

Reconciliation News

September 2010

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Barayuwa Mununggurr (Laynhapuy), Clive Atkinson (Mirrambeena Aboriginal Education Group), Djambawa Marawili (ANKAAA), IGA Chair Mick Dodson, Karen Wood (BHP Billiton), Daniel Morrison (Noongar Mia Mia), Corine Matasia (Napranum Preschool PaL Group), David Brockman (AIDA), Tom Cleary (NCACCH), Wayne Denning (Carbon Media). Photo by Wayne Quilliam

Awards winners shine

For the eight finalists in the 2010 Indigenous Governance Awards, this was their moment. Gathered high on the 23rd floor of the BHP Billiton building with sweeping views of Melbourne, they were about to find out who had scored the top honours.

But of course, they were all winners. Just by making the finals of the Awards they had proven their worth as eight of the best-run Indigenous organisations in the country.

For the 120 guests comprising representatives of the finalist organisations and their friends,

corporate identities, government leaders and people from the community, it had been an uplifting event. Earlier Aunty Joy Wandin-Murphy had given a warm Welcome to Country and Master of Ceremonies Deborah Cheetham had provided a joyous rendition of *Dali Mana Gamarada*, the song she performed at the Opening Ceremony of the Sydney Olympics.

BHP Billiton had turned on a magnificent lunch interspersed with short addresses from their Chief People Officer Karen Wood and the Chair of the IGA and RA Co-Chair Professor Mick Dodson. The CEO of the South West Aboriginal Medical Service, Glenda Humes, spoke of her elation when SWAMS had won the highly

commended prize in 2008 before introducing a short audio-visual providing a thumbnail overview of each finalist and their work.

And then it was the moment everyone had been waiting for as Professor Dodson opened the envelope and revealed the names of the two winners and two highly commended Indigenous organisations.

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MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

Change is in the air



Co-Chairs, Mark Leibler and Mick Dodson

They say change is good for the soul which is probably why Reconciliation Australia is buzzing right now following the appointment of our first Indigenous Chief Executive and several new names on the RA Board.

We're excited to welcome Leah Armstrong as RA's new CEO. Leah's outstanding track record, especially in community capacity building, maximising partnerships and working closely with governments and the private sector is certain to influence the focus and scope of our future programs. As our first Indigenous CEO, Leah breaks new ground bringing a fresh perspective to what we do.

We are also pleased to welcome three highly experienced new Directors to the RA Board — Kirstie Parker, Tom Calma and Melinda Cilento. Many will already know Kirstie and Tom both of whom have been involved in reconciliation for most of their working lives. Until recently Melinda Cilento was Deputy CEO of the Business Council of Australia and has actively promoted reconciliation to the business sector for a number of years. These new Directors, along with Sam Jeffries who joined the Board in May, bring significant skills and spheres of influence to the RA Board.

New arrivals of course usually coincide with departures and we're sorry the time has come to farewell Board directors Shelley Reys and Sam Mostyn. Suffice to say after 10 years with RA, our dear friend

Shelley will be sorely missed. She has been an extraordinary Board member and has worked tirelessly for reconciliation for as long as we can remember. Given her passion and continuing interest in the quest for Indigenous equality our paths are certain to keep crossing.

In her three years on the Board Sam has made real inroads for reconciliation especially in her role as a Commissioner of the AFL. We will miss her positive input. More details about all the Board changes can be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

Our lead story in this edition is the announcement of the winners of the 2010 Indigenous Governance Awards (IGA) and we congratulate all the finalists on their success and indeed all the organisations that entered this year. Conducted in partnership with BHP Billiton, the Awards really do encourage organisations to put up their hands to be recognised for their strong leadership and good governance.

Our *Unfinished Oz* advertising campaign which began in May continues on television and in cinemas for the next few months. Devised pro bono by agency Droga5, its aim is to 'refresh' reconciliation in the light of the

10th anniversary of the 2000 Bridge Walks and draw people to the website. A special thanks to Qantas who generously ran the commercial as part of their in flight viewing from National Reconciliation Week through to NAIDOC week.

The second Barometer Report on how Indigenous and other Australians feel about each other has been conducted for us by social research company Auspoll. While the findings in the draft report show that perceptions and attitudes haven't shifted far in either direction since 2008, there are still some interesting trends that remind us of the work still to be done. A preliminary summary of the Barometer findings is included in this newsletter.

You'll notice on the RAP pages just how successful our nationwide initiative has now become. More and more organisations, government departments, schools and community and sporting groups are signing up each week, helping us to embed RAPs as an occupational necessity alongside OH&S and workplace diversity.

Once again we warmly welcome Leah Armstrong to RA and look forward to achieving great things together.



Leah Armstrong

Leah heads up RA's team

As announced by the Co-Chairs, the new Chief Executive of Reconciliation Australia is Leah Armstrong, a Torres Strait Islander woman from Boigu Island, Queensland. Leah commenced work in her new role at the end of August.

Since 2009, Leah had been advising Social Ventures Australia on social enterprise development partnerships. Previously, she was Executive Director of Yarnteen Ltd (formerly Yarnteen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Corporation) for 17 years. At Yarnteen, Leah expanded the Newcastle-based business from a start-up government funded organisation to a self sufficient company with substantial assets and diverse and reliable income streams. For the last 10 years Leah has also been a Director of Indigenous Business Australia (IBA), overseeing the organisation through a period of unprecedented investment growth with an investment asset base at approximately \$300 million.

Reconciliation Australia Co-Chair Mark Leibler said Leah's solid background of achievements over a long period of time working with communities, corporations and governments made her an ideal appointment.

'Leah has more than 20 years experience working with Aboriginal communities to create economic independence,' Mr Leibler said.

'With her clear understanding of effective governance, Leah brings considerable skills in building and maintaining respectful relationships — key building blocks for reconciliation and essential qualities to lead our organisation into the future.'

As well as her directorship with IBA, Leah is a Director with the Australian Indigenous Minority Supplier Council (AIMSC) and a Board member of the Jobs Australia Foundation and the Hunter Regional Sports Authority.

Leah is familiar with the work of RA having been a judge for the Indigenous Governance Awards and, while at Yarnteen, signing up to a Reconciliation Action Plan.

'I have long admired Reconciliation Australia and their achievements towards building respectful relationships. Although I have been involved with the reconciliation movement for more than 18 years, I am very excited about leading Reconciliation Australia in the ongoing challenge of reconciliation between mainstream Australia and our Indigenous people,' she said.

Awards Winners Shine

continued from front page

Organisations established for less than 10 years

Winner and prize of \$10,000

Carbon Media Pty Ltd (Qld)

Highly commended and prize of \$5,000

Noongar Mia Mia Pty Ltd (WA)

Finalists

Mirambeena Aboriginal Education Group Inc (Vic)

Napranum Preschool PaL Group (Qld)

Organisations established for more than 10 years

Winner and prize of \$10,000

Laynhapuy Homelands Association Incorporated (NT)

Highly commended and prize of \$5,000

North Coast Aboriginal Corporation for Community Health (QLD)

Finalists

Association of Northern, Kimberley and Arnhem Aboriginal Artists (NT)

Australian Indigenous Doctors Association (ACT)

Reconciliation Australia and BHP Billiton sincerely thank our media partners The Koori Mail and the National Indigenous Times for their generous help in again promoting the IGA during the year. We're also grateful to our new media partner the ABC who have pledged to work with each of the winners to develop a Communications Plan — to help them build their profiles more broadly and of course help spread more good news stories about Indigenous success.

A big vote of thanks too to the judging panel whose task is never easy and to photographer Wayne Quilliam whose images of the finalists and their work are included in our new calendar, in all the related IGA material and in this newsletter.



David Liddiard (Corporate Connect AB), Paul Wand (Desert Knowledge) and Glenn Brennan (NAB).



Rhonda Randall and Paula Wooton (both from North Coast Aboriginal Corporation for Community Health) with Jodie Belyea (Jobs Australia).



Wayne Denning from winning organisation Carbon Media.



Barayuwa Mununggurr (Laynhapuy Homelands Assn), Karen Wood (BHP Billiton) and Mick Dodson.



RA Co-Chair Mark Leibler, Adam Mooney and RA Board Director Fred Chaney.



Deborah Cheetham (Master of Ceremonies).



JJ Li, Leila Smith and Dewi Zulkefi (all from Australian Indigenous Doctors Association).

All IGA photos by Wayne Quilliam



Judy Atkinson (Mirambeena Aboriginal Education Group), Glenda Humes (South West Aboriginal Medical Service), Clive Atkinson (Mirambeena), Aunty Joy Wandin-Murphy, Jodie Sizer and Daphne Yarram (National Congress of Australia's Indigenous Peoples).

A toolkit for good governance

What is Indigenous governance? How do Indigenous organisations develop, plan, build their rules and constitutions? Manage disputes? Define the roles and responsibilities of staff and boards? Engage with stakeholders? Work in partnership with communities? Develop and train staff and boards? Build leaders and succession plans? Successfully balance cultural and operational functions?

