

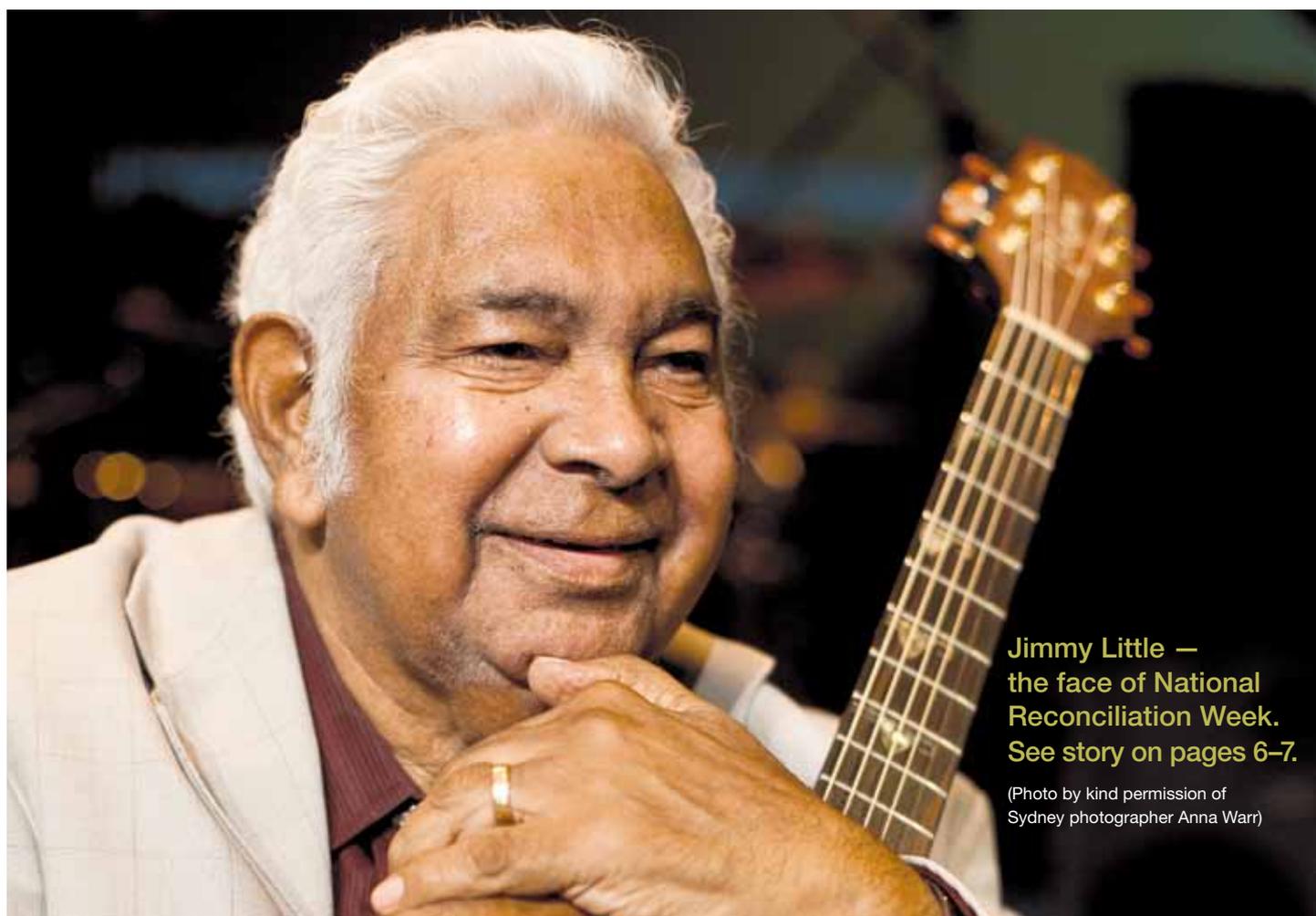
ReconciliationNews

April 2011

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**Jimmy Little —
the face of National
Reconciliation Week.
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(Photo by kind permission of
Sydney photographer Anna Warr)

Relationships improving, but trust is low

According to the 2010 Australian Reconciliation Barometer relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians are improving and the majority of Australians are optimistic about the future of reconciliation.

Conducted every two years by Reconciliation Australia, the Barometer provides a detailed snapshot of the views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians on reconciliation, and tracks how we feel about each other.

As you might expect, the findings are not all positive. The biennial study also shows that we still don't trust each other very much and there are high levels of prejudice between the two groups.

Reconciliation Australia Co-Chair Prof Mick Dodson said the research shows that overall attitudes are positive and that we value the relationship.

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**Reconciliation
AUSTRALIA**



Leah Armstrong

In our December newsletter I mentioned that I had just received the preliminary findings of the Australian Reconciliation Barometer. The Barometer is Reconciliation Australia's biennial survey of how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians feel about each other and is a very important signpost for reconciliation.

We're all in this together

As you will see from our cover story, the final report has now been released and it reveals some interesting findings (the full report can be downloaded from our website). There are some variations, both positive and negative, compared to the first Barometer study in 2008, however, it's worth remembering that in 2008 the study was conducted just after the Apology to the Stolen Generations when spirits were buoyant.

So perhaps this latest study provides a more accurate reading of how things stand and how we feel about each other. We will only know as time goes on. Collectively however, the findings will impact on how we refine our messages and target our programs over the next two years.

I'll mention just two findings that I thought were particularly significant. We agree that our relationship with each other is important (99 per cent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents and 87 per cent of other Australians) and we also concur that the media presents an unbalanced view of Aboriginal Australia (91 per cent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents and 84 per cent of other Australians).

That such high percentages of respondents overwhelmingly agree the relationship is important is especially auspicious and shows that abundant goodwill exists on both sides to pursue true reconciliation. That gives me great heart for the future.

The second example — that most of us agree the media presents an unbalanced view of Aboriginal issues — indicates to me that Reconciliation Australia needs to make some deeper inroads in both traditional and new media to promote the many inspiring stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander success. While we may not be able to completely overcome the sometimes ingrained negativity, we can at least provide a balance.

I should quickly mention National Reconciliation Week which is just around the corner. We're especially delighted that singer Jimmy Little has agreed to be the 'face' of NRW 2011 which this year has the theme 'Let's talk recognition'. It is intended to stimulate discussion with an eye down the track on the possible referendum to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Australian Constitution. You'll find your copy of the NRW poster accompanying this newsletter — please put it up on your wall and by all means let's start talking about the positive influence recognition can play.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition which endeavours to shine a light on the opinions, achievements and stories of the many organisations and people who work tirelessly for reconciliation.

Culture at their feet

Who says sport and art don't mix? Indigenous creative agency Gilimbaa recently managed to marry the two by designing specially painted boots for players in the All Stars Rugby League game in February to help raise funds for the Queensland Premier's Disaster Relief Appeal.

Gilimbaa specialise in such things as brand development, project management and public relations along with a range of projects that call for artistic input. With their colourful boot designs, Gilimbaa have taken a giant leap into sports fashion — black or white boots are old hat, multicolours rule!

Using each pair of boots as a contemporary canvas, Gilimbaa artists Riki Salam and David Williams used Indigenous art to tell the story of each individual player.

Greg Bird explained the story on his boots painted by David:

'There are the black and white dots for my Aboriginality and my white heritage. I've grown up knowing but not sort of embracing my Aboriginal heritage until later in life. The pattern on the other side goes narrow and comes out to big where I am now and shows I've had some struggles but I've come out the other side.'

Although last year's skipper Preston Campbell didn't play this time, he was eager to contribute to the cause and donated a pair of his boots for the post-game auction alongside those of teammates Greg Bird, Matt Bowen, Jharal Yow Yeh, Jonathan Thurston and George Rose.

All five players were honoured to showcase their pride of family and community by representing their people in their sport and running with their culture on their feet.

The project certainly utilised Gilimbaa's twin strengths — artistic excellence and communications expertise — with Riki and David's artistic talents helping to spread the cultural message far and wide.



Greg Bird's boot design

Riki and David creating their unique designs





Relationships improving, but trust is low

continued from front page

'The data from the Barometer provides an indication of where Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians are currently positioned in relation to each other. It's relevant for the upcoming discussions around Constitutional reform and we have briefed the Government's expert panel on the findings,' Prof Dodson said.

Among the findings of those surveyed were:

- 87 per cent of Australians agree the relationship is important and 48 per cent say it is improving
- 58 per cent of Indigenous people agree the Apology has improved the relationship
- The general community's knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures is fairly low (only 39 per cent)
- About 4 out of 5 Australians believe it is important to know about Aboriginal history and culture and are open to further learning
- 91 per cent of Indigenous Australians believe past policies still affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

- 59 per cent of Australians believe in the special place of the First Australians, connection to the land and family relationships but only 44 per cent say Aboriginal peoples are open to sharing their culture

- Only nine per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and 16 per cent of the general population think the media presents a balanced view of Indigenous Australians

- We still don't trust each other. Just twelve per cent of Indigenous people and nine per cent of other Australians feel that trust between the two groups is good

- There was also a strong acknowledgement, particularly from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (93 per cent), that there are high levels of prejudice between the two groups.

