

ReconciliationNews

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Looking back on National Reconciliation Week 2011

National Reconciliation Week certainly captured the attention of Australians this year; with hundreds of events and impromptu gatherings held by businesses, schools and remote communities across the country.

This year's theme, *Let's Talk Recognition*, celebrated the achievements made by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and focused on the importance of recognising their many contributions.

As part of National Reconciliation Week, Reconciliation Australia hosted a public forum at the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra where a panel of five speakers shared their thoughts with a capacity crowd on the concept of recognition.

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At the National Gallery of Australia for National Reconciliation Week were (back row l-r) Prof Peter Read, Henry Burmester and Aden Ridgeway, (front row l-r) Kirstie Parker, Casey Keed, Alex Sloan and Leah Armstrong.
Picture by Wayne Quilliam.



Reconciliation
AUSTRALIA

Constitutional recognition

With the 2008 Apology to the Stolen Generations providing a meaningful chance for reconciliation, the formal recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our Constitution could be the next step in working towards lasting and positive change for Australia.

As part of their Reconciliation Action Plan, the Law Council of Australia held a discussion forum at Old Parliament House in Canberra; exploring the constitutional change process in recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. With lectures by Professor Patrick Dodson, The Hon Michael Kirby AC CMG and facilitated by Dr Jeff McMullen AM, the forum brought together community leaders and law experts for a lively Q & A on how a 'yes' vote could be achieved in a referendum.

In his opening remarks, Patrick Dodson spoke of the need to be patient, steadfast and courageous. Changing our Constitution to recognise the true custodians of our lands is our nation's chance to be courageous and to move forward together as a fairer society where everyone feels included and recognised in their own way.

The forum was also an opportunity to reflect on countries like Canada and

New Zealand who have specific sections in their constitutions that recognise the rights of their Indigenous peoples.

Many people would be surprised to know that not all citizens are treated equally under the Australian Constitution. While racial discrimination is no longer accepted in our community, in our workplaces or in our daily lives, the Constitution permits laws that discriminate on the basis of race. Michael Kirby pointed out, "so long as racist provisions exist in the Australian Constitution, they stand at risk of being used".

Since the drafting of the Australian Constitution in 1901, only 8 out of 44 referendums have gained public support—with the last successful referendum held nearly 35 years ago.

The campaign for recognising Australia's First Peoples in the Constitution is however gaining momentum. A *Newspoll* survey conducted in February this year revealed that 75 per cent of Australians already support some kind of constitutional reform. The success of the 1967 referendum was a major step towards including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australian society. The recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Australian Constitution is a further step towards building a nation based on mutual respect and understanding.



Prof Patrick Dodson speaking at the Law Council of Australia's forum at Old Parliament House.
Picture by Rebecca Gallegos.



A culture of inclusion

Australia is recognised for its pristine beaches and vast landscapes—and also its cultural diversity and the idea of a ‘fair go’. Our Constitution is an important part of saying who we are—it’s our nation’s birth certificate.

As it stands, the Australian Constitution does not recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first Australians, and parts of the Constitution do not treat all Australians equally.

A panel of prominent Australians has been appointed by the Australian Government to consult with the public and lead a nationwide discussion on the issue.

They are currently meeting with members of the public in regional centres and capital cities to discuss a range of options for

constitutional recognition in their discussion paper. These include:

- Changing or deleting sections which are discriminatory
- Adding a preamble to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- A provision for agreement making between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and government.

The Australian people have the power to update the Constitution through a referendum so that it truly recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

To have your say or attend a public consultation in your area visit: www.youmeunity.org.au.

“If we face our history with courage, and if we pledge the integrity of our improving relationship firmly within our Constitution, then a real dialogue between us can proceed, secure in the knowledge of our shared commitment to the nation and its future.”

Prof Patrick Dodson

YOU ME UNITY



Refocussing after National Reconciliation Week

With the good vibes of National Reconciliation Week still fresh in my memory, I'm feeling very heartened about the prospects of true reconciliation in Australia. I know that we have a way to go but the signs during National Reconciliation Week indicated to me that Australians are genuinely keen to reconcile and that the goodwill is widespread.

The National Reconciliation Week theme *Let's talk recognition* worked very well in stimulating people to think about the many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander achievers over the years, often triumphing in difficult circumstances. It also prompted people at a local level to

recognise those in their community who have shown leadership and wisdom.

And it got people talking about the possible recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Constitution. At our major National Reconciliation Week event attended by a capacity crowd at the National Gallery of Australia, a panel of speakers (as mentioned in our cover story) explored the concept of recognition. The hour-long forum was broadcast live on ABC Local Radio ensuring a wide coverage of the event.