Our new online Indigenous Governance Toolkit is an easy to use resource for Indigenous organisations, businesses and communities to help them build and strengthen their governance. The toolkit provides tools, checklists, examples and straightforward lessons to help with the big challenges in Indigenous governance.

The content and tools are drawn from the best-practice Indigenous governance learnings of the organisations and communities involved in the Indigenous Governance Awards and the Indigenous Community Governance Research project. Good Indigenous organisations are the backbone of Indigenous communities and, as Indigenous Governance Awards judge Gary Banks observed, 'the best among these Indigenous bodies actually outclass most mainstream organisations or enterprises in Australia'.

The toolkit is just a click away and can help answer all those questions posed above, and many more besides. Take a look at www.reconciliation.org.au/governance.

Six of the best

As the Co-Chairs mentioned on page 2, the Reconciliation Australia Board has had something of a 'makeover' in recent months following the departure of Shelley Reys and Sam Mostyn and the appointment of Tom Calma, Kirstie Parker, Melinda Cilento and Sam Jeffries.

After a decade in the role, founding Reconciliation Australia Board director Shelley Reys relinquished her position at the end of May. RA Co-Chairs Professor Mick Dodson and Mark Leibler commended Ms Reys for her tireless involvement in reconciliation — both as Board Director for Reconciliation Australia and in her previous role with the former Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation.

Professor Dodson said that Shelley had made an enormous contribution over the past 10 years. 'While Shelley's departure from the RA Board is a great loss we know that she will continue her work in this space and carry on as an ambassador for reconciliation,' he said.

Shelley joined the Reconciliation Australia Board of Directors as inaugural Co-Chair shortly after the historic Sydney Harbour Bridge Walk for Reconciliation in May 2000.

'That day had a huge impact on me and influenced me to accept a place on the Board of the newly formed Reconciliation Australia established by the former Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation,' Shelley said.

Shelley said that her departure was deliberate and that she welcomed the new

board members and the fresh ideas they would bring to the table.

'The last 10 years have been challenging, inspiring and memorable. As I step down, I can confidently say that reconciliation today is much more than just a word we bandy about. It's real and it's happening, with a growing army of enthusiastic people and organisations rolling up their sleeves and getting involved,' she said.

The Co-Chairs also paid tribute to the excellent contribution Sam Mostyn has made to Reconciliation Australia during her three years on the Board.

'Sam has played a crucial role to advance reconciliation across the country — particularly in the areas of community development, sport, recreation and broader corporate engagement,' Mr Leibler said.

'As a Commissioner of the Australian Football League, Sam has helped to bring Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians closer together both on and off the playing field,' he said.

New Board director Tom Calma is an Aboriginal elder from the Kungarakan tribal group and a member of the Iwaidja tribal group whose traditional lands are south west

of Darwin and on the Coburg Peninsula in Northern Territory, respectively.

Tom has been involved in Indigenous affairs at a local, community, state, national and international level and worked in the public sector for more than 35 years. He served as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner for six years and also served as Race Discrimination Commissioner.

Kirstie Parker is a Yuwallarai woman from NSW. Since 2006 she has been the Editor of The Koori Mail, Australia's only wholly Aboriginal community owned and independently audited national Indigenous newspaper.

Kirstie has 25 years experience in mainstream and Indigenous journalism, communications and management of Indigenous organisations, including Tandanya — National Aboriginal Cultural Institute in Adelaide and the Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre in Canberra. Formerly she was media adviser to a federal government minister and head of public affairs for ATSIIC.

Melinda Cilento was formerly the Deputy CEO at the Business Council of Australia and has extensive public and private sector experience in economic policy development and analysis and actively promotes reconciliation at

every opportunity. Previously she worked with County Investment Management (now Invesco) as Head of Economics, the Department of Treasury and the International Monetary Fund.

Sam Jeffries, a proud Murawarri man, born and raised in Brewarrina, the youngest of seven children, joined the RA Board in May. Sam has been involved in Aboriginal Affairs since leaving school and spent 20 years in Lightning Ridge in far north western NSW establishing the CDEP project.

Sam's many appointments include Co-Chair of the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples, Chairperson of the Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly, Deputy Chairperson of the Indigenous Land Corporation, Board Member of the Western Catchment Authority NSW, Co-Chair of the National Centre for Indigenous Excellence and Chairman/CEO of the Indigenous Environmental Services Pty Ltd.

All these Board changes come as RA celebrates a decade fostering reconciliation in Australia. And although we farewell Shelley and Sam, the four outstanding new appointments have certainly reinforced the Board as we look to the future.



Shelley Reys



Sam Jeffries



Kirstie Parker



Tom Calma



Melinda Cilento



Sam Mostyn



Garma — sharing the cultures

Each year Reconciliation Australia hosts a group of 20 influential women from business, government, media and community organisations at the Garma Festival of traditional culture in east Arnhem Land. For most of the women a working day is usually a mix of meetings, sitting in front of a computer or talking on the telephone, so to take time out at this wonderful event can be a very powerful and inspiring experience.

One of the women in RA's group was Caroline Evans, the Corporate Counsel and Company Secretary for TRUenergy in Melbourne who shared her impressions of Garma with us.

I have two particularly strong images from the same place at Garma. It's a place that was really the heart of the festival — a clearing as large as an AFL field, but covered in fine dusty sand rather than turf.

As it reaches evening, the bunggul gathers momentum, dancers from clans across Arnhem Land pound the dirt, with other clan members singing to help tell their stories. As the sun goes down and the dust continues to rise, the view into the arena turns red and brown and beige with figures dancing through the haze.

Later in the night we're at the bandstand at the other end of the field. You wouldn't know though, it's barely visible. The Chooky Dancers onstage are nearly mobbed by hordes of young kids, laughing and jumping for a chance to get close to these guys and their infamous fusions of Indigenous dance — with Zorba the Greek, or Bollywood, a personal favourite.

I was lucky enough to be invited to the 2010 Reconciliation Australia Women's Program along with 20 other women

Our women's group arrive for the 2010 Garma festival. Photo by Wayne Quilliam

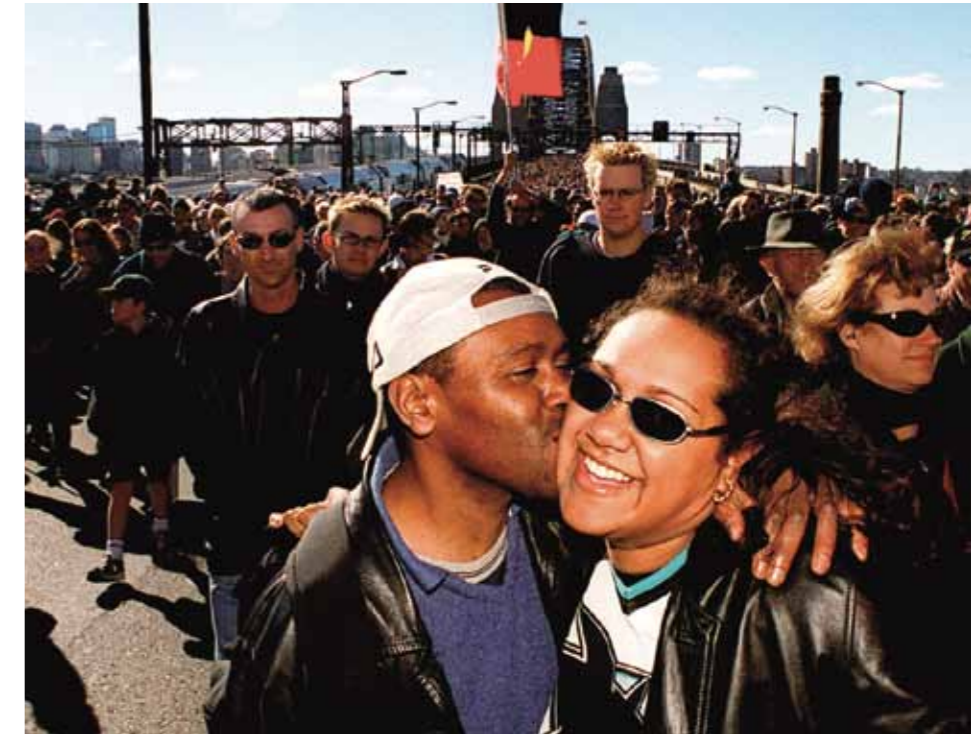
there to learn, to listen, and to share. We walked to a crying ceremony before dawn, visited the traditional healing place, and sat with the Yidaki man. We spent time looking at art and film, in forums and sitting around the fire with people passionate about causes from youth and human rights, through to ranger programs and housing.

Coming as I did from the corporate end of the spectrum, I felt Garma was an enormous learning curve for me — and the most valuable part I took away was also the most unexpected. I was delighted to be able to simply speak with our Yolngu hosts — to share in their thoughts and issues and history. I took a great thrill in finding forums that touched on legal issues (thank goodness — something I knew a little about!) and even more in those things I knew nothing about (traditional string art, trying to strip down fibers for weaving, learning the first basic steps in the traditional dances) — let's just say there's plenty of room left for learning.

I loved Garma 2010. I was tremendously proud to be part of the festival, and part of the Reconciliation Australia Women's Group.

