

A Tribute to Pauline McLeod

I can hear her voice telling the wonderful Dreamtime Stories. I can hear the birds and the animals. I can see her beautiful smiling face.

Pauline McLeod "journeyed on" on 22nd May 2003, just four days before Sorry Day. She was to be with us at our Journey of Healing for the Stolen Generations. She told stories for us in 2002 on Sorry Day.

On one day, Pauline, together with her four brothers and one sister, were stolen, taken from their mother.

Pauline was only two years old. More than twenty years passed—a long time—before she met her real mother and family again.

I met Pauline when she was studying at the Aboriginal College—the Eora Centre. The students produced a play "Close to the Bone". They wrote the script, the songs, the music and they built the scenery. It was about finding their Aboriginality. It was their stories. It was Pauline's story too.

After college in 1992, Pauline formed a group "Kooris in Theatre". She began story telling. She visited communities in NSW,

talked to elders who gave her permission to use their stories. The ABC recorded a cassette tape, "Nallowilli - sit down and listen" of ten of these stories.

Pauline was a master storyteller, a poet, an actor, an animator. People young and old were spellbound by her stories. She told stories in schools, on TV, at the Art Gallery, the Museum, the Powerhouse Museum, to large and small groups. She was there for everyone. Young children would ask, "Is that the lady from *Playschool*?" It was!

Her dream was "that children in Australia would know the dreamtime stories as well as they knew Cinderella."

This must be our goal for Pauline.

Helen Ford

JOURNEY OF HEALING

About 80 people took part in a moving and challenging Journey of Healing ceremony on 26 May at St Joseph's Hall, Narrabeen, which was suitably decked out in flags and candles.

Sue Moylan introduced proceedings by welcoming everyone acknowledging the location as Guringai country. At her invitation, several people paid tribute to Pauline McLeod, an Aboriginal storyteller and activist who died recently. Many placed daisies near the candles lit in her honour as a mark of love and respect.

Sue went on to talk movingly about the significance of the event as an acknowledgement of the pain and hurt experienced by the Stolen Generations. She said that all Aboriginal families had been affected in one way or another and we had come together to share the loss and feel the grief. We had come a long way since the Referendum on 27 May 1967 but needed to take a reality check about the continued deprivation suffered by indigenous people.

Sue then challenged us to commit to personal and joint action to begin to turn the tragic situation around. After hearing the stirring song, "What one man can do",

we wrote down personal statements of our aspirations for a reconciled Australia and our commitments to make a difference through specific action. Sue then got us to sit around an imaginary campfire and to read out our statements. Finally we all linked hands to form one big circle and we embraced the people next to us.

This was followed by a well catered for supper, during which three Aboriginal girls read poems and every one mingled and chatted. This was an enjoyable evening marking the Journey of Healing but, fittingly, it also confronted us with the need for personal commitment to action.

Andrew Macintosh

2003 GURINGAI FESTIVAL

May 26 to July 13



With more than 36 events the third Guringai Festival has been a varied and exciting celebration of Aboriginal culture and heritage. Nine Councils in the northern metropolitan area of Sydney participated together with the Metropolitan Aboriginal Land Council, the Guringai Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group and the Aboriginal Support Group – Manly Warringah Pittwater.

The founding Director of the Guringai Festival is Susan Moylan-Coombs, the Chairperson of the Manly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Committee.

SALTWATER DREAMING

– a talk by Susan Moylan-Coombs and Dennis Foley, author of *'Repossessions of our Spirit – Traditional Owners of Northern Sydney'*

3pm. at Manly Art Gallery and Museum on Saturday July 12.

Footprints On Celluloid

On Monday June 2nd, the Aboriginal Support Group began a series three of "Footprints on Celluloid" as part of the Guringai Festival. The documentary *Gulpilil-One Red Blood*, written and directed by Darlene Johnson, was shown to a large gathering of interested people. We were very fortunate to have Darlene as our special guest on the night to talk about her documentary, David Gulpilil and her film making work.

