

ReconciliationNews

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Partnerships are the key

In commenting on Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's second *Closing the Gap* report card, Reconciliation Australia Co-Chairs Professor Mick Dodson AM and Mark Leibler AC said they were encouraged by the emphasis on promoting genuine partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and the importance of Indigenous-led solutions.

Professor Dodson said that the Prime Minister's recognition of Indigenous-led solutions supported Australian and international evidence, that locally driven initiatives are the keys to real progress on the ground.

'Much of the evidence presented in the report card shows that progress comes from the ground up, rather than top-down and that the roles of governments and others is in supporting and working closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders and communities to address their issues,' Professor Dodson said.

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The powerful photographic exhibition Marnti Warajanga — we're travelling — is on show at Old Parliament House in Canberra, see story on page 11



Reconciliation
AUSTRALIA

MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

Ten years after the Bridge walks

For many Australians, the Bridge Walks in 2000 still conjure a vivid image of the great mass of people enthusiastic for reconciliation in this country. It's hard to believe that 10 years have passed since that momentous time and while we've certainly come a long way in the interim, there's still some distance to go.



Reconciliation Australia itself turns 10 this year and National Reconciliation Week is an ideal opportunity to contemplate how we're travelling as a nation and to ponder whether reconciliation continues to have real meaning or has been superseded by more tangible efforts towards 'closing the gap'.

We contend that continuing to build respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians is intrinsic to closing the gaps. In other words, it's the human interaction between black and white Australians that is fundamental to the success of programs designed to end disadvantage in life expectancy, education, employment, health care, treatment before the law and all the other areas of inequality.

At the time of the Bridge Walks, reconciliation was a high profile issue — arguably better recognised than it is today. But what we have now is a broader based, more highly engaged group of people and organisations who are doing more and doing it smarter. We have Australians from

all backgrounds wanting better relationships, to learn and to share pride in an inclusive Australia. They are aware of grave problems and accept some responsibility in fixing them. They know there's no quick or easy answer, but they still want to be a part of the solution.

Helping to build relationships is a key aim of Reconciliation Australia. For the past decade we have worked with many partners and organisations including government, business, community groups, schools and sporting clubs to improve relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Two major projects currently underway are the second Australian Reconciliation Barometer and the 2010 Indigenous Governance Awards. The Barometer is our wide-ranging biennial study conducted by social research company Auspoll. It canvasses the views of around 600 Indigenous people and 1,000 non-Indigenous people to gauge attitudes and perceptions of each other. The findings are due to be released later this year.



Co-Chairs, Mark Leibler and Mick Dodson

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will see that the eight finalists of the Indigenous Governance Awards have now been announced. Conducted in partnership with BHP Billiton, the Awards promote good governance, leadership and Indigenous achievement and showcase the best Indigenous organisations in the country. The winners for 2010 will be announced in August.

During National Reconciliation Week 2010, by all means let's look back and remember the Bridge Walks and what they signified. But let's also continue in the footsteps of those who walked, and embrace our future. All Australians — black and white — have a role to play in improving the relationship. And all Australians have much to gain.

Vale Chicka

The passing of Charles 'Chicka' Dixon on 20 March 2010 from asbestosis ended a lifetime of fighting for justice and basic human rights for his people. A brave and influential Aboriginal man, Chicka was afforded a State funeral in recognition of his work that began on the Sydney wharves in the late 1940s.

He campaigned for a YES vote in the 1967 Referendum and was an active participant at the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in 1972. He attended annual conferences of the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI) in the 1960s and was part of a delegation of Aboriginal Australians to China.

Chicka became a foundation member of the Aboriginal Arts Board in 1973 and went on to become Chairman, pressing for reforms in funding for Indigenous artists. Earlier he had worked with Mum Shirl, Fred Hollows and others to establish the Redfern Aboriginal Medical Service.

In 2007, he assisted Reconciliation Australia in the lead up to the 40th anniversary of the 1967 referendum, providing photographs and recollections of that momentous time.

Chicka was 81 and is survived by his two daughters, Rhonda and Christine, his brothers and sisters, nieces, nephews, grandchildren and extended family.



Free posters for NRW

National Reconciliation Week (NRW) this year coincides with the 10th anniversary of the famous Bridge walks (and of Reconciliation Australia itself) and so is a timely opportunity to build on the goodwill of the past decade and to work together to achieve great things.

The image of the hands on the poster was adapted from a photograph taken by students from Kildare College in Wagga Wagga during a reconciliation project conducted by RA. Hands provide powerful imagery for reconciliation and the poster has a positive message about trust, purpose and our shared journey ahead.

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.

Reconciliation Matters

Reconciliation Australia is about to turn 10 and even though we've been around for a decade people still ask about our role in the reconciliation movement and what it is that we mainly do. It's hard to summarise succinctly because at any one time we find ourselves involved in multiple projects and at all levels.

In the past few years the organisation has doubled in size largely due to our very successful RAP program which continues to expand at a rapid rate. Then there's our Indigenous Governance Awards in partnership with BHP Billiton, the Indigenous Financial Services Network with all the leading banks and the Reconciliation Barometer. But rather than detailing each and every project we're involved in, the following verses perhaps provide a sharper insight into our role and purpose.



Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia
Has no expectation of failure
Our work takes plenty of patience
Reconciling with Aboriginal nations
A happy mix of black and white
We work together to get things right
Influencing and stimulating
Lobbying and facilitating
Because reconciliation matters

We partner with others to achieve
Like Qantas, the banks and BHP
We reach out with care and respect
And rejoice when we know we connect
When the apology drew a line in the sand
It helped Australians to understand
That we all share this space
Whatever our race
And so reconciliation matters

Perhaps our most successful initiative
That's guaranteed to grow and to give
Is our program of reconciliation action plans
Being taken up daily all over the land
Government departments, corporates too
Joining because it's the right thing to do
Schools and Unis, they've come on board
All united for the national accord
Because reconciliation matters

10 years on we're dynamic and strong
Things are on track, but the road is still long
We'll continue to dare, continue to dream
Of the day when there is no need for our team
Until then we'll work for as long as it takes
To achieve real understanding for everyone's sake
'Cause all Australians have a right to expect
A future shared with mutual respect
That's why reconciliation matters

IGA finalists announced

The Indigenous Governance Awards for 2010 are now well underway with the eight finalists now decided from the 28 applicant organisations.

The valued partnership project between Reconciliation Australia and BHP Billiton began in 2005 and this is the fourth year the Awards have been conducted. Organisations are assessed and shortlisted by the review committee based on six key areas of good Indigenous governance:

1. Governing body
2. Making and implementing decisions
3. Conflict resolution
4. Leadership development
5. Cultural norms and values
6. Future planning

The eight finalists for 2010 fall into two divisions: four in category A — organisations established for less than 10 years and four in category B — organisations established for more than 10 years. The winner of each category receives \$10,000 and the highly commended award winners each receive \$5,000.

The judging process has so far involved two stages. First, at a meeting of the review committee, all 28 applications were appraised with more than a dozen recommended for further assessment. An independent judging panel led by the Chair of the Awards, Professor Mick Dodson, then met to consider the shortlisted applications. After a lengthy examination of each organisation's credentials, the judging panel settled on the following eight finalists:

Category A: organisations established for less than 10 years

1. Carbon Media Events Pty Ltd (QLD)
2. Mirimbeena Aboriginal Education Group Inc (VIC)
3. Napranum Preschool PaL Group (QLD)
4. Noongar Mia Mia Pty Ltd (WA)

Category B: organisation established for more than 10 years

1. Association of Northern, Kimberley and Arnhem Aboriginal Artists (NT)
2. Australian Indigenous Doctors Association (ACT)
3. Laynhapuy Homelands Association Inc (NT)
4. North Coast Aboriginal Corporation for Community Health (QLD)

The next step is for members of the judging panel to make an onsite visit to each of the eight finalists. Based on their assessments, the winners will be decided at a final meeting of the panel and announced at an Awards lunch in August at BHP Billiton in Melbourne.

Reconciliation Australia congratulates the finalists and indeed all the organisations who applied. Just by entering the 2010 Awards, applicants demonstrated knowledge of and respect for good governance which underpins the wellbeing of their organisation and of the wider community.

Chair of the Indigenous Governance Awards, Professor Mick Dodson will soon be flying around the country with other IGA judges to assess the finalists.





Australian Indigenous Doctors Association

This short profile was provided by one of our eight Indigenous Governance Awards finalists, the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association (AIDA). AIDA was established in 1998 to advocate for improvement in Indigenous health in Australia, encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to work in medicine and provide collegiate support for Indigenous medical graduates and students. The profiles of all the IGA finalists can be found on our website.

Australian Indigenous Doctors Association pictured outside Old Parliament House — their new home in Canberra. Courtesy AIDA, photographer Belinda Pratten.

