

ReconciliationNews

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Mark Olive and
Stephanie Alexander

**Take reconciliation
to the table**

**Reconciliation:
a personal
reflection**

The Hon Robyn Layton
AO QC

Nova Peris

**Recognising
Aboriginal girls**



Reconciliation
AUSTRALIA

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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, sea 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 newsletter 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.



Reconciliation
A U S T R A L I A



This year has been off to a flying start and events in the first few months have demonstrated how important our work is to achieving a united and reconciled Australia.

From the report that was handed to the Prime Minister recommending changes to the Constitution to formally recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, to the scenes outside the Lobby restaurant on Australia Day. From the celebrations of this year's Australian of the Year winners to the passing of great role models including Uncle Jimmy Little and elder Mr Ned Cheedy. There have been many highs and lows.

Reconciliation Australia's role is vital to ensuring that we focus on the positive developments and stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and that we promote working together in a progressive and respectful manner.

Our annual breakfast honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian of the Year finalists, and other finalists who are working with our communities, was a wonderful event to meet inspirational people and to hear firsthand their stories. These figures are important for reconciliation. Not only do they inspire the nation but they inspire individuals.

The formalities of the National Flag Raising and Citizenship Ceremony on the morning of Australia Day were a mark of how far we have come. The inclusion of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags being raised along with the Australian flag; Auntie Agnes Shea welcoming everyone to Ngunnawal country and National Australia Day Chairman Adam Gilchrist, the Prime Minister and the Governor General all paying their respects to the traditional owners of Australia were all welcomed steps forward. These acts of inclusiveness and recognition are demonstrated throughout many ceremonies and events all year round.

These simple important actions are testament to the progress that is being made and that change is happening, but we acknowledge that a lot more still remains. We all know reconciliation is a big process and there is no single strand.

Just recently we celebrated the launch of the 300th Reconciliation Action Plan, welcoming GrainCorp to the RAP family. What an achievement for the program. The outcomes we are witnessing through our RAP partners,

and their commitment to opportunities and actions that go to the heart of overcoming employment, education and health inequality, are clear signs of the change that is happening. Our RAP Impact Measurement Report, released in February, shows that significant progress is being made in the areas of cultural awareness, employment and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business opportunities.

Everyone has a role in facilitating and advancing this positive change—and National Reconciliation Week is a perfect time for us to broaden the conversation. This year I am pleased to welcome Mark Olive and Stephanie Alexander as the 2012 National Reconciliation Week Ambassadors. They're encouraging Australians to get together this May over a cuppa or around a BBQ to support reconciliation. This year's theme *Let's talk*

recognition also complements the important work around constitutional change.

As the national body promoting reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians, Reconciliation Australia has been tasked by the Australian Government to lead the *You Me Unity* campaign. *You Me Unity*—the public education campaign for Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples—is about reflecting a nation's values; its idea of itself for the future.

At Reconciliation Australia, we believe that recognition and reconciliation go hand in hand and that constitutional change has the potential to bring all Australians together.

In March, around 100 emerging young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders met at the National Centre of

Indigenous Excellence to have their say on constitutional change. Their enthusiasm was infectious and I hope they will continue the conversation in their communities about why change is important.

It's these images of excellence, of optimism and of courage that I hope the Australian community will continue to hold front and centre in 2012—as it is the only way we can foster change.

And speaking of change, I hope you enjoy the new-look Reconciliation News. We're moving the publication to a magazine format with longer and more in-depth articles about reconciliation. Please enjoy this issue that focuses on recognition—both individuals and organisations.

Leah Armstrong
Chief Executive
Reconciliation Australia



Prime Minister Julia Gillard with India Mortlock at a morning tea in Parliament House after the Government's announcement of the next steps for Constitutional Recognition.
Picture by Cole Bennett.

Reconciliation: a personal reflection

By The Hon Robyn Layton AO QC



Photo courtesy of Luke Hemer/
Messenger Community News.

Reconciliation has been at the forefront of my thoughts over the last two months. There are personal reasons for its prominence. I was recently in Canberra on 26 January 2012 for the presentation of the Australian of the Year Awards. I was privileged to be the South Australia finalist and also a recipient of an Order of Australia in the General Division. I met with two Aboriginal women who were also Australian of the Year Award finalists. Julie Tongs Local Hero from the Australian Capital Territory for her health and wellbeing initiatives and Rebecca Richards Young Australian South Australia for her voluntary work which included Indigenous health and education and being the first Aboriginal Rhodes Scholar. I also met Dr John Boffa who was the Australian of the Year finalist for the Northern Territory, for his outstanding contribution to the health development for Aboriginal people in the north of Australia.

A particularly moving moment was when Laurie Baymarrangga, a 90-odd-year-old elder from Murrungga Island in the Northern Territory was announced as the recipient of the Senior Australian of the Year. She was unable to be present but we saw video footage of an interview with her and also interviews of others who spoke about her outstanding initiatives in providing housing, cultural maintenance and environmental wellbeing for her community.

The prominence given by the National Australia Day Council to awarding Australian of the Year Awards to persons engaged in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues this year is very significant. It was particularly special to see so many Aboriginal people being recognised for the work that they have done within their own communities. There were also examples of people working together with Aboriginal people to improve their welfare and the connection between cultures.

Reconciliation Australia arranged a breakfast in Canberra which we attended; overall the mood was uplifting, with hope and enthusiasm for the future. We were all looking forward to the positive steps of reconciliation which could occur through the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Constitution.

The next day, the high dipped to a low with the Tent Embassy event followed by protestors burning the Australian flag on the steps of Parliament House. The unbalanced media coverage, the disgraceful misrepresentation which triggered the events, followed by outraged and often ill informed condemnation from all sides, left people wondering what impact these would have in achieving a successful referendum for constitutional change.