Two great moments in time

There are certain world events you can never forget — sometimes you might even remember exactly where you were when they happened. However for two such events to occur in the same city and in the same year is rare. But that's what happened in 2000.



John Harding and Elaine Crombie after walking across the Bridge in 2000. Photo by Chris Pavlich copyright © Newspix

For many Australians the win by Cathy Freeman in the 400 metres at the Sydney Olympics 10 years ago was the highlight of the Games. Carrying the honour of her people and the expectation of a nation she ran like the wind to achieve a remarkable victory. As she crossed the line, commentator Bruce McAvaney cheered 'What a legend, what a champion!' with co-commentator Raelene Boyle adding, 'What a relief.'

A gifted young Indigenous Australian had inspired us all. The other equally momentous event that year was the Harbour Bridge Walk when more than 300,000 people crossed the 'coat hanger' in a unanimous show of unity for reconciliation. It was a galvanizing moment and for those who walked, like Elaine Crombie from South Australia and John Harding from Victoria, it would never be forgotten.

Two great moments in time that still inspire us 10 years on.



Cathy Freeman image by News Ltd copyright © Newspix

Reconciliation through fresh eyes

To mark the 10th anniversary of the Bridge Walks in 2000, Reconciliation Australia launched a new public awareness campaign asking Australians to recommit to reconciliation — and 'help finish Oz'.

The campaign calls on Australians 'to see things through fresh eyes' and features well-known Australian faces including Jack Thompson, Jonathan Thurston, Andrew Denton, Natalie Bassingthwaighte, Karla Grant, Sigrid Thornton, Adam Goodes, George Negus and Jimmy Little.

And there's a twist. In keeping with the 'fresh eyes' line, each of the celebrities looks slightly different. Thanks to the magic of digital manipulation, they are literally looking through someone else's eyes.

Central to the campaign is a new social networking website called *Unfinished Oz* where people register their support by placing themselves on a virtual map of Australia with a pixel of light.

Each pixel of light connects to like-minded others on the map thereby creating an online people's movement, ultimately completing the map of Australia.

The site also offers a range of ways for people to become more involved in the reconciliation process.

Before the campaign launch, Reconciliation Australia Board Director Shelley Reys said that while reconciliation had come a long way in the past 10 years it was timely that we look at things from different perspectives.

'Reconciliation is about improving the relationships between the first Australians and other Australians so we can build a better future we can all share in,' Shelley said.

'That can only happen when we respect our differences, celebrate our diversity and defend what we have in common. And that's what we're asking all Australians to do so we can start seeing things with fresh eyes.'

Creative Chairman of Droga5 agency, David Nobay, the man behind the campaign said, 'Reconciliation is something that we all have a stake in and I think Jimmy Little's challenge at the end of the ad says it all: *Let's finish what we started.*'

The one minute advertisement can be seen on free to air television, Foxtel, Austar, SBS, NITV and in more than 50 cinema complexes in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Canberra, Adelaide, Perth, the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast.

Droga5 and all the celebrities enthusiastically provided their creativity, commitment and time free of charge which just goes to show how far reconciliation has progressed in the last 10 years. Here are the names of all those who appear on screen in the *Unfinished Oz* campaign.

- Natalie Bassingthwaighte
- Steve Bisley
- Andrew Denton
- Ernie Dingo
- DJ GoodWill
- Karla Grant
- Gyton Grantley
- Adam Goodes
- John Howard (the actor)
- Marcia Hines
- Jimmy Little
- Neil Perry
- Margaret Pomeranz
- Paul McDermott
- George Negus
- Shannon Noll
- Mikey Robins
- Wendell Sailor
- Dan Sultan
- Jack Thompson
- Sigrid Thornton
- Jonathan Thurston
- Stan Walker
- John Waters

You can view the 60 second advertisement and join the Unfinished Oz movement at www.unfinishedoz.com.au.

Five faces from the campaign (from top to bottom): Ernie Dingo, (sporting his 'fresh eyes'), Natalie Basingthwaighte, Andrew Denton, Karla Grant and Jonathon Thurston.



Barometer sniffs the wind

Two years ago we released the Australian Reconciliation Barometer, a first-ever study on what Indigenous and other Australians think about each other.

The biennial national study explores how the attitudes and perceptions of Indigenous and other Australians affect progress towards reconciliation and closing the gap.

The 2010 Barometer has now been completed by social research company Auspoll, canvassing the views of 600 Indigenous and 1,000 non-Indigenous Australians.

At first glance the overall attitudes to reconciliation and Indigenous issues are broadly similar to what they were two years ago. However there are some key changes since 2008 such as:

- The relationship is less important to us;
- We are more likely to believe the relationship is poor;
- We are also less likely to see ourselves in a positive light;
- Indigenous respondents are less likely to believe they are disadvantaged or affected by race-based policies;
- There is a slight reduction in the importance we place on Indigenous culture;
- Indigenous role models have become less visible to the general community;
- Perceived levels of contact and engagement with the issues have dropped;
- We are less supportive of Government action on Indigenous issues;

- Indigenous respondents are more positive about government programs but the general population disagrees;
- The perceived importance of Indigenous culture, traditional lands and extended family relationships amongst Indigenous respondents has declined;
- Indigenous respondents believe they are better at working together but they see less cooperation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous leaders.

In interpreting the results Auspoll points out the changes are generally small (typically less than 10 per cent). Auspoll also suggests changes in the broader social, political, and economic environment in Australia at the time each survey was conducted, including the Apology to the Stolen Generations, the NT Emergency Intervention and the global financial crisis, may also account for some of the results.

Future surveys will better illuminate whether the subtle changes in mood detected since the 2008 survey are 'short-term' effects of the current environment, or whether they represent a long-term shift in the national psyche.

The results of the 2010 Barometer will be released later this year.

More midwives to redress the balance

Better health outcomes for pregnant Indigenous women appear likely in future as more Indigenous students enrol in midwifery courses. Southern Cross University in Tweed Heads is leading the way with six of the 50 students enrolled in the new Bachelor of Midwifery degree this year being of Aboriginal descent.



Associate Professor of Midwifery Heather Hancock, who recently spent four years in the Northern Territory working in peri-natal primary health in Indigenous communities, said she was delighted with the response to the course.

'We believe this is the largest percentage of Aboriginal students ever seen for any Bachelor of Midwifery course in Australia,' Professor Hancock said.

'This is significant because for the last 20 years Aboriginal peri-natal mortality has been well above the average and has not improved.

'One critical way to address this is to educate more Aboriginal women as midwives because research shows that problems are picked up more quickly when women are able to develop close relationships with a midwife they feel they can trust and who understands them.

'They have a greater level of satisfaction with the care they receive, are more likely to keep their appointments and take responsibility for their health and wellbeing, and there is a greater likelihood of improved outcomes for both mother and baby.'

Would-be midwives previously had to complete a nursing qualification before studying midwifery, but stand-alone courses

such as Southern Cross University's three-year Bachelor of Midwifery have made it possible to enter the midwifery profession directly.

Indigenous student Tanya Bonner said the cultural needs of Aboriginal women were very different to other women.

'There is a distrust of the mainstream hospital system because many Aboriginal women have a fear of prejudice and of being judged so they choose not to go,' Tanya said.

'Many hospitals have an Aboriginal liaison person but sometimes this person is a man, who can't be involved in women's business.

'Traditionally Aboriginal women gave birth *on country* with other women around them, and there are important ceremonies that take place outside on country that welcome the child into the world.

'Now, in isolated communities the women are flown to a regional hospital at 36 weeks into their pregnancy and have to stay in accommodation in town without their extended family until they give birth in the nearby hospital.

'The women feel they have no choice, and if babies aren't born on country they lose some of their link to the land. I hope that if I train as

Tanya Bonner (far right) and Tamara Jones (front) with baby Lachlan and their fellow Indigenous students studying midwifery at Southern Cross University.

a midwife I will be able to help these women be fully informed, educated and empowered, and maybe even be situated in their community so they could have their babies on country if they choose,' she said.

Another Aboriginal student, Tamara Jones, who travels from Broken Hill with her four-month-old son Lachlan to attend intensive units of study, said she first tried the traditional pathway of studying to be a nurse.

'I studied to be a nurse for a year, but I gave up because I really wasn't interested in studying to be a nurse — I always wanted to be a midwife and now I realise that I can achieve this goal,' Tamara said.

'I like the way the course is set out — we all learn together and it's a supportive environment to learn in. I also plan to get involved in mentoring a new Indigenous student next year so I can help other students settle into the course,' she said.



Co-Curator Hayley Atkins walking the Canning Stock Route Collection, photo by Ross Swanborough, 2008

Anyone finding themselves in Canberra in the next few months should allocate a few hours to see an amazing Indigenous art exhibition at the National Museum of Australia.

Yiwarra Kuju: The Canning Stock Route is one of Western Australia's most significant cultural and artistic endeavours and one of the most important collections that the Museum has yet acquired.