Darlene Johnson is a Dunghutti woman from Belbrook on the east coast of New South Wales. She is a writer and a director of documentary and dramatic films. Her credits include *Two Bob Mermaid*, *Stolen Generations*, *Stranger In My Skin* and *The Making of the Rabbit Proof Fence*, which was shown by the Aboriginal Support Group during last year's Guringai Festival.

Darlene has received many awards for these works and is recognised as one of Australia's most promising emerging Indigenous filmmakers. She lectures in Australia and overseas. She has developed a set of cultural protocols for filmmakers working with Indigenous people and their stories. These have now been incorporated as part of the official charter of SBS. She is also a Board Member at Metro Screen. She is currently working on her first feature film as well as a comedy short film being made with David Gulpilil.

Gulpilil-One Red Blood details the life and work of the wonderful David Gulpilil, from his first film, *Walk-About* in 1971 to *Storm Boy* in 1976, his TV series such as *Boney* and *Homicide*, *Crocodile Dundee* in 1987, *The Rabbit Proof Fence* and then his latest film *The Tracker*, in which he has a starring role for the first time.

The documentary showed David in his country in North East Arnhem Land, living in a corrugated tin house he built himself (because the Government will not build him a house), with his traditional wife

and family. While he loves meeting and interacting with people outside his country, he always goes back to his tribal land. There he shares his money with all of his family. He likes to share his culture and his language with others and says that acting to him is a "piece of cake". He only speaks English when he is away from his own land.

He is said to represent Aboriginal people in cinemas today. He undermines the stereotypes of Aboriginal people. This is very important to Aboriginal Australia culturally.

From 1967 to 1974 David had been involved in the political scene. In 1979 he travelled to the United States of America. David has received recognition of his work in his award of the 'Order of Australia' medal.

After *Crocodile Dundee*, work in the film industry dropped off for David. Roles for people like him were not available. But then came *The Rabbit Proof Fence* and *The Tracker*, where he used his traditional knowledge of tracking. An 'A' award was presented to him in acknowledgement of his fine acting work.

David approached Darlene Johnson to make this documentary as he wanted something for posterity to pass on to his family. David and his family shared their lives with us in this film and Darlene spoke about many experiences that occurred during the filming in David's country.

Gulpilil-One Red Blood is a wonderful documentary film about a wonderful Aboriginal man and his wonderful life. We are so fortunate to have the filmmaker, Darlene Johnson, with us to tell us about David and his documentary. The evening was truly enjoyable and of great interest for all of those in attendance.

Carol Ritchie

The Stolen Boy

One day they came and took him away,
But he promised his family he'd come back some day.
Everyday and everynight,
His family cried wishing for just one last time they could hug
him tight.

The people who took him away was a white man,
They were the ones who took over this black land.
All the time he tried to think of those happy times back in
the dreamtime,

But all can come to his head was what those white men did,
which us blacks call a crime.

He left the homes and got fostered out,
He hated it there cause they would hit him, laugh at him
Because of his colour and would always shout.
When he turned 18 he left that hurtful home,
And went to find his family so he wasn't all alone.

After 2 years he couldn't find what he was looking for,
He felt so much pain and felt like his insides had tore.
Once his grandma had said its okay for boys to cry, so he
did, and he'd cry some more and more.

That night he gave his life away and his spirit drifted back into the dreamtime,
That's was the only place he knew everything was going to be fine.
His mother and father still looked for their long lost boy,
They always told him they'd come back cause he was there
pride and joy.

But now they found out that there little lost boy one day
gave his life away,
So after all the pain he went through now the blacks plead
for a sorry day.

Now this little lost boy has come back all the way from the
spirit world to whisper in the wind:

**ALL YOU KOORI KIDS, DON'T DO WHAT I DID THAT
NIGHT,
AND JUST REMEMBER THAT I'LL ALWAYS BE
THERE TO SHOW THE LIGHT
NEVER LET OUR CULTURE DIE OUT,
BE PROUD OF WHAT WERE ALL ABOUT.**

Emma Franks

Student Year 9 – Biala Hostel From Albury
25.5.03

FASHION PARADES

Thursday June 5

Fabrics and fashions from Indigenous designers Coral Vincent and Robyn Caughlan have proved one of the social highlights of the Guringai Festival.