Luckily Pat Dodson, a few days later, helpfully began the process of putting the events into perspective. As he said: *"I would always condemn bad manners and unnecessarily aggressive behaviour by whomever. But I will always defend people's rights to assert their political position and try to look to the heart of why people feel so oppressed that they feel violent confrontation is the only recourse."*

"As a non-Aboriginal person a primary personal commitment is to increase my knowledge and understanding about Aboriginal people within the community in which I live..."

This same sentiment was later taken up by Pat Anderson, the Chairperson of the Lowitja Institute, who gave an address for the fourth Anniversary of the National Apology to the Stolen Generations breakfast in Adelaide on 13 February 2012. Pat initially posed the question as to whether the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians was so tentative and fragile that one or two

incidents could jeopardise historically needed change. She asked that if that was true, what could we do to overcome this to build a stronger, more open and honest relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians. She expressed her view that the events in Canberra made a powerful argument for a structural change in the way business is done in Australia. It made changes to the Constitution to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to prohibit racial discrimination even more necessary and more urgent, not less. Pat referred to the need to address feelings of powerlessness and consequent rage in some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and a need to build a system which is more responsive to their needs.

Pat also made another important point that the mainstream system must learn to recognise and respect Aboriginal experience, that most Australians generally know very little about Aboriginal people. There is a need to challenge negative stereotypes about what it means to be an Aboriginal person. This view in particular had great resonance for me.

We all have our own perspective of what reconciliation means. For me, reconciliation takes many different forms. It is both the journey and the destination towards cultural respect and connection. It is individual and it is community. It is inward reflection and outward action. But none of this can occur without a personal commitment to the process.

As a non-Aboriginal person a primary personal commitment is to increase my knowledge and understanding about Aboriginal people within the community in which I live. A greater understanding of the different groups, the diversity within and between groups, kinship and family connections; language; and more sensitive appreciation of respectful communication and engagement.

Living as I do in the City of Adelaide, I see a reasonable spectrum of Aboriginal people. I see them as students at school and at tertiary institutions; on the streets late at night needing care and shelter; smartly dressed going to work; camping in the park lands after they have come from remote communities for various reasons (including selling artworks); having breakfast at the Daughters of Charity Hutt Street Centre. However, this is a superficial viewing. It is reliant first of all

upon apparent Aboriginal identification and it is often not accompanied by direct communication, although taking my dogs for walks have provided many opportunities for brief exchanges. These simple human communications should not be underestimated.

I am lucky enough to have a means of achieving a better understanding through connections resulting from being Co-Chair of Reconciliation South Australia with Professor Peter Buckskin, as well as being a member or chair of other organisations with a significant Aboriginal focus. I have

“These simple human communications should not be underestimated.”

made it part of my personal commitment to go to functions, attend Aboriginal arts exhibitions and performances, reading books about culture and belief and stories, as well as listening to radio and television programs. This is part of my personal journey towards reconciliation.

In relation to community reconciliation, I see many ways in which legal training can play a part, particularly by being involved in the necessary information process to address the general lack of understanding within the community about the existence of a written Federal Constitution, let alone its discriminatory provisions.

In short, the Constitution is deficient and discriminatory in respect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It has no recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' prior occupation and custodianship of land, waters and sea. It has clauses which can expressly permit



Australian of the Year finalists Hon Robyn Layton, Julie Tonga, Dr John Boffa and Rebecca Richards with Reconciliation Australia Co-Chair Dr Tom Calma (second from left). Picture by Maiko Yoshimoto.

discrimination against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; section 51(xxvi) allows special laws to be passed which disadvantage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; and section 25 which enables State laws to disqualify people of a particular race, from voting at State Elections.

The excellent report *Recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the Constitution* presented to the Federal Government by the Expert Panel in January 2012, contains well considered recommendations on specific changes to the Constitution as well as recommendations on the process of a referendum, following extensive consultations around Australia.

The suggested amendments cover three main topics and five sections of the Constitution.

1. **Repealing two discriminatory sections** 25 and 51 (xxvi).
2. **Adding two sections on recognition** of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as original occupants and allowing laws to be passed in respect of them (new section 51A), as well as recognition of Aboriginal languages (new section 127A).
3. **Adding a section prohibiting racial discrimination** and enabling special laws and measures to be taken for the purpose of overcoming disadvantage or past discrimination and protecting culture, languages and heritage (new section 116 A).

These suggested amendments need to be discussed around the whole country. Providing easily understood and accessible information about the Constitution, its contents and the reasons for suggested amendments, is an essential first step in the process towards a referendum.

A referendum is the only way the Constitution can be altered. It is a decision of the people and requires every voting Australian citizen to consider and answer questions about recognition of Aboriginal people within the Constitution. In order to be successful, over half the voters in Australia including over half the voters in four out of the six States must say "Yes" to the questions which are asked.

The whole referendum process provides an invaluable opportunity to further reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians. It is a very important means for community engagement in reconciliation. I also see ways of involving the legal profession more generally in that process and it will require them to become personally attuned to reconciliation and its importance.

An important ingredient towards reconciliation is to build on the strengths. The negative stereotypes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is the only image that some people have of what it means to be a First Australian in this country. The positive achievements being made by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are often not known or appreciated by the general community, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. I was recently amazed to read the Aboriginal Business Magazine (ABM), a very glossy monthly magazine accessible from the internet, which features the broad spectrum of Aboriginal businesses carried out in Australia as well as overseas. These are examples of entrepreneurship and self-employment of Aboriginal people which is little known; let alone celebrated.

"It is also important to focus on youth and education as being a prime means to empower future generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people..."