Patrick Tjungurrayi, from Papunya Tula Artists, photo by Tim Acker, 2007

Many say it's also the best exhibition ever staged at the National Museum. Sponsored by BHP Billiton, the exhibition sings with Aboriginal voices and experiences as it explores a significant but little known period of Australian history through contemporary art, film and new media. Components include works by more than 80 artists from nine community art enterprises, an eight-metre interactive multimedia installation, a film program, public workshops and a national K-12 education program.

The exhibition emerged as an important outcome of the *Ngurra Kuju Walyja (One Country One People): The Canning Stock Route Project* instigated by FORM in mid-2006. FORM brokered partnerships with nine art enterprises and communities with direct connections to the Stock Route region. These unique partnerships developed further through a number of creative workshops, return-to-Country trips and community visits. The established and emerging artists featured in the exhibition contributed

their oral histories that explore the complexity of their works, building a powerful social and cultural repository of remote Western Australia. After it closes on 26 January 2011, the exhibition will tour extensively around Australia.

You can find the full story behind the exhibition on the National Museum website – www.nma.gov.au

Canning Stock Route stops at the Museum

It's simply about respect



The practice of being welcomed to Country or in turn acknowledging Country at official events or gatherings has been a topic of debate recently, so we thought it might be helpful to provide some answers to a few questions that come up from time to time.

Is a Welcome to Country something new, invented for the sake of political correctness?

Protocols for welcoming visitors to Country have been a part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures for thousands of years. Despite the absence of fences or visible borders, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups had clear boundaries separating their Country from that of other groups. Crossing into another group's Country required a request for permission to enter — like gaining a visa — and when that permission was granted the hosting group would welcome the visitors, offering them safe passage. For example, in some areas visitors would sit outside the boundary of another group's land and light a fire to signal their request to enter. A fire lit in response would indicate approval and welcome from the landowning group and often, on meeting, gifts would be

exchanged. While visitors were provided with a safe passage, they also had to respect the protocols and rules of the landowner group while on their Country. Today, obviously much has changed and these protocols have been adapted to contemporary circumstances but the essential ingredients of welcoming visitors and offering safe passage remain in place.

What is an Acknowledgment of Country?

An Acknowledgment of Country is a way of showing awareness of and respect for the traditional Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander owners of the land on which a meeting or event is being held, and of recognising the continuing connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to their Country.

An Acknowledgment of Country can be informal or formal and involves visitors acknowledging the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander owners of the land as well as the

long and continuing relationship between Indigenous peoples and their Country.

At a meeting or formal occasion the speaker can begin proceedings by offering an Acknowledgment of Country. Unlike a Welcome to Country, it can be performed by a non-Indigenous person.

There are no set protocols or wording for an Acknowledgment of Country, though often a statement may take the following form: 'I would like to acknowledge that this meeting is being held on the traditional lands of the (appropriate group) people, and pay my respect to elders both past and present.'

You might personalise and localise an acknowledgement to make it as meaningful as possible, so the statement above is just a guide. As journalist Martin Flanagan reflects: 'I am not going to pretend that every Welcome to Country ceremony I've attended has been brilliantly alive to me. But that would be true of a lot of, if not nearly all, official ceremonies I attend. I also think there is an onus on non-Indigenous people who acknowledge country in the course of their public utterances to do it as well as they can.'

Why are such acknowledgements and welcomes important?

Incorporating a welcome or acknowledgement protocol into official meetings and events recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and custodians of their land. It promotes an awareness of the past and ongoing connection to place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

Unlike New Zealand, Canada and the United States, Australia has no treaty with its Indigenous people. While land rights laws and Native Title determinations in recent years have meant that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians have been officially recognised as having some ownership rights to some areas, for many groups there remains no official recognition of their connection to the land of their ancestors. A Welcome to or Acknowledgment of Country doesn't replace a treaty, Native Title or land rights, but they're a small gesture of recognition of the association with land and place of the First Australians.

How does a welcome or acknowledgement help address Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander disadvantage?

Some critics who disagree with the practice of being welcomed by or acknowledging traditional owners argue that it's pointless because it fails to solve practical aspects of Indigenous disadvantage. This view doesn't take into account the connection between dispossession and disadvantage, and that the ongoing effects of colonisation are at the heart of the disparity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians today. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander exclusion from our history books, our flag, anthem and for many years our democracy can never be undone — and the damage it has done cannot be reversed.

What can be done, alongside efforts in health, education and employment, are practices of inclusion. Including recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in events, meetings and national symbols is one part of ending the exclusion that has been so damaging. As Cape York leader Noel Pearson writes: 'Reconciliation is not only possible but necessary. Settlement of recognition will include many things: land issues and connection to land, solutions to economic and social issues, language rights and many other things. There will be symbolism as well.'

Why should we be welcomed by or acknowledge Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people if they no longer legally own the land?

In today's world of meetings in office buildings and school assemblies, Welcomes to and Acknowledgments of Country may seem out of place. The culture, population and environment of Australia have all changed significantly since colonisation and these ceremonies can seem strange or meaningless to some. However, all areas of Australia have or had traditional owners, including where large cities are now situated. Even though Indigenous people may not live in a traditional way on this land, they are still connected to it.

In Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, the meaning of Country is more than

just ownership or connection to land, as Professor Mick Dodson explains:

When we talk about traditional 'Country'... we mean something beyond the dictionary definition of the word. For Aboriginal Australians...we might mean homeland, or tribal or clan area and we might mean more than just a place on the map. For us, Country is a word for all the values, places, resources, stories and cultural obligations associated with that area and its features. It describes the entirety of our ancestral domains.

While they may all no longer necessarily be the title-holders to land, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are still connected to the Country of their ancestors and most consider themselves the custodians or caretakers of their land.

To find out more...

For advice on how to acknowledge Country the following link may help. You might also get in touch with your local traditional owners through your local land council, reconciliation group or an Indigenous community organisation.

<http://www.det.wa.edu.au/education/abled/docs/welcometocountryaug2007.pdf>

Postscript

Following recent amendments to Standing Orders in the Australian House of Representatives and the Senate, all openings of future Federal Parliaments will begin with a 'Welcome to Country' by the traditional Indigenous owners.

The amendments allow for the incorporation of this ancient cultural tradition into Australia's democracy at the first meeting of a new Parliament, after a Federal election.

The Australian Parliament witnessed the first Aboriginal Welcome to Country in the February 2008 opening of Parliament.

Loss of language is loss of culture

We recently received a letter from Trevor Stockley, an Aboriginal languages teacher from Innisfail in Queensland with thoughtful insights into the loss of Aboriginal languages and the shortcomings of current educational policies. He dedicated his critique to former RA Board Director, the late Dr R Marika saying:

'Dr Marika was a good friend whose life's work was to fight for language rights and cross cultural understanding in Australia. Her message, that strong language and culture is a key to successful education and a strong future, still stands. Dr. Marika was a special person, who touched many people locally, nationally and internationally in her efforts of reconciling her language and culture within today's world and values.'

For many threatened Indigenous languages, recording is the only way to avoid losing the language forever. Photo by Wayne Quilliam



I write to you concerning Australia's Indigenous languages,

I was wondering what kind of reconciliation is happening in Australia concerning these languages. It seems to me that the actions of the NT government with its 2009 'First 4 hours in English' decision, which effectively killed the last nine Indigenous bilingual learning programs (Indigenous and English languages) in Australia, was made with the support of the Commonwealth government 'English is the language of education and work in Australia' (J. Gillard). This is far from reconciliation and shows an absolute lack of understanding of languages, education and Indigenous culture. Stopping children from learning in and through their mother tongue is akin to linguistic genocide — linguicide. These are not reconciliatory actions.

All over Australia Aboriginal people have 'lost' their languages as well as the cultural knowledge and traditional framework which held these languages — this is a fact of history. Of the approximately 250 languages spoken in Australia at the time of invasion, there are now fewer than 20 left and of those only about 12 are viable and intergenerational. If a language is not intergenerational then it is not being passed on to children and consequentially, it too is on the road to being 'lost'.

The Commonwealth government made big publicity out of the decision last year to fund language programs in an attempt to revive/re-awaken some of these lost languages. On the face of it, this may appear as an admirable act of reconciliation but remember, these languages are already lost and what is brought back with language programs, although important, is only a whisper of the original languages and the knowledge which they transmitted.

So we have the incredible situation in Australia where some of the lost languages, (remember this is around 230 languages) will be funded while the last 20 spoken languages are left struggling or actively discriminated against. The 12 or so intergenerational languages, including those with bilingual learning programs in their schools, have been left with their funding

and support halted and with their two-way education programs discarded. These language communities face a difficult future as their children will be forced, against their parent's wishes, to learn only in English for the first four hours of every school day, no matter what their age or their mother-tongue.

The message here in 2010, is the same message as during the last couple of hundred years and that is, that your language (which embodies your culture) is rubbish and not worthy to be used in schools to educate your own Indigenous children. We don't need to hypothesise about the repercussions and consequences of such a shocking decision, we just need to take a look at history — the picture is plain and clear.

Australia is now a signatory to the Declaration of Indigenous Rights and yet continues to flaunt basic human rights conditions contained within this declaration, in particular Article 14. Maybe Australia signed this paper in invisible ink, as it seems like we are still trying to hide our real actions while showing the world our politically correct face.

