntas team will play three exhibition matches and around 40 young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men will engage in a high performance football development program, accessing the KGI for both its facilities, expert staff and pathway programs. Although the

Institute is based around sport and the AFL, its programs are designed to build sustainable and positive change in participant's communities in Victoria and in the Northern Territory.

“It's an opportunity for young people to explore leadership, think about active participation in their local communities and consider what their career aspirations might be.”

“The KGI is able to influence change and bring communities together because although other clubs run programs, there's no other training and education facility like it that's close to a club like Richmond,” she says. “And it's really important that we maximise the opportunities available onsite.”

“We've had a high level of participation and engagement with our career expos—in excess of 1,200 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people came to our last event which really shows how effective the brand of AFL and the Richmond Football Club can be.”

Belinda also credits the success of the Institute to its ability to form genuine partnerships and relationships with a range of Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners across government, community, education and corporate sectors—including the AFL and the AFL Players Association.

“I've been very lucky to receive support from a range of Aboriginal professionals and organisations,” she says. “We're now thinking about how we can continue to build on the KGI so it's sustainable for our young people.”

Belinda also wants the KGI to be a place where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players from all clubs can come to collaborate, learn and celebrate their cultures. She also hopes that the Institute's activities will allow Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to come together to help teach and mentor the Institute's young participants.

The Laguntas team with the Victorian Country team after playing an exhibition match. Image courtesy KGI.



“One of the Melbourne players comes to the Institute one day a week and we also have some other Indigenous and non-Indigenous players that come to training sessions throughout the year.”

“It’s about creating an opportunity for dialogue about how we can partner together through the reconciliation process.”

Belinda’s work through the KGI and other AFL programs was formally recognised last year when she named AFL Woman of the Year. Although Belinda says she was surprised by the award, she was also very humbled to be recognised for her work with the Institute.

“I really love what I do and believe sport is a great pathway to achieve other things in life,” she says. “I’m privileged to be a part of a club and industry that’s building greater awareness. By doing that, it’s actually building stronger relationships, and to actually see that in action is really powerful.”

“I really love what I do and believe sport is a great pathway to achieve other things in life... I’m privileged to be a part of a club and industry that’s building greater awareness.”

Richmond hopes the work of the KGI and the Club’s RAP will help educate more non-Indigenous staff, players and fans about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories. One such fan who has embraced the Club’s attitude towards improving relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and

other Australians is official cheer squad member Brett ‘Trout’ Beattie. Inspired by the *Indigenous Round* and the hype surrounding the *Dreamtime at the G* clash, the dedicated Tiger’s fan approached Official Richmond Cheer Squad Chairperson, Gerard Egan, about the possibility of the squad undergoing cultural awareness training.

“Brett had been learning about what the club was doing through *Dreamtime at the G* and the KGI and thought there was more that we could do and more that we could find out,” explains Gerard. “I agreed with him and after talking to cheer squad members we set up our first cultural awareness training session.”

The initial session was led by Belinda and held at the Institute earlier this year in the lead up to National Reconciliation Week (27 May – 3 June). Feedback from members was so positive, another session was organised to ensure more Richmond cheer squad members had access to cultural awareness training.



Korin Gamadji Institute (KGI) Director Belinda Duarte with participants of the REAL Program. Image courtesy KGI.



REAL Program participants at a Youth Parliament session in Melbourne. Image, Mel Harris.

"It's a terrific outcome for reconciliation and an opportunity for us to build more knowledge and become leaders in this area," says Belinda. "Gerard has a real intent to build on what we've started."

Gerard says the session has helped more members understand the history of Indigenous Australia and how past policies can still affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people today.

"People walked away from the initial session with more knowledge of what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have gone through," he says. "Some of the things we learnt really opened our eyes as to how recent some of these discriminatory policies were."

Gerard believes that it wasn't racist behaviour that prompted he and Brett to organise the cultural awareness training, but more a lack of understanding and knowledge about the history and culture of the First Australians.

"I believe in what we are doing, and if we can get the message out not only to the sporting community, but to the general community as well, it's got to be a good thing."

"I think the training gave people more of an understanding of what reconciliation is about," Gerard explains. "You know people knew the Government said sorry, but sorry for what?"