The strategy being undertaken by Reconciliation Australia for the promotion of Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs) is a very important means of engaging organisations, groups and individuals in the journey towards reconciliation. That process is beginning in my own legal community. There are many people who are very sympathetic to improving communication between

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians, but do not know how to go about doing something to achieve that. This is where RAPs, properly developed, implemented and monitored, can go a long way both philosophically as well as requiring the identification of practical targets to improve the respect dignity and welfare of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. They require mutual engagement.

It is also important to focus on youth and education as being a prime means to empower future generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Education opens opportunities for work, self-respect, and avoids the boredom and depression created by unemployment and reliance on government benefits. There are some positive signs of the effect of mentoring programs to retain youth at school and to give them hope and a future vision for themselves beyond what are for many of them; dysfunctional family circumstances. Reconciliation SA has also developed educational packs which are distributed to all schools in the State to imbed knowledge and information about Aboriginal culture within the curriculum for all students.

Two hundred years of continuing disadvantage takes time to undo. This is no excuse for less than optimum effort and not setting goals and targets to be achieved within timeframes. Being an optimist, I can see that there are tracks that we can forge and follow towards the goal of reconciliation. Amendments to the Constitution to give formal recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the original custodians of the land and waters, combined with clauses to prohibit racial discrimination against them, and other Australians based on race, as well as enabling special measures to be taken for their benefit, will lay a solid foundation to specifically target areas of disadvantage. Of course legislation by itself is not enough. It is essential to have true and respectful consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians about their needs as well as discussion about their views of what is required to be done to enable them to achieve equality of outcomes. This is real connection and reconciliation.

For more information on constitutional reform visit www.youmeunity.org.au

The Indigenous governance and development challenge: an international conversation



A small gathering of Indigenous leaders from across Canada, New Zealand, the United States of America and Australia recently met in Tucson at the University of Arizona to share their common experiences and practical insights into meeting the challenges of advancing Indigenous self-determination, self-governance and sustained economic development.

The impetus for the conference came from Professor Mick Dodson during his appointment as the Malcolm Fraser & Gough Whitlam Chair in Australian Studies at Harvard University. The three-day event was coordinated as a Harvard University Australian Studies Initiative, in partnership with Professor Stephen Cornell from the Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy, University of Arizona; Joan Timeche from The Native Nations Institute; as well as The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, Harvard University; and The National Centre for Indigenous Studies at The Australian National University. Additional support was also provided by the Udall Foundation and The University of Arizona's Office of Global Initiatives.

The four countries each have distinctive Indigenous cultures and histories, with considerable internal cultural diversity as well. Delegates heard about that diversity from the panelists and keynote speakers from each country (Sir Mason Durie from New Zealand; Jaime Pinkham from the USA, Wilton Littlechild from Canada, and Jason Eades on behalf of Patrick Dodson from Australia). But more importantly, delegates also heard from delegates about the strong commonalities that Indigenous peoples share across the four countries; commonalities that bind and perhaps offer the chance to better support each other in similarly challenging situations.

One thing everyone agreed on—over the last 40 years, in each of the 4 international jurisdictions, the game has changed or at least is changing. A transition is occurring from the 'rights battle' to the 'governance and development challenge'. Many Indigenous groups have spent so much time fighting for recognition and rights, and sorting out internal disagreements, that they have shortcut building their own governance foundations. As a result, they have to catch

up fast afterwards, or worse, miss out on opportunities and get continually hammered by crises.

Professor Mick Dodson laid out the conference themes in his introductory presentation. He noted that Indigenous people have now secured many rights, successfully negotiated treaties and land claims, and entered into major resource and enterprise development agreements.

“The four countries each have distinctive Indigenous cultures and histories, with considerable internal cultural diversity as well.”

With these successes, he said, has come a daunting challenge—that of building effective forms of self-governance to promote development and manage resources and benefits. The additional challenge in this, as Neil Sterritt from Canada pointed out, is for Indigenous people not only to gain more control over their own affairs, but to find ways to make control meaningful and to maximise their practical capacity for self-determination.

An important commonality the delegates identified across countries is the consistency and resilience of Indigenous demands for self-determination and self-governance, and the persistence of their efforts to get sustainable economic

2010 Indigenous Governance Awards winner Wayne Denning on location with the Carbon Media crew. Wayne was part of the Australian delegation in Tucson. Picture by Wayne Quilliam.

development going. The good news from the conference is that Indigenous people are paying increasing attention to governance, and to the link between capable institutions of governance on the one hand, and development outcomes on the other.

Highlighted by all four countries was the role of self-determination and self-government as essential bases for making sustained improvements in the socioeconomic conditions of Indigenous peoples. This was a key feature of Reconciliation Australia's own *Indigenous Community Governance Research Project* carried out with the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research. Getting governance right, the evidence shows, is a precondition of Indigenous peoples being in the driving seat of their own development.

While stories of disadvantage, deficit, and despair still dominate far too many discussions of Indigenous issues,

“... the delegates told new stories of resourcefulness, creativity and success — as determined and chosen by Indigenous peoples themselves.”

the delegates told new stories of resourcefulness, creativity and success — as determined and chosen by Indigenous peoples themselves. Narratives were shared demonstrating the hard work that is making a difference on the ground: leaders building succession planning into their work; groups designing investment strategies to look after future generations as well as the needs of

current citizens; clans, tribes and nations negotiating complex agreements with the private sector and governments; Indigenous programs that build the practical capacity of people in communities to run education, policing and health systems (not just for their own citizens but sometimes for non-Indigenous residents as well).