The 2010 Barometer also included findings on the role of business in reconciliation. While there was uncertainty from respondents as to the specific role businesses should take, there was widespread support for a range of business initiatives to address Indigenous disadvantage, such as scholarships and traineeships.

Professor Dodson said that the first Barometer was conducted in 2008, five months after the *Apology to the Stolen Generations* when a strong sense of optimism was evident within the sample groups.

'The 2010 Barometer has shown a slight drop in some areas but it is important to look at the findings in context,' Prof Dodson said.

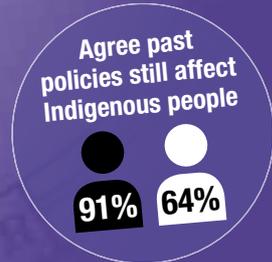
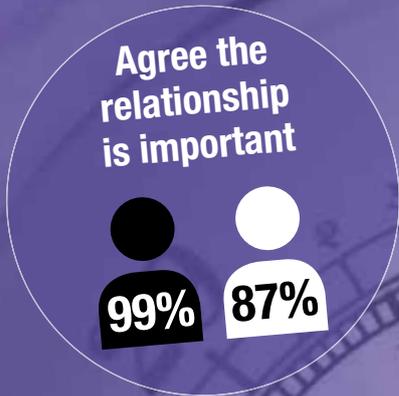
'Over the last two years, particularly with the Global Financial Crisis, there has been a general feeling of apprehension. So it's not surprising that responses are slightly down but it's more to do with a change in the broader social landscape than what we feel about reconciliation,' he said.

An encouraging finding is the fact that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents are less likely to believe they are disadvantaged or affected by race-based policies of the past. There was a 10% drop from 35% in 2008 to 25% in 2010.

The Australian Reconciliation Barometer is a helpful assessment of how things stand and a valuable guide on what still needs to be addressed.

The full Barometer report can be downloaded from our website: www.reconciliation.org.au/barometer2010

Where is the love?



Australian Reconciliation Barometer

COMPARING THE ATTITUDES OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND AUSTRALIANS OVERALL

How do Indigenous and other Australians really feel about each other? The sentiments above are a small sample drawn from the 2010 Australian Reconciliation Barometer — the second biennial study of Australian attitudes and perceptions affecting reconciliation. Conducted for Reconciliation Australia by Auspoll, the complete 'tell-all' Barometer report can be accessed on our website: www.reconciliation.org.au.



Jimmy is the face of National Reconciliation Week

We're delighted that singer Jimmy Little is the 'face' of National Reconciliation Week 2011. This year's theme is *Let's Talk Recognition* which makes Jimmy such an appropriate choice being so familiar and successful. Anna Warr's front cover photograph of Jimmy will appear on the NRW poster which encourages people to talk about and acknowledge the achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Dr Jimmy Little, courtesy of the Jimmy Little Foundation



Let's talk recognition

Recognition of course comes in many forms. We admire the talents of our singers and our actors. We marvel at the skills of our sporting stars. We honour the sacrifice of our ANZAC heroes. Each has helped define who we are as Australians today.

And all those achievers have included Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians who, despite being socially and legally excluded from society for so many years, have triumphed against the odds. The First Australians deserve proper recognition, not only for their cultural longevity and resilience but for their continued contribution to our national identity.

Over his musical lifetime, Jimmy has pretty much won every music award in Australia and recently added a Golden Guitar for Lifetime Achievement Award to his impressive list.

In a career that began in the 1950s, the Tamworth Country Music stalwart has recorded more than 30 albums and has toured Australia ever since his first recording when he was 19.

Referred to as 'Gentleman Jim', he was a true pioneer as an Aboriginal

man recording popular music and rose to national acclaim with his number one hit *Royal Telephone* way back in 1964. That the song stayed in the Top Ten for 18 weeks and earned Jimmy the title of Australian Pop Star of the Year is even more remarkable when you consider that at the time Aboriginal people had limited rights and the 1967 referendum was still three years away.

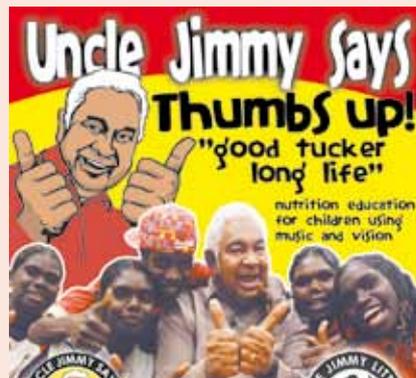
More than 50 years on, he still continues to mentor and encourage emerging entertainers who dream of a musical career.

Throughout his life, Jimmy has quietly and firmly helped to break down barriers, working in the true spirit of

reconciliation while producing songs that transcend time.

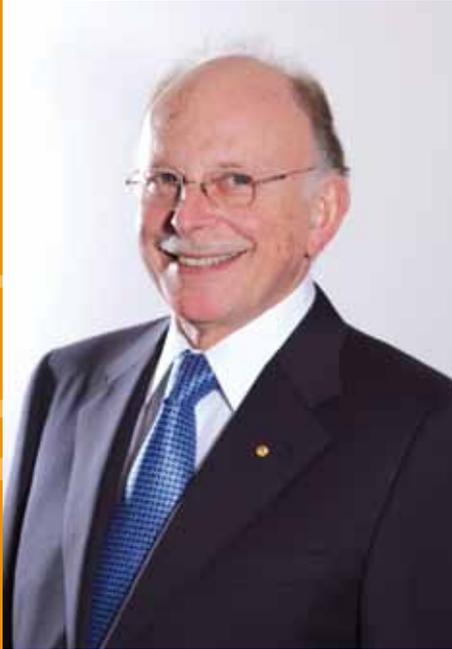
Since 2006, Jimmy has concentrated on The Jimmy Little Foundation, using music and new media workshops to inspire young people to lead a healthy life through the foundation's nutrition program *Thumbs Up! ...Healthy Tucker — Long Life* (www.jlf.org.au).

He and his team have travelled widely across Australia trying to help stem the tide of diabetes that has led to the huge increase in kidney failure in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples — a problem of which Jimmy unfortunately has had first-hand knowledge.



National Reconciliation Week runs from 27 May until 3 June and free copies of the poster can be ordered via the link under Reconciliation resources on the front page of our website www.reconciliation.org.au or by calling Marianne Pinnington on 02 6273 9200.

Mark leaves a great legacy



Mark Leibler, leaving after 11 years with Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia Co-Chair and founding Director Mark Leibler has left the RA Board after more than a decade in the role.

At a farewell morning tea with Reconciliation Australia's Board and staff at Old Parliament House, Co-Chair Professor Mick Dodson honoured his colleague's long-term commitment to the reconciliation movement.

'Mark has made an outstanding contribution to Reconciliation Australia, and indeed to reconciliation in this country, as a founding Board member since 2000 and then as Co-Chair from 2005,' Prof Dodson said.

'During his time as Co-Chair, Mark was involved in the successful National Reconciliation Workshop in 2005, the 40th anniversary celebrations of the 1967 referendum and the Apology to the Stolen Generations in 2008.

'Mark was also instrumental in the foundation of the Reconciliation Action Plan program that now takes in 20 per cent of the national workforce.'

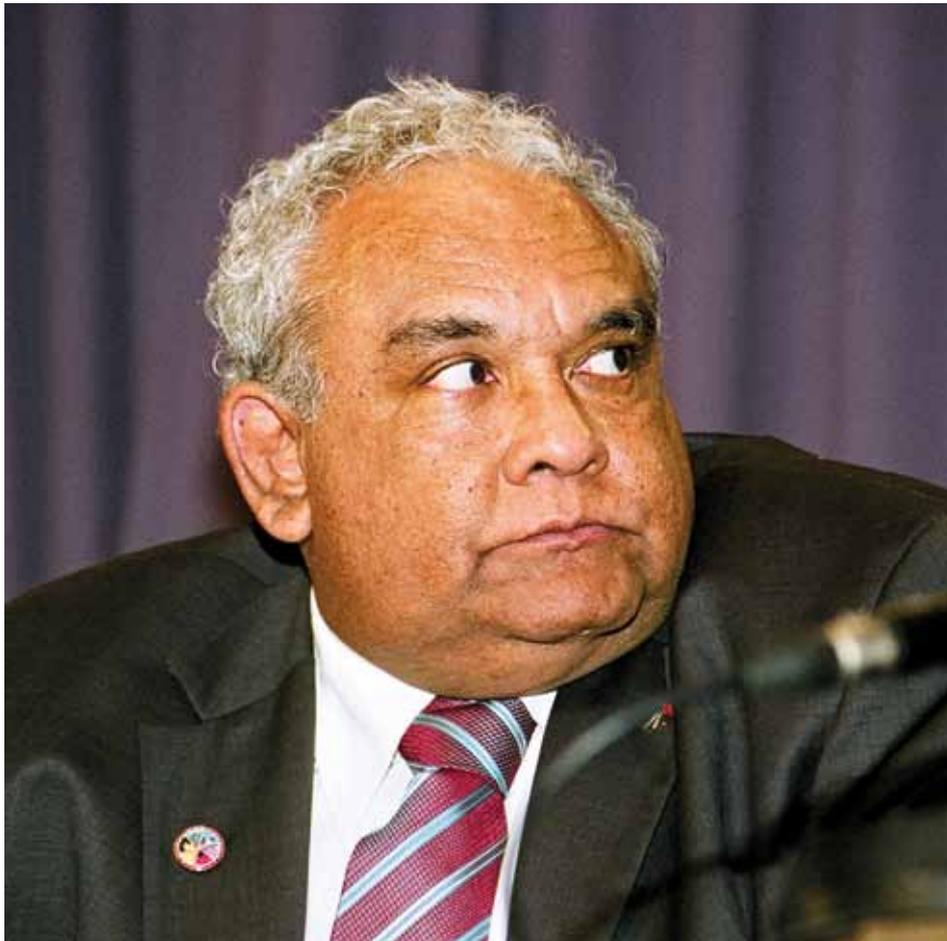
While Mr Leibler leaves Reconciliation Australia, his many skills will not be lost to the reconciliation movement, as he was recently appointed Co-Chair of the Expert Panel on Constitutional Recognition of Indigenous Australians.