Gerard now wants other cheer squads to undergo similar training. He's already met with representatives from other clubs and is now in the process of organising more cultural awareness training sessions, the first of which is set to take place this month. He believes this approach could eventually filter out to other cheer squads and AFL fans in general.

"Maybe we can get to a point where there is no longer a cultural divide between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians," he says. "If we want the future to change, we've got to change ourselves and have a better understanding [of [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture] first."

"I believe in what we are doing, and if we can get the message out not only to the sporting community, but to the general community as well, it's got to be a good thing."

Remembering Frank Reys

Champion jockey and Australian legend

By Shelley Reys AO



A young Shelley Reys sits with her Dad Frank, pointing out his Melbourne Cup victory. Image courtesy of Shelley Reys.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of champion jockey Frank Rey's Melbourne Cup win. Frank was the first Aboriginal Australian to win the coveted trophy in 1973—a win which came after years of hard work both as a trainer and rider. His daughter, Shelley, remembers her Dad as she reflects on his career and the influence he had, and still has, on both her and her family.

If you're lucky, there will be one moment in life that positively influences who you are and what you do. There are few moments that influence you—as well as your whole family—for many generations to come. This was one such occasion for the Reys mob.

My grandmother was a woman of the Djiribul people of northern Queensland, near Cairns. With my grandfather, they reared 14 children and always managed to find extra space at the dinner table for the random number who would turn up at the door; apparently "an extra cup of rice" always seemed to cover it.

My father, Frank, was the eldest of grandfather's second marriage. He was a larrikin, smart and self-motivated.

“But none was more excited than my own family... we could not have been more proud than if we were riding that horse to victory ourselves.”

As children they spent much of their childhood swimming in fresh water creeks, throwing themselves from flying foxes into rivers, and riding wild brumbies through the Atherton Tablelands. Along with his brothers, he would ride all day long.

He developed a great love for horses and once older, sought to turn it into a viable career. He wanted to be a jockey.

At 18 he got his first ride at the Gordonvale racetrack near Cairns and moved onto Brisbane with a jockey apprenticeship.

My uncles have shared stories of his hard slog—being young and black—but Dad rose above it and attained his riding licence in June 1953.

This led to an opportunity to work with a Sydney trainer and then to another in Melbourne.

By the time I was born, the family were settled in Melbourne and Dad had been a professional jockey for 20 years. Even though he was one of Australia's leading jockeys, I didn't think he was too different to other Dads—I thought everyone's Dad rode a horse.

But in 1973, on the first Tuesday in November, Dad won The Melbourne Cup. And I then realised how different he was.

The press, the neighbourhood and local community, just about everyone was running on overdrive with accolades and adoration. As a shy young girl, I remember being asked to stand in front of the entire primary school community during assembly, and standing on a rickety chair, showing off the dazzling trophy. They fell into rapturous applause.

But none was more excited than my own family. In fact, we could not have been more proud than if we were riding that horse to victory ourselves. Whether he was your father, husband, brother, uncle or cousin, we were overjoyed that 'one of ours' had won the most prestigious horse race in the country, if not the world. A 'Reys' had done it!

Much had led to the win, including a number of serious falls. In 1969 he had 18 weeks out of the saddle due to injury, as well as in 1970 (19 weeks), 1971 (10 weeks) and 1972 (23 weeks). In 1973 he was injured again and then (after saving one of our family ponies who was caught in a nest of barbed wire) was out of action for a total of 42 weeks. It was a mere three months later that he won The Melbourne Cup—a heroic story that garnered a great deal of press and had him labelled as the public's favourite.

Yet, he was a successful jockey long before The Melbourne Cup. He won the Oaks, won the Oakleigh Plate twice, won the Lightning Stakes twice, won the William Reid Stakes twice, came second in the Derby, and came second in The Caulfield Cup just to name a few. He won an impressive 1330 races throughout his career as well as 915 second and 863 third places. And this is back in the day when there was only one city meeting and one country meeting per week—nowadays there are races every day of the week. From his first ride in 1949 to his retirement in 1976, his career was bookended by winning his first and last rides.

“We now understood the power of believing in yourself and your goals, we appreciated that anything is possible if you work hard enough, and we learnt the value of sheer grit and determination in an environment where the odds seem stacked against you.”