Also showcased was the wide range of economic initiatives being established and sustained: from small individual and family businesses, to major nation enterprises, and joint ventures. And yet again it was clear that a common denominator for success was building ‘effective governance for doing business’ which includes, as one delegate pointed out, creating innovative ways of ‘culturising commerce, not commercialising culture’.

Particularly inspiring was a full day-trip to Tohono O’odham Nation, a federally recognised Tribe located in southwestern

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The 2012 Indigenous Governance Awards are seeking outstanding examples of Indigenous governance in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, projects or initiatives.

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The Awards recognise and promote effective, innovative, courageous and creative leadership and decision-making that show Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people determining and driving real change.

To find out more: www.reconciliation.org.au/iga or 02 6273 9200

Applications and nominations close 31 May 2012

Indigenous
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and central Arizona with 28,000 members living on and off the reservation. At Tohono O'odham delegates had the opportunity to see a tribal government in action, visit their legislative offices and cultural resource centre, and spend time talking with their impressive leaders.

While we often think Indigenous people overseas have greater statutory and treaty rights than here, the Australian delegates were able to tell their own success stories from the perspective of just getting on with the business of being self-determining where they could, in spite of relatively limited statutory recognition and rights.

Tony Wurramarrba was one such speaker. He is a founding member of the Anindilyakwa Land Council (ALC) Groote Eylandt and has been its Chairperson since 2003. Tony told how the ALC was the first land council in Australia to broker a wide-ranging Regional Partnership Agreement with the Federal and Northern Territory Governments. In exchange for land leasing, the ALC was instrumental in securing well in excess of \$50 million of government money to increase housing, improve health, education and training, business opportunities and infrastructure to the Wanindilyakwa people of the Groote Archipelago. As one Native American delegate commented, the Aboriginal people of Groote effectively exercised their sovereign decision making when they negotiated such an agreement.

Another Australian delegate, Wayne Denning, told how he and other young people are committed to ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are part of the 21st Century digital economy. Wayne is the managing director/executive producer of Carbon Media, an Aboriginal multi-media production company in Brisbane which won the 2010 Reconciliation Australia and BHP Billiton Indigenous Governance Award. Carbon Media produces content that challenges perceptions, promotes success and highlights issues that impact on Indigenous Australians. It has produced television commercials, documentaries, children's game shows, corporate DVDs, live streaming of events, and interactive and innovative websites and mobile applications.

Jason Eades stepped into the breach at short notice to present the Australian keynote speech on behalf of Patrick Dodson. Jason also talked about the work he was doing through his own consultancy company, with Victorian Aboriginal people, looking for ways to think differently about economic development opportunities (including investment, family business and community enterprises). He sees 'culturally responsive' governance and competency as part of the necessary foundation for successful outcomes. Jason is a board member of Indigenous Business Australia and served as CEO of the Koorie Heritage Trust, a not-for-profit Aboriginal community organization in Melbourne, which received the inaugural Reconciliation Australia and BHP Billiton Indigenous Governance Award in 2005.

“...the Australian delegates were able to tell their own success stories from the perspective of just getting on with the business of being self-determining where they could...”

Reconciliation Australia's Leah Armstrong and academic Diane Smith took delegates through the resources that are now publicly available on Reconciliation Australia's Indigenous Governance Toolkit website. The Governance Toolkit is Australia's only comprehensive online resource aimed at strengthening Indigenous community and organisational governance. The toolkit draws much its wealth of case studies and resources from the finalists and winners of the Indigenous Governance Awards and includes video content and easy-to-use templates. From straightforward information on the basic tenets of governance to tools to assist in governance development, the

Toolkit can be accessed for day-to-day governance support or form the foundation of governance training. The toolkit is currently being re-designed, with support from BHP Billiton, by Carbon Media and will be re-launched later in 2012.

Steven Cornell also presented the new *Governance Database* hosted by the Native Nations Institute at the Udall Centre in Tucson. Both sites [www.reconciliation.org.au/governance and <http://nnidatabase.org/db/home>] provide stories about what works for Indigenous people in their governance-building efforts.

It was encouraging to see younger delegates actively engaging. From Australia, Dean Matthews and Ninielia (Nini) Mills spoke of the hard-won recognition and opportunities being taken up by the Yawuru people in Western Australia. Dean and Nini were sponsored by senior Yawuru people so they could benefit from the knowledge and insights shared at the conference. This is part of what “succession planning” is all about, and many Indigenous groups from overseas now do it as a matter of course. The conference was also well-served by the highly professional work of Tim Goodwin, Toni Bauman and Megan Menoka Hill who facilitated break-out group discussions, and Asmi Wood and Miriam Jorgensen who impressed everyone as co-rapporteur, drawing together the many insights and overlapping discussions.

The delegates identified an ongoing action, research and communication agenda designed to help continue the conversation and spread practical lessons as key actions to take forward. In particular, delegates were keen to explore digital information technologies, including the design of an international electronic portal—a kind of “Governance Watch”—that would link Indigenous nations, governance research centres and data bases in each country so that the success stories can be more effectively shared across countries. Reconciliation Australia will continue to support this work through the hub group that has been tasked with progressing the conference recommendations. We will keep you updated on this important conversation about our common roots and common futures.

Hugh Jackman and David Koch to help reach a new reconciliation audience online

Reconciliation Australia is continuing to delve into the online arena, and we are especially excited to launch the new National Reconciliation Week website.

Looking very deadly, if we may say so ourselves, the website offers ways you can be involved this National Reconciliation Week—including an events register, informative resources and profiles about our wonderful supporters.

From Hollywood hero Hugh Jackman, to young entrepreneur and Gamilaroi woman Juliette Knox; the supporters of National Reconciliation Week are an eclectic bunch. They all have one thing in common though; advocating the importance of reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians.