AIDA applied for the IGA because we believe that AIDA has a strong and sound record in governance of the highest order. The commitment and the operationalisation of excellence in governance is not only for the here and now, but for our future generations and future of our people. When AIDA was established there were approximately 15 Indigenous doctors in the history of Australia. By the end of this year there will be 150 and many of the testimonials of graduating doctors attribute their success, in no small part to other Indigenous doctors as role models and mentors and the very existence of AIDA. Above all our organisation has remained true to our cultural heritage, obligations and survival as Indigenous people. Our governance and leadership are grounded in and guided by what it means to be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Romlie Mokak, CEO, AIDA



In February, the IGA team, Mick Dodson, Ara Cresswell, Carol Cutmore and Davina Thomas, ventured back to Kalgoorlie to run a follow-up workshop to our 2009 Sharing Success Workshop. Sessions led by Mick Dodson, Jodie Sizer from SED Ingenuity, Jason Eades from the Koori Heritage Trust and Susan Ash from WACOSS, discussed grant applications, strategic plans, stress management and leadership. It was an inspiring and productive two days with several participants at our earlier Mt Isa workshop flying all the way across Australia to attend.

Partnerships are the key

continued from front page

Professor Dodson welcomed the Prime Minister's commitment to be vigilant about what is working and what is not. While noting there had been some improvements in data collection and quality, Professor Dodson said there remains a need to improve the evidence base being used to make many policy decisions in this area.

'Sound evidence of what works is fundamental in policy development and implementation. We should be able to make a direct connection between a policy and the evidence that supports it. If not, then it's probably not working and

therefore is not a good policy,' Professor Dodson said.

'While we all welcome the increase in spending that has accompanied the *Closing the Gap* targets, if the money is not spent wisely on policies that work it will be wasted and we will not close the gaps. Funding must be matched to needs, and this is what good quality data will tell us.'

Mr Leibler said that the Prime Minister's acknowledgement of the positive impact of RA's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program highlighted the strong ripple effect RAPs were having in Australian workplaces.

'All Australians have a part to play in closing the gaps and strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians to achieve a shared sense of fairness and justice,' Mr Leibler said.

'The success of the RAP program relies on building good relationships based on respect, and creating opportunities that turn good intentions into actions.'

See page 14 for an analysis of the *Closing the Gap* report and page 24 for the latest news of Reconciliation Action Plans.



The new National Centre of Indigenous Excellence

New facility nurtures Indigenous talent

The impressive lineup of VIPs at the opening of the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence was a measure of the faith invested in its future success. Prime Minister Kevin Rudd opened the Centre in the company of the Governor of NSW Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO, the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Jenny Macklin, NSW Premier Kristina Keneally, Indigenous elders and other federal and state politicians.

Special guests included high-profile NCIE advocates Michael O'Loughlin, Craig Ashby, Sean Taylor and members of the South Sydney Rabbitohs and Sydney Swans.

Funded and constructed by the Indigenous Land Corporation, this exciting new facility will foster the talents of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people providing the foundations they need to pursue their dreams, hopes and ambitions.

Built on the site of the old Redfern Public School in Sydney, the Centre offers a safe environment for approximately 5,000 young people from around Australia each year.

It boasts world-class facilities including a fully equipped gymnasium and sports hall, outdoor 25-metre swimming pool, intensive literacy tutorial centre for 60 primary school students, arts/craft activity rooms, sporting field and campus accommodation for visiting groups of over 100 people.

Co-chair of the Centre and Deputy Chair of the Indigenous Land Corporation, Sam Jeffries, said that the launch marked a new chapter for Indigenous opportunity and achievement in Australia.

‘This is a momentous occasion for Indigenous people. It is a direct investment into the young Indigenous people of our nation and is one of the biggest and most significant single transaction investments into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people ever to have been made in the history of Australia.

‘The Centre will give young Indigenous people permission to think beyond the limitations of their day-to-day life and dream of a bigger future. And it will provide them with development pathways to make those dreams come true,’ Mr Jeffries said.

Chairperson of the Indigenous Land Corporation, Shirley McPherson, said the NCIE represented a \$50 million investment by the ILC in young Indigenous people.

‘The Indigenous Land Corporation has a clear mission to assist Indigenous people to acquire land so they can derive social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits. The ILC Board has always been mindful to strike a balance by acquiring land, not only in rural and remote areas, but also creating opportunity in urban areas where most of our Indigenous people live today,’ Ms McPherson said.

In opening the Centre, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd said the NCIE directly supports the federal government’s efforts to help overcome Indigenous disadvantage in the community.

‘What the Indigenous Land Corporation has built here at the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence is a world-class facility that symbolises a new era in Indigenous education, engagement and leadership.

‘This is a place that is big on opportunities, showing people their potential and giving them the means to achieve it,’ he said.

Located at 180 George Street in Redfern, the Centre is managed in partnership with the Indigenous Land Corporation, YMCA, Exodus Foundation Tutorial Centre, National Aboriginal Sporting Chance Academy and Lloyd McDermott Rugby Development Team.

Through its four development pathways of Sport, Learning and Innovation, Culture and Arts, and Health and Wellbeing, the Centre of Indigenous Excellence will create opportunities to develop brighter futures for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from across the country.

For more information about the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence visit www.ncie.org.au

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd tests the water as NSW Premier Kristina Keneally chats to the youngsters.



Agree or disagree?

We're all a shade of black



Don Allan at his desk

For the past 16 years Don Allan has been a columnist for the weekly newspaper, The Canberra Chronicle. Don writes about such things as politics, the arts, law and order, disability services, Indigenous affairs and in fact has an opinion on just about any topic you can think of. Recently he penned this piece about the use of the word 'Indigenous', a topic that comes up from time to time and which we thought would be of interest to readers. Don is always happy to receive feedback so if you feel like responding please email him at dca@netspeed.com.au. His website is www.donallan.wordpress.com

The words Aboriginal and Indigenous often leave me confused when used in the same sentence to describe the same people. Although the words can be interchangeable, Indigenous also has an extra meaning. The Oxford dictionary defines Aboriginal as people of the race that has existed in a land from the earliest times while Indigenous also means people belonging naturally to a place, which in the latter context I say makes most Australians Indigenous.

And if one accepts the science of man originating in Africa and that his genetic structure has changed little over the millennia, it seems logical to assume that if the skin colour of an Aboriginal African today is black, then black was the colour of Africa's original inhabitants.

That said, it would also seem reasonable to assume that, following his first global movement and settlement in different parts of the world, man developed new languages, cultures, physiognomies and skin colours as he coped with the demands of his new environments. This accounts for the wide physiological, cultural and skin colour of the peoples native to Asia, Europe, South America, North America and the Middle East et al.

At the same time, the effect of his continued travelling and intermarriage with other travellers has made the billions of people who currently inhabit the earth, Indigenous. I am also certain that, in time, this mixing will continue to leave us. As Ophelia said in Hamlet: 'We know what we are, but know not what we may be.'

I say this because as man created new technology he also created the global village. In doing so he has sparked a second great global movement that is changing the world at far greater speed than the first great global movement. I suspect, too, that, in future, and using even more advanced technology, man will spark a third great global movement and that this global movement will see man living in space. When this happens I am in no doubt

that man will develop an even greater range of cultures, physiognomies and skin colour.

Some people may say I am drawing a very long bow. So be it. But long bow or not, I hope that when I release my arrows my aim is true and that they find their mark among racists because every arrow has a message that none of them will like. That message is: whatever they may think, their skin colour is simply a 'paler shade of black.'