I was especially delighted at the willingness of so many of Canberra's national attractions to embrace National Reconciliation Week by staging events and exhibitions. All in all, National Reconciliation Week was well supported right across Australia and we are already planning an even bigger event for 2012.

Over the last few months Reconciliation Australia has been through a restructuring phase in order to refocus our approach to the work we do. The change in structure and strategic focus has necessitated a number of staff changes and I want to pay sincere tribute to those who have recently left Reconciliation Australia for their great commitment and dedication over the years.

New blood always invigorates an organisation and I believe that our revitalised team will give us even more capacity to make a difference to the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through our policy initiatives, political influence and partnership building.

And remember, if you have any stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander success or achievement you'd like to share, please let us know and we'll try and include them in our newsletter.

Leah Armstrong, CEO

Lifeline for Reconciliation Victoria

The Victorian Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Jeanette Powell, has reinstated funding for Reconciliation Victoria, previously cut by the former Labor administration.

The Minister announced that the Coalition Government will provide \$800,000 for Reconciliation Victoria over the next four years.

"Reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Victorians is a critical part of the Coalition Government's commitment to

closing the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Victorians," Mrs Powell said.

"We still have a long way to travel on the path to genuine reconciliation and closing the gap, especially on health and education.

"Reconciliation is about a mutual process of recognition and respect based on the commitment to building and maintaining an ongoing relationship that delivers real outcomes," she said.

Looking back on **National Reconciliation Week 2011**

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The panellists included: Kirstie Parker, Reconciliation Australia Board Director and Managing Editor of The Koori Mail; Henry Burmester QC, member of the Expert Panel on the Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples; Aden Ridgeway, former Senator and Tourism Australia representative; historian Professor Peter Read; and ACT NAIDOC Young Person of the Year 2010 Casey Keed.

Uncle Jimmy Little, the 'face' of National Reconciliation Week 2011 was to perform and speak at the event, but unfortunately illness prevented him from coming. The multi-

award winning singer wished all the people in Australia a good National Reconciliation Week.

"Recognition and thanks is how we make change, how we support one another and how we as a human people can move forward," Dr Little said.

"I hope my involvement in National Reconciliation Week will help with recognition of the great good that my people do, have done and will continue to do, not only for themselves but in contributing to the fabric of the Australian community," he said.

Stepping in for his famous grandfather, James Henry set the mood opening proceedings with a heart-warming rendition of Yorta Yorta Man—Jimmy's ode to his origins and heritage.

During the wide-ranging discussion, hosted by ABC presenter Alex Sloan and simulcast on ABC Local Radio, Kirstie Parker, a Yuwalarai woman, spoke about what recognition meant to her:

"It makes you feel good about yourself, and I believe when you feel good about yourself, you can see the good in other people. And when you see the good in other people, magic happens. Absolutely anything can happen."

The lively debate continued on in small groups well after the event had officially ended.

Throughout the week, most of Canberra's national cultural institutions united to present free National Reconciliation Week events including public talks, musical performances, forums, exhibitions and online debates.

Yorta Yorta Man: James Henry's moving tribute to his grandfather Jimmy Little, the face of National Reconciliation Week.
Picture by Wayne Quilliam.



Looking back on **National Reconciliation Week 2011**

At the Australian War Memorial, the important work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the defence force was recognised in a lecture by the Memorial's Indigenous liaison officer Gary Oakley.

"Recognition has been a long time coming in the Australian Defence Force," Mr Oakley said.

"The army was actually one of the first equal opportunity employer's in WWI, but once they came back to Australia there were no Indigenous faces in the marches."

The National Portrait Gallery held a special talk, entitled *A Voice to be Heard*, which recognised various Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who instigated positive change in our society. At the National Gallery of

Australia, a forum of Indigenous curators and artists hosted an event on the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander visual arts.

The support of National Reconciliation Week by our national cultural institutions was yet another sign of the goodwill shared during the event.

Reconciliation Australia CEO Leah Armstrong acknowledged the contribution made to National Reconciliation Week by all organisations and individuals.

"Events like National Reconciliation Week provide a focus for us to reflect on reconciliation and learn more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures," Ms Armstrong said.

"Recognising our shared histories, contributions and achievements will lead to better relationships between all Australians."

In years to come, we want National Reconciliation Week to continue to be a special time that inspires reconciliation and encourages us all to make the effort to form respectful relationships with each other. Just as Christmas is a time for peace and family, National Reconciliation Week should be a time of genuine understanding and acceptance.

The Wiradjuri Echoes performing during National Reconciliation Week.