'Every single Australian has an important role to play in reconciliation — and Mark has been an outstanding reconciliation ambassador by opening the doors to government and big business, getting them to listen and explaining how they can play their part in the process,' Prof Dodson said.

'He will continue this in his new role as Co-Chair of the Expert Panel and on behalf of all of the Board Directors at Reconciliation Australia I wish him the very best in this important work.'

Recently appointed Board Director Melinda Cilento, a non-executive director with Woodside Petroleum, will replace Mr Leibler as the non-Indigenous Co-Chair of Reconciliation Australia.

Honorary Doctorate for Tom



His lifelong work to promote and protect human rights, increase Indigenous participation in higher education and close the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life expectancy gap, has seen Dr Tom Calma recognised by Curtin University with a Doctorate of Science.

Dr Tom Calma

A high-profile Aboriginal elder from the Kungarakan tribal group, Tom Calma is a Reconciliation Australia Board Director and Co-Chair of the Close the Gap Committee and was formerly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner and Race Discrimination Commissioner.

In 2008, he was chosen by representatives of the Stolen Generation to deliver the formal response to the then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's National Apology in Parliament House.

Dr Calma was responsible for overseeing community development, employment and education programs at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services (ATSIS) and Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) where he worked with remote Indigenous communities to implement community-based participation and empowerment programs. His public sector career spans more than 38 years as an

academic, public servant, political adviser, diplomat and human rights defender.

Last year, the Federal Government appointed Dr Calma as the inaugural National Coordinator for Tackling Indigenous Smoking in 2010. As part of his role, he will lead and mentor the Federal Government's \$100 million Council of Australian Government Tackling Indigenous Smoking initiative to reduce smoking in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Dr Calma has been a longstanding advocate for integrating Indigenous culture and knowledge in higher education, and has encouraged universities to reflect, value and incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge into their curricula and teaching methodologies.

Curtin Vice-Chancellor Professor Jeanette Hackett said the Honorary Doctorate recognised Dr Calma's knowledge and leadership in Indigenous affairs, and his

commitment to closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

'Dr Calma has been actively involved in promoting the interests and concerns of Indigenous people at all levels, and has been a consistent and forceful advocate for their wellbeing,' Professor Hackett said.

Dr Calma said he was honoured to receive the Honorary Doctorate.

'I have worked hard throughout my life to encourage universities to integrate Indigenous culture and knowledge into their teaching methods,' Dr Calma said.

'To be recognised by an institution such as Curtin University, which is committed to Indigenous education and knowledge through its Centre for Aboriginal Studies is very humbling.'

For Tom of course, the quest continues and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have no greater advocate.

What price a hole in the wall?



In this opinion piece **Glen Brennan** suggests that if we're serious about improving financial services and literacy in Indigenous communities, we need to look at ways to strengthen institutions like the Traditional Credit Union by expanding their services, delivery model and ultimately their revenue streams by including ATMs. Glen is Senior Manager, Community Finance and Development at the National Australia Bank and this article first appeared in *The Punch* (www.thepunch.com.au).

ATM fees have long been a sticky topic. For many people, paying an ATM transaction fee is an unwelcome but accepted fact of life.

For Indigenous Australians in remote communities however, ATM fees can have a significant impact on their life, swiftly eroding their humble bank balance.

This is the finding of a report released late last year by the feisty Australian Financial Counselling and Credit Reform Association (AFCCRA), titled 'ATM Fees in Indigenous Communities', which focussed on excessive ATM fees in remote communities.

It found that too often, Indigenous people have no choice but to use the single ATM in a remote community.

Most concerning is the exorbitant fees that some 'no-name' ATM operators charge. Transaction fees of \$2 are common, but some remote communities incur fees up to \$5 or \$10 per transaction.

Many of these people exist on low incomes and Centrelink payments, checking their balances multiple times on the day a Centrelink payment is due. Needless to say, this quickly eats away at their payment.

The AFCCRA report argued these fees cause further hardship for those who can least afford it.

It was a bold move by AFCCRA who has never shied away from outing exploitation in the financial services sector. At the very least, the report made the Minister for Financial Services and Superannuation Bill Shorten and Reconciliation Australia's Indigenous Financial Sector Network (IFSN) sit up and take notice.

There's no doubt that for low income earners, ATM fees quickly add up. The reality is that for an unemployed person on a

Newstart allowance (which equates to living on \$33 per day), it reduces the money they spend on food.

Case studies in AFCCRA's report reveal that Indigenous consumers are more likely to withdraw small amounts of cash and so incur more fees — sometimes \$20 to \$40 on the day Centrelink payments are due.

The issue was heightened in 2009 after the Reserve Bank of Australia made sweeping ATM Fee Reforms which inadvertently made the situation worse for remote Indigenous communities.

The Fee Reforms were designed to encourage greater ATM competition by allowing direct charging by ATM owners (many of whom are private operators) and forcing them to compete for business with 'other ATMs in the vicinity'.

And there's the problem: 'In the vicinity' works really well if you're in the big smoke, but it's a waste of time if you're in sunny Yuendumu 300km north-west of Alice Springs.

Armed with their new powers some private operators have taken the opportunity to charge like wounded bulls because in the words of Gordon Gekko 'greed is good and now it seems it's legal'.

I'm sure some ATM operators provide a responsible fee for service and, to be fair, these fees will be higher because it is more expensive to operate an ATM in a remote community.

However, access to cash is an important service and I've yet to speak to one person who doesn't want an ATM in their community. It appears the hole in the wall is just as handy in remote Australia as anywhere else. And I'm yet to meet anyone who enjoys being ripped off.

And so I'm uneasy with AFCCRA's key recommendation from the report: 'there should be no charge at all to use an ATM in an Indigenous community'.

If there is no financial incentive for operators, there will be no ATMs in communities. The good, the bad and the ugly will just pack up their gear and leave for more profitable places.

However it is not AFCCRA's intention to make ATMs extinct in remote communities. What they are saying is 'someone else needs to pay the ATM fee for people in remote communities'.

My concern is that having someone else foot the bill doesn't address the underlying problem. It doesn't improve levels of financial literacy and it doesn't stop the exorbitant fees. It actually has the potential to accelerate both.

While I'm sure everyone has ideas, one alternative is to consolidate the ATM network into a single financial institution like the no-nonsense Darwin-based Traditional Credit Union (TCU).

With 17 years of successful operations and 11 branches in remote Indigenous communities throughout the Top End, the TCU is a model worth looking at.

The Minister for Indigenous Affairs Jenny Macklin has already allocated \$14 million to expand the TCU into each of the 20 targeted growth towns in the Northern Territory.

The funding will train up to 330 Aboriginal people and provide 39 teller positions within these communities. In addition, 9,200 Aboriginal people will for the first time have access to culturally relevant and informed face-to-face banking.

The way I figure it is that if you're in for a penny you might as well be in for a pound so why doesn't the Government just bite the bullet

and consolidate the ATM network into one organisation?

With an ATM costing between \$60K and \$100k each they're not cheap and so the TCU is unlikely to go on a spending spree without some government support.

And if the government does kick in, the benefits are likely to be many.

First, the TCU's Board is made up of high calibre traditional elders and Territorians who are unlikely to impose exploitative fees on their communities — at least not if they want to keep their positions.

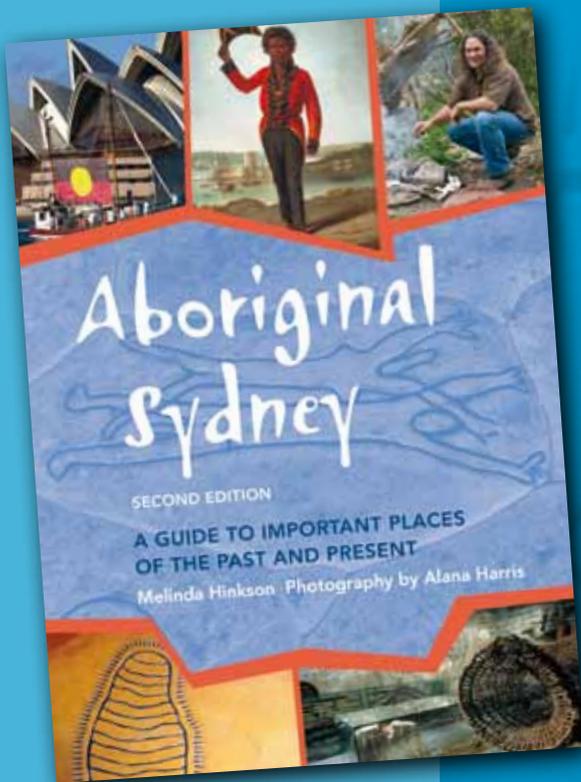
Second, because it's a Credit Union any profits will be ploughed back to its members to improve products and services. Essentially, the TCU could reinvest the money where it's needed most.