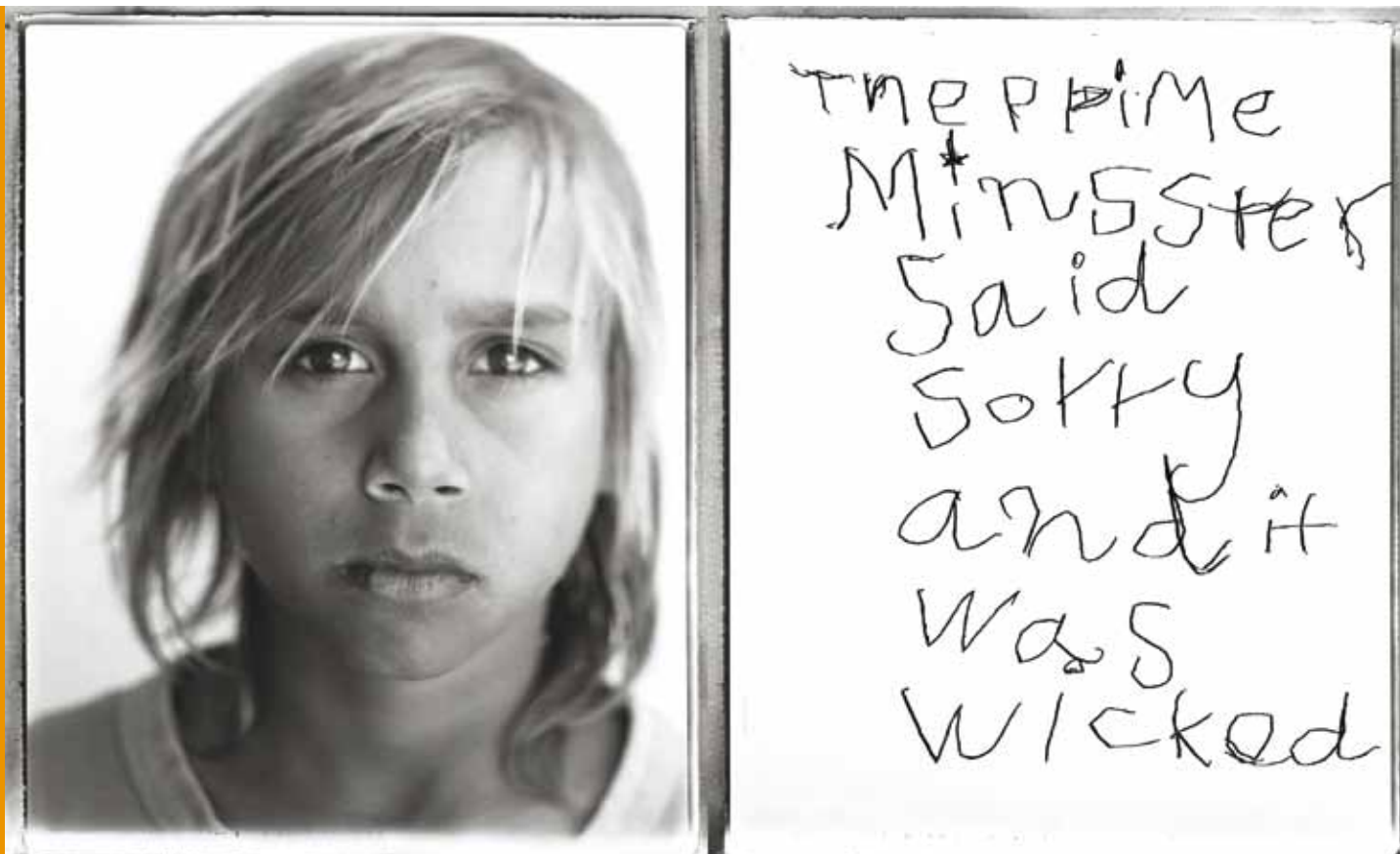
This message will, of course, provoke anger among a certain section of white people who will never accept that their genetic inheritance is black. Indeed, I feel sure they will argue that Africa's original inhabitants were white and that the changes I have outlined happened in reverse. Some, of course, won't even accept that argument and continue to argue that whites were created as super humans and non-whites as inferior humans. Never will they ever be persuaded that colour is only skin deep.

Not that racism is confined to people whose colour is the palest shade of black. The emotions that drive people to adopt a superior view of their status also drive people of different shades of black to hold the same superior view. Unfortunately, while colour is but skin deep, emotion is not.

Let me return now to my starting point: my confusion between Aboriginal and Indigenous. Even if there are only a few Aboriginals left in the world, Australia should be proud of those who live here. We should be hailing them as a unique race not diminishing them by referring to them as Indigenous. If something isn't done soon (although it is already too late for some) they will lose their uniqueness and their cultures.

That said, I'd like to ask Australia's Aborigines two questions. Why don't you insist on being given your proper title? And why don't you make the uniqueness of being Aboriginal a cachet of prestige that will be the envy of many people around the world?

An indigenous Scot myself, I am one of the envious people because I wish I could ascribe the description Aboriginal to my Scottish heritage.



Jack Dhu — one of many faces featured in the exhibition.

The Pilbara comes to Canberra

In Canberra, an intriguing photographic exhibition that focuses on the stories of Indigenous Australians from the Pilbara region of northern Western Australia has opened at the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House. The exhibition also includes reflections of non-Indigenous people who work closely with the communities.

A collaboration between the Museum, Wangka Maya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre and award-winning photographer Tobias Titz, *Mamti Warajanga — we're travelling* personalises a number of momentous historical movements and how they affected both black and white people living in the Pilbara region.

Director of the Museum of Australian Democracy, Jenny Anderson, says that the exhibition is an excellent example of how the Museum works with artists and communities to present their stories to a wider audience.

'It was a privilege and amazing experience for our curators to be welcomed into the communities of the Pilbara, and to spend time with people who were so generous in sharing their stories,' Ms Anderson said.

The role of Wangka Maya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre is to keep alive the Aboriginal languages, culture and history of

the Pilbara through promotion and education. In so doing, Wangka Maya's Sylvia Clarke, Nadine Hicks and Chair Bruce Thomas provided valuable assistance to the curators of the exhibition.


In preparing the photographic content of the exhibition, award-winning freelance photographer Tobias Titz photographed each person on Polaroid film, and also photographed the same space without the person in it. The empty negative was then used by each subject to write a short comment relating to various events such as the Pilbara Strike of 1946, the 1967 Referendum and the Apology in 2008.

Tobias particularly enjoys capturing people in their own surroundings — even if that means travelling to remote locations in the Australian outback. His works have been exhibited internationally and are held in public and private collections in Australia, Europe and the USA.

'Providing a place where often long buried stories can be told allows us to understand where we've come from and how to move forward,' he says.

The exhibition will be on display at the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House until February 2011 before travelling around the country for a further four years. The Museum of Australian Democracy connects Australians with thousands of years of history and heritage through a program of dynamic exhibitions and events. The museum traces democracy from its earliest origins and captivates visitors' imagination through the stories of ordinary people.

For more information go to the website www.moadoph.gov.au or contact Barbra Wilson, on (02) 6270 8108, email barbra.wilson@moadoph.gov.au

A photograph of two students, a young woman and a young man, in school uniforms. The woman is on the left, wearing a dark sweater over a white collared shirt. The man is on the right, wearing a white short-sleeved shirt with a dark bow tie and a star emblem. They are both smiling and looking upwards towards a large, leafy tree against a clear blue sky. They appear to be standing on a wooden structure, possibly a bridge or walkway.

Fast facts on the new curriculum

The recent release of the new draft national curriculum for schools has stimulated considerable discussion about the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and perspectives. We've now had a good look at the draft curriculum and have prepared some straightforward facts to help explain Indigenous elements. For more comprehensive answers to specific questions our curriculum Q and A can be accessed on our website by opening *Reconciliation Resources*, then *Facts and Figures*.

1. Indigenous perspectives are one of three ‘cross-curriculum dimensions’ in the national curriculum.

The draft of the new national curriculum, to be delivered to all schools nationally once it has been finalised, has three ‘cross-curriculum dimensions’. These wide-ranging topic areas are linked in to subject matter throughout the curriculum. The three key areas are ‘Indigenous perspectives’, ‘Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia’ and ‘commitment to sustainable living’. These dimensions have been chosen as important areas of knowledge for students going through school in contemporary Australia. The dimensions are not included in every class and in some years they have a stronger focus than others. Having Indigenous perspectives as a dimension of the curriculum means that Indigenous history, cultures, books, stories, art and knowledge of the land are taught to all Australian children. This hasn’t always been the case with the current State-based system.

2. Students from Kindergarten to Year 10 will have Indigenous perspectives included in their History, English and Science curriculum each year.

Scattered across three of the four subjects (History, English and Science — Maths is excluded) there will be content focusing on Indigenous cultures, languages, knowledge, history and events in classes from Kindergarten (or Prep) to Year 10. In Year One, for example, the science curriculum includes a unit called ‘science and culture’, where students learn about the science knowledge of other cultures (including Indigenous peoples) looking at traditional plant-based ‘bush’ medicines. In Year Three history, students are asked to identify different points of view by reading or listening to an historic story and answering questions about the thoughts and feelings of the person in that story. In Year 10, students examine the struggle for Indigenous rights in Australia through such events as the Wave Hill walk-off, the 1967 referendum and the Mabo decision.

3. Indigenous perspectives are just one component of the new curriculum.

Indigenous perspectives are an important part of the new national curriculum, but the main focus is on general capabilities. The general capabilities are the building blocks of learning including; literacy, numeracy, thinking skills, and communication and information technology. There is also a strong focus on the Asia-Pacific region and the place of Australia and Australian history in a global context.

