

ReconciliationNews

December 2011

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Recognition drives reconciliation

Recognition. It's motivational; it instigates pride and connectedness; and it has the potential to drive positive change. This is why, this year, the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Constitution has been the subject of a national conversation.

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A sign of respect: Arrente elder Walangari Karntawarra welcoming new Australians at the Department of Immigration and Citizenship's citizenship ceremony at the Sydney Opera House. Including a Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country in all citizenship ceremonies is one of DIAC's RAP actions which aims to promote recognition and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Acknowledgements of Country are at the very heart of reconciliation.
Picture courtesy DIAC.



Mick Dodson steps down as Reconciliation Australia Co-Chair



Over the past decade Prof Mick Dodson has made a significant and lasting contribution to Reconciliation Australia. Described by former Co-Chairs Fred Chaney and Shelley Reys as someone who would bring a wealth of experience and expertise to Reconciliation Australia, Prof Dodson was the first new member to be appointed by the inaugural Board in 2002.

“The wish to bring Mick on was unanimous because of the strength of the intellectual contribution he had made to the recognition and advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders—and his standing with those communities,” Mr Chaney said.

Professor Dodson became Co-Chair of Reconciliation Australia in 2008—and as an uncompromising, yet humble leader, has played a major role in all of Reconciliation Australia’s activities. With a particular interest in the Indigenous Governance Awards (IGA) program, Prof Dodson successfully engaged with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, helping to build strong relationships while also initiating governance workshops across communities. He says being a judge on the IGA panel changed his life.

Top Australian: Prof Mick Dodson receiving the 2009 Australian of the Year Award from former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and National Australia Day Council Chair Adam Gilchrist.

“It’s an honour to see these proud people doing proud things,” Prof Dodson said.

“Success is now my guiding light as it must be for all Australians who want to see it replicated across the country.”

In 2009 Reconciliation Australia was proud to nominate Prof Dodson for Australian of the Year and was delighted when he was awarded the title—further cementing him as an Australian leader and advocate for reconciliation.

Prof Dodson’s official roles—which include Director of the National Centre for Indigenous Studies at the ANU and Chairman of the

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies—tell only a small part of his story and what he does for his people. He shares his wisdom, encouragement and compassion with both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians. He is a true champion for reconciliation.

While always celebrating the successes of his people, both publicly and privately, Prof Dodson also expects accountability for failures. Board Director Fred Chaney says Prof Dodson has never been one to shy away from the difficult questions and situations which often occur in the reconciliation landscape.

“His passion, determination and legacy will live on.”

“As a Board member, I relied on Mick for his moral compass, his fierce independence and for telling it as he saw it,” Mr Chaney said.

Prof Dodson has been recognised as a leader on the international stage through his work with the United Nations and with his recent appointment as Chair of Australian Studies at Harvard University in the United States.

Newly appointed Co-Chair Dr Tom Calma says Prof Dodson’s leadership will certainly be missed.

“It’s been a great privilege to work with Mick,” Dr Calma said.

“While his contribution to the Board will be missed I know he will continue to advocate for reconciliation through his many other leadership roles.”

“His passion, determination and legacy will continue to live on through the accomplishments of future generations of Aboriginal leaders and organisations.”

CEO message



This year has been a big one for Reconciliation Australia—and I’d like to sincerely recognise all of our committed partners, supporters, Board members, staff and volunteers that have helped create an environment for change.

Recognition has been a big part of our work over the past 12 months. We have been actively promoting and supporting discussions around changes to our Constitution that formally recognise our nation’s first peoples.

Despite all of our efforts to achieve equality, not all Australians are treated fairly and sections of the Constitution still allow for discrimination based on race. And so, the formal recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Australian Constitution is an important step in the reconciliation journey. This is essential for Australia to move forward—as a united nation.

Since August, Reconciliation Australia has held ‘recognition’ events with seven universities, four businesses and had a presence at a selection of NRL and AFL games—including a big *Sea of Hands* event at the NRL Grand Final. Thanks must go to members of the RAP and corporate communities that supported these initiatives.

These events have provided the opportunity for learning and discussion around this very important issue of recognition.