Australia has failed to provide a quality education to Indigenous children and has failed to respect their languages and culture. The development of bilingual/ two-way education was on the right track for Indigenous education and languages but rather than adequate funding and support, the government has instead resorted to retrograde actions and returned to a model proven by its failure, which relies on stripping away the child's language, disregarding the child's prior cultural learning and blaming the child for their failure in an education system which is dependent on English only, one-size-fits all testing.

I hope your organisation can help to bring pressure and publicity to this dire situation. I see that you say 'Reconciliation involves justice, recognition and healing...' I don't think any of those things are being fostered or realised here.

Trevor Stockley

Language revival on the Peninsula

Schools on the Yorke Peninsula are helping to keep alive the language of the traditional owners — the Narungga people — following the publication of a dictionary, storybooks and a new language course by the Narungga Aboriginal Progress Association (NAPA) and a community linguist.

NAPA also has released a book of speeches to be used at public occasions, and a book explaining the complex Narungga kinship system and its terminology. NAPA and the Adelaide University research project has increased the number of known Narungga words from about 200 to more than 1000.

South Australian Education Minister Jay Weatherill said the Narungga language had been in danger of being lost forever — but is now having resurgence through a partnership between NAPA and local schools.

'The Narungga language was in danger of disappearing altogether, but this project is reconciliation in action — Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities working together to increase the appreciation of Narungga culture and ensure this language is kept alive,' Mr Weatherill said.

School teachers, senior secondary students and interested community members recently participated in a series of week-long workshops where they learned about the Narungga language and culture. So far 16 Yorke Peninsula locals have completed the course and a further 18 have enrolled.



Helping to save the words

The recipient of the inaugural Dr R Marika Scholarship, Vicki Couzens, has just returned from the Indigenous Languages Symposium at the University of Oregon in the United States. The trip was made possible through the scholarship enabling Vicki to gain international exposure for her research on Indigenous languages by attending the recent symposium.

A Keeray Woorroong Gunditjmarra woman from South West Victoria, Vicki works at the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages, and is an artist and language 'activist'. She has completed an MA (Fine Arts) and a Certificate 3 in Aboriginal Languages and commenced her PhD this year at RMIT. Vicki established the South West Aboriginal Languages Committee, which covers nine languages in the

region, and is a member of the Committee of Management for the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages.

An advocate for language maintenance and preservation, Vicki chose to attend the Oregon symposium because it provided a unique forum for exchange of scholarly research on teaching American Indian and other Indigenous languages, and investigating best practices to promote, preserve, and protect Indigenous languages.

Co-funded by AIATSIS and Reconciliation Australia, Vicki's \$4,000 Dr R Marika Scholarship was named in honour of the late Dr R. Marika who passed away in May 2008. Dr Marika was one of Australia's most prominent and admired traditional Aboriginal leaders, widely known and well-respected for her passionate advocacy for Yolngu languages, and the importance of maintaining them and using them in schools. Amazingly, English was Dr Marika's 14th language.

'Dr Marika was an inspiring role model and brilliant advocate for Indigenous languages

Scholarship recipient Vicki Couzens with Professor Mick Dodson AM, AIATSIS Chairperson and Co Chair of Reconciliation Australia, and Adam Mooney, Acting Co-CEO of Reconciliation Australia. Photo courtesy of AIATSIS

and I hope I can do justice to her legacy,' Vicki said.

The Scholarship has now been renamed the AIATSIS/ Reconciliation Australia Dr Marika Excellence in Bilingual Education Award. In future the award will promote and develop bilingual education in Australia by recognising and rewarding examples of excellence in bilingual education. Bilingual education enhances the survival of Indigenous languages and cultures and teaching students in their first language improves learning and literacy acquisition in English.

It is expected that applications for the 2011 Award will open later this year.

Yarning Circle gives kids a voice

An innovative cross cultural education and social development program, *Let's have a Yarn with Yarn*, has had outstanding results with young Indigenous people in the South Burnett district of Queensland.

Developed by Aboriginal teacher Lee Townsend, the program uses wool as a medium to connect people in a verbal learning circle. These intertwined connections form a 'web of knowledge' that allows the group to communicate by sharing their experiences.

Lee says that the success of the program comes down to capturing the ethos of traditional Aboriginal Yarning Circles and using it in a contemporary way.

'The use of wool allows the circle to share voices through open lines of communication in a structured and nurturing learning environment. Individuals can share their stories

and discover alternative solutions, develop greater choices and instil power into their everyday lives,' she said.

In the Cherbourg district, Senior Counselor at Wondin-Dee Domestic and Family Violence Counseling Service Narelle Sanford said that she and her colleagues had seen excellent outcomes with the 'Yarning' technique.

'For some time I'd thought that the usual counseling methods may not be appropriate for Indigenous people. So I started to look around for other mechanisms and strategies which might involve more culturally appropriate and traditional techniques. I had heard about the effectiveness of yarning circles so wanted to give it a try.

'The beauty of *the Yarn* program was that we were trained to deliver the program ourselves. The training was excellent and when we came to deliver the program we found it to be flexible enough to suit a number of different situations and with a diverse range of age groups.

'We have seen some very positive results. For example *the Yarn* was used recently with a group of students who had been experiencing some conflict out of school. When teachers and counsellors became aware of this they implemented the strategies from *the Yarn* and this resulted in very positive outcomes for the kids involved, as well as the school and the broader community.

Speaking of the flexibility of the program, Lee Townsend said that *the Yarn* was for anyone at any time in any situation.

'Everyone needs a voice,' said Lee. 'Whether you're young or an elder, Indigenous or non-Indigenous, real communication comes through talking and listening.'

For more information about how *the Yarn* can help you and your organisation please visit www.theyarningcircle.com or contact Lee Townsend on 0403 257 123.

***The Yarn* has been successful in addressing children's concerns.**



Slater wins for Wathaurong

This is the first time we've included a surfing story in our newsletter but a gracious gesture by the nine time world champion, four time Rip Curl Pro champion and world number one surfer, Kelly Slater, certainly deserves a mention.

After winning the Rip Curl Pro again earlier this year the American showed his immense appreciation for Australian Indigenous culture by gifting his 'Bell' trophy to the Wathaurong Aboriginal Cooperative.

Kelly has twice before been the recipient of a traditional Aboriginal welcome to the winner's podium by the Je-Be-Weng Aboriginal Dancers. On arriving at Bells this year he said that if he won he would give his trophy to the Wathaurong

community in recognition of their previous support and as an acknowledgement of the traditional owners of the land.

Half way through the final and well behind in scores he said he suddenly remembered his personal pledge and wondered whether the opportunity was slipping away. 'I didn't remember that until I was out in the water and right when I did, those winning waves came,' he said.

Before giving the trophy to the Wathaurong community Slater passed it around for everyone to give it a ring and then spent time with his Aboriginal friends in the Johanna car park ringing the Bell in his own handover celebration.

The place that Wathaurong Aboriginal Cooperative plays in the Rip Curl Pro is now significant and is specifically aimed at exposing the world to Australian Aboriginal culture.

The Indigenous element of Rip Curl Pro is a key component of the ongoing statewide

Indigenous surfing program coordinated by Surfing Victoria in partnership with the Wathaurong Aboriginal Cooperative and supported by the Victorian Government, community groups and the surfing industry.

Elements of the program include statewide Indigenous community learn to surf and water safety programs, work placement opportunities, a statewide surfing carnival attracting community members from not just the Victorian coastline but many inland communities as well, wild card opportunities into the Rip Curl Pro and coaching and mentoring courses.

Kelly Slater is currently riding high on the ASP world ratings, perhaps aware that the Wathaurong Aboriginal Cooperative will be cheering him on at every event he contests this season!

Kelly Slater in action at Bells Beach. Photo by Colleen Petch, courtesy of Newspix.



DFAT plays its part

To mark National Reconciliation Week this year, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) presented its inaugural seminar series *Indigenous Australia – Closing the Gap* featuring four eminent speakers.

In welcoming members of the diplomatic community and DFAT staff, Secretary Dennis Richardson said that since the National Apology in 2008, there had been a surge in international interest in Indigenous issues.

'These inaugural seminars will provide the diplomatic community and DFAT staff with authoritative Indigenous and Government-sourced information to build greater understanding abroad,' he said.

In his speech, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Mick Gooda outlined efforts to reset relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians to achieve lasting and real reconciliation.

Principal of the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Russell Taylor spoke of the significance of repatriation to Indigenous Australians saying, 'I implore the diplomatic community to help right the wrongs of the past and return our people so their spirits may rest in peace.'

British Deputy High Commissioner Jolyon Welsh, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Mick Gooda, DFAT Secretary Dennis Richardson and AIATSIS Principal Russell Taylor at DFAT's seminar series for NRW.

British Deputy High Commissioner Jolyon Welsh highlighted the international educational opportunities opened up to Indigenous Australians through the new Charlie Perkins Scholarship with Oxford University.