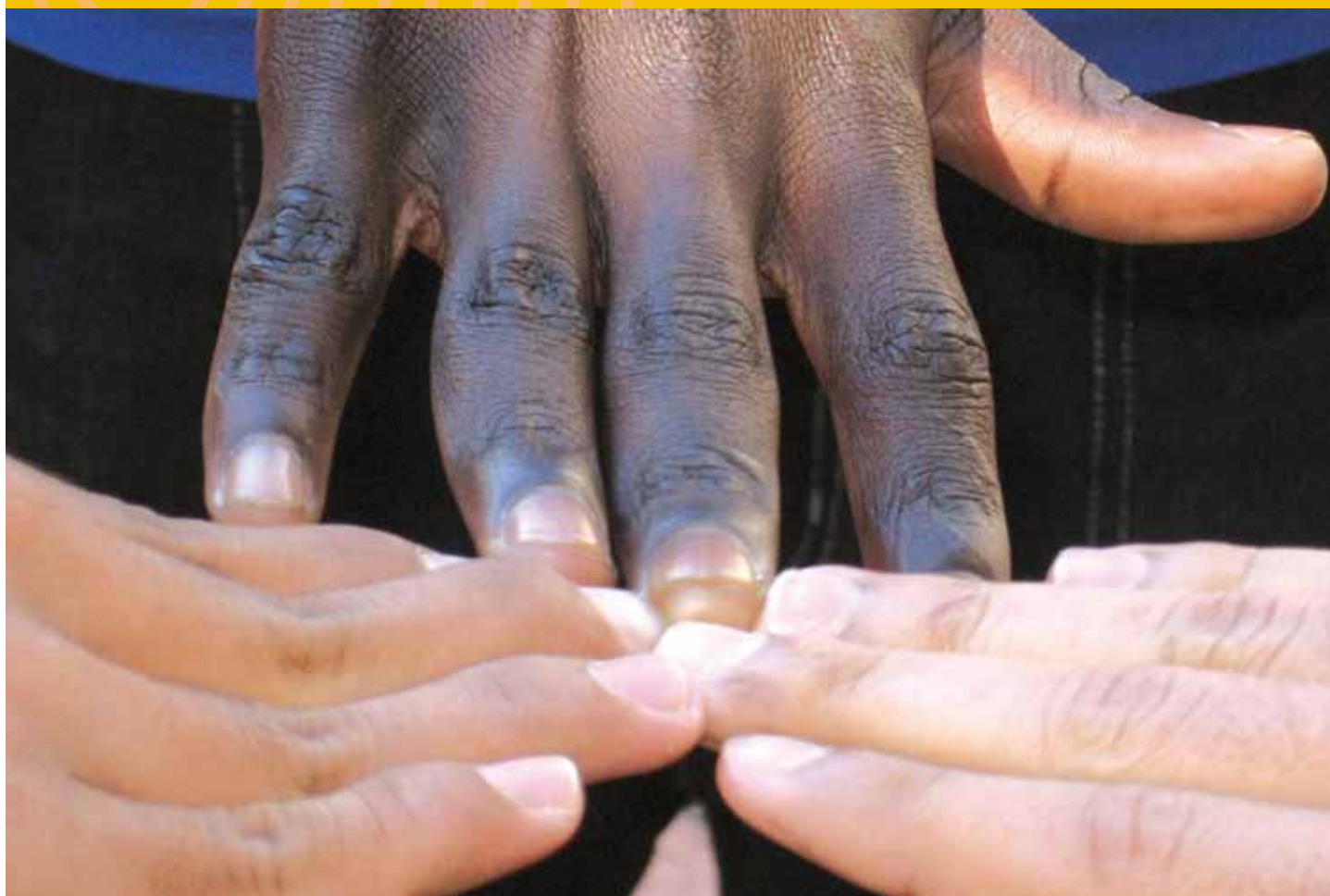
4. Schools will be able to use local content and make local connections.

While it is a national curriculum, and students all around the country will be taught the same subject areas, there is much scope in the Indigenous perspectives dimension for local information to be included. For example in primary school, students are taught to think about history through local place names, including Indigenous place names. In English, students are encouraged to think about other texts apart from written material — like oral stories — perhaps by inviting a local Elder to speak to the class.

5. Yes, Sorry Day is mentioned in the same subject unit as Anzac Day but they’re not ranked in importance.

There has been considerable media comment about the mention of Sorry Day alongside Anzac Day in the curriculum. The reporting of this issue has suggested that children are being taught that the days are of equal importance. This does not accurately reflect the draft curriculum. Both days are used as examples for students to consider why certain events are commemorated and how they’ve come to be important. In the Kindergarten history curriculum there is a topic called ‘personal and family stories’ where children look at how families commemorate past events that are important to them. These might be birthday parties, religious festivals (e.g. Christmas, Hanukah, Ramadan), family reunions and community commemorations such as Anzac Day and Sorry Day. In Grade Three, history students look at reasons for particular days being marked as celebrations, or as commemorations of events of national significance including Australia Day, Anzac Day and Sorry Day.

Analysis of Closing the Gap Report



The *Closing the Gap Report* released by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) outlines a number of actions the Government has taken in response to its commitment to close the gap.

In terms of reporting progress, there was little or no measurement of the impact of these actions nor reference to whether there were any mechanisms in place to measure the impacts. Where progress has been reported no links were drawn between the actions of the Government and these outcomes. As progress has been occurring steadily over the last decade, it's debatable that it can be linked solely to government action.

A *Shadow Report* prepared by the *Close the Gap Coalition* focuses on health equality for Indigenous peoples in the context of the *Close the Gap Statement of Intent* signed by the Government in March 2008. Reflecting the perspectives of Aboriginal and

non-Aboriginal health organisations, the *Shadow Report* has a narrower scope than the FaHCSIA report, and does not examine the Government's progress in achieving the COAG targets around education and employment.

On the subject of health policy, the reports differ in focus. FaHCSIA's report outlines specific programs and actions (for example, the provision of 416 eye operations) while the *Shadow Report* focuses more broadly on measuring the overall strategy of the Government and its impact on Indigenous health.

The following summary follows the six COAG targets:



CLOSING THE GAP

TARGET 1:

Close the gap in life expectancy within a generation

- Tobacco, obesity and inactivity were found to be the leading risk factors in Indigenous deaths.
- The Government noted that due to a change in the way data is collected, the gap has been revised down from 17 years to 11.5 for men and 9.7 for women.

TARGET 2:

Halve the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five by 2018

- Welcome decline in the infant mortality rate over the past decade, particularly evident over recent years. Can be traced to improvements in sanitation and public health conditions, better neonatal intensive care, the development of immunisation programs, and the success of intervention programs for SIDS
- Indigenous children under five are still twice as likely to die as non-Indigenous children.

'Actions on the Ground': Health

- Since 2007–08 the Australian Government's annual expenditure on Indigenous specific health programs has increased by 57 per cent, to almost \$1 billion.
- Approval has been granted for 53 new services for funding, including 40 services established across Australia to provide child and maternal health services. A total of 11,000 mothers and babies will be assisted over five years under the \$90.3 million Mothers and Babies Services program.

- As part of the Central Australian Integrated Eye Health Strategy, 416 eye surgeries have been completed since 2007.
- In the Northern Territory Emergency Response communities, 390 ear, nose and throat (ENT) consultations were conducted with 385 children and ENT surgery to 109 children (between July and December 2009). A total of 1,990 dental services were provided to 1,429 children over the same period.
- The Australian Government has placed 273 health professionals on short term placements in remote primary health care services comprising 31 general practitioners, 178 registered nurses, 22 allied health professionals and 42 dental personnel.

TARGET 3:

Early childhood education access for all Indigenous four-year-olds in remote communities by 2013

- Between 2005 and 2008, pre-school enrolments of Indigenous children have increased.

'Actions on the Ground': Early Childhood Education

- The locations for 36 Children and Family Centres have been finalised by the Australian Government.
- In November 2009, the Australian Government commenced construction of a 24-bed facility in Cairns under the Indigenous Mothers' Accommodation Fund. In December 2009, construction also began on the extension of an existing hostel in Katherine.
- The Australian Government has assisted around 1,049 children and parents through playgroups in the Northern Territory in 2008–09.

TARGET 4:

Halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievement for Indigenous children by 2018

- Slight variations in the reading gaps for the 2008–2009 period were reported:
 - Year 3: Gap of 25.2% was reduced by 5.5%
 - Year 5: Gap of 29.2% was reduced by 2.5%
 - Year 7: Gap of 23.5% was reduced by 1.7%
 - Year 9: Gap of 23.5% increased by 3%

TARGET 5:

Halve the gap in Year 12 or equivalent attainment for Indigenous 20–24 year olds by 2020

- 47.4 per cent of Indigenous 20–24 year olds had completed Year 12 in 2006, compared to 83.8 per cent of non-Indigenous students (a gap of approximately 36 per cent).
- Between 1995 and 2008 Indigenous school retention rates rose from 30.7 per cent in 1995 to 46.5 per cent in 2008. Improvement has been strongest between 2006 and 2008, with retention rates increasing by 6.4 per cent over this period.

'Actions on the Ground': Education

- A draft Indigenous Education Action Plan was published by the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs.