In September, I had the honour of attending an historic discussion at the APEC Women and the Economy Summit in San Francisco which highlighted the economic potential of women to lift their families’, communities’ and nation’s prosperity.

The Summit keynote by Hillary Rodham Clinton did not disappoint. Secretary Clinton called for action and big and bold ideas. Much of the event linked back to recognition—and the dialogue with Indigenous women from other nations provided me with food for thought on what can be done in our communities to invest in Indigenous girls.

As 2011 rapidly draws to a close, I would like to recognise each and every individual for their part in supporting Reconciliation Australia this year. I’d particularly like to welcome Dr Tom Calma as our new Co-Chair following the retirement of Prof Mick Dodson. Dr Calma, who formally joined our ranks last May, brings significant knowledge, skills and influence to the position.

I’d like to also thank Prof Dodson for his outstanding efforts as Co-Chair and Board Director for close to a decade. You have made a huge impact on reconciliation in this country and I know it is an issue that will always remain close to your heart.

We’re also farewelling long-standing Board Director Graham Evans who has played a key role in connecting our organisation with major corporates and helping develop the Indigenous Governance Awards with BHP.

Finally, I would like to wish all of our supporters a joyous holiday season and look forward to a 2012 full of energy and enthusiasm to engage even more people in the reconciliation process.

Unfinished Business: The Indigenous Peoples Workshop at CHOGM

Every two years the Commonwealth People's Forum brings together international representatives to debate key issues facing Commonwealth people. Held in the run up to CHOGM, the Forum is the single biggest opportunity for community members to inform Commonwealth leaders on major issues.

This year saw the first ever opportunity for Indigenous speakers and delegates across the Commonwealth to come together in Perth to discuss issues specific to colonised communities.

In October, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people hosting the Indigenous Peoples Workshop brought together Australian and international delegates for a day-long event to discuss and reach recommendations on common issues.

The keynote speaker was Jim Morrison, a Noongar man and reconciliation advocate in Western Australia, who addressed impacts of colonisation, intergenerational trauma and the "unfinished business" required to close the gap in Indigenous disadvantage.

The key issues from the Indigenous Peoples Workshop were presented to the Commonwealth Heads of State by Noongar Elder Margaret Culbong.



Speaking out: West Australian reconciliation advocate Jim Morrison addressing the Indigenous Peoples Workshop at CHOGM.

Recognition drives reconciliation

Continued from front page

Since May, a group of community leaders, lawyers and Members of Parliament appointed by the Prime Minister has held consultations in metropolitan, regional and remote Australia asking the public how they think recognition could be achieved. When the consultations closed at the end of September, panel members had visited 84 communities and 3400 submissions had been received. The panel will report back to the Prime Minister later this month.

**“Achieving a
successful
referendum will
not be easy.”**

Reconciliation Australia has played a key role in leading and encouraging the national discussion on constitutional recognition because of its great potential to make our country better, fairer and more reconciled. A constitution reflects a nation's values—its ideas of itself. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures, as part of the world's longest, continuing tradition, form a key part of that idea.

Recognition and acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures, past and present, would show their valued place as part of our national identity. In our submission to the panel advising the Australian Government on constitutional recognition, Reconciliation Australia makes the case for “the views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be the starting point ... [so that] any changes to the Constitution are meaningful to them”. We also argue that to achieve justice and fairness, the potential for racial discrimination within the Constitution must



A united effort: Member of the Panel for Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and Reconciliation Australia Board Director, Fred Chaney (left); Noongar Elder Dr Richard Walley (centre); and Reconciliation Australia CEO Leah Armstrong at Rio Tinto's RAP community event in Perth.

be removed or changed, namely sections 25 and 51(xxvi). Section 25 should be removed because a provision to disallow a race of people from being counted in elections is an anachronism in a modern democracy. In amending or removing section 51(xxvi), there are several legal complexities involved because key pieces of legislation that enshrine Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' rights rely on this provision.