National Portrait Gallery educator Krysia Kitch paying tribute to Eddie Mabo during a special tour of some of the gallery's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander portraits.
Picture by Wayne Quilliam.



Looking back on **National Reconciliation Week 2011**



Musician Archie Roach (above) headlined the launch of Zoos Victoria's first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) that outlined 20 actions the three zoo properties will take over the next two years.

The launch at Healesville Sanctuary also included performances by the Wurundjeri Jindi Worabak dancers (top and left).

The plan, launched during National Reconciliation Week, was developed in partnership with Reconciliation Australia, traditional owners and other stakeholders.

Pictures by Andrew Griffiths and courtesy of Zoos Victoria.

Roadside recognition

During National Reconciliation Week, the West Australian Government supported the opportunity to develop stronger relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians.



Indigenous Affairs Minister Peter Collier encouraged all West Australians to embrace the week, to use it as an opportunity to learn more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, to recognise past wrongs and to commit to working together to help close the gaps.

“Shared learning, mutual respect, cultural awareness and understanding are all critical to encouraging reconciliation,” Mr Collier said.

“Talk to your children, take some time to focus on all aspects of our Australian history and commit to helping develop stronger relationships in your own life,” he said.

The WA Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA) funded a wide range of events during the week and also partnered with the Bringing Them Home Committee, Reconciliation Australia and the City of Perth for a reconciliation banner project.

More than 40 organisations sponsored 138 banners, which added a splash of colour to Perth’s central business district, along with a message about reconciliation.

Street banners promoting reconciliation lined the streets in Perth.

The Larrakia Petition revisited



Dr Bill Day taking part in National Reconciliation Week activities at the National Archives. Picture by Gilbert Herrada and courtesy of the National Archives of Australia.

Bill Day (below left) with Larrakia elder Bobby Secretary (right) and Harry Adams (centre) at the Kulaluk camp in suburban Darwin in 1971. Picture courtesy of Dr William Day.



To mark National Reconciliation Week, the National Archives of Australia delved into its collection to display one of the most important documents in the history of the Indigenous Australians' struggle for land rights; the Larrakia Petition.

The petition, headed *Gwalwa Daraniki*—‘Our Land’ in the language of the Larrakia people, the traditional owners of the Darwin area—was signed by 1,000 Indigenous Australians across the country. It called for treaties recognising the land rights and political representation of Australia’s First Peoples. Some signed the three metre long scroll with their names, others with a thumb print. The finished petition was delivered to Queen Elizabeth II in October 1972.

The National Archives carefully restored the original document and invited Dr Bill Day, consulting anthropologist involved with the creation of the petition, and Mr Daniel May from the Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation, to provide an inside perspective on the petition at their Speakers Corner on May 29.

Around 75 people gathered to hear the talk and pay their respects to the men and women who signed it nearly 40 years ago. It was also the first time Dr Day had seen the petition since he mailed it to Buckingham Palace in 1972.

“It was a strange situation to be in presence of the document,” Dr Day said. “There was added emotion because many of those named on it were my friends. Although the majority have passed away since the petition was gathered, I felt that their spirits were in the room.”

The proceedings began with a moment’s silence to acknowledge those who had passed away. Dr Day then began his talk by describing some of the people who contributed to the petition and how he came to be involved in its creation.

In 1969, when he first arrived in Darwin as an itinerant worker, he had been shocked by the living conditions in the Aboriginal fringe camps around the northern capital. He publicised their cause through a land rights newsletter that he edited for 13 years, from 1971 to 1984.

He said, “the petition was an integral part of this campaign for Aboriginal rights and was

intended as a national effort on behalf of all Aboriginal people”.

Following Dr Day’s address, Daniel May, and his brother, Leonard, then spoke about their experiences and the experiences of their relatives in struggling for recognition. As part of the questions after the talk, one member of the audience said learning about the story behind the petition had inspired them to become more involved with the cause.

Today, the Larrakia Petition serves as a reminder of the continuing effort to recognise the land rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Dr Day said that displaying the petition at the National Archives of Australia honoured those whose names are written on it.

“The National Archives should be congratulated for preserving our history for future generations...generations who at the very least might be made aware of the sacrifices made by those who went before them.”

No place for racism in Australia

Grace Portolesi grew up in Adelaide as the youngest child of a large, migrant Italian family. At Flinders University she studied public policy and government. After working for a number of South Australia Government Ministers including Frank Blevins, Terry Groom and Carolyn Pickles she moved to Queensland in the early 1990s where she was an adviser to Queensland Premier, Wayne Goss.

She returned to Adelaide some years later to work as a policy adviser to Opposition Leader Mike Rann and, when Labor won government in 2002, advised the Minister for Families and Communities, Jay Weatherill.