One might argue that for all intents and purposes, The Melbourne Cup was just another win for one of Australia's leading jockeys. But to do so would under-value the enormous impact this particular win had on the lives of us all.

We now understood the power of believing in yourself and your goals, we appreciated that anything is possible if you work hard enough, and we learnt the value of sheer grit and determination in an environment where the odds seem stacked against you. The notion of triumph over adversity was never more palpable.

I know I would be a different person, living a very different life, if not for these lessons.

Such is the power of sport. It showcases talent and the values of those talented. Whether you're standing in the centre of the game or on the outskirts of the field, sport creates heroes and in doing so, inspires us to be better and stronger ourselves.

“Whether you're standing in the centre of the game or on the outskirts of the field, sport creates heroes and in doing so, inspires us to be better and stronger ourselves.”

It is for this reason that all sportspeople, and all sporting bodies, need to remain vigilant in providing healthy and positive messages to those who follow them and look to them. There can be no excuses.

Dad's sporting success—just like his death—defined us as individuals and as a family. This year marks the 40th anniversary since he won The Melbourne Cup and we will be celebrating and reliving the moment, once more.

There have been many occasions when I've wondered if, symbolically, we were all riding on his back that day. Because we certainly are today.

Frank rode into the history books on Gala Supreme in 1973.
Image, News Ltd.



Frank seals his Melbourne Cup win with a kiss.
Image, News Ltd.



AFL Cape York

High expectations bring high achievements

By Al Harris



Anthony Nicholls, 16, plans to attend James Cook University next year. Image courtesy AFL Cape York.

On Cape York and the Torres Straits, Australian Rules footy is more than a game, it's a central part of a revolution in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, health and wellbeing.

In a region with high rates of chronic disease and low levels of academic achievement, the work of AFL Cape York is not about picking up the best players for southern teams, but about using the local love of competitive footy to lead real change.

Program Manager Rick Hanlon says the program works to build the confidence and capacity of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men from remote communities in Cape York and the Torres Straits.

"We have extremely high expectations of our boys because we know they are as good as any other kids in Australia," he says. "When our kids are treated with respect and encouragement they perform like champions on the footy field, in the class room and in life generally."

AFL Cape York recently opened a residential centre which provides educational, employment and training opportunities for young men which are not available in the remote communities they live.

Cape York House, as the centre is known, offers the young men a safe and secure residential environment in Cairns and places students in five participating local schools to ensure they are able to reach their full potential.

Sixteen year old Anthony Nicholls from Thursday Island has been in the Cape York AFL program for four years and is currently studying at Cairns Peace Lutheran College whilst living at Cape York House.

"It's given me a lot of confidence, life skills and the ability to stand up and say what I need to say," he said. "Above all else the program teaches us to show respect; respect to ourselves as well as others and I now have high expectations of what I want from life."

Anthony plays with the North Cairns Tigers Under-18 team and plans to study physiotherapy at James Cook University in Townsville after he completes Year 12 later this year.

Cape York House grew out of the highly successful AFL KickStart development

program in the region which highlighted commitment to education and healthy living including the long term dangers of poor nutrition, smoking and substance abuse.

"We are not nutritionists or health workers but we know that without a good diet our kids won't excel and so we use the kids' love of the game to impart messages about good, healthy living," says Rick Hanlon.

These messages are simple and effective, and the kids then pass them on to their own families back on the Cape and in the Straits. "One old lady from Cooktown told me that when her grandson returned from an AFL trip he growled her about drinking coke; 'That stuff's no good Nan' he told her.

"The kids we work with are catalysts for change when they go home," he explains.

"We had 64 Cape York kids go through a session with a Queensland Health nutritionist at our last Cape Crusaders Cup competition in Weipa; imagine if they are all able to influence their own families."

Run. Sweat. Inspire!

By Rebecca Gallegos



Nadine Hunt (in Cairns, 2011) was the first Indigenous woman to complete the New York marathon. Image, Stewart McLean.

Two years ago Nadine Hunt made history. In a time of 3 hours and 40 minutes, the now 27-year-old from Cairns became the first Australian Indigenous woman ever to complete the New York Marathon. Arguably the largest marathon in the world, the New York marathon courses through five boroughs of New York City attracting nearly 50,000 runners from around the world.