Great care needs to be taken in drafting the changes to ensure that existing legislative rights are protected and that there are no or limited unintended consequences as a result of any change. From a reconciliation perspective, any changes to this provision

should result in the removal of the potential for racial discrimination; the preservation of a Commonwealth power to make laws on matters of importance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culture; and the protection of their already recognised rights. While acknowledging that other ideas including agreement making powers and guaranteed seats in parliament are important aspirations, Reconciliation Australia believes that the focus of the current process should be on recognition and the removal of the potential for racial discrimination from the Constitution. These are the next stepping stones along the reconciliation path, offering the opportunity to foster new relationships founded on mutual trust and respect and increasing the capacity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to negotiate with government on matters of importance to them.

Widespread support essential for constitutional reform

However, for a referendum on constitutional recognition to succeed there must be widespread, grassroots support for change. We know from research commissioned by Reconciliation Australia that the Australian people's awareness of constitutional recognition is low—although it is slightly higher among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It is viewed as a relatively low priority issue among both groups with little impact on people's day to day lives. It is also apparent that the grassroots campaign for change is still building.

The upside of this is that the issue is still to be framed in most people's minds. As a consequence of these still unformed attitudes, there is great potential to foster support. The downside is that they could also be persuaded by a 'no' case.

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Making news: Media giant News Limited has become the first Australian print news organisation to develop and implement its own Reconciliation Action Plan. Pictured above (from left to right), Aboriginal leader Noel Pearson, outgoing News Limited CEO John Hartigan and Indigenous Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin all spoke at the launch event at News Limited head office in Sydney.

With over 9000 employees Australia-wide and the impressive weekly readership of over 13 million people, it is clear that News Limited is well-placed in playing a role in reconciliation.

One of the various actions underway is a program that sends editorial staff to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to increase understanding and awareness within the newsrooms of the challenges facing the First Australians.

The hope is to also develop corporate partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses where News Limited employees can share their expertise.

Picture courtesy News Limited.

Indigenous Australians honoured

With great Aboriginal leaders such as Prof Mick Dodson, Dr Larissa Behrendt, Dr Noel Hayman and Djapirri Mununggirritj already recognised as winners and finalists, Reconciliation Australia was proud to see 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians making it through to the state finals for the *2012 Australian of the Year Awards*.

Among the group of Indigenous Australians recognised for their

outstanding achievements, five were nominated for Young Australian of the Year. Patrick Mills from the ACT was nominated for his successes both on and off the basketball court, which included raising \$50,000 for the Queensland flood appeal. In Western Australia, Krista McMeeken was recognised for her contribution towards reconciliation, while Tim Goodwin led the way in Victoria with a nomination for his contribution to Indigenous law.

Reconciliation Australia was also proud to see sporting hero and Indigenous advocate Preston Campbell making it through to the Queensland final for Australian of the Year.

Congratulations go to Laurie Baymarwangga whose incredible story of hope and survival saw her take home the Northern Territory Senior Australian of the Year.

Good luck to all of the Australians who make it to the final on 25 January 2012.

National Reconciliation Week 2012

Reconciliation Australia is pleased to announce that recognition will remain the hot topic for next year's National Reconciliation Week.

Riding on the success of National Reconciliation Week 2011, the theme of recognition will carry over to coincide with the timely issue of formally recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our Constitution.

We all know the importance of recognition and how good it makes us feel—National Reconciliation Week is the perfect opportunity to recognise all Australians, and the unique place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within this country.

It is also the perfect time for all of us to think about how the First Australians could be recognised within our founding document. So get involved by hosting or attending an event and do your part for reconciliation; it's everyone's business.



Outgoing Board Director Graham Evans pictured at Wesfarmers' reconciliation event in Perth.

Talking recognition: SBS staff and members of the Media RING (Reconciliation Industry Network Group) attended a panel discussion led by You Me Unity Ambassador, Karla Grant on constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at SBS Studios, North Sydney.

Panellists included (from left) Carla McGrath from the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence, Reconciliation Australia's Leah Armstrong and Glenn Ferguson (far right) from the Panel for Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The three took part in a robust discussion on recognition, including the importance of recognition for an individual, and some of the key suggestions arising from public consultations.



In November, Reconciliation Australia farewelled Mr Graham Evans from the Board of Directors.