There will be no shortage of engagement from this mob, with each supporter contributing a blog coinciding with this year's theme; *Let's talk recognition*.

Sunrise presenter David Koch blogs about why he supports National Reconciliation Week; reflecting on the importance of recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the original custodians and pioneers of this country.

"Their history, their culture and their beliefs have a sacred place in the DNA of our nation."

In keeping up with the evolving social media world, our supporters will also be dabbling in 'Tweeting', 'Facebooking', and 'Vlogging'—rest assured it's not as confusing as it sounds.

In the spirit of food bringing people together, each supporter will share their favourite recipe on the website; young Indigenous advocate Madeline Anderson is an avid homemade pizza fan, while Hugh Jackman loves to make Anzac biscuits with his kids.

With video blogs or 'vlogs' set to go up weekly on the website, people around the country such as comedian Kevin Kropinyeri and Triple J presenter Alex Dyson (to name a few) are encouraging you to get involved this National Reconciliation Week, and talk recognition.

Check out www.reconciliation.org.au/nrw

Also find us at:

www.facebook.com/ReconciliationAus

www.twitter.com/RecAustralia

www.youtube.com/ReconciliationAus

Dancers from Bangarra and The Australian Ballet performing in *Warumuk - in the Dark Night*, a joint collaboration between the two premier dance companies to mark the 50th anniversary year of The Australian Ballet. The photograph by Jeff Busby captures the rhythm and passion of the dancers as they unite for a magical performance inspired by Aboriginal culture. Bangarra's new production *Terrain* tours nationally from June. www.bangarra.com.au





Mark Olive and Stephanie Alexander take reconciliation to the table for National Reconciliation Week 2012

As a young child, Mark Olive eagerly watched his mother and aunts prepare meals in the family home. Food not only brought his family closer together, but the blend of Indigenous and Western foods also sparked his passion for cooking—a career that has now spanned some 25 years.

Mark, aka 'The Black Olive', is a proud Bundjalung man whose family originated from the Northern Rivers region in NSW. Early in his career as a chef, Mark developed a strong desire to raise the profile of native Australian foods. Through the creation of his international catering company, Black Olive Catering, Mark has been successful in showcasing the best Australian native foods to national and international audiences. His charismatic style and creative approach to food has also seen him star in his own television series *The Outback Cafe*. Because of Mark's passion, people around the world and in Australia know more about cooking with meats unique to Australia including crocodile, emu and kangaroo—as well as native Australian herbs such as lemon myrtle and wattleseed.

But Mark is not only passionate about cooking. His success and determination to create positive change for his people has made him an inspirational leader for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business owners. And with his beaming smile and friendly disposition, Mark has become a well-known and much loved Australian personality.

Throughout his career, Mark has worked with some great Australian cooks and chefs including Stephanie Alexander, Poh Ling Yeow and Elizabeth Chong.

Sharing a passion for fresh, Australian ingredients Mark and Stephanie have demonstrated throughout their careers that reconciliation is about working together to make Australia a unique and harmonious place.

Growing up, Stephanie was also strongly influenced by her family, particularly her mother who "was interested not just in recipes, but in the culture that inspired the dish". Throughout her travels (both Mark and Stephanie have spent time in Europe);

Stephanie came to understand that an interest in the food of the world meant an interest in the culture of the world. Her love of culture has also translated to the many different Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures here in Australia.

Inspired by her love of food and culture, Stephanie wrote one of Australia's most famous cookbooks, *The Cooks Companion* and also created the *Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation* which encourages children to grow, harvest, prepare and share fresh, seasonal food.

For this year's National Reconciliation Week, it was an easy choice to have Mark Olive and Stephanie Alexander as our ambassadors. They're both passionate about food, family and reconciliation.

You can support National Reconciliation Week by hosting your own morning tea or BBQ and registering it at www.reconciliation.org.au/nrw.

Recognising girls and investing in their future

Nova Peris and the Governor-General Ms Quentin Bryce AC
CVO with students from St John's Catholic College.



As a young girl, Nova Peris dreamt of big things. Inspired by her grandmother, she always believed that anything was possible. It was this attitude that helped shape her values and attitudes—and it was this attitude which saw her become Australia's first Aboriginal person to win a gold medal at an Olympic Games.

But now Nova wants to use her experiences to motivate the next generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women through the Nova Peris Girls Academy. Setting up a pilot program at St John's Catholic College in Darwin, a boarding school she herself attended, she's hoping the students will also "reach for stars and live their dreams".

"Going back to my old high school to develop this program in partnership with the NT Catholic Education office is something that I'm very honoured, privileged and excited about," she says.

"It's amazing to be in a position where you can have such a huge effect on the lives of these young girls."

Nova believes that highly developed mentoring programs, such as those in her academy and in the Clontarf Academy for Boys, can empower positive behavioural change and improve school retention.

"People don't realise the power of mentoring," she says.

"We've seen a lot of students whose self-esteem has been at an all-time low—so it does mean a lot to be such a positive influence in their lives."

The Academy aims to achieve real and measurable improvements for Indigenous girls in attendance, numeracy and literacy, higher education and workforce readiness, leadership and engagement. It's also focused on enabling young women to achieve their best—with programs focusing on health and wellbeing, life choices, self-esteem, career pathways and spirituality or connecting to culture.

"I'm obviously very passionate about the Academy and getting the concepts right is something I've put all of my energy in to," Nova says.

"The Academy is about giving these girls a sense of empowerment and providing them with the tools to make the best lifestyle choices for themselves.

"I want them to be able to step outside the box of society's perceptions, and I think our mentors are providing them with the support they need to do that."

The relationship between each student and mentor is perhaps the most important element of the Nova Peris Girls Academy. Nova likens the relationship between the each student and mentor to that of a big sister or aunty.