“The New York marathon is one of those marathons where you can really soak up the crowd and the atmosphere and use that as fuel,” she says. “Just getting to the start line was a huge achievement in itself...It was a race I’ll never forget.”

Nadine—a Torres Strait Islander woman—ran the gruelling 42.2 kilometres with then 30-year-old Bianca Graham from Weipa, Queensland. The pair trained for the iconic marathon together under the guidance of Robert de Castella’s Indigenous Marathon Project (IMP), an organisation set up by the world-champion and former New York Marathon winner to provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to compete in long distance running including the New York and Boston marathons.

The IMP was born out of the documentary *Running to America* which details the story of four Aboriginal men from isolated communities in Arnhem Land, the Kimberley and the Central Desert, who spent eight months under the guidance of Robert and Northern Territory based coach John Bell, as they train to compete in the New York Marathon. Determined to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are given the same opportunities to pursue distance running as other Australians, Robert used the momentum of the documentary and funding from the Australian Government to start the IMP.

“I’ve run against people from every race and culture, and whilst we have seen a wonderful representation of Indigenous athletes in the explosive sports such as AFL, league, boxing and sprinting—I’ve been surprised by the lack of Indigenous representation in distance running or the marathon,” Robert says.

“There hasn’t been a real culture of distance running amongst Indigenous Australians, but with the overwhelming response we’ve had to date I believe we have the potential of identifying some real talent.”

Out of the group of 11 runners from the IMP who completed in the marathon in 2011,

Nadine and Bianca finished third in the group and were also the first women of the group to cross the finish line.

“I was lucky enough to share the moment with Bianca,” says Nadine. “We pretty much ran together the whole way and kind of worked with each other—so when one person was feeling down the other picked the other one up.”

“As soon as Bianca and I grabbed each other’s hands and crossed the line we just cried,” Nadine says. “It was a good moment...just pure, raw emotion.”

Nadine says she was also motivated to keep going during the race by thinking of her family back home in Cairns.

“The marathon is a great metaphor for life. Every time you go for a run you’re increasing your sense of self-worth which is one of the most important things to have in life.”

“When I thought about my grandparents and parents at home I could feel tears coming,” she says. “When you think of home and you think of those people that have really supported you, it doesn’t matter what result you get because they’re already proud of you for just getting there.”

Just 12 months earlier Nadine didn’t consider herself a runner. She was active in team sports such as touch football but had no experience in distance running. Despite her lack of experience, it was her curiosity

and desire to challenge herself that saw her try out for the Project.

“When I tried out for the program I just thought why not give it a go?” she says.

“I didn’t understand how far the marathon would be really, but after months of training I finished it—and it was just amazing!”

Under the guidance of Robert (or ‘Deek’ as he’s affectionately known) and IMP trainer and CEO, Tim Rowe, it took about eight months of training in order for the 2011 squad to be fit enough to enter the marathon.

“You really do have to sacrifice things,” Nadine admits. “But I am so much healthier both mentally and physically—and so much more positive about life.”

The IMP is much more than just a running program. The organisation uses the marathon to help change the lives of runners, their families, friends and communities across Australia. It also aims to promote healthy and active lifestyles in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities nationally; reduce the incidence of health issues and diseases; and create Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander role models to inspire both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Squad members learn to develop skills such as discipline, perseverance and probably the most important skill of all—the power of self-belief which applies not only to running but to life as well.

“The marathon is a great metaphor for life,” Robert says. “Every time you go for a run you’re increasing your sense of self-worth which is one of the most important things to have in life.”

Participants of the IMP are mentored to become role models and leaders in their own communities, helping to motivate and support people to lead a more active and healthy lifestyle. Since joining the squad in 2011, Nadine has embraced the IMP’s vision deciding to relocate to Canberra from Far North Queensland to work as the organisation’s Project Officer and Deadly Fun Run Coordinator.



Elise Hull (front row, second from right) with the IMP squad on the Gold Coast this year. Photo courtesy IMP.

“It’s a special program to be a part of and I’m so thankful for the opportunities it’s given me,” she says. “It was such a special moment to make history, and to go home and be able to be a role model and inspire Indigenous women in my community and throughout Australia means so much to me.”

Since she joined the program Nadine has seen some significant changes in her own family’s attitudes towards health and exercise. Just by watching her achievements as one of the first female squad members, Nadine’s sister has started running while her other family members are now more conscious of taking actions to prevent diseases such as diabetes.