During his time on the Board, Mr Evans built many solid relationships for Reconciliation Australia with both government and corporate sectors.

In particular his stewardship in the relationship between Reconciliation Australia and BHP Billiton not only helped sustain and legitimise the organisation's work over the last decade but, through the Indigenous Governance program, made a lasting impact on policy, practice and outcomes in this critical area.

Mr Evan's dedication to the cause of reconciliation has been both genuine and meaningful. He will be greatly missed by both the Board and staff at Reconciliation Australia.

Existence, validity, recognition

The following story was written by Benson Saulo for a Reconciliation Australia special feature in the Canberra Times.

Recognising Indigenous Australians as the First Australians is set to become the next great debate on the national agenda and it has been acknowledged as a “once in 50 year opportunity” by Prime Minister Julia Gillard. Over the past year the term recognition has undergone close scrutiny with the definition being pulled and prodded, twisted and turned to resemble a definition that both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians are comfortable to discuss in open forums and eventually vote upon in the 2013 proposed referendum.

It is with reserved optimism and nervous anticipation that I, like many Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, await the 2011 government proposal [later this month] and subsequent 2013 referendum. With only eight of the past 44 constitutional amendments being successful, it will take a movement at the ballot boxes reminiscent of the 1967 referendum in which more than 90 per cent of Australians voted in favour of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders being recognised as Australian citizens.

This year I have had the great privilege and honour of being appointed the 2011 Australia Youth Representative to the United Nations, a great achievement not only as a representative of the diverse and optimistic youth demographic across our nation but as the first Indigenous representative to hold this position since it began in 1999. I feel that my appointment as Australian Youth Representative is a reflection on the youth of Australia and their aspiration to promote an inclusive society.

I am a strong believer that youth participation and representation in the decision making process, either directly or indirectly affecting the direction of Australia and issues relating

to youth, is paramount. Engaging and empowering the voice of the growing youth population will ensure the future leaders of Australia are informed and educated in the importance of an inclusive society with effective decision-making.

Based on the 2006 Census and age population projections identified by the Australian Bureau of statistics, the total population of Australia in 2011 is approximately 22,596,500 with 9.65 percent of the population falling between 18 and 24 years of age. In the years leading towards the 2013 proposed Referendum the Australian population is predicted to increase by 2.35 percent with the population of first time eligible votes increasing by 1.18 percent.

“The role of young people has evolved from silent by-stander to influential voice.”

Promoting the importance of recognition means acknowledging the existence and validity of a person or group. If the 2013 proposed referendum is to have the best chance of success; the existence of the growing youth population and the validity of their input needs to be acknowledged and supported with the understanding of the importance of recognition of the First Australians.

In today's society the role of young people has evolved from being a silent by-stander to becoming an influential voice with calculated, articulated conviction. Whether in school, the workforce or in everyday life, young people are encouraged to have an opinion and voice their concerns.

This ability to communicate and debate should not be limited to the school yards and street corners of society but encouraged at

all levels of public debate. Supporting this public debate will become an instrumental component to the recognition of the First Australians. Education and awareness will become the tools in building a positive movement.

Empowering the youth of Australia with the knowledge of the past injustices and the movements to build an inclusive society will not only promote the positive contributions Indigenous Australians make in society, it will also promote an educated and informed society on Indigenous issues going forward.

Supporting diverse and informed input offers differences of perspective, positive debate and outcomes. Engaging this younger generation is important to the positive growth of society, empowerment through the knowledge of a scarcely taught past.

Over the coming two years the understanding of recognition of the First Australians will be tested and debated, it will lead Australia on a journey of discovery in identity and history. It will be a journey that will look to define the term recognition and First Australians but it will be the existence and validity of the public debate involving young Australians that will ultimately lead to a successful outcome for Australia's future.



Benson Saulo, 2011 Australian Youth Representative to the United Nations.



Celebrating success: Award-winning singer Shellie Morris (left), Reconciliation Australia Board Director Dr Tom Calma (centre) and actors Jack Thompson and Luke Carroll (right) on the red carpet with the Yanyuwa Singers from Borroloola.