Recent fashion parades in North Sydney showcased Aboriginal Australia and were tributes to ordinary people doing extraordinary things.

Dharug artist Robyn Caughlan is making a transition from art to fashion with her bright colours and weaving designs. Robyn was heavily involved in the Sydney Olympics in 2000 and has designed four national costumes for the Miss Universe pageant.

Her gowns have also been worn in the Miss World Competition and at the Emmy Awards in New York.

In 2001 Robyn was the first Indigenous woman to enter in the ready-to wear collection show for Mercedes Fashion Week.

The other designer, Wiradjuri woman Carol Vincent, specialises in hand-painted silks and refers to the spirit in all her work. The result is an exciting new look which blends contemporary and traditional Aboriginal images. In July, Coral's designs will be going to New York and Chicago as part of a tour to promote Australian culture and to India in September as part of an Aboriginal touring fashion show.

BREWARRINA in the 50s

– Support Group Member Dr. Ruth Fink Latukefu will present an anthropologist's view of the Aboriginal Community at Brewarrina in the 1950s
**7.30pm. at the Nelson Heather Centre,
Jacksons Rd, North Narrabeen.**

9918 2594

“A Long way to go from Redfern”

From barefoot Redfern boy to internationally published writer; from an indigenous settlement near Vancouver, Canada, to an Aboriginal mission site near Coonabarrabran

Acclaimed Aboriginal writer, Philip McLaren of Avalon, described both journeys and the link between them when he spoke about his heritage, and the reasons he decided to become a writer, to the Aboriginal Support Group's May meeting.

Now a popular and widely translated author, Philip described how recognition of his Aboriginal roots led him to move from his first career as an illustrator and production designer to paint in words some pictures of his people.

Philip McLaren's early experiences mirrored those of thousands of Aboriginal children. For the first eight years, he was a barefoot, football-loving Redfern boy. His father claimed he still 'had the language' – but in reality, his son says he retained some words only, coming from a generation of young people who were ostracised and punished if they spoke it. And when, many years later, McLaren went to visit his father's early home, the Burraballoo Mission near Coonabarabran, he found nothing there but a graveyard.

McLaren's own earliest 'country' was Cleveland St School and Prince Alfred Park. "I owned the streets, the laneways of Redfern, Chippendale and Newtown." The family of seven children were 'really poor' and moved to Jannali and other areas where his father, a builder, could find work. Philip went to fourteen different schools but recalls that his older brothers and sisters taught him everything, so that high school seemed easy.

His subsequent experiences were far from those of the average Redfern boy. Dropping out of school at 14, he began to work as an illustrator at Channel 7, meeting and working with overseas performers. A scholarship took him to East Sydney Tech Art School and at 21 he was overseas, driving from Panama to Canada over six months. For more than seven years he lived in Canada, working in animation, including working on the Hana Barbera cartoons. He married a Canadian.

McLaren's interest in his own Indigenous background was stimulated when he worked in Vancouver as production designer on a story about an Indigenous community there. He met a chief of this group.

"There I had this epiphany. I asked myself, why do I know more about these people than about my own people at home? That's when I knew I was going to become a writer."

He blames the then inadequate teaching of Aboriginal history in Australian schools for this ignorance. But this was the genesis of his decision to become a writer.

Returning home, he did research which led him to conclude that Aboriginal people of the east coast had "the most drastic ignorance of their own culture." He calls the "terra nullius" claim "Cook's big lie"; to him it was clearly a planned invasion with intelligence behind it. The benefits of that lie to the European migrants and their descendants have always been a problem for McLaren. He is now completing a new novel, a fictional account of what happened to Aborigines in East Gippsland.

His first book, *Sweet Water, Stolen Land*, was published about the time of the Mabo decision, and is now available in nine languages. His great-great-grandmother, Ginny Griffin, was custodian of some of the historical background he used to tell his story of the Kamilaroi people, including the Myall Creek massacre. It won the University of Queensland Press prize and the David Unaipon award.