CLOSING THE GAP

- Funding has been provided for three Smarter Schools National Partnerships. These programs aim to accelerate improvement in student literacy and numeracy outcomes, improve engagement and attendance among Indigenous students and support teachers (including those in schools with predominantly Indigenous students).
- \$41 million has been invested in 30 literacy and numeracy pilots to improve outcomes.
- Daily meals have been provided to children from 67 communities in the Northern Territory in 65 schools.
- In 2009, 43 projects were delivered under the Sporting Chance program for some 6,000 students. Reports in 2009 show that the average school attendance rate of students in the program was some six per cent better.

TARGET 6:

Halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians by 2018

- Between 2002 and 2008 the employment gap fell from 23 to 21 percentage points. This was a period of economic growth for Australia.
- Meeting the target will require the gap to fall a further 10.6 percentage points by 2018.

'Actions on the Ground': Employment

- In remote Australia, over 1,500 sustainable, properly paid jobs in government service delivery have been created.
- The Government's Working on Country program now employs 540 Indigenous rangers, up from 124 in 2007.

- Under the new Job Services Australia program, launched in July 2009, more than 90,000 Indigenous job seekers have registered with Job Services Australia providers. In seven months over 18,000 Indigenous job seekers have been placed into work as at 31 January 2010.
- The Commonwealth is providing funding of more than \$750 million for the reformed Indigenous Employment Program (IEP). In 2008–09, around 28,300 commencements in employment and training were made through the IEP, an 18 per cent increase over the previous year.

Shadow Report: Key Findings

- Since 2007, COAG (the Coalition of Australian Governments) has outlined three new strategies to close the gap in Indigenous disadvantage:
 1. the *National Indigenous Reform Agreement*;
 2. the *National Integrated Strategy for Closing the Gap* and;
 3. the *National Urban and Regional Service Delivery Strategy*.
- These strategies provide an excellent basis for the development of a comprehensive approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, but do not meet the Australian Government's commitment to a national plan for Indigenous health equality by 2030.
- COAG has agreed to a \$1.6 billion National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap on Indigenous Health Outcomes. However, this funding was largely directed towards mainstream health services.

- Government has committed approximately \$2 billion to a *National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing* that includes a target of 20 per cent Indigenous employment projects. While these commitments show that the Government is taking the issue of Indigenous housing and infrastructure seriously, many of the targets have not been met. While it has encouraged community cooperation in some instances, in others it has been less than adequate.
- Partnerships between the Government and Indigenous people have been promoted, including the provision of funding to support an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representative body at the national level.
- There is no comprehensive, targeted national plan for addressing COAG's 'six social determinants of health'.

Overall, the *Shadow Report* found that key commitments made by the Government had not been met. These commitments included:

- developing a comprehensive, long-term plan of action in order to achieve equality of health status and life expectancy by 2030;
- ensuring the full participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their representative bodies in all aspects of addressing their health needs; and
- supporting and developing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled health services in urban, rural and remote areas in order to achieve lasting improvements.

New faces in Indigenous health



One certain way of closing the Indigenous health gap is by more Indigenous people setting their sights on a career in medicine whether as doctors, nurses or other health professionals. There are many opportunities available to Indigenous people including scholarships, cadetships and university and TAFE places. There are also effective partnerships being brokered between health services and educational centres to make it easier for students to get started on their careers.

One such partnership formed in October last year between an Indigenous health service in Mt Isa and the Tropical North TAFE in Cairns has already yielded impressive results in its first program to deliver the Certificate III in Health Services Assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students aspiring to be nurses.

The following figures show what a success story the partnership has become:

- 37 students commenced the course in October 2009
- 26 students completed the Certificate III course in early 2010
- 18 students enrolled in the Bachelor of Nursing at James Cook University
- six students enrolled with TN TAFE for the Diploma of Nursing
- 18 students applied for DEEWR Indigenous Cadetships
- two students will take up Puggy Hunter scholarships
- four students will take up Royal College of Nursing Australia Scholarships
- seven students completed Year 12 (2009) — four with a Senior Certificate and three with a Senior Statement.

Indigenous health care services such as SWAMS in WA play a vital role in examining and treating patients in regional and remote communities.

The delivery model, '*Tjirtamai*' which is a Kalkadoon word meaning 'to care for' was given to the program by the Kalkadoon people — Traditional Owners of country where Mt Isa is situated. The program was developed and delivered by Kalkadoon descendants including Project Manager Roianne West, Assistant Project Manager Leeona West, Mentor/Elder Karen West and Laurie West. All are Aboriginal nurses and/or primary health care workers.

The West family are committed to Closing the Gap in Indigenous and non-Indigenous health, returning to their traditional lands and home towns to implement these health training initiatives to support their people, their community and their country. The training model includes direct social and emotional support to the students and intensive face-to-face delivery sessions.

Can Australia follow Obama's lead?



Barack Obama, courtesy of Newspix AFP photo/ Emmanuel Dunand

Stephen Cornell is a faculty associate of the Native Nations Institute, professor of sociology, and director, Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy, all at the University of Arizona. He also co-directs the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development. Stephen has made a number of visits to Australia in recent years to discuss Indigenous governance issues.

His article was prompted by US President Barack Obama's recent commitment to effectively empower American Indian nations to re-build their own decision-making capability. The President recognises that genuine self-determination is not only good public policy but is essential for moving forward. Stephen suggests that in Australia the evidence similarly shows that when Indigenous communities make their own decisions, the outcomes can have a transformative impact on people's lives.



Stephen Cornell

Last November, President Barack Obama hosted a White House Tribal Nations Conference in Washington. Addressing an audience of more than 400 — the largest gathering of tribal leaders in United States history — the President explicitly recognised that the U.S. and its Indigenous peoples have a ‘unique, nation-to-nation relationship’.

He also acknowledged that for many American Indians, U.S. history up to the present day has been characterised by violence, disease, and poverty. He argued that in addressing these issues, Washington can’t and shouldn’t dictate a policy agenda for Indigenous peoples. ‘Without real communication and consultation,’ he said, ‘we’re stuck, year after year, with policies that don’t work.’ He committed himself to ‘a lasting conversation that’s crucial to our shared future’.

These were important words for the Indigenous peoples of the U.S. to

hear. They reaffirmed two principles of late 20th-century U.S. Indian policy that have been gradually undermined or ignored since century’s end: (1) the federal policy of tribal self-determination, and (2) a government-to-government relationship that not only recognises Indigenous nations as decision-making entities but keeps the focus of the policy conversation on tribal *communities* and their hopes and dreams, not simply on individual Indians and their personal socioeconomic fortunes.


Over the last two decades, the U.S. Supreme Court has chipped away at the self-determination policy, producing a set of decisions that have reduced the range of tribal decision-making power. This has occurred despite ample evidence that the U.S. policy of self-determination — formally adopted in the 1970s — is the only U.S. Indian policy ever linked to sustained improvement in socioeconomic conditions in Indian communities. The North American experience shows that self-determination pays off, provided tribes not only assume responsibility for their own affairs but invest time and energy in building governing institutions that can capably exercise decision-making power and that have the support of their own peoples — and provided central and other governments take self-determination seriously.

Allowing Indigenous peoples to design their own governance solutions is not always easy for central governments, with their preference for imposing

their own templates on Indigenous organisation and decision-making, to swallow. But despite much misunderstanding of the term, this is what self-determination means. It is not about letting Indigenous peoples run programs someone else designed for them — a policy that central governments like to call self-determination but that is nothing more than self-administration. It involves instead a substantive transfer of decision-making power, plus programs and resources that can assist Indigenous peoples — denied that power for generations — in rebuilding their own decision-making capacities.

As for the government-to-government relationship, it too has received mostly lip service since 2000 as the U.S. government backed away from commitments to consult with Indian nations on policy issues where they were involved or were likely to feel the consequences. President Obama acknowledged as much to tribal leaders at the November meeting, noting that ‘President Clinton issued an executive order establishing regular and meaningful consultation and collaboration between your nations and the federal government. But over the past nine years, only a few agencies have made an effort to implement that executive order. And it’s time for that to change’.

Words are only words, of course. We’ll see how much change takes place. The President gave each of his cabinet-level departments 90 days to produce concrete plans for ‘the full



implementation' of the Clinton executive order, plans that are being issued now. It is the next three years of the Obama administration that will demonstrate whether all the talk and all the plans make a difference. But for the first time in nearly a decade, there is someone in the White House who apparently believes that American Indian nations themselves are the ones who can best address the catastrophic legacies of colonialism, and that empowering and supporting them in that effort is good public policy. Not only does this please American Indian leaders. It conforms to their experience over the last few decades.

Lessons for Australia

What, if any, relevance might all this have for Australia? That's for Australians to decide, but a couple of thoughts occur to me. Back in 2002, I was one of several North Americans — some Indigenous, some not — asked to talk about Indigenous governance at a conference in Canberra. Much of the audience was made up of Indigenous Australian leadership. We talked about what American Indian nations in the U.S. and First Nations in Canada had been doing over the last three decades: reclaiming control over their affairs, searching for and, in many cases, creating or reviving governance solutions to the difficult issues they face; building legislative and judicial capacities; creating records of success in law-making and enforcement, resource management, economic development,

education, cultural and language revitalisation; making plenty of mistakes, yes, but in growing numbers digging their way out of the miasma of poverty and despair.