And finally, ATM usage could be coupled with over-the-counter services of the TCU's branches and tellers. Customers could deposit and transfer money and check account balances in addition to withdrawing cash.

It's a more rounded financial solution for remote communities.

Interestingly, the TCU already has agreements with Westpac, ANZ and NAB which allow its members to access their ATMs for free, but at the least replacing all the no-name-white-label ATMs in remote communities with TCU ones would likely result in more transparent and accountable ATM fees.

If we're serious about improving financial services and literacy in Indigenous communities, we need to look at ways to strengthen institutions like the Traditional Credit Union.



Sydney's layers of history uncovered

Sydney's rich and complex Aboriginal history — and many fascinating places for tourists and Australians to visit — is highlighted in an updated second edition of the book *Aboriginal Sydney*.

This authoritative and informative guide book first published in 2001 provides an alternative social history told through 'precincts of significance' to the city's Aboriginal people.

The Principal of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), Russell Taylor commends the book saying it offers a different perspective on one of the world's great cities by making its Aboriginal heritage visible.

'It does this by mapping and identifying many of the important historical Aboriginal heritage sites that can still be visited in and around Sydney,' Mr Taylor said.

Chairperson of the NSW Aboriginal Land Council Bev Manton says that despite its bustling urban presence, Sydney has a rich and complex Aboriginal heritage.

'Hidden within its burgeoning city landscape, lie layers of a vibrant culture and a turbulent history, but, you need to know where to look — *Aboriginal Sydney* supplies that information,' she said.

Sites identified and documented in the book include:

- Rock art and middens in national parks
- Points of early contact and conflict around Sydney harbour
- Sites of 'civilising experiments' to the west of Sydney
- Places of protest, civil rights and community pride in Redfern and La Perouse
- Cultural centres, galleries, museums and theatres

Published by AIATSIS, the book is a joint work by Melinda Hinkson, senior lecturer in social anthropology at the Australian National University's Research School of Humanities and the Arts, and Aboriginal photographer Alana Harris, a Wiradjuri/ Ngunnawal woman raised in Cowra who manages AIATSIS' Still Image Service Unit. Copies can be bought through AIATSIS — www.aiatsis.gov.au. For further information please contact Peter Windsor on 0400 554 603.

Hats off for the hoodies



The Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) is a young Indigenous corporation that partners volunteer university students in a one-on-one mentoring relationship with Indigenous high school students.

After starting with 25 mentors and 25 mentees in 2005, the program now partners 1,250 university students one-on-one with 1,250 Indigenous high school students across the east coast of Australia. It's a program that is greatly improving the educational and employment opportunities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Its objective is ambitious: by 2020, AIME wants to expand its numbers to reach 6,000 Indigenous students nationally, and have every one of those students finishing school at the same rate as every Australian child.

One of AIME's major events is National Hoodie Day, coming up on Thursday 21 July, which promises to transform the black suit commute into a sea of colour. Hoodie Day is for everyone and each hoodie sold sees more Indigenous mentees live the AIME ideology

that Indigenous equals success. And of course you'll also have a stylish warm hoodie just as winter starts to bite!

AIME is built on the power of one; the power of the individual stepping up. It starts in the schoolyard, where mentees and mentors seize the opportunity, sending the message of Indigenous success rippling across universities, workplaces, homes and beyond.

Kyle Vander-Kuyp, Aboriginal Olympian athlete, has taken in his stride the role of AIME Program Manager at Melbourne's Monash University. Kyle is a descendent of the Woromi tribe of the north coast of NSW, and the Yuin tribe from the south coast of NSW.

'Reaching a high level of sporting performance has allowed me to work with coaches, physiotherapists, managers, family and friends,' says Kyle. 'I understand the team dynamic: how important each contribution is; how special that balance is; how powerful it can be. 'Looking at AIME, it's more than just saying *we've got to get you through school*. It's about partnering youth with youth. It's a generation walking together with knowledge of, and pride for, Australia's Indigenous culture.

AIME role models for National Hoodie Day (Back left to right): James Roberts (Rabbitohs), Carla McGrath (AIME), Michael O'Loughlin (former Sydney Swans player), Lewis Jetta (Sydney Swans), Wendell Sailor (former rugby player) and Byron Sumner (Sydney Swans); (Front): John Hutchinson (Rabbitohs, Souths Cares), Ian Thorpe (Olympic swim champion) and Jack Manning-Bancroft (AIME CEO).

'It's a great collaboration of people. I don't think I've ever felt so inspired.'

National Program Operations Director, Sam Perry's journey with AIME is emblematic of the many non-Indigenous Australians who find enormous personal and professional learning through a deeper connection with Indigenous culture.

'I recognise just how lucky Australians are to be living on the land of the oldest surviving culture. I believe that Indigenous Australia holds the key to this nation's future cultural identity. I want to be part of realising that identity.'

For more information about National Hoodie Day go to the AIME website www.nationalhoodieday.com



Scholar Emma Sharman with the President of the Rotary Club of Balwyn, Ken McQualter

A night to remember

There was a noticeable hush when Reconciliation Australia Board Director Fred Chaney AO addressed the Rotary Club of Balwyn at its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tertiary Scholarship Presentation night. Fred had flown to Melbourne specifically to attend the ceremony where three \$80,000 scholarships were awarded to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

As Fred spoke, there was a remarkable pin-drop calm as members seemed to collectively hold their breath when he described his first encounter with Indigenous people in Western Australia.

Fred said he had not met an Aboriginal person until he was 13 years old but the impact of that meeting in WA's Swan Valley was clearly visceral. More than 50 years on he was still visibly moved as he spoke of the living conditions and social plight in which he found WA's Indigenous people. 'They had no vote and they were not even counted in the census,' he said.

Fred also talked about some of the remarkable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people he had worked with including Charles Perkins, the first Aboriginal Australian to graduate from university.



RA Board Director Fred Chaney with Peter Blundell (Member, Rotary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tertiary Scholarship Advisory Board) and John Fast (Chairman, Rotary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tertiary Scholarship Advisory Board)

‘And today we have our first Indigenous Rhodes scholar,’ he said referring to Adelaide University Anthropology student Rebecca Richards (*see article in Short Takes*).

He praised the RCB for its work in providing tertiary scholarships for Indigenous people and particularly the counselling program that enhanced the value of the scholarship.

In the presence of six former RCB scholarship winners, the tertiary scholarships were then awarded to Shakara Basso, Shane Fry and Sea Tirris. Each was linked to an RCB mentor.

Shakara’s scholarship was jointly funded by Skills Victoria and the Department of Education. She is deeply proud of both

her Italian background on her father’s side and her Aboriginal heritage, from the Wemba Wemba Tribe. She intends to study for a Bachelor of Social Work at RMIT University.

Shane’s scholarship was funded jointly by the Rotary Club of Balwyn and the Department of Justice. He has gained entry to the Bachelor of Social Science course at Latrobe University but plans to change this course to Law. Shane is from the Wotjobaluk people and retains strong connections to them.

Sea’s scholarship was funded jointly by the Rotary Club of Balwyn and the Department of Education. Sea grew up in northern NSW but since the age of 13 has lived in inner Melbourne. She worked at three and four jobs to support

herself before spending her gap year overseas, mostly in Europe. She has recently regained full contact with all her family members.

While the RATSITS project makes a huge difference to the lives of the recipients, it also has a wider effect, showing others what can be achieved and helping lift entire communities in the process.

As former scholarship winner Emma Sharman said to Fred after his talk, ‘You have given us inspiration and hope.’

The RCB’s 2005 Scholarship winner is now just a few months away from being awarded his PhD and their 2007 winner recently commenced working towards her PhD.

NITV expands its news service

NITV has now launched Australia's first half hour Indigenous news service. The new live service will broadcast Monday to Friday from SKY News Studios in Sydney, replacing NITV's 15 minute pre-recorded news segment. It promises to be hard-edged news looking at the important key issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



NITV's Head of Content Tanya Denning said the expanded news programming enables NITV to increase its coverage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues on both a national and local level.

'It brings us a step closer to achieving our goal of being the preeminent source of Indigenous news in Australia,' Tanya said.

'We plan to delve into the key issues and topics of importance to the Indigenous community and believe the content will be of interest to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Bringing this information into the lounge rooms of all Australians is key to greater understanding of Indigenous heritage and culture.

'We are committed to expanding our reach across the whole of Australia, having recently opened a bureau in Brisbane, to add to our Sydney and Canberra operations and are aiming to open other bureaus in Perth and Darwin.'

Already the NITV news team has doubled from 5 to 10, providing scope for increased employment and skill development opportunities. 'We'll also be introducing *MoJos* or mobile journalists based within regional and remote Indigenous communities. This enables us to grow our capacity for citizen journalism and provides a channel for sharing Indigenous voices from the ground up,' she said.