Dr Kerry Arabena, Co-Chair of the newly formed National Congress of Australia's First Peoples explained the Congress' role in the reconciliation process saying, 'The Congress is a historical milestone in the reconciliation process, giving Indigenous Australians for the first time a truly independent voice at the political table.'

More magic from Shane

The former lead singer of Goanna, Shane Howard, has just released his 10th solo album titled *Goanna Dreaming*.

The album is a promise fulfilled by one of Australia's most loved and respected singer-songwriters. There's a lot of history to Shane's career and all of his musical and lyrical themes over the past 30 years are brilliantly integrated and condensed into *Goanna Dreaming*. Cosmology, mortality, justice, landscape, love and belonging form a big canvas, crossing from folk to world music to powerful ballads, all underpinned by Shane's masterful storytelling and insightful observations of human frailty.

The first bars of the album's opening track, *Earth Is Singing*, slowly unfold from Shane's intimate acoustic guitar and the Mexican Jarana of Francisco Gonzales (one of the founding members of Los Lobos), building to a *Goanna*-esque rockin', celebratory, crescendo. The song tells the back story of Shane's first pilgrimage, all those years ago, to Uluru when he wrote the Australian classic, *Solid Rock*.

The rollicking *Clancey & Dooley & Don McLeod* retells the remarkable, hidden story of Australia's Black Eureka, when 800 Aboriginal pastoral workers, in the Pilbara, walked off the stations in 1946 and went on strike for pay and better conditions.

From the sublime *Come Down Moses*, rich with Biblical references and contemporary relevance though to *Don't Give Up On Us*, a wryly humorous agnostic prayer, Howard sets the feet tapping and the brain ticking.

Since his last studio album three years ago, Shane has toured with the celebrated *Black Arm Band* ensemble, travelling to world festivals, most of Australia's major arts festivals and into remote and regional Aboriginal communities, helping to take the ensemble's musical message of hope.

He also produced Archie Roach's last studio album, *Journey* and collaborated with the young Street Warriors and Shannon Noll for a new, hip-hop version of *Solid Rock*. For 30 years Shane has eloquently pleaded the case for Aboriginal justice.

But *Goanna Dreaming* takes us beyond, into a deeper appreciation of Aboriginal cosmology.

'I'm owning my history,' Shane says, 'I'm proud of what we attempted in those heady Goanna days, but back then I was well intentioned but naïve and looking at Aboriginal Australia. After 30 years of solid friendships, we are all in the story together. Much has changed but there is much more to do. At a time when the world is reeling from the dire consequences of climate change, religious fanaticism and the limitations of economic growth on a finite planet, Aboriginal philosophy shows us a new way, via an old way, to relate to our fragile Earth.'

If you're already on the lookout for Christmas presents, *Goanna Dreaming* with its haunting melodies and thoughtful lyrics is a gift to be treasured. To choose your purchase option go to www.shanehoward.com.au/shop.

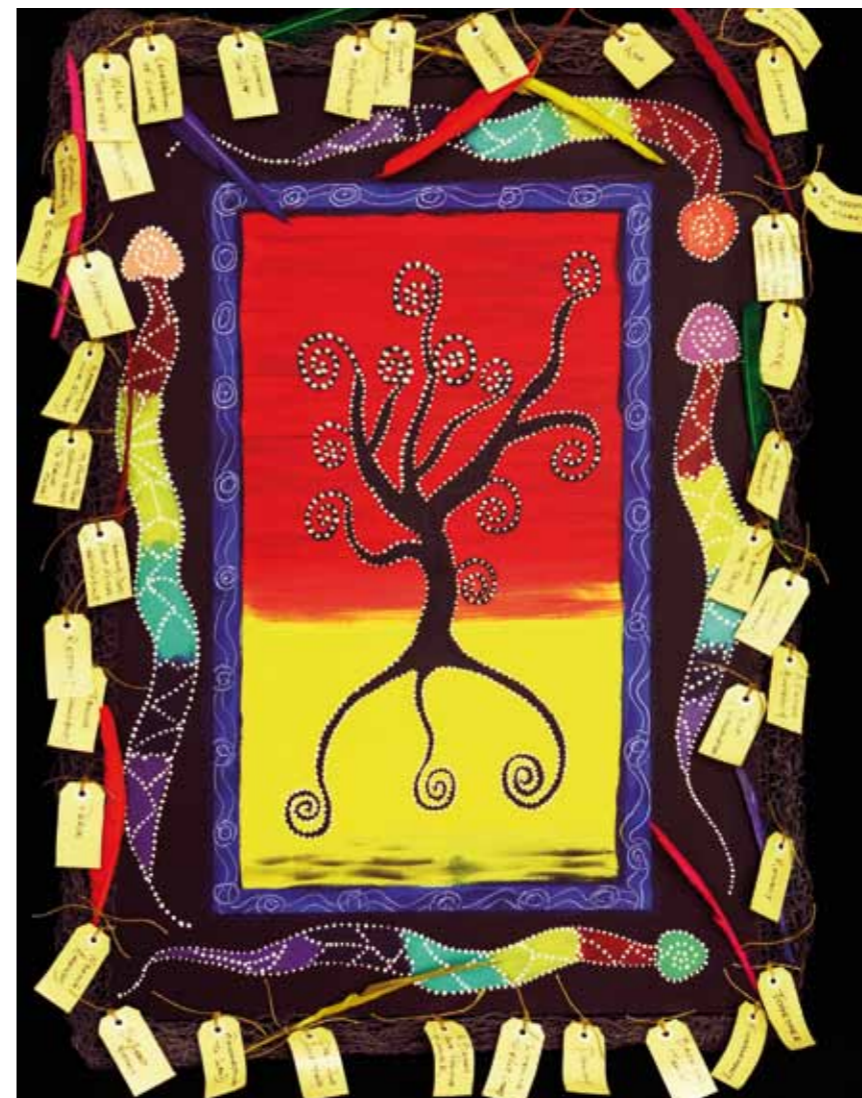


Shane Howard



Goanna Dreaming

RAP Chat



Two departments, one RAP

The Victorian Department of Human Services and Department of Health launched a joint Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) earlier this year. They are the first Victorian Government departments to establish and implement a RAP.

This well designed RAP identifies clear actions and measurable targets that recognise the significant place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia. It will assist both departments and their staff to challenge stereotypes and acknowledge Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in symbolic and practical ways.

The Department of Human Services and Department of Health operate in eight regions across Victoria so distance was an obvious challenge when developing the RAP.

It is worth noting that in addition to their RAP working groups, the departments used a creative mix of 'staff talent, canvas and paint' to stimulate engagement across their geographic range. Employees' thoughts, feelings and experiences were recorded in the colours of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags.

Each resulting artwork therefore represents a discussion in which staff gave personal and visually imaginative responses to the question 'what does reconciliation mean to me?' The result is a bright and colourful confirmation of staff participation in the RAP journey.

The RAP was launched in various Melbourne suburbs and also in Geelong, Traralgon, Ballarat and Bendigo ensuring staff and locals in those regions witnessed the culmination of the development process they had all shared.

Secretary of the Department of Human Services, Gill Callister, and Secretary of the Department of Health, Fran Thorn, both said they hoped their departments' efforts would inspire organisations and individuals to take part in the reconciliation process.

The Department of Human Services and Department of Health RAP can be viewed on our website by clicking on Reconciliation Action Plans and following the links.

Two of the many artworks created by staff of the two departments.

In a league of their own

During NAIDOC Week, the Skill360 Northern Pride became the first Rugby League club in Australia to have their RAP ratified by Reconciliation Australia.

Northern Pride Chairman Bob Fowler said they were proud to be leading the way especially as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have played a massive role in Rugby League internationally, nationally, state wide and especially locally in Far North Queensland.

'When you look at blokes like Matty Bowen, Justin Hodges and Ty Williams we are certainly producing quality players and with over 60 per cent of our players being from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent we are perfectly placed to make a difference,' he said.

'Our RAP recognises this and aims to use the strength of Rugby League, our strengths and our profile to positively influence our local community.'

Operations Manager Chris Sheppard said 'this is about giving everybody a go and about effecting change. We realise we can't fix everything but we can certainly make a difference and the more like minded people and organisations we can get to stand beside us the more we can do collectively.'

Take Pride Program Indigenous trainees Francis Mosby (left) and Josh Mene (centre) together with Pride players Noel Underwood and Rod Jensen pose for a photo with Skytrans Take Pride Holiday Clinic participants from Wujal Wujal, Bloomfield, Doomadgee, Pormpuraaw, Lockhart River, Aurukun and Coen.



Farewell Jenny, welcome Farah

Over the past two years Jenny McGuire has been a driving force in developing Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs) in Western Australia. As an employee of the Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA), Jenny helped give effect to the important partnership between the department and Reconciliation Australia by supporting Western Australian government agencies to develop and implement RAPs.

Thanks to Jenny's tireless efforts, the total number of Western Australian Government RAPs now exceeds 40 — the largest number in any state or territory government. Local government councils' interest in RAPs is also increasing. As a consequence of work by Jenny and her DIA supervisor, Mary Cowley, the Town of Narrogin was assisted to develop its RAP.