McLaren wrote his popular crime novel, *Scream Black Murder*, in response to comments that contemporary Aboriginal people also needed their stories told. This police procedural fiction has the novelty of two young Aboriginal homicide police as heroes. In it McLaren addresses the idea that Aboriginal deaths are not investigated as thoroughly as other murders. He chose the *Columbo* pattern: the readers know who did the crime, but read on to see how it will be solved. He used the two Aboriginal protagonists as a vehicle to show the reader different Aboriginal lifestyles.

McLaren sees himself as learning more and more about the craft of writing with each book. He is passionate about the mining of sacred sites, the subject of his third book, *Lightning Mine*. It is set in the Northern Territory, in Rum Jungle – a place Aboriginal people for generations avoided as a 'sickness place'.

His new work, *West of Eden*, is an historical fiction set in East Gippsland. The novel walks the line between fiction and fact, a genre seen years ago in the work of James Michener. "I invent four or five characters and have them walk through history", he explains. He creates dramatic scenarios which lead up to the historical parts of the book. His extensive research gives him far more material than can be fitted into one book.

A very long way to go from Redfern indeed!

Pauline Byrne

UNVEILING of Tribal Metaphysics Wednesday June 4

TRIBAL Metaphysics is a series of bronze sculptures commissioned by Ku-ring-gai Council and produced by Narrabeen artist Nikki McCarthy

Nikki is a Wiradjuri woman from the Dabee tribe who has been an artist all of her life. The northern beaches area is constant inspiration for Nikki's works and she draws on her inherent spiritual connection to the land to guide her in the creative process.

The three totems installed in the court yard at Gordon library were officially unveiled by

Robert Welsh, chairman of the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council, and Susan Moylan-Coombs.

The messages of the totems come from a need to create awareness of the many sacred sites and the many tribal groups found in the Ku-ring-gai area.

Nikki hopes every one will join in the spirit of reconciliation to promote understanding and respect of Australia's Indigenous people.

The three totems contain symbolic meanings in their design. The first is Baiamie, the creator spirit of the

Ku-ring-gai areas and other parts of NSW. The second totem is the Female spirit and the third is Higher consciousness. This one is a prayer totem asking the creator spirit to give people from all nations the wisdom and understanding to lead us into a future of world peace and preservation of our beautiful planet, Mother Earth.

On Monday November 3 Nikki will speak to the Support Group about 'Tribal Metaphysics' at the Nelson Heather Centre, North Narrabeen. 7.30pm.

Your Land Our Land?

I am a Salt Water Woman.
I belong not to the wide brown land
of shimmering grains and grasses-
amethyst-hued hills
and hovering snowy mountains.

My place remains here,
high on a sandstone cliff
the horizon drawing my eyes
to distant shores,
then focusing
on the beach – sands of eternity
and the community of my belonging.

This coast land is my land –
but here – or there –
I know that this land
"Always was
always will be,
Aboriginal land."

Jill Perkins
Turimetta Beach

DAD

Dad you seen through so much pain
it makes me want to cry as heavy as rain.
They call you a little halfcaste boy
and hit you with the wip and
laughed with joy
But really dad your like gold to me
I wish they would of just set you
free
You got out of the homes when you were only
15 (fifteen)
but being brought up in institutions
wasn't a dream
I get this ache in my heart.
why did yo gubbahs have to take you
from the start
They took our land away from us.
And they wont say sorry cause
Its just a big fuss

Clarissa Kitchener
Student Year 8 – Biala Hostel
From Coffs Harbour
25.5.03

BIALA HOSTEL REPORT

June 2003

Another school term and all the girls are looking forward to the school holidays – as we are.

The hostel is being painted during the holidays so we will have a nice bright hostel to return to.

We have all been very busy with school and other activities. Dayle Clarke has left the hostel and Marissa has joined us and is in Year 11.

The homework centre has continued this term with our wonderful group of volunteers. We have not had paid helpers as we are endeavouring to get specialised tutoring for the girls to help them apart from their homework, so the volunteers are really appreciated.