In 2006 Grace was elected as the Member for Hartley and served as Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney-General. After the 2010 election, she was appointed as Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Youth and Minister for Volunteers.

The following article was written by the South Australian Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, Grace Portolesi, and first appeared in the Adelaide Advertiser.

How would you feel if you were often served last at the counter, even though you'd arrived ahead of others who were served before you?

Imagine if you were regularly treated poorly or with contempt. Imagine if people avoided sitting next to you on a crowded bus; you were asked to leave a pub; you were not given a bed in a motel; or you were turned down for a rental property?

I invite you to think about a daily experience of not being recognised, of being invisible, ignored, not trusted—and for your culture not to be respected. Your children not only witness this happening to you, they face this experience themselves.

It would be difficult for many of us to walk in the shoes of someone who is treated this way. If it happened to us, would we not see it as extremely unfair and discriminatory? If it were because of our race, would we not name it as racism?

It might be hard for us to accept that this can happen in Australia, the land of the 'fair go', but it does happen. We know that this discrimination and prejudice occurs in our community. Aboriginal people tell us this is their daily experience and research bears it out.

I was dismayed to read the results this year of comprehensive national research on racial attitudes and experiences across Australia.

This was undertaken by the University of Western Sydney, which polled 12,500 Australians over the past 10 years, including South Australians.

"It might be hard for us to accept that this can happen in Australia, the land of the 'fair go', but it does happen."

It found that across all racial groups, 1.7 per cent of respondents reported often having been treated with disrespect and mistrust. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents, this number rose sharply to 20 per cent. More than one in 10 Australians polled identified themselves as 'prejudiced

against other cultures' and it was disturbing to see that at least one in four expressed anti-Aboriginal sentiments.

While racist sentiment toward new waves of migrants may improve over time, it appears anti-Aboriginal sentiments remain resilient. This is shameful. It should not happen to anyone. And these are our nation's First Peoples.

Further, Reconciliation Australia's 2011 Reconciliation Barometer showed that levels of trust between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people are very low.

Shouldn't this make us question where we, as a society, are going wrong?

It is a priority for our State Government to address discrimination and Aboriginal disadvantage. Since Don Dunstan's nation-leading legislation in 1966 to prohibit all forms of discrimination in South Australia, we have come a long way with legislative reform. And governments of all persuasions have committed millions to *Closing the Gap*. Despite this, racism persists. What is it about our culture that enables this to continue?

It is fitting and timely that National Reconciliation Week's theme this year is *Let's Talk Recognition*. It's fitting

because recognition is the foundation of reconciliation and it's timely because there has been much talk recently about what recognitions means.

But when are we going to recognise the presence and effects of racism in our community?

Racism has a very damaging impact on people and our ability to deliver programs designed to improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Research from across the world shows that racism impacts on people's mental and physical health. And there is also research starting to look into the economic cost of racism, just as we are also recognising the cost of other social issues such as domestic violence and depression.

Perhaps we all need to look at recognition as something that can make visible what is currently invisible. It is important that we challenge ourselves to think about the realities that we as a community may not have wanted to recognise or acknowledge realities like racism.

Putting aside for a moment that I am a Minister, it is possible for someone like me—a white person born of migrant parents—to go about my daily life without seeing racism as something requiring my attention. But I want to challenge this notion. I am asking non-Aboriginal Australians to recognise that racism is profoundly experienced by Aboriginal people and that we, as non-Aboriginal people, have a responsibility to consciously and actively tackle it.

I may well be criticised for highlighting the reality of racism and issuing this challenge. I know that in talking about racism—and talking about it as an issue that Australia must tackle—I may be accused, by some, of political correctness and labelling people as racist. But this is not about blame or accusation; it's about recognition and ultimately reconciliation. While this may

challenge the notion that we are the country of the 'fair go', we need to face up to the problem and take collective responsibility to act.

It's my view that we, as community, will continue to struggle with closing the gaps of Aboriginal disadvantage until we acknowledge that Aboriginal people are confronted with racism and its consequences on a daily basis.

“This is not about blame or accusation; it's about recognition and ultimately reconciliation.”