2011 Deadly Awards

Reconciliation Australia was once again proud to sponsor the *Deadly Awards*, which showcases the outstanding achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in sport, music, arts and the community.

This year's event, held at the Sydney Opera House, was hosted by singer Casey Donovan and actor Aaron Pederson and proved to be a great night of celebration and entertainment.

Singer Shellie Morris was joined by the Yanyuwa singers from the Northern Territory and the National Gondwana Indigenous Children's Choir for the opening of the event, with an amazing performance combining songs in both English and Aboriginal languages.

Although the *Deadly's* are a great excuse to frock up for a night of glitz and glamour—recognition is at the heart of the event. Recognising the achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is an

important part of reconciliation. And this year's nominees and winners once again showed how talented Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are.

Karla Hart's dedication and commitment to the Noongar community saw her nominated for Broadcaster of the Year. Other winners included Aaron Pederson; Debra Mailman; Jessica Mauboy and Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu—who beat popular artists Dan Sultan and Troy Cassar-Daley to take home the *Deadly* for Male Artist of the Year for the second time.

Reconciliation Australia Patron and tennis great Evonne Goolagong-Cawley was awarded the Ella Award for Lifetime Achievement in Sport. Accepting her award, Evonne shared with the audience her amazing story of passion and determination which saw her win seven grand slam singles titles during her career.

Congratulations to all our 2011 *Deadly* finalists and winners!



Deadly fashion on display at the Opera House.

Diary Dates



Purchase some Magabala diaries for 2012!
www.magabala.com

NSW



WHAT: Yiwarra Kuju: The Canning Stock Route

WHERE: Australian Museum, 6 College Street, Sydney

WHEN: 17 December 2011 – 22 April 2012, 9.30am-5pm daily (except Christmas Day)
www.australianmuseum.net.au/Yiwarra-Kuju-The-Canning-Stock-Route

Discover more than 120 contemporary paintings, cultural objects and remarkable new media work which reclaim the untold Aboriginal history of the Canning Stock Route – the world's longest stock route through the deserts of Western Australia.

WHAT: New Year's Eve 2011 cruise

WHERE: Sydney Fish Market, Darling Harbour, Sydney

WHEN: 31 December 2011
www.tribalwarrior.org

Celebrate the New Year on Sydney Harbour with the Tribal Warrior Association. All welcome aboard the Mari Nawi (Big Canoe) for her maiden voyage. Costs involved. Contact Tribal Warrior for details.

WHAT: Indigenous Australians Exhibit

WHERE: Australian Museum, 6 College Street, Sydney

WHEN: 1 January 2011 – 31 December 2011
www.australianmuseum.net.au

Indigenous Australians Exhibit is a fascinating look at the history, culture and political struggles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

WHAT: Annual Cultural Showcase

WHERE: Tamworth Country Music Festival, Tamworth

WHEN: 23 January – 28 January 2012, 12 noon – 12 midnight
www.culturalshowcase.info

A great opportunity for Aboriginal musicians to perform and develop their talent—and to showcase and celebrate Aboriginal culture as part of the Tamworth Country Music Festival.

WHAT: Saltwater Freshwater Festival

WHERE: Taree, NSW

WHEN: 26 January 2012
www.saltwaterfreshwaterfestival.com.au

The Saltwater Freshwater Festival is a showcase of the best Aboriginal talent in the country and, most importantly, in the region. It is a culmination of a range of arts and cultural activities undertaken by Saltwater Freshwater Arts during each calendar year, providing an authentic Aboriginal experience for visitors and local communities.

QLD

WHAT: The Dreaming Festival

WHERE: Sunshine Coast Hinterland

WHEN: 27 December 2011 – 1 January 2012
www.thedreamingfestival.com

The Dreaming, Australia's International Indigenous Festival, will be showcased in a special precinct within the Woodford Festival where Indigenous music, theatre, talks and galleries will be featured.



WHAT: NRL Indigenous All Stars

WHERE: Skilled Park, Gold Coast

WHEN: 4 February 2012, 7pm
www.nrl.com.au

The Indigenous All Stars take on the NRL All Stars in the third annual Harvey Norman Rugby League All Stars match.