Tatum Moore and Sian Moore (cousins) spent some time at the new Freshwater Campus and have now returned to Mackellar. Tatum has continued on this term with her Sunday Young Actors course at Nida. Although it is demanding for her to go into Nida each Sunday after a busy school week, she is apparently making quite an impression at her course with many people.

Quite a few of the girls are playing hockey on Saturdays and their team is doing very well. Emma Franks, Carissa Gallagher and Denise Reynolds are playing soccer for the Manly Vale U/16 Ladies Soccer team on Sundays and are also doing very well. Denise is playing goalie and is also goalie for the U/18 team. Emma also played in the State Soccer Knock-Out Cup for this area. We all thank the Aboriginal Support Group for their sponsorship of the girls' fees. It is very much appreciated by the girls and their families.

We were invited to the Group Sorry Day event on 26th May. It was a very moving evening and appreciated by us all. Some of the girls had heard Pauline McLeod at the group's previous Sorry Day and had also seen her on Play School and we were all very sorry to hear of her passing. Two of the girls, Emma Frank and Clarissa Kitchener, had written their own poems about the Stolen Generation and they, together with Tatum Moore, who read a very moving poem from the Koori Mail, read their poems at the Sorry Day event.

Other activities this term have been: a night at Fox Studios in the La Premiere Theatre to see X-Men 2, a picnic/barbecue at North Harbour Reserve with Denise and Corin's family, who had come down from Tweed for the week-end, and trips into the city with Ian. Also Sian and Allira Moore (sisters) and Denise and Emma Marne went with Carol Ritchie on the Bush Tucker Walk at Flat Rock Gully Willoughby, which was part of the Guringai Festival. John Lennis was the guide for the walk and was very interesting. The beautiful bushland, which is being regenerated, is on the western side of Northbridge bridge.

Some of the girls formed a dance group under the guidance of Vicky from Naida. They performed in the Warringah Eistedford after practising for only three weeks and were a pleasure to watch. They danced against many schools who were obviously highly trained over a long period. Hopefully this might be an ongoing event for the dance group. Joannah Baker's mother was in Sydney this weekend so was able to watch the dance group too.

The girls also formed part of the larger group who performed at the Swans AFL game on the Indigenous Night, which was a very exciting experience. They may also perform at the opening of the Rugby World Cup and on the 5th July they are booked to dance at the Powerhouse Museum.

The Mackellar High Athletics Carnival was also held and our girls did very well. Hopefully some of the girls will go to the next level, the Zone Carnival, and we wish them well there.

Once again, we thank the Aboriginal Support Group for their ongoing support to us and the girls. It is really important to have people like your group around and it is really appreciated by us all.

Judy and Ian Patterson
– Houseparents, Biala Hostel

TIME IN THE TENT EMBASSY

It was a pleasantly hot day with a cool wind blowing. The grounds of the Embassy were impressive. There had been a clean-up; the sacred fire was glowing and tourists were being disgorged from buses and cars,

I was sitting on one of the specifically provided logs inside the Gunyah that had 'appeared' on January 26, chatting with a couple of the Embassy folk, catching up with what had been happening, listening to hopeful plans for the future.

Many of the tourists walked to the Parliament buildings but a number were attracted by the colourful appearance of the Embassy and shyly wandered around. A couple of the Embassy people greeted them, welcoming them to the Fire and to the Gunyah, inviting them to look at the laminate sheets that told of the important events in the history of Black Australia. I had found the information interesting and I saw how many of the visitors took a keen interest in both the pages on the walls, and in the telling of the stories of their guide.

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A school group, of 10 or 11 year olds, were brought to the Fire by their teacher. An Embassy person welcomed them and as they circled the fire, he told them a story or two and made interesting comments about the history not always written in books. I looked around the group and saw that he had their attention.

The A-frame, the Gunyah, no longer stands on the site chosen. It had been threatened by the government-and very early one morning the 'troopers' arrived and set about dismantling the structure. The before-dawn raid did not give supporters a chance to even know what was going on, let alone to get to the site to protect the destruction of the Gunyah.