As individuals, we must accept responsibility to challenge racism wherever we see it happening, from so-called jokes through to blatant or systemic discrimination. If we raise these issues with our families, social networks

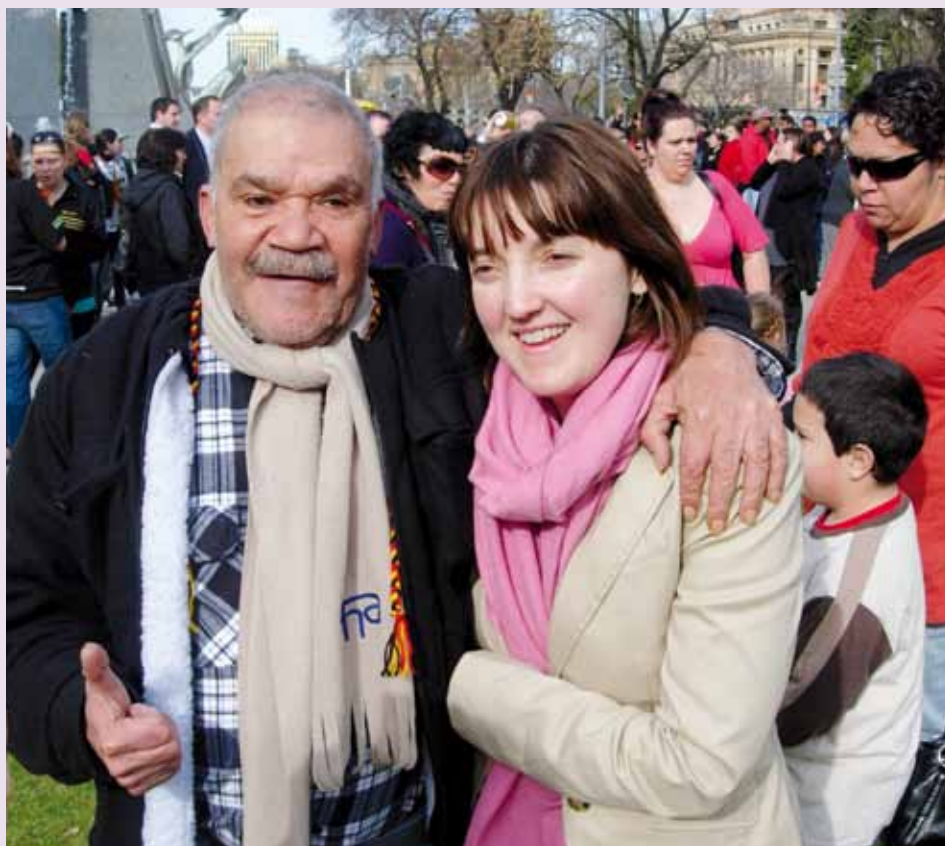
and workplaces, think of the positive ripple effect it will have. If we do this, I believe we can make change.

I have formally asked the South Australian Aboriginal Advisory Council to advise me on practical strategies for our community to more effectively tackle racism. We should not underestimate the importance of small, but practical, steps. From little things, big things grow.

This is why I acknowledge traditional owners of the land on which we stand. To me, this is about respect. It's an essential and practical symbol to recognise the unique and primary relationship that Aboriginal Australians have with their country.

If, as a community, we can't bring ourselves to undertake the small, but powerful, acts, how can we achieve the big things, like improving the life expectancy of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and empowering Aboriginal children to become community leaders?

As simple as it sounds, recognition is very powerful, because it's one of the most important means we have to achieve reconciliation.



South Australian Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, Grace Portolesi with Roy Range during NAIDOC Week celebrations last year.

Box office preview

Ronin Films have recently released two new DVDs, *Three Boys Dreaming* and *Emily in Japan*.

Three Boys Dreaming, by Michael Cordell, follows the lives of three Indigenous boys as they chase the dream of becoming professional AFL footballers. Under the glare of coaches and recruitment managers each of the boys has a chequered pathway, but it is the boys' emotional journey that is most captivating.

Much more than a sporting documentary, this is a universal film about dreams and ambition, and what happens when life gets in the way.

Another fascinating DVD recently released is *Emily in Japan*, which tells the story of the landmark exhibition of paintings by Emily Kame Kngwarreye that toured to Osaka and Tokyo in 2008.

Emily was a remarkable Aboriginal woman from Utopia in central Australia who began to paint on canvas when she was 78 years old. In the eight years before she died in 1996 she produced a staggering output of more than

3,000 canvases, many of which are now highly valued.

At the core of the film is the working relationship between curator Margo Neale and Japanese scholar and art critic Professor Akira Tatehana—who 10 years earlier had recognised Emily's talent and had made it his mission to bring an exhibition of her work to Japan. The success of the exhibition has guaranteed Emily's place as one of the world's leading modernist artists.

Copies can be ordered on the Ronin Films website: www.roninfilms.com.au



Vivian Paul from the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) celebrated National Hoodie Day in style with his grandmother, Betty Smith. In its second year, the initiative is raising money to help improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Picture courtesy of AIME.