“It only takes one person to affect change in a whole community,” she says. “Making one small change like not drinking soft drink and getting outside more really creates a ripple effect...you just have to start small and build up—literally put one foot in front of the other.”

Nadine is also proud that she’s been able to promote running in remote Aboriginal communities through the Deadly Fun Run Series. The Deadly Fun Runs are an initiative

of the IMP, designed to introduce running and walking to men, women and children living in remote areas in a fun and non-threatening environment. Nadine played an integral role in setting up a series of Deadly Fun Runs in her home town and says the series has now been held in nine different communities.

“Communities work with us to hold the fun runs but they’re established and owned by the whole community and we encourage them to take ownership of it,” Nadine explains. “We work with local volunteers and support agencies to deliver the runs and they’ve been a great success so far.”

In addition to her own training schedule—which this year includes the Gold Coast Half Marathon and Frankfurt Marathon in Germany—and coordinating the Deadly Fun Run Series, Nadine also teaches

“It only takes one person to affect change in a whole community.”

Certificate IV in Health and Leisure which all IMP participants complete as part of the program. The course focuses on health and chronic disease, fitness and coaching, nutrition, sports training, kids’ programs, event organising, public relations and media skills.

Education is an important part of the IMP philosophy which is one of the things that attracted 24-year-old Elise Hull to the program. Currently living in Bathurst where she is both studying and working at Charles Sturt University (CSU), Elise recently joined the IMP because she wanted to not only do something for herself, but wanted to also inspire her family and community to become more active.

“As an Indigenous Resource Officer at CSU I know that not many Indigenous students are enrolled in university and retention rates are not great,” she says. “To close the gap in

education we need to first close the gap in health because you need a healthy body to get through school or university.”

Taking up running just over 12 months ago after getting together with a ‘jogging buddy’, Elise has been completing one fun run every month as a member of the IMP. On top of her training, study and work load, she’s also a mother to a four-year-old and says being a positive role model to her daughter was something that motivated her to join the IMP.

“I’ve fallen in love with running,” she says. “It’s great for stress release, it’s great for health and fitness, but it’s also got my four year-old daughter interested in being healthy and active.”

Elise says the support and guidance from the IMP is helping her to reach her goal one fun run at a time.

“You see projects with different celebrities attached who don’t really have anything to do with the program,” Elise says. “But we’re in contact with Robert regularly... he’s very involved with the program and

is always checking in to make sure we’re okay. The time and effort everyone puts into supporting us is really humbling.”

Nadine agrees that IMP staff (consisting of just four people including Robert de Castella) have been able to forge strong relationships with their participants. Her own teaching style is one of collaboration and two-way communication between herself and participants, ensuring that each student’s learning style is respected and catered for.

“Having experienced the program as a squad member, I understand how tough it can be for each runner,” she says. “I respect each of them for showing the courage to take on the challenge and responsibility to proudly represent their family, friends and community.”

With the IMP now becoming a more established program, Robert is now hoping the program will reach even more Aboriginal communities with plans to supply local schools with better resources for running activities.

“We’re looking at getting some basic infrastructure into remote schools where there’s no running tracks in the town,” he

says. “A durable running track which is fenced off is something that will make a real difference in young people being able to train.”

Making a difference to the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through running is something that all Australians can be a part of. Through the IMP Footprints program runners can sign up to a unique training program designed by Robert de Castella while raising money for the IMP. Donations of pre-loved runners are also accepted through the Project which are then given to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in remote communities so they too can experience the joy of running.

“I feel a strong sense of obligation and almost duty to do whatever I can to improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people,” Robert says. “I want participants to become great leaders and great role models to other Indigenous Australians.”

“I want Australia to be a better place where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can feel proud.”



The IMP squad made it to New York in November 2012. Image courtesy IMP.

Imparja Cup

Recognising skills and culture

By Sarah Carpinteri



Imparja Cup squad member Nathan Gardiner in action at Alice Springs earlier this year. Image courtesy Cricket Victoria.

Held annually in Alice Springs, Cricket Australia's Imparja Cup is a Twenty20 tournament connecting the nation's best Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cricketers. Each year, cricketers revel at the chance to represent both their state and heritage. In 2013, it was Victoria's Nathan Gardiner that stepped up to the challenge.