At a break in the meeting, an Aboriginal man came up to two of us. 'We know this isn't the United States,' he said. 'We know we're not Indians. But you have to keep telling us these stories. They give us hope.'

Perhaps it is more than hope. Perhaps it is affirmation, for Australia has its own record of this sort of thing. There's ample evidence of it, for example, in the Indigenous Governance Awards, a scheme coordinated by Reconciliation Australia in partnership with BHP Billiton that recognises Indigenous communities and organisations that are resourceful and innovative, that are building capable, responsible governance structures of their own design, and that are having a transformative impact on people's lives. *That's where the real hope lies.*

Meanwhile, the Indigenous Community Governance Research project carried out by Reconciliation Australia and the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research at the ANU found solid evidence of the ability of Australian Indigenous communities, when given the necessary freedom and support, to develop creative governance solutions to current problems. Such solutions may be rooted in Indigenous tradition, invented to deal with new circumstances, or borrowed from outside. The point is that these solutions, whatever their

provenance, were generated through processes of Indigenous choice, which gave them power.

Tragically, just when that research project was generating compelling findings, identifying successful governance strategies and key factors that made them possible — just when it was beginning, in other words, to produce the evidence that a genuinely evidence-based Indigenous policy requires — government decided to drop the funding, and the project came to an end.

I mention these two programs because I am familiar with them, but they are not the only ones. I know there are others in Australia as well that have learned, as we have been learning in North America, that imposed solutions seldom work, and that Indigenous communities can effectively address many of the problems they face. What they need is time, support, the freedom to be ambitious and creative and to be themselves, some knowledge of what has — and hasn't — worked elsewhere, permission to make mistakes, and a stable policy environment that searches for, encourages, works with, and supports Indigenous solutions.

President Obama's words were encouraging because they reflected those lessons and the idea that, as he put it in November, 'tribal nations do better when they make their own decisions'. These are lessons that both our countries, as different as they may be, can learn from and build on.



Valery is always
happy at the wheel

Have car, will travel!

Valery Gurruwiwi loves to drive and thanks to the efforts of the Indigenous Stock Exchange (ISX), she's doing more driving than ever these days operating her Southern Cross family car service. It's a welcome solution to the high cost of transport for her extended Aboriginal family in Nhulunbuy, North East Arnhem Land, in the Northern Territory.

In many remote communities the costs are prohibitive for a single one-way trip to the nearest town to visit the supermarket. Without buses most communities have to add these travel costs to the already high prices for groceries.

Many of the 200 odd residents at Wallaby Beach used to pay a \$40 to \$50 one way taxi fare to the town of Nhulunbuy where the major shopping and administrative services for the area are located.

In December last year the ISX started a campaign to buy a family bus for Valery. In just 31 days she was able to purchase her first 12 seater bus outright and in her own name

from Cais Alsewari who owns a number of taxis in Nhulunbuy. What a memorable day it was for everyone!

'It's so good to have the bus, it's good for everybody,' says Valery. 'Now when I make trips to town everyone can ride together to buy their groceries or just come along for the drive.'

Valery operates her voluntary, not-for-profit family transport service on a demand basis for morning, lunch and early evening trips. Family members make a voluntary donation of \$10 per return journey to Nhulunbuy and Yirrikala which covers insurance, fuel and maintenance and a small voluntary donation for Valery's time.

A highly capable driver who will not be humbugged, Valery calls the shots on the bus and has the right of refusal at any time. The ISX estimates that Valery's vehicle will save her community thousands of dollars and hope it leads to a fleet of Yolngu family busses.

The ISX has been involved in some large projects but say none has made it prouder than this one. Special thanks go to Elizabeth Aitken and Rob Morgan who directly sponsored the bus and enabled Valery to purchase it, and to Mr Alsewari who has offered to continue to help Valery.

Postscript

The Indigenous Stock Exchange (ISX) has now embarked on another transport quest — this time to source a suitable vehicle for Gayili Marika Yunupingu who runs an arts and crafts business in Galupa (near Yirrkala) in the Northern Territory.

Gayili is a senior Gumati elder and still lives at her birthplace Galupa, the only community near the Alcan, now the Rio Tinto bauxite plant.

Collecting dyes and hunting and gathering for barks, yidaki and pandanus palm leaves is essential for Gayili's business. For the past seven years, whenever she's run low on art materials she'd knock on every door until someone would lend her a car so she could fossick in the surrounding countryside.

Having her own vehicle would enable Gayili to have greater independence in collecting materials and also allow her to take other women to find food and to teach young children the ancient practices.

What she really needs is a troop carrier with a roof rack and the ISX is keen to fulfill her wish. If any benefactor believes they might be able to assist they could contact Peter Botsman in the first instance on info@isx.org.au.

On the road to New York



Cooling down, Rob pictured with (l to r) Daniel Moscow, Joseph Davies, Juan Darwin, Rueben Brown and Caleb Hart.

Six Aboriginal teenagers from remote communities in outback Australia have the opportunity to be the first Indigenous Australians to run in the world's most famous race, the New York Marathon.

The brainchild of Australia's greatest ever marathon runner and CEO of Smartstart for Kids, Rob de Castella, the Marathon Project aims to reignite distance running and establish a program that promotes and encourages a healthy lifestyle, exercise and good nutrition for remote area Indigenous males and females. Eventually it may also lead to producing future Olympic middle distance and marathon runners.

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

'Research has shown that there are no avenues or opportunities for Indigenous long distance runners. At the moment, there's no real culture of distance running amongst Indigenous Australians, but I believe there is potential given the history of endurance evidenced by a nomadic existence, traditional hunting and recorded history of an extraordinary ability to cover vast distances.'

In this first year, Rob will select six Indigenous teenagers from remote communities across the Northern Territory to run in the 2010 New York Marathon. To date there are 11 potential runners from Croker Island, Ramingining, Maningrida, Kununurra, Atijira, Alice Springs and Santa Teresa. The final six will need to earn their place in the group that travels to New York in November 2010. For those who don't reach the required fitness levels, their training will still enable them to compete in an Australian big city fun run or half marathon.

Supporting Rob is National Athletics Coach John Bell who has over 30 years experience working with remote communities in the Northern Territory. John still holds the NT marathon record.

Since initial fitness assessments were conducted in December last year each aspiring athlete has been given a basic training program to continue on their own assisted by identified support people from the communities (for example community police driving runners five kms outside the community so athletes can run back over a measured distance and have times recorded).

John also has a series of sports days and fun runs planned so the runners can build their experience and become familiar with the different aspects of distance running.

The Top End runners have already competed in the Australia Day fun run in Darwin and the Central Australian runners recently took part in the Santa Teresa fun run.

The program includes a two-week intensive at the Australian Institute of Sport for the 11 runners. This fortnight will focus on marathon routines as well as various vocational training modules such as health and fitness, time management and media training and public speaking.

An added bonus with the project is a film being shot about the athletes' year-long journey to compete in New York. A documentary crew will follow the program throughout the year recording the stories of the aspiring athletes, their supporters and their communities.

It's planned that the film will screen nationally on ABC television and internationally via the Discovery channel, inspiring others to follow in the footsteps of the 2010 athletes.

Rob says that no other big city, mass participation marathon captures the spirit and excitement of marathon running like New York.

'The promise of this experience on a world stage while representing their people, their communities and their country will provide the athletes with the motivation to succeed like nothing else could,' he said.

'The overwhelming response we've had demonstrates this latent interest in marathon running. And I think we have the potential of identifying some real talent.'

Just goes to show that amazing things can be achieved given the right opportunity.

Rob de Castella's company, SmartStart for Kids, is a not for profit health, lifestyle and fitness program that works with children, adults and families that are at increased risk of physical and mental illness and disease. Since 1999, more than 45,000 children and adults have directly participated in SSFK programs. In 2008 SSFK started working with indigenous at risk youth and families.

SSFK partners State, Territory and Commonwealth governments, community and non-government organisations, and individuals conducting health and fitness checks with participants and delivering support, education, skill acquisition and fun based programs and activities.

website: smartstart.com.au



Rob de Castella

RAP Chat

Tripping around the country

Last year, the RAP team kicked off a national workshop series with a packed house in Perth. Since then, we've been filling rooms wherever we go. We've now run workshops in Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne and Sydney and before the end of June will visit Darwin, Adelaide and Hobart.

Our RAP workshops are designed to link up RAPPers with other RAPPers, to build relationships and networks and to talk practically about developing, implementing, reporting and refreshing Reconciliation Action Plans.

The workshops are a great opportunity to meet RA's RAP advisers and relationship managers in a relaxed environment. More importantly, it enables our RAPPers to meet and learn from each other.