Year 6 students David, Mackenzie, Nathan and Oliver giving their National Reconciliation Week presentation to the school.

Thank you from Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia would like to thank the students and teachers from Geelong Grammar School for their fundraising efforts during National Reconciliation Week.

Year 6 students showed great leadership and responsibility in raising the Aboriginal flag and explaining the importance of National Reconciliation Week to other students. They also ran a number of fundraising activities including a sausage sizzle and a sale of specially painted hands, boomerangs and kangaroo paws.



Doors open for Indigenous art workers

Eight Indigenous art workers from remote Northern Territory and Western Australian communities recently completed residencies in several of Australia's leading art institutions—the National Gallery of Australia, Museum of Contemporary Art and the Art Gallery Of NSW.

The placements were the culmination of nine months training and mentoring conducted by the Association of Northern Kimberley and Arnhem Aboriginal Artists (ANKAAA).

"It is really important for our mob to meet and work with the people who are running the mainstream galleries and organisations at those very high levels," said ANKAAA Chairman and Madarppa Clan leader, Mr Djambawa Marawili AM.

"For the people from remote areas we are really stirring them around and opening their visions and their dreams to get into this open world.

"It is a new pathway opening up for art workers—new pathway for both sides, that is the point," he said.

ANKAAA's innovative arts worker extension program offers exciting opportunities for committed Indigenous art workers already employed within art centres in the Top End and the Kimberley.

The training and mentoring extends their skills and industry networks and the residencies enable them to share knowledge of their culture and art centres with interstate galleries.

"The real Aboriginal art tells us who we are and where we come from. Through my stories, my patterns, my songs, my Law, I am telling the world," Mr Marawili said.

"We can call it education for non-Aboriginal as well as for Aboriginal people—learning about different cultures, different languages and also different backgrounds. This program is opening up the way for those different tribes and clans to be sharing their knowledge," he said.

ANKAAA arts workers with Indigenous curators at the National Gallery of Australia, June 2011 (l-r) Kelly Cole (National Gallery of Australia), John Saunders (ANKAAA), Tina Baum (National Gallery of Australia), Vivian Kerinauia (Tiwi Design), Nici Cumpston (Art Galley of South Australia), Faith Thompson (Ngukurr Arts), Rachael Umbagai (Mowanjumb Artists Spirit of the Wandjina), Glenn Pilkinton (Art Gallery of Western Australia). *Picture courtesy National Gallery of Australia.*

The project is funded under the Indigenous Training for Employment Program, a partnership between the Northern Territory Government Department of Business and Employment (DBE) and the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Work Place Relations (DEEWR).

Core operational funding to ANKAAA, received through the National Arts and Crafts Industry Support (NACIS) and from the Australia Council for the Arts, is also crucial to the program.

ANKAAA will soon call for expressions of interest for the next intake. For more information contact: Christina Davidson on (08) 8981 6134 or ceo@ankaaa.org.au



Dreamworld staff at the launch of their RAP (l-r) Rocky Round, Mark Downey, Adam Clarke.
Picture courtesy of Dreamworld.

Dreamworld's RAP ride

Dreamworld gardener and general maintenance employee Greg 'Rocky' Round, is extremely proud that his workplace has become the first theme park in Australia to launch a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

As one of the five Indigenous staff members working at Dreamworld, and sister park WhiteWater World, he was eager to be involved in the 12-month consultation process.

"Already since the launch of the RAP we have seen some great examples of how my culture can be incorporated into the business and I am really looking forward to seeing how the plan progresses and being a part of it," Mr Round said.

The official launch in May was attended and supported by Aboriginal community members Aunty Carol Currie of the Mununjali people and Kombumerri Elder Patricia O'Connor, along with local politicians.

Dreamworld and WhiteWater World CEO Noel Dempsey felt that all businesses should feel the same sense of obligation to ensure long-term economic benefit for Indigenous communities and assist in raising the profile of the First Australians.

"We realise that as a business there are a number of opportunities that we have to showcase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures to local and international visitors.

"Our plan is aimed at increasing cultural awareness in all levels of our business, creating greater engagement with local communities, partnering with and promoting local Aboriginal businesses to create for them greater industry opportunities," he said.

Aboriginal singers Tyrone Drahm and Alec Warner topped off the launch with a rendition of Advance Australia Fair sung in the local Aboriginal language, Yugambeh.



Rolled gold RAP for Rio Tinto

International mining group Rio Tinto launched its Reconciliation Action Plan during National Reconciliation Week, presenting the document to the Prime Minister Julia Gillard at a formal handover at Parliament House in Canberra.