Personally I am sorry that it was destroyed. I found it a pleasant place to sit and be reflective, or to yarn a bit with those who stopped by. They say there are plans afoot to 'create' something

on the spot commemorating the stand taken by some of the 'heroes of the Resistance' in January 1972. Like the Sliver depicting the story of the Stolen Generations it will probably take a very long time to complete.

I recognise that there are very real differences of opinion between some of the traditional owners of the land and others who have aligned themselves to the Embassy over the years. There are difficulties. However, just as I wish we could have used diplomacy to solve the U.S.'s problems with Iraq, I long for the local people here to bridge their differences creatively so the young people of Australia—and older ones too—can visit the Embassy and learn of a significant past, present and future of this country that impinges on the life of us all.

Jill Perkins



A Tribute to William Charles Wentworth, M.P. (Sep. 8th 1907 - June 15th 2003)

It seems very appropriate for the Aboriginal Support Group of MWP to celebrate the life of the Honourable William Charles Wentworth AO, a great grandson of the famous explorer and statesman, who died at the age of ninety-five on June 15th, 2003.

Billy Wentworth was Federal MP for Mackellar from 1949–1977. A former resident of Newport Beach, he was probably the first federal MP to campaign for social justice for Aboriginal people and was well loved and respected by them.

Dr Bill Jonas, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Commissioner when he heard of his death said: "I would like to pay tribute to one of Australia's great federal parliamentary figures, who made an enormous contribution to raising Aboriginal rights issues in the federal political arena the nation's first Aboriginal Affairs Minister worked diligently during his political career to improve the rights of Aboriginal people and played a leading role in advocating for Aboriginal people to be included in the 1967 census. He will be sadly missed."

His old friend and Chairman of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies said: "He was a grumpy old bugger but he had a heart of gold. He had a genuine passionate commitment to Indigenous Australians and our place in Australian society."

Former Liberal Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser said: "Wentworth was a passionate person who held his beliefs fiercely and with

enormous integrity. If his voice had been paid greater attention, Australia would have made significant advances in relationships with Indigenous Australians. He was decades ahead of colleagues in both parties in relation to Indigenous Australians."

Wentworth and his wife Barbara came to know Aboriginal people when they visited remote parts of Australia, in the early days on horseback and later in four-wheel drive vehicles. This gave him contact with Aboriginal people living more traditional lives as well as those who were living as fringe dwellers. Through these contacts he gained an appreciation of Aboriginal cultures, which at the time were denigrated under the Assimilation policies.

In 1959 he wrote a document on "An Institute for Aboriginal Studies" in which he pointed to the lack of knowledge of Australian Aboriginal people and stressed that, "within ten years there will be nothing but a fraction of a fraction left. It must be recorded now, or it will go unrecorded for ever."

Wentworth envisaged that the Institute would work through existing universities but that there would be a permanent building to house it and to exhibit Aboriginal culture. It took several years more before the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (AIAS) which is now known as the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), was established by an Act of

Parliament in 1964. Wentworth lists it as his greatest achievement. It has become a national treasure and it was Wentworth who persuaded the Prime Minister, Menzies to establish it.

My last time to see Billy Wentworth was in September 2001 in Canberra at the official opening of the wonderful new building for the Institute on the Acton Peninsula next to the National Museum. The collections there include films, tapes, photographs, an important library and research facilities. As Dr Mick Dodson wrote in June 2001, "Completion of the building marks a new milestone in the history of the Institute providing at long last, a building that does justice to the Institute's status as the premier research organisation for the promotion of knowledge and understanding of Australian Indigenous cultures, past and present. "

You could see the happy expression on Wentworth's face, that he had lived long enough to see his dream come to fruition.

May we remember him!

Ruth A. Fink Latukefu

Sources: I must thank Jacquie Lambert and the librarians of AIATSIS for their assistance in providing information on W.C. Wentworth which I have used in this short tribute.

ASG WEBSITE ... Coming Soon!



I am very pleased to report that the new ASG website is currently in production and is set to launch on Monday September 1.

The website will contain current information relating to ASG activities and events, as well as information regarding local and national indigenous issues. It will be a useful resource for the general public, students and the ASG members.