"Building trust with the girls is an important part of being an effective mentor," she says.

"And it's also about sharing your own stories and experience and passing that knowledge on to the girls."

"Investing in girls' education is really important, not only here in Australia but on a global level as well."

The mentors within the Academy are also helping students, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to adjust to life away from their families.

"I think it's comforting for parents to know their children are going to a boarding school where there are programs in place that identify the needs of young girls and look at a whole range of programs to address those needs," she says.

"Schools are set up to deliver education but it's difficult for them to provide students with that one-on-one mentoring experience.

"Our program affords students that quality time with their mentor.

"Having more Indigenous teachers and mentors in schools and programs that are culturally sensitive does help to give

those Indigenous students that sense of empowerment."

The Academy is also starting to have a positive flow on effect to the students' family and their community with another 25 girls joining the Academy in Term 2.

"Our programs are ingrained with the curriculum and encourage overall positive health and wellbeing which will achieve higher education outcomes," she says.

"And if you invest in a girl, you're not just investing in the individual; you're investing in a whole community.

"Investing in girls' education is really important, not only here in Australia but on a global level as well."

Nova has a long held belief in the importance of education which was instilled in her from a young age.

"Although both my mother and grandmother grew up in Aboriginal missions, I had a fantastic family who believed in providing me with the best education possible," she says.

"While I excelled in sport, my stepdad still used to say to me that education is for life."

While Nova admits to feeling some pressure for the Academy to succeed, her innate desire to achieve excellence, together with her teachings of her grandmother, are placing the Academy in a good position.

"I'm not a perfect role model, but I am a young Aboriginal woman that achieved when all the odds were stacked against me.

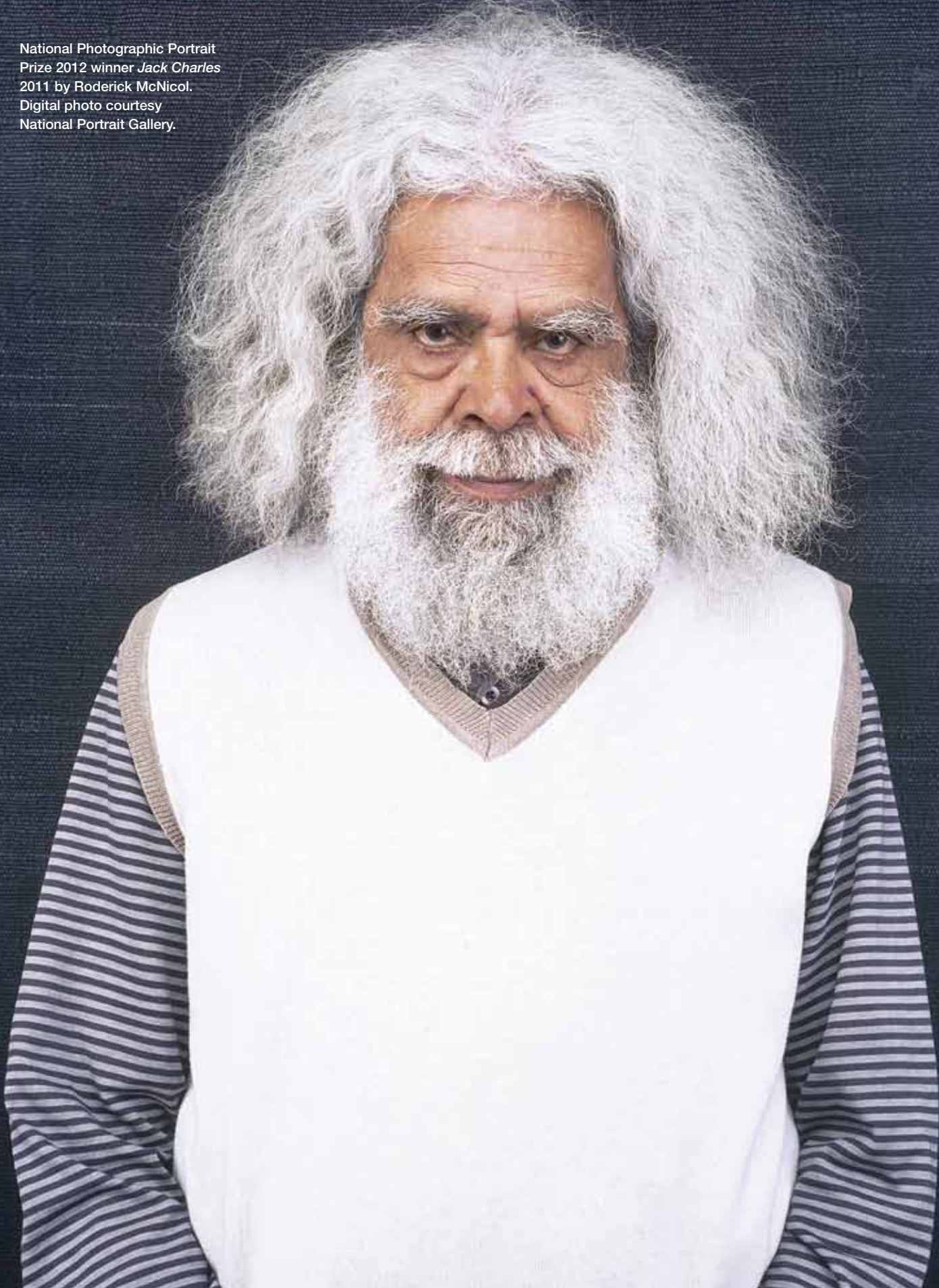
"I was a young girl who got off my backside and believed in myself and had a go—and that's what the principles of my Academy are based on.