Having returned to the InfoReady Victorian Imparja Cup team after a two-year hiatus, Nathan was the shining light for the side, being the only Victorian to be selected in the Black Caps squad; the team of the tournament.

But the accolades didn't stop there for the opening batsmen. He was also recruited to Cricket Australia's under-23 Indigenous Development Squad, along with teammates Ben Abbataneglo, Josh Eaton and Adam McDermott. The Squad aims to develop the nation's most talented Indigenous cricketers, assisting them in the pursuit of playing elite cricket.

"I was really honoured to be recognised by Cricket Australia. It's a great opportunity," Nathan says.

Nathan—a 21-year old Wurundjeri man—completed the Imparja Cup with 146 runs, making him the tournament's second highest run-scorer (not including the final). His highest score was 51 from 37 balls against South Australia. He relished the chance of playing in an all-Indigenous tournament, enabling him to show his pride for his culture.

The 2013 InfoReady Victorian Imparja Cup team at the 2013 Imparja Cup. Image courtesy Cricket Victoria.

On the third day of the tournament, teams experienced a culture day where they embraced their Aboriginal and Torres Islander heritage, listened to ex-footballer Darryl White and tasted Indigenous cuisine.

The Imparja Cup, created in 1994 by Aboriginal cricketers Shane Franey and Ross Williams, was originally designed to be a family cricket match between Alice Springs and Tennant Creek. In 2001, Cricket Australia decided to make the tournament national—blending male, female, elite and community participation.

The national sporting body saw the tournament as a good opportunity to develop the nation's best Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cricketers. It's now become a highly anticipated event on the cricketing calendar seeing different cricketers and their families connect through their passion for the sport.

"The Imparja Cup isn't just about cricket. It's also about embracing our culture."

"The Imparja Cup isn't just about cricket. It's also about embracing our culture," Nathan says. "Culture day allowed us to feel connected to the Aboriginal community."

Away from the Imparja Cup Nathan is no stranger to playing competition cricket, having played representative cricket, pathway cricket as well as premier cricket—the highest level of club cricket in Victoria.

"I think having played cricket since I was seven-years-old and in various forms of high level cricket has prepared me well for tournaments such as the Imparja Cup."

"The tournament produces a high standard of cricket and you're playing against the best Indigenous cricketers in the country."

Overall, the InfoReady Victorian Imparja Cup team, also known as Noogal Toengorrt Tani, fell short of the 2013 Imparja Cup final, finishing in third place.

"It was disappointing to not make the final this year but, I am certain that we'll be back bigger and stronger in 2014," says Nathan.

To find out how you can get involved in the Imparja Cup visit cricket.com.au/series/imparja-cup-2013





Image, Stuart Bryce.

'Reconciliation is everyone's responsibility... I reckon it's up to us individually to extend a hand of friendship, to take a chance on each other and to form real relationships... we need to get together, we need to talk, we need to hang out, we need to get know each other.'

Meshel Laurie



National Reconciliation Week 2013



Image, Brian Cassey.

'To me Reconciliation Week is about putting a positive foot forward.'

Kevin Kropinyeri

'The flash mob represented people of Australia just coming and declaring reconciliation for this nation.'

Jackie, Flash Mob Choreographer



'We can't change the past, but we can help to make a better future.'

Lisa Singh Labor Senator for Tasmania, Australian Senate

'Reconciliation is about bringing everyone together.'

Miranda Tapsell



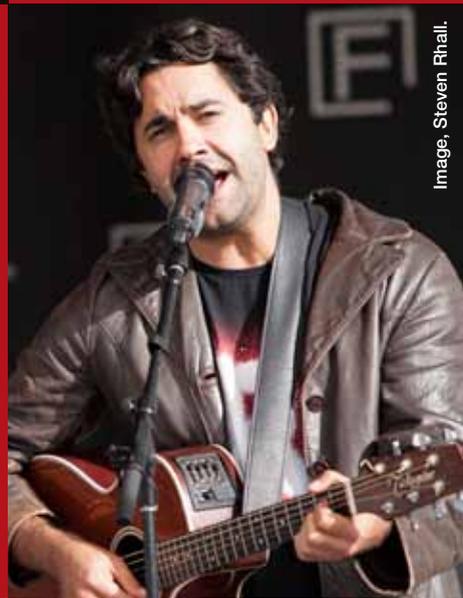
Image, Steven Rhall.