Bill Onus at the referendum march in Melbourne in March 1967. Picture courtesy Fairfax photos.

WHAT: From Little Things Big Things Grow: Fighting for Indigenous Rights 1920-1970

WHERE: Museum of Tropical Queensland, Townsville

WHEN: Until February 2012
www.mtq.qm.qld.gov.au

This exhibition tells the largely unknown story of Indigenous and non-Indigenous activists who fought together for justice and equal rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It details the achievements and sacrifices of the struggle through personal stories, rarely seen objects and protest material.

WHAT: Fraser Coast Cultural Festival

WHERE: Fraser Coast

WHEN: 24 March – 25 March 2012
www.frasercoastculturalfestival.org.au

This event promotes, organises and presents an inclusive cultural festival, which embraces, upholds and supports all cultures and encourages participation by the multicultural communities of the Fraser Coast.

VIC

WHAT: Australia Day/Survival Day

WHERE: Barthwick Park, Belgrave

WHEN: 26 January 2012, 12 – 4pm

www.belgravesurvivalday.org

This event acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives on the 231 years of European occupation of Australia, and celebrates the survival of the oldest living culture on the globe through live music, storytelling, traditional dance and craft.

WHAT: Lake Bolac Eel Festival

WHERE: Lake Bolac

WHEN: 24 March 2012

www.eelfestival.org.au

Join musicians and artists for an event that fosters reconciliation, mutual respect and understanding between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians.

ACT

WHAT: National Multicultural Festival

WHERE: Canberra City, Canberra

WHEN: 10 February – 12 February 2012

www.multiculturalfestival.com.au

The Festival celebrates the cultural diversity of the ACT by providing events that positively showcase cultural differences and encourages people to share in and celebrate differences by enjoying arts and music, dancing, laughing and eating together.

WHAT: Out of the West: Art of Western Australia from the national collection

WHERE: National Gallery, Parkes Place, Canberra

WHEN: Until 1 April 2012

www.nga.gov.au/Exhibition/OUTWEST

Out of the West is the first exhibition at the National Gallery of Australia to present a large sample of artists living and working in Western Australia. It takes a unique look at the art from Western Australia from pre-settlement until today.



Woven basket by Dorothy Dullman (born 1951) Marrgu, Ngalbulanj language groups Gunbalanya, Northern Territory. Picture courtesy of the National Museum of Australia.

WHAT: Off the Walls: Art from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Agencies 1967–2005

WHERE: First Australians Focus Gallery, National Museum of Australia, Lawson Crescent, Canberra

WHEN: Until 10 June 2012

www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/off_the_walls

For more than 40 years, government bodies dealing with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs built significant art collections, including work by world-renowned artists Rover Thomas, Narritjin Maymuru and Fiona Foley. This exhibition takes you into the world of Indigenous art, and the politics and history of a time of great change.

WHAT: Bipotaim: Stories from the Torres Strait

WHERE: National Museum of Australia, Lawson Crescent, Canberra

WHEN: Until 14 September 2012

www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/bipotaim

An exhibition of striking photographs, stories and objects about the lives, culture and identity of Torres Strait Islanders



Gloriana Mosby (left) and Daisy Kabay. Picture by David Callow and courtesy National Museum of Australia

SA

WHAT: Spirit Festival

WHERE: Tandanya National Aboriginal Cultural Institute and Mulla Wirraburra Park, Adelaide

WHEN: 23 February – 27 February 2012

www.thespiritfestival.com

Spirit Festival is South Australia's premier Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and culture festival. From high-energy ceremonial, traditional and contemporary dance to award-winning music acts, beautiful art works, and forums the Spirit Festival is the place to experience the rich and diverse culture of Australia's first peoples.

NT

WHAT: Imparja Cup Cricket Carnival

WHERE: Alice Springs Town Council grounds, Alice Springs

WHEN: 5 February – 11 February 2012

www.ntcricket.com.au

The Imparja Cup is now a national celebration of cricket and Indigenous culture.