"I'm definitely not saying to these girls be like me but rather I'm saying be like you.

"I hope the Academy will be something that not only leaves behind a legacy—but continues to be a place that helps to empower young Aboriginal women."

Picture perfect: the award-winning role model

National Photographic Portrait
Prize 2012 winner *Jack Charles*
2011 by Roderick McNicol.
Digital photo courtesy
National Portrait Gallery.



Jack Charles is a proud Wiradjuri and Wurundjeri man. The actor has reached great heights—most recently with his portrayal of Bennelong in the stage production *I am Eora* and in 2010 where his one man show *Jack Charles v The Crown* was welcomed by audiences and critics with much acclaim. While Jack is proud of his accomplishments as a performer, it is his role as an advocate, and his journey of survival, that is fast becoming his greatest achievement.

“My story was intended to educate and inform white Australia about just one stolen person’s journey,” he says.

“It’s a high honour for me to be acknowledged as a person that’s moved on from the past. I’ve gone from infamy to stardom.”

In his 68 years, the Aboriginal elder has faced seemingly insurmountable challenges. Born in 1943 at the Cummeragunja Mission on the Murray River, Jack was taken from his mother at four years of age and raised in the Box Hill Boys School in Melbourne. What followed his childhood was nearly four decades of heroin addiction, crime and homelessness. Amidst the chaos though, Jack found his niche in performing, founding the first Aboriginal theatre company *Nindethana* with Bob Maza in 1971. Storytelling was always a passion for him and in 2008, he was given the opportunity to tell his story with filmmaker Amiel Courtin-Wilson taking on the life of Jack Charles in the documentary *Bastardy*.

“Many people didn’t take kindly to an Aboriginal man seemingly boasting about his prowess as a cat burglar on the wealthy side of town,” Jack says.

“But there’s always more to the story than meets the eye... and by the time the film premiered I was already on the journey of being a black light of the future in my community.”

Bastardy has also made its way to several drug and alcohol centres and prisons, a place Jack often found himself during his years of crime and addiction. Nowadays he goes to prison for a different reason—helping to inspire some of the inmates still battling the same drug dependency that once plagued him.

“The film has been shown in many drug and alcohol centres and sometimes I’m able to go along and take some questions from the audience,” he says.

“It’s affected so many lives here in Australia and it’s been picked up by a number of countries including New Zealand, South Africa, Canada and India who are all former colonies.”

Being recognised for his talents is something Uncle Jack has come to thrive on. He has welcomed the fame and positive attention he’s recently received through the National Portrait Gallery, where a photographic portrait of Jack now hangs. The striking photo was taken by long-time friend, Rod McNicol, and was recently awarded the National Photographic Portrait Prize 2012.

“There’s a bit of a cheeky Mona Lisa smile under my moustache there,” says Jack.

“And the eyes follow you around the room... that’s a telling portrait.”

“Jack says he hopes to use his position to encourage more Australians to learn about the history and culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.”

The relationship between photographer and subject began over 40 years ago. Jack was a 25-year-old actor, struggling to find himself and living on the streets in Fitzroy, while Rod was idealistic and passionate about telling the story of the local performing arts scene through photography. Not one to shy away from the spotlight, Jack was more than willing to accept Rod’s request at being model and muse.

“Our friendship is very lasting and he has stuck with me over many years,” Jack says.

The latest photo, now an award winning portrait, is arguably the best image that Rod has taken of his mate. Beneath the eyes, which reveal both sadness and joy, is a mischievous and telling smile of someone who has been through hell and back, still keeping his sense of humour and laconic attitude.

“It’s his idea of celebrating my late blossoming,” says Jack, “and it’s perfectly said.”

“It’s also one of the highest honours that I could receive—a portrait of me hung in the National Portrait Gallery which is a stone’s throw away from the High Court of Australia—it’s brilliant!”

Freed of his drug addictions, Jack says he hopes to use his position to encourage more Australians to learn about the history and culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. He also hopes his tenacity to overcome adversity will cement him as a role model for young people, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous.

“My advice for young people is that you’ve got to be true to yourself and you’ve got to be strong enough to make serious decisions—if not for yourself, for your family or kids.

“I’m a perfect example of a rewired person coming out of addiction, crime and jail time into the lights of stage and camera and doing the work that I’ve always wanted to do. I’m well and truly ready to accept the role of the articulate elder and to tell the story of my life.”

The National Portrait Gallery will conduct special tours during National Reconciliation Week that recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians through portraiture.



Turning good intentions into action on reconciliation

By Melinda Cilento

The first few months of this year have seen many reflecting on the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and other Australians.

The good news is that most Australians see the relationship as important and are optimistic about the future of the relationship.

In fact many individuals and organisations are keen to contribute directly to the process of reconciliation in Australia, if only they knew how to go about it.

In 2006 Reconciliation Australia launched its Reconciliation Action Plan program to address this challenge. Reconciliation Action Plans, or RAPs as they are known, provide a framework to directly improve relationships and respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians. Stronger relationships and deeper respect in turn are the foundations for better opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people now and in the future.

The first RAP Impact Measurement Report released by Reconciliation Australia in February evaluates the collective results of the program and highlights the significant milestones made by our growing RAP community. This report shows that when organisations are given the tools to engage in reconciliation the results are inspiring.

In just over five years 300 organisations have implemented RAPs. This group includes some of Australia's largest companies, not-for-profits, government departments, schools and universities. Each has worked closely with Reconciliation Australia to develop strategies to pursue reconciliation through actions and commitments focussed on respect, relationships and opportunities.

Every day RAP organisations are building greater knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and people through their workplaces.