The expanded news content also means NITV will be able to increase its contribution to the World Indigenous Television Broadcast Network (WITBN). Last year NITV contributed two programs — *Momentum and Hypothetical* — to WITBN. These were broadcast in Canada, New Zealand, Scotland, Taiwan and Ireland.

Tanya said that being Australia's only national television service made for, by and about Indigenous Australians with direct

NITV Newsreader Natalie Ahmat is incredibly proud of her diverse family heritage. On her paternal grandmother's side, she is descended from the Mudburra people, near Wave Hill in the Northern Territory, along with some German ancestry, while on her grandfather's side she is Torres Strait Islander (Mabuiag Island) and Malayan.

independent, editorial and commercial control, means NITV is uniquely placed to help the Federal Government achieve key goals in its Closing the Gap initiative.

'While we are still awaiting a decision from the Federal government about the continuation of our funding...we remain optimistic about our future and the role we can play as a facilitator of improved employment, education and health programs for Indigenous Australians.'

CareerTrackers provide a springboard

CareerTrackers Indigenous Internship Program recently celebrated the achievements of 28 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pre-professionals who completed private sector summer internships.

Among the 125 supporters who attended the organisation's first annual gala dinner were 11 CEOs, four human resources vice presidents, eight diversity managers and six small business owners. During the evening several students received awards for their commitment to professional excellence and outstanding contributions in the workplace.

CareerTrackers Indigenous Internship Program is a national non-profit organisation that creates private sector career pathways for Indigenous university students. Leveraging the 40-year legacy of the INROADS African-American internship program in the United States, CareerTrackers has adapted this model to provide specialised support to students and employers across a broad set of industries.

One of the unique aspects of the CareerTrackers program is that the organisation starts first with the individual. A consultation process that aims to pinpoint the passion of the student then develops a pathway towards professional employment. Students perform their internship with a sponsoring company with the aim of

converting from intern to full-time employment upon completion of their degree program. In support, CareerTrackers provides students with leadership training and assists companies with the necessary cultural adaptations required to make Indigenous employment a success.

Over last summer, 28 students completed internships in workplaces specialising in architecture, IT, accounting, theatre set design, law and Indigenous community engagement.

Jermaine Morrow, a third year architecture student from the Queensland University of Technology, described his internship as life changing. 'I have never had a professional role model in my life and now thanks to my sponsoring company, SJB Architects, I have 18!' During his internship, Jermaine was involved in the design and documentation of large-scale residential projects. 'Now, when I go back to uni I will have a better understanding of what my tutors are looking for in assignments and my grades are going to drastically improve,' Jermaine said.

At the gala dinner, Jermaine and three other CareerTrackers' students received the award for Professional Excellence. Each of these students moved cities during the summer to complete their internships which is a strong indication of their desire to one day become leaders in their individual fields.

Other award recipients included the Foundation for Young Australians (FYA) and their two interns, Morgan Coleman and Samantha

Paxton, who received the Outstanding Project Award. This was a combination award going to the intern and organisation for the most substantial and challenging project. Equally, the award went to the intern who stepped up to meet the challenge and delivered their project with excellence.

Rather than hiring a professional consulting firm to develop FYA's new Indigenous Leadership Academy, the organisation was bold enough to employ the two interns to perform the market analysis and program design. And it was not disappointed!

As Jan Owen the CEO of FYA said 'this project will change history'.

Morgan and Sam worked together on the project, assessing what programs exist today, what Indigenous young people are looking for and how best to design a program to fill the gap in the market. The outcome shows that there's no better way to design an Indigenous program for young people than to use Indigenous young people.

CareerTrackers Founder and CEO Michael Combs says that in 2011 CareerTrackers will place 70 students with over 50 employers.

'The program is exploding! We are getting four to five students registering per week and employers contacting us from around the country to participate in the program.'

For more information about CareerTrackers please visit www.careertrackers.org.au or call 02 8090 5765.

The CareerTrackers interns of 2010 pictured at the presentation night. The program is set to expand in the coming year with 70 students expected to be placed with more than 50 employers.



Internal thoughts on reconciliation

Two or three times a year, Reconciliation Australia takes on two interns for a six-week placement to work with one of our program teams. The interns are normally recent graduates or students in their final university year and they work on specific projects likely to be of interest to them. In return we get the benefit of their fresh eyes and youthful enthusiasm.

In their last week our two most recent interns, Elizabeth Jones and Sharon Lynch, provided a brief snapshot of what brought them to us and how they spent their time here.

Elizabeth Jones

I remember one day in 2007 when I had just started university my parents were going over the events of that afternoon. As it turned out, my mother, who had been organising a community meeting with a local Indigenous group, had come home disappointed — none of the expected guests had shown up. On enquiring as to why this was my mother was surprised to hear someone respond — ‘I am sorry but we did turn up, a whole mob of us, and after only a few minutes someone had called the police concerned there was a bunch of black people congregating in the park and we were asked to move on’.

I’ve always had a sense of social justice and my parent’s disbelief was reflected in my own and it was this disbelief that sparked a thought in my mind — ‘what kind of Australia do we live in?’

This question developed more throughout the rest of my studies. Again, I can recall a

particular moment that shaped my curiosity. It was during a typical afternoon seminar, in which the class was discussing the issue of ethics and the legal profession. My teacher asked us to talk about our views of Indigenous clients. The purpose of this part of the seminar was to question our underlying perceptions.

I was surprised to find that even in a class of well-educated law students, those underlying values were far from what I had hoped. One student proclaimed that she had never met an Aboriginal person (that she knew of I might add) but that she had been forced to take an Indigenous Studies class in high school, which had apparently bothered her immensely.

This worried me. If our future lawyers and policy makers held such views then I was forced to consider a new question — ‘what kind of future will we see in Australia?’

Then, out of luck and good guidance, I was accepted to undertake an internship with Reconciliation Australia. Over the past six weeks I have witnessed people dedicated to their work, slowly, step by step, building relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and other Australians. I have learnt more about programs such as the Indigenous Governance Awards and the good work RAPs are doing to transform workplaces across Australia and in all sectors of society. And I especially enjoyed my time in the communications team researching and writing several Q and As and the possible Constitutional change. All in all, it’s been an experience that has been humbling and inspiring.

I still question the kind of future Australians will see. However, I am hopeful that it will be one that our Indigenous counterparts can be proud to claim as part of their own.



Our two most recent interns,
Sharon and Elizabeth.

Sharon Lynch

When I began my law degree as a mature aged student in 2007 I had aspirations of being a hard-nosed commercial lawyer, fighting to the end for clients who would pay for my comfortable western lifestyle in this 'lucky' country.

However, there is nothing comfortable about learning that Australia's Constitution did not recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as people until 1967. There is nothing comfortable about learning that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were forced off their homelands and stolen from their families. There is nothing comfortable about learning that in our 'lucky' country there are still Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living out the dire consequences of oppressed and destroyed cultures.

These revelations in the classroom hit me hard and I found myself questioning how we as a nation can even consider ourselves to be an open society which is accepting of all cultures and peoples. It struck me that this façade of multiculturalism has a glaring flaw. I soon found that the selfish mindset I had entered my studies with had changed. I found myself wanting to learn more and more about these issues and seeking out opportunities to become involved in what I consider now to be the important work of helping to heal the past and work toward a better future.

I was very fortunate to be accepted to undertake an internship with Reconciliation Australia. Over six weeks I worked with some talented, innovative and inspiring

people who have a real heart to see Australia changed. I have been working with the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) team and have seen firsthand the impact that RAPs are having in local communities. I have heard stories of meaningful collaborations between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and non-Indigenous Australians which are helping to break down the barriers of racism, build respectful relationships and provide opportunities for change.

I am encouraged by what is already being done but have also realised there is still so much more to do. I go home humbled but hopeful that in the future I can use the knowledge and skills I have gained through my law degree and my experience here to help see a changed Australia.

Jo Randall on song

Late last year, a small group of singers from Madjiti Moorna, singers of Aboriginal songs from Forrestfield WA, nominated their music choir coordinator Jo Randall for a *Music in Communities Award* for inspirational leadership.

They based their nomination on three achievements — Building a choir, with Aboriginal music directors in a welcoming, respectful and nurturing environment; sharing reconciliation and healing with the wider community; and developing a friendship with the Halls Creek community and inspiring music in this remote town.

When word came through that Jo was a finalist, everyone was thrilled that she had been recognised for her accomplishments. And then, when they heard she had won an award to be named the WA Reconciliation Award, they were over the moon.

On winning the Award, Jo said, 'It's such a thrill to be recognised for doing something useful in the community through music!'

Madjiti Moorna music director George Walley says, 'Jo is a Moorditj choir coordinator, leader, singer and friend who sees the big picture of where Madjiti Moorna has come from and how it has evolved. She sees where the choir can play some small but positive part in encouraging the Indigenous community and wider community to sing and through music, help build our community.'

Jo Randell, George Walley and Della Rae Morrison, leaders of Madjiti Moorna, singers of Aboriginal songs

The choir's main aims are:

- To sing in and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait language songs and compositions by Indigenous artists from around Australia
- To acknowledge and embrace the stolen generations and their journey of healing
- To generate healing with the community through the vibrations of our harmonious songs
- To create a warm, sensitive, safe environment to encourage members to express the joy and beauty of music
- To promote and embrace reconciliation through the multicultural blend of our members
- To encourage Aboriginal communities and people from remote regions to form similar singing groups to enhance the healing process.