'Reconciliation is about us looking at our past and writing our own future. Making sure our kids have the opportunity for great education, work and to keep the flame of their culture burning.'

Jeremy Donovan, Generation One

'Every day is about reconciliation.'

Anita Heiss



Image, Steven Rhall.



'We have been here for over 40,000 years, we are the longest continuing culture...it's important for all Australians to understand our history and celebrate our culture.'

Dr Tom Calma AO

'Education is the key to stamping out racism.'

Professor Shane Houston



Brisbane Broncos help to tackle Indigenous smoking

Whether you love Rugby League or hate it, in Queensland it's almost a religion and its cathedral is the home of the Brisbane Broncos. With 280,000 Facebook 'likes', nearly 30,000 twitter followers and an average television audience last year of close to a million viewers, the Broncos are arguably Australia's most popular sporting club.

Which explains why Ian Lacey, manager of the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health's (UIH) preventative health team, was keen to sign up the Club as partners in the Institute's *Deadly Choices* health promotion campaign.

Ian, who is a former Broncos hooker himself, says having the Broncos on side has made a huge difference in the audience reach of the UIH's anti-smoking messages. "Broncos captain Sam Thaiday agreed to become our campaign ambassador last year and he drew large crowds to all the community events he attended," says Ian.

"We used his image on posters and in television and radio commercials to get the message about the dangers of smoking and poor diets out to our community."

The Broncos have now signed a new partnership agreement with the UIH which provides for the broadcasting of *Deadly Choices* interviews, features and related anti-tobacco and positive health messages on *Broncos Insider*—the Broncos television series broadcast on the Nine Network throughout the 2013 NRL Season.



Parliamentary committee finds sport key to reconciliation and closing the gap

A bi-partisan report on the contribution of sport to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing and mentoring has found that sport plays a vital part in reconciliation and improving the wellbeing of Australia's First Peoples.

The report, *Sport—more than just a game*, made several recommendations related to improved funding for Indigenous sports programs and carnivals and recommended particular efforts be made to lift participation in sport by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls.

In her introduction to the report, Committee Chair, Ms Janelle Saffin, specifically referred to the positive role played by sporting clubs and codes developing Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs). RAPs she said were, "making progress in areas of reconciliation and increasing the understanding and respect for Indigenous Australians through the medium of sport."

Ms Saffin referred to a number of issues contained in the Reconciliation Australia submission to the Committee's enquiry including the importance of sport as a vehicle for building improved relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Committee Deputy Chair, Dr Sharman Stone, said the Committee was disappointed in the lack of support for women's participation in sport and called for greater security in funding. "We found short-termism, one off trials and pilots littered the funding environment when it came to sport or physical fitness and Indigenous communities," she told ABC Radio. "Even when a sports-related program had outstanding results, this did not guarantee ongoing funding or any long-term commitment to the program or project."

NASCA helps Aboriginal kids to stay on track

Located at the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence (NCIE) in Redfern, the National Aboriginal Sporting Chance Academy (NASCA) has been empowering young people and their communities to make positive lifestyle choices for nearly 20 years. Using sport to initially engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and young people across Australia, NASCA now runs an expanded program including educational and cultural initiatives, personal development activities and community involvement programs.

NASCA Project Officer, Stewart Okell, mentors students in years 7 to 12 at the Walan Darramal Academy, which operates in three South Sydney schools. The Academy offers an holistic approach to students with sporting opportunities, career and employment programs, university site visits and meetings with potential employees.

"I've seen some obvious changes in the students that go through the Walan Darramal Academy—including literacy and numeracy levels which often improve within the first year," Stewart says. "We ask the kids to think about their lifestyle and the way they want to live because we want students to reach their full potential and gain the confidence to achieve in all areas of their schooling."

In addition to academies in Sydney and Central NSW, NASCA also engages young people using professional sportspeople as role models, such as Libby Trickett and Patrick Johnson, who are all actively involved in the organisation.

Find out more by visiting nasca.com.au





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Mo'onia Gerrard
Australian Netball Diamonds