Jenny's good work in expanding the number of RAPs, promoting the RAP program and her enthusiastic advocacy of reconciliation is much appreciated and we wish her well in the future.

Jenny's replacement in DIA, Farah Rind, previously worked with independent schools to create awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. Farah will continue Jenny's role in the successful partnership between DIA and Reconciliation Australia by providing support and advice to state government agencies in Western Australia to develop, report and refresh their RAPs.

Farah can be contacted at Farah.Rind@dia.wa.gov.au or on 08 9235 8086.

Big wraps for Transfield Services

In May 2009, Australia's then Deputy Prime Minister the Hon Julia Gillard MP launched Transfield Services' Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The RAP aimed to significantly increase Indigenous employment in the company's Australian business, as well as increase its engagement with Indigenous communities and cultures.

A year on, and Transfield Services has now completed its RAP report demonstrating the progress made against its original RAP commitments and outlining what challenges remain.

In total, Transfield Services achieved approximately 70 per cent of its targets. Amongst its achievements is the employment of an additional 38 self-identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, a significant improvement in their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier relationships and a review and implementation of a number of Indigenous Human Resources policies.

In a tough financial climate, Transfield Services has demonstrated an admirable commitment to the RAP program and to its RAP targets. Its CEO personally contacted key clients to inform them of the RAP program, confirming the importance that Indigenous participation holds for their business.

In support of its RAP report, Transfield has developed two case studies, *Learning how to RAP* and *Rapping up our recruitment* which provide an organisational perspective on the RAP process. The report and case studies are available on our website.

We congratulate Transfield Services on an enviable year of learning and achievement in their first RAP.



Transfield Services Chairman, Tony Shepherd, Australia's then Deputy Prime Minister, The Hon. Julia Gillard MP and Chief Executive Officer Transfield Services Australia and New Zealand, Mr Bruce James at Transfield Services' RAP Launch in 2009.

Early award for CBA team



(left to right): Anna Jovanovic (CBA), Chris Kirby (CBA), The Hon Anna Bligh MP, Premier of QLD and Paul Durante from the Department of Public Works.

During National Reconciliation Week, the Commonwealth Bank's Indigenous Banking Team won a Queensland Government's 2010 Reconciliation Award for Business for the category of established business.

Set up in 2009, the Indigenous Banking Team is the first of its kind for a major Australian financial institution and offers specialised banking support to Indigenous communities. It also includes specialists in Indigenous employment and economic development dedicated to providing Indigenous communities with the same opportunities for wealth creation as those enjoyed by other Australians.

The Commonwealth Bank has further strengthened its commitment to training and recruiting Indigenous employees by implementing an Indigenous Employment Strategy and Indigenous School Based Trainees program. In 2009, over 50 per cent of Queensland trainees secured permanent employment with the bank, with other trainees pursuing further education.

RAP helps redefine the boundaries

Queensland Health has reaffirmed its commitment to reconciliation and closing the health gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Queenslanders by developing a comprehensive framework to guide the delivery of health services.

The Queensland Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework 2010–2033 provides a blueprint for the delivery of sustainable health services that are culturally respectful for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It re-shapes the foundations of how health services are designed and delivered, embedding the important principles of reconciliation into everyday practice.

Queensland Health Director-General Mick Reid launched the cultural capability framework in Brisbane during NAIDOC Week celebrations saying that it represented a new era for Queensland Health.

'This era will be notable for the fact it has reconciliation, respect and relationships at the heart of how Queensland Health provides health care and services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland,' he said.

'Queensland Health shares the national and State vision of improving Indigenous health outcomes and closing the gap on non-Indigenous life expectancy. To achieve this, our organisation must meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.'

The framework had its genesis in the Queensland Health policy document *Making Tracks towards Closing the Gap in health outcomes for Indigenous Queenslanders by 2033*. Together, the policy document and cultural capability framework provide a powerful way forward for Queensland Health and its engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

RA's Acting Co-CEO Adam Mooney said that communication and trust were essential elements between those needing and those delivering health services.

'Understanding and addressing people's health concerns results from a combination of trust, respect and knowledge of holistic wellbeing. In committing to a long term cultural capability framework with targets, dates and actions, all health workers in Queensland will be better equipped to welcome, understand and meet the health needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. This will no doubt, lead to improved health outcomes,' he said.

The framework consolidates the commitment by the Queensland Government and Council of Australian Governments to close the life expectancy gap of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in a generation and to halve the gap in mortality rates for children under five within a decade.

Calling all artists



(left to right): Kerryne Liddle, SKM Indigenous Engagement; Peter Erlanger, SKM Regional Manager; S.E. Australia Region; Kerrie Nelson, Reconciliation Australia; Paul Douglas, SKM CEO, and Colin Hunter Jnr, who gave the Welcome to Country on behalf of the Wurundjeri people of the Woiworung nation.

Sinclair Knight Merz (SKM) has now reported on their RAP after a promising first year in their reconciliation journey. In a handover ceremony in August, which coincided with the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, CEO Paul Douglas was cautiously optimistic about their progress but absolutely committed to closing the gaps over the long term.

One of their RAP actions involves scoping opportunities to work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists. SKM is currently developing relationships with the Koorie Heritage Trust in Melbourne as well as local Aboriginal artists in Hobart and is keen to further expand such partnerships in other state capitals and in Cairns, Launceston and Tatura. Any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander artists or art organisations interested in displaying their artwork at various SKM office locations around the country should contact Bill Lawson at WLawson@skm.com.au.



The framework was jointly signed by Queensland Health Director-General Mick Reid and RA's Acting Co-CEO Adam Mooney in the presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy Unit Senior Director Haylene Grogan.

Other RAP launches



SVHA

St. Vincent's Health Australia Limited (SVHA) launched its Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) earlier this year with a beautiful ceremony shared with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders and elders. SVHA said it was an honour to celebrate their commitment to reconciliation with revered Indigenous community elders, Lyla Dreise, Aunty Penny Tripcony, Uncle Bob Anderson and Joe Kirk. SVHA is one of Australia's leading Catholic not-for-profit diversified health care providers.

Standing left to right: Mission Director, St Vincent's Hospital Toowoomba, Darlene Garvey; Indigenous Nurse Advisor, Odette Best; SVHA Chair, Dr. John Gurry, SVHA National CEO, Dr. Tracey Batten; Elwyn Hennaway, RA's Grant Paulson; National Director Mission SVHA, Sr. Leone Wittmack RSC; RA's then CEO, Paul O'Callaghan; and Executive Officer, SVHA, Leslie Jordan. Seated are Indigenous community elders, Lyla Dreise; Dr Penny Tripcony AM; Dr Bob Anderson OAM and Joe Kirk.



Uniting Care Gippsland

At the UnitingCare Gippsland's launch of its Reconciliation Action Plan in Bairnsdale, Victoria, trainee Narelle Briggs spoke to the audience of 60 about what the RAP meant to her. Narelle (centre) is pictured with Yangan Nalu project worker Naomi Gorton (l) and Practice Leader Shirley Ruff (r).



Beyond 3000

Beyond 3000, a boutique land development company helping to design and build green communities, launched its RAP in NAIDOC Week in Mandurah, Western Australia. The Beyond 3000 RAP shows that it is not only big corporations and government that can contribute significantly to reconciliation.

Managing Director Greg Whyte said that the objectives of the organisation include social diversity and inclusion through respect and celebration of culture, which are emulated in the RAP. Pictured are the Hon Fred Chaney AO, Board Director Reconciliation Australia; Greg Whyte; Binjareb Noongar community elder Harry Nannup; Chairman, Winjan Aboriginal Corporation, Frank Nannup; and Binjareb Noongar community leader, George Walley.



ACT Department of Education and Training

The Department of Education and Training in the ACT launched its Reconciliation Action Plan during NAIDOC week at the Birragai Outdoor School. Ngunnawal elder, Laura Bell welcomed more than 300 Canberra community members to country for the event. Grand weather, great food, wonderful children's activities, performances by Johnny Huckle, Carly Jia, Lel Hodges, Sissy Hodges, Tesepa Law, Peter Savage, Tim Cornforth, Koedal Banu of the Torres Strait Islander Dance Group (pictured) made it a day to remember.

The art of reciprocity

During National Reconciliation Week, Reconciliation Australia staff gathered over lunch to discuss and strengthen cultural awareness in the organisation, and to celebrate the organisation's 10th anniversary.

We all took part in a learning experience — inspired by Christine King and led by Jacqui Bethel — about the role and importance of reciprocity in Aboriginal culture. Jacqui explained how gifts are exchanged in Aboriginal culture when visitors are welcomed to other Aboriginal peoples' Countries, much like diplomatic protocols. These gifts are often representative of the person giving the gift.

Jacqui told us that a gift doesn't need to have a high value and can simply be a small personal memento. With this in mind we embarked on a mini-project with little wooden blocks and paint. Within an hour and guided by our own creativity, we managed to produce dozens of tiny artworks that we can now turn into necklaces as gifts for RA visitors.