One of the choir's singers, Pat Oakley, recently participated in Deborah Cheetham's opera *Pecan Summer* and credits the choir with building her confidence for her successful audition. She is now pursuing formal opera singing coaching.

To enable the choir to continue its success, Jo is keen for the prize money from the award to be used to assist more Aboriginal people to join.



‘Genuine engagement’ is all important

The new head of Gnibi College of Indigenous Australian Peoples says he aims to develop research programs that will enable the College to reach its full potential as a significant player in the national and international Indigenous higher education sector.



Professor Adrian Miller says Gnibi’s research program would be built on a foundation of developing credibility through authentic collaboration within Indigenous communities and Indigenous organisations.

‘I think Gnibi has an exciting future and I will be working with my colleagues, and the community of people who want to be involved, to shape it together. In regard to the research agenda, the essential framework will involve Indigenous communities, Indigenous organisations and the broader community,’ Professor Miller said.

‘For the past 10 years I have been working in a highly productive mainstream academic centre at James Cook University. That centre focused heavily on teaching and research and I plan to bring some of those skills into this environment and see how well we can develop a similar program in a strictly Indigenous-focused setting.

‘For example I am interested in incorporating international Indigenous relations as a study area, including the introduction of international Indigenous exchange programs and the development of international collaborative projects in Indigenous research.

‘Another area that I have a strong interest in is the social determinants of health, particularly socio-economic issues and how they impact on health. My current research area is investigating barriers to infectious disease interventions in Aboriginal communities with a focus on H1N1, strongyliodes and scabies.’

Professor Miller’s previous role was as a senior academic with the Anton Breinl Centre, School of Public Health, Tropical Medicine and Rehabilitation Services at James Cook University (2000–2010) and prior to that he was the foundation head of Warawara, Department of Indigenous Studies at Macquarie University.

‘In terms of engagement with the local community, I see local Aboriginal communities and local broader communities as absolutely significant to any future direction we take. The way I see engagement working is by taking a ‘concentric circles’ approach where we start within the University, then move out to the local communities, then to regional centres and then more broadly to national and possibly international settings.

New head of Gnibi College of Indigenous Australian Peoples, Professor Adrian Miller.

‘I think the foundations of good research can only be built on genuine engagement. If you haven’t got local engagement then there is no use looking overseas. As far as I am concerned your credibility and your authenticity comes from your local engagement.

‘An area that we will be looking at over the next few months is the curriculum for the courses run by Gnibi College. I plan to hold a teaching and learning forum which will be a highly collaborative process designed to ensure we are providing the highest quality of education based on good evidence and good research.

‘Overall, I think Gnibi is well-positioned to be a significant player in good collaborative research and teaching both nationally and internationally. I would like to see the College working within the broader collaborative framework of *Indigenous business*, *everybody’s business* — and so it should be.

Big wrap for Transfield Services

Transfield Services have won the Ethical Investor 2010 Australian Sustainability Award in the Social – Community category. The award recognises the excellent work Transfield Services has done with its recently refreshed RAP. Other nominees included two banks, Westpac and the NAB.

Now in their 10th year, the Sustainability Awards recognise the best achievers in environmental, social and corporate governance practice.

The judging panel highlighted key areas and strengths from Transfield Services' RAP including the significant journey travelled in

order to get the Indigenous participation right the first time. The panel also noted that the process taken ensured it was not only right for the business but the correct form of engagement for Indigenous people and their communities.

Transfield was commended for its governance and overall business through its Indigenous Advisory Board along with its public commitment to achieve four per cent Indigenous employment by 2013 — well on track with current data showing employment at 3.06 per cent.

Transfield Services General Manager, Business Community Investment, Neil Birtchnell commented that 'the true social and business

value of our work will be known when we reach all the targets outlined in our RAP.'

Chairman of its Indigenous Advisory Board, Eddie Fry, said that while promises are all very well, it's the follow up on those promises that is all important.

'For Indigenous Australians, particularly in the most disenfranchised and marginalised parts of our communities, nothing means more than the delivery on one's talk to do something of note to alleviate in some small way upwards the social and economic wellbeing of Indigenous Australians.'

Congratulations to Transfield Services' for their well-deserved Award.

Transfield Services employees on site at Mt Whaleback in Newman, WA





Participants of the Georgiou Group Indigenous Employment Program in 2010, with Loretta Harris from Skill Hire.

Commitments in construction

The Reconciliation Action Plan program has extended its reach with the launch of the first RAP by a construction company. That company is the Georgiou Group — a diverse national organisation that delivers projects from inception to handover in civil engineering, building, infrastructure, project management and manufacturing.

The construction industry has a significant role to play in the national effort to close the gap in life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and other Australians, not least because of its national scope, its considerable employment opportunities and its necessary presence in a high number of communities across the country.

The Georgiou Group now takes its place in our growing RAP community. Of particular note is their commitment to develop strong employment pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples engaged in the criminal justice system.

Australia Post pushes the envelope

Australia Post has cemented its commitment to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians with the launch of its first Reconciliation Action Plan.

The Minister for Finance, Penny Wong, was joined by Australia Post Chair, David Mortimer, and Managing Director and CEO, Ahmed Fahour, to announce the plan which signals Australia Post's ongoing commitment to closing the gap on employment for Indigenous Australians.

'The program builds on Australia Post's long and proud history of supporting Indigenous employment,' Mr Mortimer said.

'The new Reconciliation Action Plan will see the introduction of a number of initiatives such as an annual Indigenous student scholarship to support higher education and the expansion of the Indigenous traineeship program to include more school-based and vocational traineeships.'

'Indigenous employees currently represent 1.7 per cent of our direct workforce, and this Reconciliation Action Plan strengthens our ongoing commitment to providing employment and career development opportunities to Indigenous Australians.'

Australia Post is one of the first Government Business Enterprises to implement such a plan and Minister Wong said the commitment demonstrated strong business and community leadership.

'I am particularly encouraged by the collaborative approach Australia Post has taken to working with Indigenous Australians to create business opportunities over a number of years,' Senator Wong said.

'The plan reflects Australia Post's commitment to assisting Indigenous Australians into ongoing sustainable work and is an example of what we hope all businesses will do.'

Ahmed Fahour said that Australia Post had always focused on employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians into real jobs.

'More than 4,000 Indigenous employees have worked at Australia Post since our first Indigenous employment strategy was developed 23 years ago. This plan commits us to maintaining our current Indigenous employment representation rate of 600 staff and by 2015 to provide employment opportunities to a further 600 Indigenous Australians.'

'Australia Post is in every community across the country and we can provide job opportunities to Indigenous Australians where they live. Australia Post can make a significant impact on closing the gap.'

Reconciliation Australia Board Director Melinda Cilento praised Australia Post for valuing its Indigenous employees and for showing its commitment to them through the RAP.

'Their Plan not only provides a strong commitment to increasing employment opportunities, but extends to ensuring Indigenous Australians are recognised and have access to vital services.'



At the launch of the Australia Post Reconciliation Action Plan (left to right) Reconciliation Australia's Adam Mooney, Aunty Joy Murphy, RA Board Director Melinda Cilento, Australia Post Managing Director and CEO Ahmed Fahour, Minister for Finance and Deregulation, the Hon Penny Wong, Kimberley O'Brien, Australia Post Chair David Mortimer and Australia Post's Dorothy Hisgrove.



Stamp for the RAP

Coinciding with the launch of its first Reconciliation Action Plan, Australia Post has issued a new stamp commemorating its long history of employing Indigenous Australians.

It features Ellen Pangieran also known as Mary Helen Cuper (1847–1877) who was appointed postmistress at the mission station at New Norcia, Western Australia in 1874. She was the first Aboriginal person to attain such a position in Australia's public service.

RGT shows its commitment

The launch in February of the Regional Group Training RAP coincided with the launch of RGT's new Canberra facilities in Wanniasa. Pictured at the launch are RGT's Indigenous C.A.R.E. Coordinator Shavaun Chapman, Traditional Elder Aunty Matilda House and ACT Education Minister Andrew Barr.

Regional Group Training (RGT) is the largest Apprenticeship Centre in Canberra with over 80 per cent of the market and has serviced the local region since 1998. As a not for profit organisation, RGT provides its services for free, their catchcry being 'Your career... our commitment'.

RGT's other divisions include a Group Training Organisation (GTO) and a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) which won 2009 ACT Small RTO of the Year.

For the last 25 years, RGT's primary focus has been to encourage and introduce employers and potential Australian apprentices into accredited training. Successful completion of an Australian apprenticeship is a nationally recognised life-long qualification with the potential to sustain employment and a career pathway.



Pilot on course

The Cities of Whittlesea and Stonnington and Baw Baw Shire are participating in a project led by Reconciliation Victoria, funded by the Victorian Government and supported by the Victorian Local Governance Association and Reconciliation Australia.

The pilot will investigate the successes and challenges of the sector involved in developing a Reconciliation Action Plan, report on and share the lessons with others, and develop resources that will assist the sector in their reconciliation activities and RAPs.

Keith Gove, Co-Chair of Reconciliation Victoria thanked everyone for their support of the project, including the Victorian Government, who recently provided extra funding to extend the project until the end of July. Maree McPherson of the VLGA said, 'The lessons learnt from this action research pilot will help inform the local government sector's involvement in reconciliation activities.'