WA

WHAT: Yarns of the Heart, an Exhibition of Noongar Dolls from the Southern Wheatbelt

WHERE: Western Australian Museum, Perth

WHEN: Until 31 January 2012

www.museum.wa.gov.au

More than 70 exquisitely crafted, handmade dolls, which tell the traditional dreamtime and contemporary stories for the women who made them, will take pride of place at the Yarns of the Heart exhibition.

NRL's contribution to reconciliation



Reconciliation in action: The Bulldogs taking home the 2011 Reconciliation Cup.
Image courtesy Bulldogs and NRL.

Sport plays an enormous role in Australian life and for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people it is especially significant. Over the years the NRL has notched up some great reconciliation achievements — and since the launch of their Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in 2008, the NRL has made a solid contribution towards reconciliation.

This season saw the 'Close the Gap' round played in Round 22, with each NRL club making a unique contribution towards improving the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Reconciliation Australia Co-Chair Dr Tom Calma welcomed the initiative, saying the game has a long history of achievement when it comes to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation.

"Rugby League embodies the kind of partnerships essential to closing the gap," he said.

"Every week in the NRL, Indigenous and non-Indigenous players come together successfully to achieve a common goal."

Round 22 also saw the Bulldogs take home the Reconciliation Cup while the Melbourne Storm became the first NRL club to launch its own RAP.

At this year's grand final between the New Zealand Warriors and Manly Sea Eagles, ANTaR and Reconciliation Australia took the *Sea of Hands* to Sydney Olympic Park.

Using the colours of the Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Australian flags, the sea of 20,000 hands was used to create the 'Flag of Unity' designed by Aboriginal artist Adam Hill.

The occasion also gave people a chance to learn more about how recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the first

Australians in our Constitution will contribute to reconciliation.

Communications Director, Karen Mundine, was pleased so many people were keen to learn more about constitutional recognition.

"It was really encouraging to see so many different people wanting to find out what the Sea of Hands was about," Ms Mundine said.

"Despite the rain early on, we managed to attract quite a few people. Even young guys just here for the game came down to plant a hand—you got a sense that once people knew what it was about they were happy to participate."

Singer and constitutional recognition ambassador Emma Donovan wowed crowds during some pre-match entertainment—performing a suite of original songs in traditional languages. Also on hand to lend his support was Aboriginal comedian Kevin Kropinyeri.

"Recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the Constitution is literally the right thing to do," Mr Kropinyeri said.

"I think once we do that we can move forward on a whole lot of different issues."

The NRL is a sport that resonates with Indigenous Australians who are well represented on the field—with over 12 per cent of elite players having Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background—and so the NRL's RAP actions have the ability to reach so many Australians.

Some of their other achievements include developing the Australian Rugby League Indigenous Council and holding the annual Indigenous All Stars series to mark the start of the NRL season and commemorate the anniversary of the Apology to the Stolen Generations. The 2012 All Stars clash will take place at Skilled Park, Queensland on 4 February.



A sea of hands: (left to right) Rebecca Gallegos, Steven Satour, Karen Mundine and Jacqueline Phillips at the NRL Grand Final.

Casey Donovan and Kevin Kropinyeri lending a hand to reconciliation.



Reconciliation Australia Co-Chair Dr Tom Calma presenting the 2011 Reconciliation Cup to Bulldogs captain Andrew Ryan.





Students talk recognition in South Australia

South Australian students were eagerly talking recognition at the recent Schools Congress, coordinated by Reconciliation South Australia, which targeted conversations between Aboriginal Australians and other Australian opinion leaders from years 8-11.

The 185 participants from 21 different schools were involved in a lively program focussed on Kinship, run by Lynette Riley from Sydney University. The program helped students to understand the cultural links and moiety system that existed in Aboriginal communities before the invasion of the British in 1836 in South Australia. It also helped students to realise the affect that the arrival of the British colonists had in breaking down the cultural rules and traditional associations with families and the land.

One of the sessions also focussed on Citizenship and Human Rights, in particular

Reconciliation Australia representatives Nevada Brown and Grant Paulson were guests at the third Schools Congress in Marion, pictured here with Wirreanda High School students and Reconciliation SA State Manager of Reconciliation, Mark Waters.

the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and school groups were encouraged to plan for reconciliation actions back in their schools.