Reconciliation Australia provided guidance and support in the development of the plan which provides a blueprint for deeper engagement between Indigenous communities and Rio Tinto operations around Australia.

Sam Walsh, Rio Tinto chief executive Iron Ore and Australia said that the RAP was an acknowledgement of the way Rio Tinto undertakes engagement and business with Indigenous people.

"The Rio Tinto RAP reflects our journey of reconciliation which continues through new agreements we are reaching with the traditional owners of the lands on which we operate," Mr Walsh said.

"In particular the RAP recognises and builds on our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy, our engagement with Aboriginal communities, and the many initiatives and achievements of the past 15 years.

"Rio Tinto is already the largest private sector employer of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, with approximately eight per cent of our Australian workforce being Indigenous, but we recognise that there is considerable work to be done to close the gap and that we need to partner with organisations like Reconciliation Australia to do this.

Reconciliation Australia Board Director Dr Tom Calma, with Prime Minister Julia Gillard, Rio Tinto's Sam Walsh and Minister for Indigenous Affairs Jenny Macklin, during the presentation of the Rio Tinto Reconciliation Action Plan.
Picture by Alex Ellinghausen and courtesy Fairfax media.

"This Plan will help Rio Tinto engage all of our business units in the journey to promote reconciliation," he said.

Reconciliation Australia Board Director Dr Tom Calma said the launch of Rio Tinto's RAP was a significant step forward for the Australian mining industry, sending a powerful message of shared responsibility to the Australian business community and to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in this country.

At the launch, Dr Calma recalled his favourable 2006 report on Rio Tinto's engagement practices with the traditional owners in the Argyle mine region.

"Over the last decade Rio Tinto has been a leader in acknowledging the strong business case for reconciliation and building communities that are strong, connected and resilient, well beyond the mine life," Dr Calma said. "Today they've raised the bar by launching this Plan and making new commitments for the coming years."

RAP Chat

Tourism Australia signs up

Tourism Australia's Managing Director Andrew McEvoy; Tourism Australia Board member, Terri Janke; Chairman of the Indigenous Tourism Advisory Panel, Aden Ridgeway; Experiences Project Manager – Indigenous Tourism, Kristi O'Brien; and Tourism Australia Chairman Geoff Dixon celebrate the launch of their Reconciliation Action Plan.

Through its successful Indigenous Tourism Champions Program (ITCP), Tourism Australia has already committed significant resources to promote businesses that facilitate the sharing of Indigenous culture and stories in an honest and respectful way.

The RAP reaffirms Tourism Australia's commitment to strong and productive relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Woolworths welcomed to RAP community

In affirmation to their commitment to reconciliation through Indigenous employment, Woolworths Limited has been working with Diversity Dimensions to provide a work ready program for Indigenous Australians. The Transition to Employment training program has seen over 200 participants successfully placed into work across Woolworths supermarkets and affiliate stores, nationally throughout Australia.



Woolworths Limited launched their Reconciliation Action Plan in June 2011; with the intention of providing long-term, sustainable employment, better education and building relationships with Indigenous businesses.

Reconciliation Australia CEO Leah Armstrong said that Woolworths, as Australia's second largest private sector employer of over 170,000 workers, has a unique ability to "influence relationships, respect and opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia".

Joanne Riley, a participant in the Transition to Employment program, is an example of the success of this initiative. As a young mother dealing with various obstacles, and very little confidence and experience, she completed the work experience program at the Delroy Park Dubbo Woolworths. Shortly after, she was awarded the role of Service Supervisor for Registers and Customer Service.

Her continuing progress is largely attributed to her self-determination, support and the ongoing-mentor relationships employed through the program. Woolworths CEO Michael Luscombe is very encourage by the results and believes enduring success will require an employment strategy focussing on "retention and managing career progression".

Woolworths shows a truly genuine and collaborative effort to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are provided with an opportunity to succeed, in both their employment and their wider communities.

Joanne Riley (far left) busy at work thanks to the Woolworths Transition to Employment program.

Picture by Natalie Holmes and courtesy of Dubbo Weekender.

Acknowledging traditional owners

Australia Post has made a visible commitment to reconciliation, by placing an acknowledgement statement in major retail outlets around the country.

The sign, developed in conjunction with an Indigenous design agency, is a representation of the ongoing journey and connection that Australia Post has with Indigenous communities. It also incorporates the colours from both the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags along with an imprint of a stamp.

The initiative is part of Australia Post's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) which was launched earlier this year.

In its RAP, Australia Post stated that recognition and shared knowledge were interlinked—and that through learning about the rich culture and heritage of Indigenous Australians the importance of acknowledging traditional owners becomes relevant.