While we were painting we continued the tradition of sharing stories and chatting about ourselves and our families. All in all it was a positive learning experience, and we enjoyed the time spent together. Of course, no RA celebration is complete without cake, and while we have a photo of all our designs, the cake disappeared too quickly to capture on film.

The RA RAP working group is currently compiling our RAP report and refresh.



The handiwork of the RA staff.

Our growing RAP Family

We are rapidly approaching the registration of our 200th RAP with the total having just edged past 180. Recent arrivals in the RAP family include:

ACT Department of Education and Training

Australian Government Insolvency and Trustee Service Australia

Australian Government Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre

Beyond 3000

Family Relationship Services Australia

Northern Pride Rugby League Club

St Damian's School

St Vincent's Health Australia Ltd

The Allen Consulting Group Pty Ltd

Victorian Government Department of Human Services and Department of Health (a joint RAP)

Unitingcare Gippsland

Short takes

Indigenous art on every page

Coinciding with the 25th anniversary of the Koorie Heritage Trust, a significant publication tracing the history of Indigenous art in Victoria was recently launched by the Victorian Arts Minister Peter Batchelor.

'For 25 years, the Koorie Heritage Trust has played a key role in protecting, preserving and promoting the culture and history of Indigenous people in South-Eastern Australia,' Mr Batchelor said.

'This new publication, *Meerreeng-an Here is My Country: The Story of Aboriginal Victoria Told Through Art*, breaks new ground as it is the first time a comprehensive book focusing on the art, history and culture of Aboriginal Victoria has been published.'

The book showcases more than 340 artefacts and artworks dating back to the 1830s by more than 120 indigenous Victorian artists. More than 16 Victorian Aboriginal languages are represented in the book with text provided entirely by the Victorian Aboriginal community.

'This is more than just a reference book. It is a moving and inspirational portrait of Aboriginal life, past and present,' Mr Batchelor said.

'Through a combination of artist statements, quotes and stories from elders and other community members, the artworks come to life as we learn their cultural and historical context and the meaning they hold for Indigenous Victorians today.'

Mr Batchelor congratulated the editors, Chris Keeler and Vicki Couzens, and the Koorie Heritage Trust for undertaking this ambitious and important project. The Victorian Government provided \$100,000 towards the research and publication of the book which is available for sale at the Koorie Heritage Trust.

For more information, visit www.koorieheritagetrust.com

Bingeing on culture!

As we often hear, life is all about choices, the good and the bad, and how they influence who we are and what we become. Now, a new Australian Government campaign against binge drinking hopes to guide some of the choices young people make.

The campaign has a special Indigenous component — *Your life, your culture, YOU CHOOSE!* It highlights positive messages and images about strong culture, families and healthy choices for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth. In discouraging binge drinking, the campaign urges young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to embrace their own culture be it through sport, music, dance or the arts.

Targeted at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth aged 15 to 25, parents, extended family and community members, the campaign includes radio and print advertising in Indigenous media and an information kit

and contacts for local services to support young people in getting help.

Local community events to promote positive alternatives and encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth to get involved have already been held in Shepparton, Western Sydney, Katherine, Yarrabah, Perth, Adelaide and Broome. The events prompted discussions about binge drinking issues, provided access and information on support services, promoted the campaign and demonstrated the positive alternatives and activities.

Wayne Quilliam, NAIDOC Artist of the Year 2009–2010 supports the campaign's key messages. 'When people get involved in positive activities and work towards a goal in life they don't need the grog. The more you drink the less you see, and you've got to see life!'

For campaign information and resources that may assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people develop positive alternatives to binge drinking, visit the website at: www.drinkingnightmare.gov.au/yc



Matthew Symonds, who designed the winning poster against binge drinking in the Western Sydney Poster Competition with Aunty Merle May, Sydney NAIDOC Elder of the Year (2009) at the community event in western Sydney.

Short takes

Progress on money matters

The Indigenous Financial Services Network (IFSN) met recently to discuss current issues and trends in financial services and to talk about ways to improve those services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers.

The IFSN comprises representatives from Indigenous organisations, government agencies, major financial institutions and their peak governing bodies. It was set up to assist disadvantaged communities to overcome money management challenges by providing the right tools and information to enable their Indigenous customers to make responsible decisions.

Co-chaired by Reconciliation Australia's Adam Mooney and the First Nations Foundation's Paul Briggs the meeting opened with a talk by Kado Muir, a well known and respected Indigenous anthropologist and archaeologist from the Goldfields, who focused on the misalignment of the hunter-gatherer economy of Aboriginal Australia and the western knowledge economy.

Rosemary Bissett from the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) spoke to members about the aims and practices of the UNEP's Indigenous Finance program for the Asia-Pacific region, and Jon O'Malley from the Indigenous Consumer Assistance Network (ICAN) talked through their Money Management Program.

Steve Rothfield provided the group with a background of the First Nations Foundation and the development of 'My Moola' (an Opening Financial Pathways program) to assist clients in rethinking the best ways to use money.

Nathan Tyson from the National Australia Bank (NAB) introduced NAB's Reconciliation Action Plan, which highlights the need to address and promote Indigenous financial inclusion. Their Money Mentor scheme requires clients to see an independent financial counselor and provides ongoing financial literacy training using culturally appropriate techniques.

The group also debated key issues surrounding the human rights element of financial literacy, best practice, knowledge

sharing through good research and evaluation, customer relations, alliance building and community empowerment.

Information about the IFSN can be found on our website or by emailing Jo Victoria at jo.victoria@reconciliation.org.au.

A week is a long time in Canberra!

One hundred Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary students from across the country converged on Canberra in June to undertake a week of work experience with the Australian Government.

The Minister for Employment Participation Mark Arbib and the Minister for Indigenous Affairs Jenny Macklin said the *Learn. Earn. Legend!* Work Experience in Government program presented an array of career opportunities for the students.

'With the *Learn. Earn. Legend!* initiative we are building the hopes and aspirations of

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students,' Ms Macklin said.

About 70 parliamentarians hosted the students in their offices and the program also included tours of Parliament House, the National Gallery, the National Museum, the War Memorial and the Institute of Sport.

Students also met *Learn. Earn. Legend!* Ambassador Scott Prince, co-captain of the Gold Coast Titans NRL team, and AFL *Learn. Earn. Legend!* Champions Michael O'Loughlin and Chris Johnson.

Scott said that the program was a brilliant opportunity for Indigenous secondary school students to find out about what it's like to work in government or the public service.

'It opens their world up to the many study and career choices available. Supportive relationships will help these students overcome challenges, build their determination and go for their dreams.'

Michael O'Loughlin was also excited about the opportunities the program delivered to students.

'What these students experienced in Canberra this week will help prepare them as future leaders and hopefully for senior positions in Government and the public service.'

Learn. Earn. Legend! aims to encourage young Indigenous people to stay in school and training so they can gain great jobs and careers, and is part of the Australian Government's commitment to closing the gap on education and employment outcomes.

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations partnered Dare to Lead and the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation to organise and facilitate the program.

For further information on *Learn. Earn. Legend!* visit www.deewr.gov.au/Indigenous

Calendar giveaway

We've produced a 2011 calendar to help Indigenous organisations improve their governance. Each month an important criterion of good governance is outlined, accompanied by an insight from a leading Indigenous organisation on how it meets that criterion. The 12 featured organisations comprise the eight finalists in the 2010 Indigenous Governance Awards and the four winners from 2008.

The calendar features images by award winning Indigenous photographer Wayne Quilliam (and one from Leon Mead), important dates and space to include your own appointments. It's a useful tool that lasts all year long.

Look out for the Indigenous Governance calendar which will be inserted into both the *National Indigenous Times* and *The Koori Mail* in November.



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Short takes

Bangarra honoured

Indigenous dance company Bangarra Dance Theatre recently added another prestigious award to its impressive list by winning outstanding performance by a company for its production *Fire: A Retrospective* in the Australian Dance Awards. Bangarra's artistic director Stephen Page also received the award for services to dance.

Drawn from more than 450 nominations, the annual awards recognise dance professionals across several categories including choreography, design, performance, dance writing and teaching.

Its celebratory production of *Fire* featured some of the most memorable elements of their previous works, and was described by judges as 'a captivating and moving performance by dancers with wonderful integrity, intense dramatic power and great physical aplomb'.

Stephen Page was understandably excited by the win saying it had come at a great time. 'We have won other awards before but these are very prestigious, it's great for the company, especially as we celebrated our 20-year retrospective last year.'

As it travels the country, Bangarra magically illustrates the richness of Indigenous culture, while simultaneously inviting its audiences to see the many advantages that true reconciliation holds for all of us.



Bangarra's *Fire* has been thrilling audiences all around the country. Photo by Jason Capobianco



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Reconciliation Australia acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to them and their cultures, and to the elders both past and present.

Reconciliation Australia is an independent, not-for-profit organisation fostering reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians for the wellbeing of the nation.

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

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

This newsletter is compiled by Reconciliation Australia to share reconciliation stories, issues and opinions. Feedback and story ideas are always welcome along with names and addresses of people who would like to receive the newsletter. Please email us at: robert.beattie@reconciliation.org.au