Over 1.6 million people work or study in RAP organisations and so far over 20,000 have completed formal cultural awareness training. In coming years around 150,000 more people will have done likewise based on existing RAP commitments.

RAP organisations have committed to employing more than 21,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with over 13,300 positions already filled. They have also filled nearly 1000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander apprenticeships and traineeships, provided millions of dollars in educational scholarships and purchased \$26 million in goods and services from certified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.

These are just the direct benefits attributable to the RAP program.

The broader benefits of greater cultural awareness and respect, of new business and job opportunities that flow from a more successful Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business community and so on, only serve to reinforce the benefits of RAPs.

Importantly, through its emphasis on partnerships the RAP program supports the efforts of other successful groups such as the Australian Indigenous Minority Supplier Council, Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience and National Centre of Indigenous Excellence.

The RAP program is effective because it does not accept short cuts when it comes to building a culture of respect in the workplace.

And, by encouraging organisations to align RAP actions to their core business, to build genuine partnerships and to engage broadly—with employees, customers and suppliers—the program drives new opportunities, lasting outcomes and mutual benefits.

RAPs help organisations find their own ways to get involved and contribute to reconciliation. The first RAP report shows that doing so is well worth the effort.

To download the full 2011 RAP Impact Measurement Report visit
www.reconciliation.org.au

DEEWR's latest RAP

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) have reaffirmed their commitment to reconciliation by launching their second RAP.

Their launch event featured a live rap and dance performance by Indigenous Hip Hop Projects, who have been working extensively in Aboriginal communities. They are a unique team of talented artists that specialise in hip hop, media, entertainment and performing arts. The group also facilitate workshops that provide performance skills, enhance confidence, and educate communities about health issues.

The event also included inspirational presentations by Leann Wilson, DEEWR's Queensland Strategic Relationships Manager; and Scott Prince, Learn Earn Legend! Program ambassador and National Rugby League superstar.

In her address, Lisa Paul, DEEWR Secretary, said the department had achieved great things since the release of their first RAP in 2009.

DEEWR's second RAP provides strategies to achieve a departmental culture that respects and values the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their history and culture; a culturally capable workforce and developing specialised recruitment pathways and employment opportunities to retain existing, and attract new, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

The event was followed by a lunch provided by Cowley's Bush Foods, a local Canberra business specialising in native cuisine giving the guests an understanding and taste of Aboriginal foods.



National Hoodie Day

31 August 2012 is the last day of winter and the last ever AIME National Hoodie Day.

The Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) is an Indigenous corporation that has dramatically improved the chances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids finishing school. AIME links volunteer university students with Indigenous high school students in a dynamic educational program across ten university sites in three states.

It costs \$3,000 to see an Indigenous child through the AIME program. This year will be the last ever for AIME National Hoodie Day, and your support will push AIME from the east coast to Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory!

Every Hoodie sold will help AIME reach more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids across the nation. The program has already grown from Redfern to greater New South Wales then on to Queensland and Victoria, and this year your involvement will lead the final push across our country to kids and communities in Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory.

AIME is looking for corporate and community partners to support the final National Hoodie Day. They're also putting the challenge out to teams across the nation to share their 60 seconds of success about Indigenous Australia.

A minimum purchase of five hoodies is required for a team to enter the AIME National Hoodie Day Video Challenge.

Winning entries will be spotlighted on the front page of YouTube.com for a 24-hour period on 31 August. The site receives 4 million impressions daily.

Videos can be uploaded to www.nationalhoodieday.com from 20 July 2012 – 30 August 2012.

For details about how your organisation can become an AIME National Hoodie Day partner, contact AIME's partnering team at partnering@aimementoring.com.

Am I black enough for you?

A storm of opinions appearing upon release of successful author Anita Heiss' book, *Am I Black Enough For You?* is an understatement. But that is exactly what Heiss was aiming for; to encourage conversation and to "make the reader think, engage and come to better understand Australia's First Peoples from a different perspective to most of those offered in the mainstream". She's definitely got people listening.

We all struggle with identity at the best of times, but the 'issue' of 'Aboriginal identity' has often been a hot media topic.

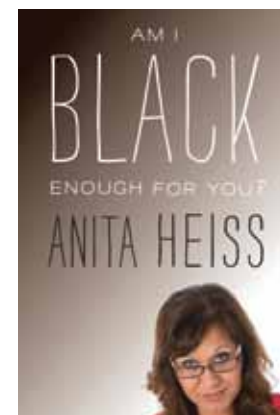
A Wiradjuri woman from central New South Wales, who grew up in the suburbs of Sydney, is tongue-in-cheek in quashing stereotypes of Aboriginal identity, describing herself as "a concrete Koori with Westfield dreaming".

A sentiment echoed by many, Heiss highlights that regardless of where Aboriginal people live, they are strong in their identity, and that, is one of the "few things that can never be taken from us".

Through her personal story she hopes to offer an insight into "the diversity and complexity of Aboriginal identity in the 21st Century, and that the power of self-identity and representation is a right, as Australians, that we should all enjoy".

Taking any controversy surrounding the book with a grain of salt, Heiss quips, "the whole point to all my writing is to portray the positive stories about Aboriginal people, because everyone else is doing a great job with the negatives."

Am I Black Enough For You? is available nationally in bookstores and online.



• Acknowledgments of Country • Register an event • Host a BBQ • Food brings people together •

• Recognition is important • Makes you feel good • Means different things to different people • Praise people • Learn about the land

• Change the future • 20th anniversary of Mabo • Recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the constitution

Let's talk
recognition

National Reconciliation Week 2012

27 May – 3 June

www.reconciliation.org.au/nrw

• Reconciliation is everyone's business • Recognition is important • Makes you feel good •