The three Councils involved work in diverse local contexts and face different challenges in their reconciliation activities. Each has agreed to focus on actions that deepen relationships, show respect and create opportunities that are mutually beneficial and involve the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents and communities in the process.

RAPs now on council agendas

We're pleased to say that local government is starting to embrace RAPs. There are 565 local government councils across Australia, and many have employed local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for many years. As employers and leaders of reconciliation in their communities, they represent an important sector for RAPs.

Already six local government RAPs have been launched, including two last year — the Town of Narrogin in WA and Sydney's Blacktown City Council. Thirty one councils are now actively developing a RAP and another 40 have downloaded the RAP Toolkit. Some have sent in Statements of Commitment, but most are just getting on with the job of forming their RAP working groups and developing their actions.

Many councils have had a long term commitment to reconciliation but are now choosing to use the RAP program to focus and formalise that commitment into our RAP template. They can see the benefit of demonstrating leadership in reconciliation in their communities and the opportunities that come from being part of a growing RAP community in their towns and cities.

Significant numbers of corporate, government and non-government organisations have RAPs in nearly every town and city. Most communities have a local branch of one (or more) of the big four banks, a post office, one of Wesfarmers' retail outlets or a Telstra operations centre. Some have a Mission Australia or Life Without Barriers office. As more and more councils develop a RAP, the potential for these organisations to collaborate with local Aboriginal organisations and local government councils on RAPs will be realised. All it takes is local leadership!

Councils with formal Statements of Commitment to develop a RAP:

- Broken Hill City Council, NSW
- City of Cockburn, WA
- City of Swan, WA
- East Arnhem Shire Council, NT

(l to r) Adam Mooney, Kerrie Nelson and Leah Armstrong (CEO) of Reconciliation Australia; Erin McKinnon, Project Coordinator, Reconciliation Victoria; Maree McPherson of the Victorian Local Governance Association and Mary Morison of the Department of Planning and Community Development after the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding for the pilot. (Not in the photo is the fourth signatory, Keith Gove of Reconciliation Victoria).





Secretary of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship Andrew Metcalfe, RA Board director Tom Calma, Ngunnawal Elder Aunty Ruth Bell, Assistant Secretary of DIAC Bob Correll and RA CEO Leah Armstrong at the DIAC RAP launch

DIAC walks the walk

With the launch of their Reconciliation Action Plan, the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) has shown its commitment to building respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The DIAC RAP provides the framework for this commitment which will increase Indigenous employment opportunities within the department.

Reconciliation Australia Board Director Tom Calma welcomed the release of DIAC's RAP, saying its focus on increasing employment opportunities for Indigenous people was an important step in closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage. He also welcomed DIAC's decision to allow Traditional Owners to welcome new settlers to country at future citizenship ceremonies and acknowledged the work of elders such as Mrs Ruth Bell, the Ngunnawal elder who performed the Welcome to Country at the launch of the RAP.

'It is wonderful to see Traditional Owners being shown the respect they deserve as the first peoples of this country. Welcoming people to country is a long-held tradition amongst

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and one which I'm sure will help build better cultural awareness among new settlers at future citizenship ceremonies.'

Secretary Andrew Metcalfe said the RAP would assist the department in meeting its commitment to reconciliation and thanked DIAC's Indigenous staff for their continued commitment to the department.

'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees have made significant and positive contributions to our work over many years,' Mr Metcalfe said.

The DIAC RAP can be seen at www.immi.gov.au/about/plans/rap.htm

Short takes

Flower power

The Kimberley Stolen Generation Aboriginal Corporation (KSGAC) represents the interests of stolen generations from the Kimberley region and in particular strives to develop projects that will produce measurable social change well into the future. One significant initiative is the creation of a commemorative flower that annually recognises those who were removed from country, language and culture.

The commemorative 'silk' native hibiscus flower was chosen by the Stolen Generations members themselves and is endorsed by Stolen Generations Alliance and National Sorry Day Committee. It is a symbol that people everywhere can display as a show of support and respect for those who were taken from their families.

The native hibiscus is a most appropriate emblem because it is found widely across Australia and it is a survivor. Its colour denotes healing and compassion and it presents as a friendly, contemporary icon without political or social barriers. The KSGAC has produced a large quantity of the silk imitation native hibiscus flowers which can be purchased for \$2.50 each, postage included.

For more information or to purchase the flowers please contact the Kimberley Stolen Generation Aboriginal Corporation on 08 9193 6502 or by email: ksgac@iinet.net.au

The silk native hibiscus



Expert panel convenes

The Australian Government has established an expert panel to promote and encourage public discussion and debate about recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Australian Constitution and to provide an opportunity for people to express their views. The expert panel will report to Government by December 2011 on possible options for constitutional change, including advice about the level of support from Indigenous people and the broader community for each option.

In performing its role, the Expert Panel will:

- lead a broad national consultation and community engagement program to seek the views of a wide spectrum of the community, including from those who live in rural and regional areas;
- work closely with organisations, such as the Australian Human Rights Commission, the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples and Reconciliation Australia who have existing expertise and engagement in relation to the issue and
- raise awareness about the importance of Indigenous constitutional recognition including by identifying and supporting ambassadors who will generate broad public awareness and discussion.

The panel comprises:

Co-Chairs: Professor Patrick Dodson and Mark Leibler AC

Non-Parliamentary Members: Graham Bradley AM, Timmy 'Djawa' Burarrwanga; Henry Burmester AO QC, The Hon Fred Chaney AO, Professor Megan Davis, Glenn Ferguson, Lauren Ganley, Professor Marcia Langton, Bill Lawson AM, Alison Page, and Noel Pearson.

Parliamentary Members: Rob Oakeshott MP, Janelle Saffin MP, Senator Rachel Siewart and Ken Wyatt MP.

Ex-Officio Members: Mick Gooda (as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner), Josephine Bourne and Sam Jeffries (as co-chairs of the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples).

Further information on the panel may be found at: www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/indigenous/progserv/engagement/Pages/constitutional_recognition.aspx

First Indigenous Rhodes scholar

An Adelaide University student has made history by becoming Australia's first Indigenous Rhodes Scholar.

Anthropology student Rebecca Richards, 23, follows in the footsteps of some famous Australian names — Bob Hawke, Kim Beazley, Malcolm Turnbull, Tony Abbott, Geoffrey Robertson and Howard Florey.

Rebecca said her interest in anthropology started at 14 when she did some field work in the Flinders Ranges.

'The information gained on this fieldwork was later used in the determination of native title of those lands,' she said. 'I am so passionate about the repatriation of Indigenous objects, languages and associated knowledge to Indigenous communities.'

Rebecca grew up in the SA Riverland on her family's fruit block. She has custodial responsibilities for her family site, Pukatu, and other women's sites in the remote Flinders Ranges. She plans to study a Masters of Philosophy when she enrolls at Oxford University next September.

Trevor returns to his roots

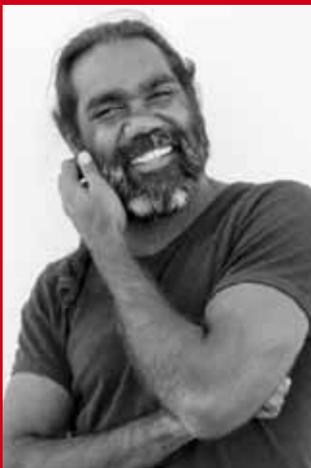
Ronin Films has just released the DVD *Nothing rhymes with Ngapartji*, an extraordinary film that follows the journey of acclaimed Pitjantjatjara actor, Trevor Jamieson. In the film, Trevor has just enjoyed a five-week, sell-out Sydney Festival season of his hit stage show *Ngapartji Ngapartji*, and is now taking it to his traditional country in the remote Aboriginal community of Ernabella in South Australia to perform in front of an all-Aboriginal audience.

We follow the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* team's journey to Ernabella and the in situ live theatre performance (in two languages) of their acclaimed show set against the magnificent backdrop of the Central Australian desert. Trevor has struggled to hold on to his language and culture while living away from his traditional country and is about to face his toughest audience yet.