Ms Jade Pass from Loreto College who participated in the 2010 Schools Congress was a highlight as a keynote speaker. Her inspirational talk encouraged students to focus on their rights and take action; reinforcing the importance of access to education as being essential for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to take the opportunities that are open to them.

Recognition drives reconciliation

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The research also shows strong support for removing sections of the Constitution which still allow discriminatory laws to be made against people on the basis of race. And we know from Reconciliation Australia's 2010 Barometer that while an overwhelming number of people believe the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians is important, less than half believe the relationship is good.

Despite these low levels of awareness, we have before us an unprecedented opportunity to generate community support by presenting the case that constitutional change is important—at both the symbolic and practical levels. Our campaign must also harness mainstream interest in building a stronger relationship; it must be forward looking; and it must inspire pride in traditions, cultures and history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Above all, there must be a national mood for change. The same mood for change that secured 90 per cent support for the 1967 referendum; the same mood for change that saw hundreds of thousands of Australians take to the streets in 2000 in support of reconciliation.

It is up to all of us to do everything it takes to build this mood for change so that, in the words of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Mick Gooda, "Australians can walk together and talk together in order to achieve reform in the Constitution so that it truly reflects the heart and soul of this nation".

To read Reconciliation Australia's submission visit www.youmeunity.org.au



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ONE OFF DONATION

Yes, I am pleased to donate:

<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$50	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100	<input type="checkbox"/> \$250	<input type="checkbox"/> \$500	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000
<input type="checkbox"/> Other \$ _____ All donations \$2 or above are tax deductible					

CHEQUE/MONEY ORDER

(for one off donations) payable to Reconciliation Australia

CREDIT CARD

for single or monthly donations

<input type="checkbox"/> Visa	<input type="checkbox"/> Mastercard
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Name on card		
Card No.	/	/
Expiry Date	/	Signature:

Thank you so much for supporting reconciliation. Feel free to tick one of the boxes below.

<input type="checkbox"/>	I would appreciate more information about Reconciliation Australia
<input type="checkbox"/>	Please send information about making a bequest to Reconciliation Australia in my Will
<input type="checkbox"/>	Would you remove my name from your mailing list.

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PO Box 4773, Kingston ACT 2604

Call **1300 729 547** or fax **(02) 6273 9201**

December 2011

The power of dance



A wonderful experience: Reconciliation Australia Co-Chair Melinda Cilento getting ready for her first dance at Garma with the help of fellow Reconciliation Australia Board Director and Yolngu elder Djapirri Mununggirritj.

The 2011 Reconciliation Australia Garma Women's Program was, once again, a huge success. As always the group was a demonstration in diversity, bringing together women from the corporate, government and community sectors—Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike. And, as our Co-Chair Melinda Cilento writes, we're already counting down the sleeps until we return to Gulkula for Garma 2012.

I pulled my hair back with a mix of excitement and trepidation. Excitement because Djapirri Mununggirritj, our Garma host, had asked the Reconciliation Australia Women's Group to join her at the bunggul. What an honour and privilege. Trepidation because I was being painted yellow and would be dancing in front of quite a crowd, having received only 10 minutes of tuition. (Yes, one of our campsite teachers was, Kathy Marika, 2011 Deadlys Dancer of the Year, but that doesn't make it any easier.)

As we waited in the sun, paint now dried, we spoke with a young Yolngu girl who was also anxious to be dancing in front of so many people. If she was nervous, what hope had we? When our turn finally arrived, the dances went on for what seemed like ages. I think we all felt clumsy by comparison, but also exhilarated. We were received with warm applause and appreciation for embracing the spirit of Garma.

In addition to dancing we were treated to lessons in traditional women's healing (complete with massage), a yidaki healing ceremony and captivating forum presentations—by the likes of Jose Ramos Horta.

While these experiences taught us a lot about the ways of the Yolngu, the time I enjoyed most was sitting around the campsite listening to Djapirri, her son and the others telling us about their lives, families and traditions.

Wonderful experiences, memories, and friendships that live on beyond the campsite and bright stars of Gulkula.



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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:
Kylie.Kluger@reconciliation.org.au