Next financial year, we'll be taking a two-day RAP workshop program to each capital city as well as several regional areas. For more information, visit www.reconciliation.org.au



Participants at the Sydney RAP Workshop, held at the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence.

Clayton Utz embraces its RAP



The launch of leading law firm Clayton Utz's RAP in March this year began with a stunning performance by the Gondwana Indigenous Children's Choir. The fine young voices were followed by Chief Executive Partner David Fagan who told the audience of colleagues and friends that creating a RAP was an important step in the firm's commitment to helping address the inequality that exists between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

'For many years now Clayton Utz has worked closely with Indigenous clients and organisations around Australia through our pro bono and 'community connect' programs. These programs will continue to be an important way we can help to make a difference in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, but we can also strengthen our commitment by creating meaningful opportunities in employment, education and training, and by supporting Indigenous-owned companies through our procurement processes,' Mr Fagan said.

'Mutual respect is at the core of our RAP. We want our own people to come to an understanding of the values and strengths of Indigenous culture and to recognise the challenges and disadvantages which we must overcome as a community together. It was important to us that our RAP provided relevant and practical ways to create positive and lasting change, and we will work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through this RAP, as equal and respected partners.'

The Clayton Utz Reconciliation Action Plan can be downloaded from our website.

RAP a boon for Beyond 3000

It's not only the large organisations that are making reconciliation an integral part of their everyday business. Beyond 3000 is a small local community developer with a 'revolutionary' approach to property development through its Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Managing Director Greg Whyte says that the firm's community creation process has numerous objectives including social diversity and inclusion through respect and celebration of culture.

'As a proud Australian business, we see reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander peoples as a key opportunity to achieve these objectives and in a broader context as an important part of the maturing of our young nation, for the benefit of all Australians.'

Developed with George Walley, a traditional owner, community leader and Aboriginal Heritage consultant, the Beyond 3000 RAP plan has already been instrumental in establishing a respectful partnership with the local Bindjareb Noongar community (where the Beyond 3000 Panorama development is taking place).

Mr Walley said that the Bindjareb Noongar people have an affiliation with their land that goes back many thousands of years.

'The bigger view should be known so that the specific location is given the greater value to

all people who are fortunate enough to be part of the land and who embrace the land to be part of them, as a people and as a community,' he said.

For the Beyond 3000 staff, the RAP principles of relationships, respect and opportunities are simply a part of their everyday work and family life. As one staff member remarked, "Business is about relationships; family is about relationships; community is about relationships; life is about relationships; need we say more about its importance to us?"

Reconciliation Australia congratulates Beyond 3000 on being a shining example of how small businesses can make a big difference in advancing reconciliation through the RAP program.



George Walley, traditional owner, community leader and Aboriginal heritage consultant has worked closely with Beyond 3000 in developing its Reconciliation Action Plan.

Second RAP for the NAB

The National Australia Bank is now working with its second Reconciliation Action Plan. Launched by CEO Cameron Clyne, the bank's new RAP has a long term focus and builds on the success of the first, where the company achieved 17 of its 22 targets.

Deborah Cheetham performing Dali Mana Gamarada at NAB's RAP launch.



In 2009, NAB recruited 35 Indigenous employees, and plans to double that total this year through a range of employment programs. More than 100 of NAB's managers and buddies involved in their Indigenous employee programs will receive cultural training and another 100 employees, including 40 senior NAB leaders will participate in in-depth cross-cultural experiences.

To support financial inclusion, the bank has launched two Indigenous-focused microenterprise loan programs that in 2009 helped eight Indigenous entrepreneurs start their own businesses. The target will triple in 2010. Also the NAB's microfinance programs are set to double, providing greater access to not-for-profit personal credit and savings programs in remote, high Indigenous-populated communities.

The bank is also piloting a broad-scale cultural awareness campaign to more than a thousand NAB employees in support of greater cross-cultural understanding.

It's great to see such a high profile organisation like the NAB embracing their RAP with such enthusiasm.



I-r: RA's Adam Mooney; Telstra CEO David Thodey; RA Board member and Traditional Owner from Yirrkala, Djapirri Mununggirrij; Executive Director Central Region Telstra Country Wide, Dan Honan; RA's Karen Mundine; General Manager Telstra's National Indigenous Directorate, Georgia Symmons; and Local NT Government member Lynne Walker, pictured before the Telstra RAP launch.

Telstra's RAP has the numbers

Telstra aims to recruit more than 40 Indigenous trainees as part of the company's Reconciliation Action Plan launched in April by CEO David Thodey in the remote Northern Territory community of Yirrkala.

Telstra's plan includes the integration of Indigenous suppliers into the company's procurement policies, a new human resources program to attract and retain Indigenous employees, an extension of the National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award, and the deployment of laptops to students in outer regional and remote Australia.

'Telstra is the first telecommunications company in Australia to spell out its commitment to Indigenous Australians, whether they be customers, employees or members of the communities we serve, with a particular focus on

opportunities, partnership and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people,' Mr Thodey said.

'Our plan articulates a long-standing and active commitment to employing Indigenous people, providing appropriate and accessible services to our Indigenous customers, and celebrating Indigenous culture through the arts and community development,' he said.

Launching the plan with Mr Thodey was Reconciliation Australia Board Member and Traditional Owner from Yirrkala, Djapirri Mununggirrij who said she was thrilled to welcome Telstra to the RAP community.

'This RAP shows Telstra's ongoing commitment to reconciliation and represents opportunities for Telstra staff to grow their understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures,' Ms Mununggirrij said.

'Through their RAP, Telstra will be able to make substantial contributions to reconciliation including employment initiatives, contracting with Aboriginal businesses,

engaging with Aboriginal communities and creating workplaces where Aboriginal employees and customers thrive,' she said.

Telstra already makes a significant contribution to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and events including the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards, the Telstra Road to Tamworth Legacy Program, Surf Life Saving and Yirrkala Indigenous Surf Club, AFL and NRL indigenous development programs, and Desert Knowledge Australia Outback Business Networks.

The company also supports remote Indigenous communities with special services that reduce line access and calling charges, and by providing more than 250 robust cashless payphones in partnership with the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy.

Since 2002 the Telstra Foundation has contributed \$8.7 million towards 90 projects that have focused on Indigenous health, education and culture.

In the mood for food?



Charcoal Lane fare — pink lake salt cured salmon terrine, beetroot sorbet, desert limes and crème fraîche

Mission Australia is adding an imaginative culinary element to its RAP with a special dinner called *Taste of Reconciliation*. The event promises to be a unique dining experience in a 'world café' format to be held at Sofitel Melbourne on 26 May, marking the beginning of National Reconciliation Week.

This novel way to meet Aboriginal people and engage with Aboriginal culture through food, language and art promises to be an especially memorable experience.

The dinner starts with a welcome and a short key note speech after which guests enjoy a three course set dinner of contemporary Australian cuisine infused with native flavours. On each table an Aboriginal host provides an insight into Aboriginal culture touching on such topics as language, writing, stories, history, rituals, art and dance.

At the end of each course guests change tables where they meet another Aboriginal host. It's a kind of reconciliation 'speed dating' where everyone learns aspects of Aboriginal culture and experiences from several different Aboriginal leaders.

The event ends with an invitation for a personal commitment to action and guests are provided with appropriate information and tools.

This unique opportunity to engage with Aboriginal elders and leaders and to participate in cultural activities builds on Mission Australia's initiative of engaging people in contemporary Indigenous culture and cuisine through their Charcoal Lane Indigenous social enterprise restaurant.

Charcoal Lane enables Aboriginal and disadvantaged young people to gain experience in a supported, real work environment as part of an integrated program which includes personal skills development and accredited education in hospitality.