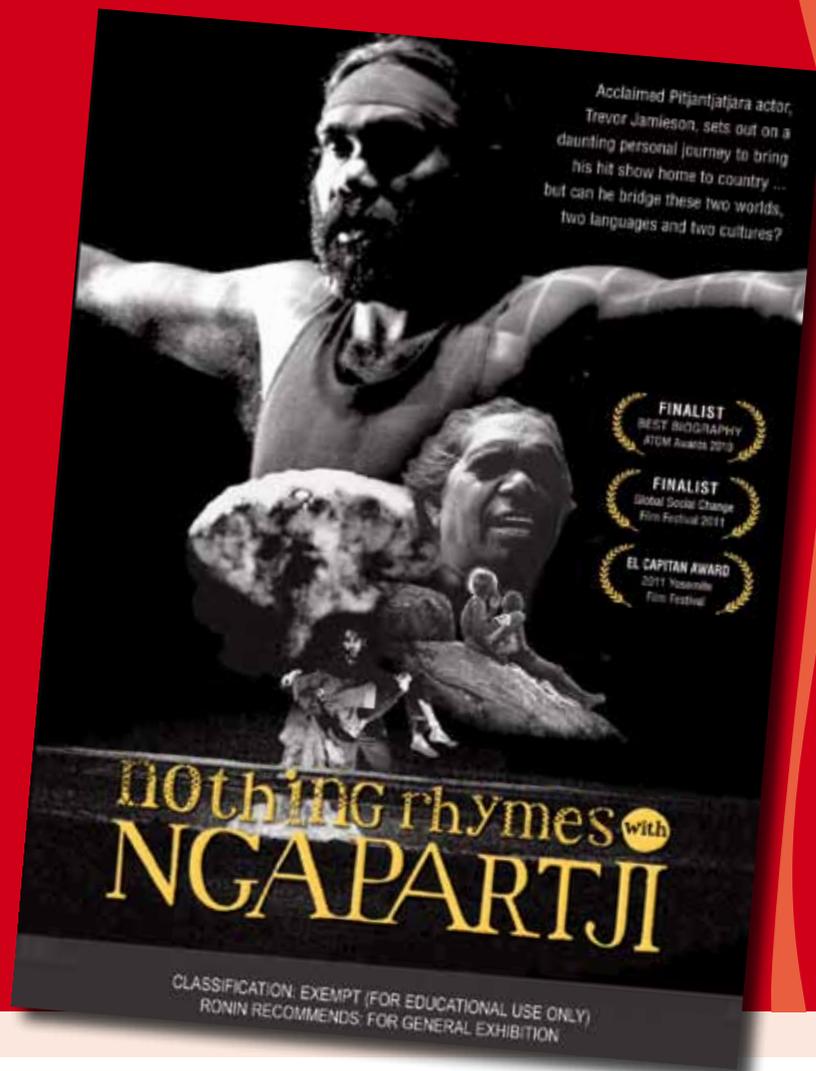
It's terrible timing for Trevor, whose father, a central character in the stage show, passed away only weeks before. Not only does Trevor have to confront his grief in order to deliver the performance, he also has to grapple with the decision to risk breaking traditional law by saying his father's name, acting the part of him, and showing footage of him as part of the show. Is Trevor going to get a knock on the head?

Directed by Suzy Bates, the 56-minute film was a finalist in the 2010 ATOM Awards (best biography) and a finalist at the Global Social Change Film Festival 2011. It won the El Capitan Award at the 2011 Yosemite Film Festival.

To purchase a copy of the film, follow the links on the Ronin Films website www.roninfilms.com.au



Trevor Jamieson



Short takes

Huge response to Close the Gap Day

Oxfam's National Close the Gap Day on 24 March was a raging success with nearly 1,000 events held across Australia.

The dedicated day is a way for all Australians to join together and remind our political leaders of their commitments to close the life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a generation. This year's focus was on the need to boost

the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce.

The events held were many and varied from morning teas to health displays, conferences to Aboriginal painting workshops. For example, the Gympie South Indigenous Pre-school held an Open Day; Fremantle Notre Dame students' conducted a courtyard fete; Scots College senior students held a

cricket match against the teachers UN team at Bellevue Hill; a diabetes education session was held in Katherine; and a Closing the Gap display was set up in Port August hospital.

People all around Australia have embraced Closing the Gap Day which looks set to become a real community based success story in years to come.

The Tale of Jasper Jones

Jasper Jones, a new book from award-winning author Craig Silvey, tells the tale of Charlie Bucktin, a precocious and bookish 13-year-old boy, and Jasper Jones, a young outcast in the regional mining town of Corrigan. Jasper is Aboriginal, rebellious and solitary and a figure of danger and intrigue for Charlie. So when Jasper begs for his help, Charlie eagerly steals into the night by his side, terribly afraid but desperate to impress.

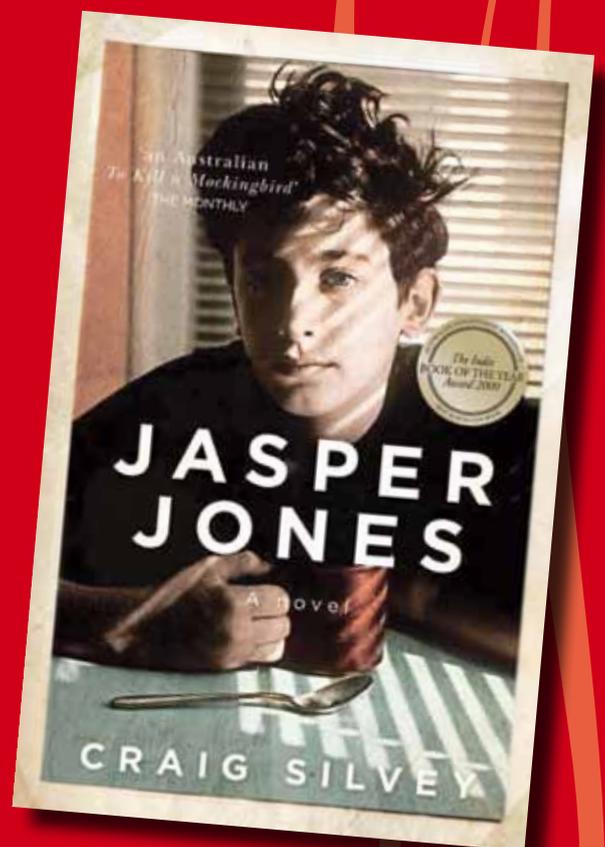
Without giving too much away, the story involves race issues, and the sinister undercurrent that runs through the mining town. Set in 1965, against the political backdrop of Australia's increased troop commitment in Vietnam, there are also issues for the family of Charlie's best friend, Jeffrey Lu, the son of Vietnamese immigrants.

In time, Charlie learns to discern truth from myth, and why white lies creep like a curse. In the simmering summer where everything changes, Charlie discovers why the truth of things is so hard to know, and even harder to hold in his heart.

The many awards *Jasper Jones* has received include *Winner Literary Book of the Year 2010 and Book of the Year 2010 (Australian Book Industry Awards)*, *Winner Australian Booksellers Choice Award 2010* and *Co-Winner West Australian Premier's Award (fiction) 2010*.

Author Craig Silvey grew up on an orchard in Dwellingup, Western Australia and, at 19, wrote his first novel, *Rhubarb* for which he received a *Sydney Morning Herald Best Young Novelist Award*. In 2007, he released *The World According To Warren*, a picture book affectionately starring the guide-dog from *Rhubarb*.

You can purchase *Jasper Jones* at most good book stores.





Reconciliation
AUSTRALIA

Please donate

National Racism Study

The University of Western Sydney has released the results of its 10-year survey on racism, ethnic-relations and cultural diversity in Australia. Key national findings include:

- 27.9 per cent of survey respondents demonstrated 'anti-Indigenous' attitudes (ranging from 17.5 per cent in Tasmania to 35.1 per cent in Western Australia);
- 12.3 per cent of survey respondents self-identified as racists;
- 84.4 per cent of survey respondents agreed that there is racial prejudice in Australia;

Detailed survey results and specific regional and State/Territory results that cover a range of Indigenous-specific questions can be accessed on the University website:

www.uws.edu.au/social_sciences/soss/research/challenging_racism/findings_by_region

National Congress meets in June

The National Congress of Australia's First Peoples is building a national platform for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Created in April last year to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples a national voice on the important Indigenous issues, the National Congress will enable those opinions to be heard by all Australians.

As a new representative body, the National Congress will be shaped over the coming years by its members — 'together we will be leaders and advocates for recognising our status and rights as First Nation peoples'.

The first annual meeting of the National Congress will take place in Sydney from 7-9 June 2011 when 120 delegates will come together to develop a national policy agenda.

For further information about the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples please email: info@nationalcongress.com.au.

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April 2011

NCIE gears up for NAIDOC



The National Centre of Indigenous Excellence will host the NAIDOC Family Day again this year.

The National Centre of Indigenous Excellence (NCIE) will host the much anticipated NAIDOC Family Day in Redfern, Sydney. Held annually, this year's NAIDOC Family Day is on Friday 8th July and will bring together Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage.

The NCIE hosts development opportunities for young Indigenous people to work towards achieving their dreams and aspirations in the areas of arts and culture, learning and innovation, health and wellbeing and sport and recreation.

Last year's Family Day welcomed close to a thousand guests. This year, with Sydney the national focus city for NAIDOC week, the Centre is expecting thousands of people from both the local community and around Australia to take part in activities that honour and celebrate Australia's rich Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage.

NCIE Chief Executive Jason Glanville said he is delighted and excited to host such an important event.

'It's an honour for the Centre to host the 2011 NAIDOC Family Day for a second consecutive year,' he said. 'With so many events, activities and entertainment on offer at Centre, I have no doubt the NAIDOC Family Day will be an enormous success.'

Among the array of attractions and activities for visitors will be market stalls, art workshops, traditional dance workshops, rides, group fitness classes and local entertainment.

For further information on the 2011 NAIDOC Family Day at the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence, go to www.ncie.org.au.



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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 organisation fostering reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians for the wellbeing of the nation.

All the work we do with our project partners is dedicated to closing the unacceptable gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children.

Reconciliation involves justice, recognition and healing. It's about helping all Australians move forward with a better understanding of the past and how the past affects the lives of Indigenous people today.

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: robert.beattie@reconciliation.org.au