Due to continuing discussions within certain communities regarding the traditional ownership of the land, the gesture acknowledges ancestors and elders in a generic statement.



Australia Post acknowledges the traditional owners of this land – their ancestors and elders – and is committed to reconciliation with Indigenous Australians through employment.

AUSTRALIA
POST

A RAP for the Opera House



Pictured at the launch of the Sydney Opera House RAP are (l to r) Karen Mundine, Reconciliation Australia; Richard Evans, CEO Sydney Opera House; Mary Smith, artist of Dreaming Sisters (the artwork featured throughout the RAP); Michael West, Gadigal people of the Eora Nation; Wesley Enoch, Sydney Opera House Trustee; and Glen Toohey, Reconciliation Australia. As Australia's premier performing arts centre, the Opera House has long celebrated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and culture, embracing the rich heritage of its Bennelong Point site and paying tribute to the contribution of the First Peoples to the nation's cultural development.

In its first RAP, the Opera House commits to improving employment opportunities in the performing arts and entertainment industry by working in partnership to create and implement programs that empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Picture by Jack Atley.



Richmond Football Club launched their RAP at their Dreamtime at the G clash with Essendon.
Picture courtesy of Slattery Media Group.

AFL in the reconciliation game

With the AFL finals drawing near, it's timely to reflect on how the game contributes to reconciliation by the administration's encouragement and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players.

While Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples make up just 2.5 per cent of the Australian population, they contribute to more than 10 per cent of the players on AFL lists. With the courage and ability to push boundaries on the field, they punch way above their weight.

But the AFL can also take credit for the high representation thanks to its programs designed to stimulate Indigenous participation. It recognises the ongoing contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players to Australian football and their importance to the growth of the game.



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More than that, it makes a deeper commitment to use the game to improve the quality of life in communities throughout Australia. In partnership with Indigenous people and other stakeholders, it works at a local level to improve employment opportunities, education and health and participation outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and their communities.

The AFL's commitment is administered through its Indigenous Framework, its Indigenous Programs and its Indigenous Employment Strategy. It's an ideal partnership where everyone wins.

Two clubs, Essendon and Richmond, have gone a step further by developing their own Reconciliation Action Plans, thereby cementing their commitment to the reconciliation process.

Football is a numbers game, and when it comes to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in the AFL competition the figures are impressive.

The first known player of Aboriginal descent to play at AFL level was Fitzroy's Joe Johnson, who played 55 games, including premierships in 1904 and 1905.

To date 195 players known to be of Aboriginal descent have played at the elite level. Last year, 84 Indigenous players were listed with the AFL including eight at both Essendon and Fremantle.

Geelong's Graham 'Polly' Farmer, who revolutionised the game with his use of handball and was named in the AFL Team of the Century, and Carlton's Syd Jackson were stars of the 1960s and early 1970s. Both were from Western Australia.

Congratulations to the AFL and to all the teams in the competition for making the game so accessible to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players and for their genuine commitment to reconciliation.

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August 2011



Deadly finalists: Casey Donovan (for Female Artist of the Year) and Brian Dowd, from *Black on Track*, (a finalist in the Outstanding Achievement in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment).
Picture by Andrew Rosenfeldt and courtesy GJC Vibe Australia.

Who's deadly?

Australia's biggest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander award night—the annual National Indigenous Music, Sport, Entertainment and Community Awards—is coming up, and with 23 categories up for grabs it's set to be *Deadly*.

At the Deadly's launch at the Opera House, a didgeridoo in place of a drum roll introduced the nominees for 2011 which included 15-year-old tennis champion Ashleigh Barty for Female Sportsperson of the Year. Ashleigh is now the second Indigenous person to win at Wimbledon after taking home the junior's title at the All England Club in June.

The success hit *Mad Bastards*, by Broome's Pigram brothers, is in the running for this year's film award, along with Cannes favourite *Toomelah*.

At the launch, *Deadlys* founder and executive producer Gavin Jones emphasised that the awards aim to provide positive role models, particularly for young people.

"I've often wondered why the mention of the Deadly Awards always brings a knowing smile to people's faces, Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike.

"I think it's because of the nature of the event: above all it's real, by the people, for the people.

"It recognises the incredible creative force and talent of our people and it shows that we are in control of our destiny and that despite the past, we continue to achieve great things—great things now and we will continue to achieve into the future," he said.

Reconciliation Australia is a proud supporter of the 2011 Deadly Awards which will be held at the Sydney Opera House on 27 September. To vote for your favourite nominees or check out broadcast times on SBS, NITV and NIRS visit: www.vibe.com.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 gaps 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:
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