For further information please go to www.tasteofreconciliation.org

Short takes

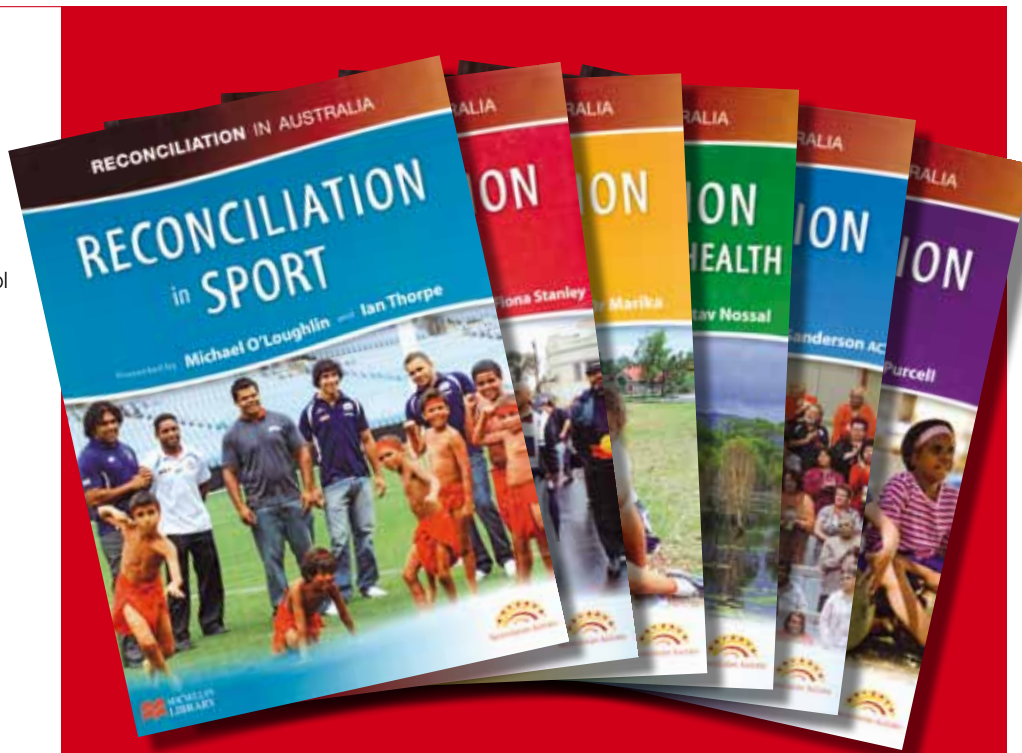
Book series for schools

In 2007 we began a partnership with MacMillan Education Australia to develop a reconciliation book series aimed at middle to upper primary school students. The series *Reconciliation in Australia* was released last year and comprises six volumes for use across the curriculum.

The six titles are *Reconciliation in the Arts*, *in schools*, *in society*, *in sport*, *in the environment and health* and *the Reconciliation journey*.

Each book is endorsed by a prominent Indigenous and non-Indigenous co-presenter such as Michael O'Loughlin and Ian Thorpe (sport) and features contemporary examples of reconciliation in action as well as practical suggestions for getting involved.

The books retail at \$32 each and can be ordered online through the MacMillan Education website www.macmillan.com.au/primary



Mentors make a difference

Around 400 Southern Cross University students at the Coffs Harbour campus have signed on to mentor Indigenous high school students through the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) Mentoring Program. This figure is double the number of student mentors involved in the program in 2009.

AIME matches up university students and high school students for an hour a week over the course of a 17-week program. Through sessions that focus on interactivity and leadership, AIME's goals are to improve Year 10 completion rates, Year 12 completion rates and university admission rates for all participating students.

Southern Cross University student and AIME mentor in 2009 Alex Bruggisser said being involved with a program that was run by young people for young people was inspiring.

'The positive changes that you're helping kids make to their lives are obvious. It's been working as an AIME Mentor at SCU that I've figured out exactly what I love doing,' Alex said.

Andrew Mansini, deputy principal of the participating Orara High School, has endorsed AIME's presence in the region.

'There is a change happening with the Indigenous students here at Orara High, and AIME has certainly been part of that.

The program has definitely made an impact on the Indigenous students at our school,' he said.

Led by AIME's North Coast Program manager Clark Webb, Coffs Harbour is witnessing a shift in youth ownership of social issues.

'Southern Cross University has been willing to back this idea, and has now given their students a chance to connect with something completely new that can potentially change Indigenous engagement in Coffs Harbour forever,' Mr Webb said.

'The students are putting their hands up and saying we *can get this done*.'

Short takes

Fast track to success

Scholarships and leadership opportunities are again being offered through the Indigenous Youth Leadership Program (IYLP) with a focus on Indigenous youth from remote or regional communities.

To be eligible for an IYLP scholarship an applicant must be a young Indigenous Australian who has the motivation and high potential to complete year 12, and be committed to succeeding. Scholarships are offered for up to two years and student progress is reviewed annually.

IYLP is funded by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and The Smith Family was recently selected to be an IYLP partnership broker.

In addition to helping Indigenous students achieve their educational aspirations, the IYLP supports the development of a pool of positive role models and future leaders, to inspire other Indigenous students and illustrate the successes that can be achieved through educational attainment.

Applications close on 31 May and all information can be found on the DEEWR website under Indigenous Schooling. If you have any questions please email leanne.smith@thesmithfamily.com.au or telephone (08) 8224 1402.

For women and good health

The *Larrakia Nation* invites delegates to their country to participate in the 9th World Indigenous Women and Wellness Conference to be held in the Darwin Convention Centre from 22 to 25 August 2010.

It's expected that the conference will attract more than 400 delegates from around the

world, stimulating considerable intellectual debate, strengthening existing networks and forging new relationships. The conference coincides with the Darwin Festival giving delegates an opportunity to sample Darwin's unique cultural and social events.

Presentations by academics, practitioners, leaders and Elders will relate to the following five interconnected themes — Healthy Communities; Strong Families; Traditional Healing and Health; Law and Justice; Education, Training and Enterprise.

For more information, please contact the Larrakia Nation office (08) 8948 3733 or Catherine Holmes on 0419 441 021 or visit the conference website via the link on www.larrakia.com or go to www.larrakiaevents.com.

Ipods in the park

Overseas visitors to some of Australia's unique Indigenous areas like Uluru and the Blue Mountains will soon be able to discover much more about the Indigenous culture and heritage of their surrounds by downloading video and audio narratives directly to their iPods.

Researchers from The Australian National University have been successful in gaining funding of \$540,000 from the Australian Research Council to develop a new multi-media project that will work with national parks and major collections institutions towards developing rich interpretations and understandings of Australian landscapes and Indigenous areas.

The project will be led by Professor Ann McGrath from the History Program in the ANU Research School of Social Sciences and will partner with Parks Australia, National Film and Sound Archive, NSW Department

of Environment and Climate Change and Water (DECCW) and Ronin Films. They will also work with researchers from the University of Sydney and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

Professor McGrath said that the project will not only meet growing tourist demands for deeper historical insights into significant landscapes, but will provide cutting edge digital technology to deliver the information.

'The project aims to create new accessible histories of pre-colonial Australia by filming and recording Indigenous stories and histories and streaming these accounts via new media technologies at the physical locations,' Professor McGrath said.

'So for example, when visitors from interstate and overseas travel to Uluru, they will be able to download video and audio recordings of Indigenous people talking about their landscapes, their histories and their cultural traditions — providing a new way of understanding Australian history that pre-dates 1788.'

The project will initially involve four case studies areas, looking at Aboriginal areas in the Sydney Basin, Blue Mountains, Kakadu and Uluru.

'Researchers, historians and other experts will work with the national parks and Indigenous communities collaboratively to research Indigenous histories of land and people and, with our partners Ronin Films and the National Film and Sound Archive, record their stories and present these accounts to people via streamed media,' Professor McGrath said.

For more information please contact Professor Ann McGrath: (02) 6125 4850 or 0432 766 937. For media assistance: Penny Cox, ANU Media, 02 6125 3549, 0424 016 978.



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Indigenous women raise their voices

The Federal Government recently announced a new national body to represent Indigenous women. The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance will report concerns to the Federal Government and propose solutions for problems that arise in Indigenous communities.

Indigenous Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin says the alliance will work with the national representative body for Indigenous people that will be formed early next year.

'This is all about making a new Indigenous women's alliance so that we get Indigenous women from different parts of Australia to come together, to really make sure that we're kept up to date with the major issues of importance to Indigenous women in different parts of the country,' Ms Macklin said.

Native tree marks the day

To commemorate the second anniversary of the apology to the Stolen Generations, a tree-planting ceremony was held at the Mary Crescent Reserve in Eden Hill, WA. Aboriginal elder Allan Kickett, of Eden Hill, helped plant a flooded gum sapling to mark the occasion saying, 'May this tree and our community flourish together.'

Bassendean Town Mayor John Gangell and City of Swan Deputy Mayor Mick Wainwright attended the event along with council staff and community members.

Staff from the Town of Bassendean and the City of Swan will work with the local Aboriginal community to plant native species across their parks each February.

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May 2010

Canberra school flies the flags

Late last year the North Ainslie Primary School in Canberra assembled in front of their recently erected flag poles to conduct a ceremony to celebrate their reconciliation journey.

The school board, staff, students and parents, along with members of the local Indigenous community gathered to raise the new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags alongside the Australian flag.

Local Wiradjuri artist, Duncan Smith and his family performed — his son playing didgeridoo and daughters demonstrating traditional dancing — and acknowledged traditional owners past and present.

Students in the school's leadership group explained what reconciliation meant to them and talked about the impact of the national Apology in February 2008.

Student Comments

'Reconciliation is recognising that you have done something wrong, a new beginning, ending conflict, healing the conflict.'

'Reconciliation is apologising and making up — taking some action proving you are sorry'.

'Reconciliation is making friends after a disagreement, settling differences, healing.'

Students raise the flags after the ceremony to celebrate their reconciliation journey.



**Reconciliation
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Reconciliation Australia acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land 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 17-year 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