The website is possible thanks to a grant from Warringah Council. It is an exciting step for our group, as it will enable us to communicate with a wider community and therefore hopefully more people will learn to understand Aboriginal issues.

The Website Working Committee had been working hard to determine and produce the content for the site. The committee members are Lizzie Landers, Anna Bell, Pat Frater and myself, with consultation from Megan van Frank. I have relevant experience and skills gained from working in the marketing department of a number of Internet based companies, and my husband Mark has kindly lent his technical expertise to develop the website.

The Guringai Aboriginal Education Consultative Group will review the content prior to launching the website to check for cultural appropriateness.

Once the website is approved, we will implement a marketing/promotional campaign, including a press release and an official launch, inviting our sponsors (Warringah Council), press and public. The website address will be included on all future marketing material and various avenues will be sought to promote the site.

Although the Website Working Committee is responsible for production, launch and promotion of the site, we hope the whole group (ASG) will feel free to make suggestions now or in the future. Please contact me on 99705456, or vlwalsh@tpg.com.au

Vanessa Walsh

GURINGAI FESTIVAL

Screening of "Beneath Clouds"

On Wednesday morning 18th June, people began pouring into the Collaroy Cinema.

As part of the 2003 Guringai Festival, the Aboriginal Support Group, Dendy, and the Collaroy Cinema, had organised a free screening of Ivan Sen's, award winning first feature film, *Beneath Clouds*.

With a strong plot, and beautifully crafted script, the writer, director and composer, Ivan Sen, was able to subtly present issues of the past and present such as identity, disease, massacres, and stolen land, without the film becoming overly political.

The locations, which have a natural beauty that characterises Australia, were captured flawlessly by director of photography Allan Collins. An original score by Alistair Spence and Ivan Sen accompanied the photography. The characters of Lena and Vaughn, were portrayed with touching realism by Danielle Hall and Damian Pitt

When people forwarded out of the cinema, one sensed that for about an hour and a half, *Beneath Clouds* had taken us all somewhere else, and some of us had been transformed by our experience.

Alana Victoria Hunt

AN INVITATION TO JOIN US...

The Aboriginal Support Group

– Manly Warringah Pittwater meets on the third Monday of each month at 7.00 for 7.15 pm.

On the first Monday of each month we conduct an Information Night at 7.00 to 9.00pm.

Please join us at either or both of these evenings at:

**Angopohora Room,
Nelson Heather Centre,
Cnr Pittwater & Jackson Roads,
North Narrabeen.**

☎ For further information ☎

(02) 9913 7940 (02) 9982 1685



Elimatta is produced by the Aboriginal Support Group – Manly Warringah Pittwater. We are a community of people who are committed to supporting Aboriginal people in their struggle for justice. If you use any material printed in Elimatta we would appreciate the extract being set in context and the source acknowledged.

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PATHWAYS TO AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS DISPUTE SETTLEMENT FORUM – Monday May 12

During National Law Week I attended a forum Pathways to Australian Indigenous Dispute Settlement at Parliament House, Sydney. The Chairperson of the Aboriginal Justice Advisory Council, Winsome Matthews, opened the session by acknowledging we were meeting on Eora land and paid respect to the spirits of the Eora people. Winsome chaired the forum with skill and good humour.

The forum focused on two NSW dispute resolution programs initiated in the past twelve months. The first, a mediation service for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the north and north west of the state, has been developed by the community Justice Centres, NSW Attorney General's Department. The trainer for this CJC program is Loretta Kelly, a Gumbarrgirra and Dungudi woman who is a mediator, lawyer and lecturer at Southern Cross University. She has extensive experience in the design and presentation of ADR (Alternate Dispute Resolution) programs for Indigenous people.

With Lessons Learnt as her topic, Loretta spoke of the appropriateness of mediation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. For the CJC program, the selection of participants from across a large area of NSW was done by telephone rather than by the preferred method of face-to-face interviews. This was due to the imposed time frame. From more than two hundred applicants, twenty four Aboriginal trainees commenced the course. Fifteen are now accredited mediators.

The course, with all Aboriginal trainers, was divided in two with an intensive residential program on the North Coast (very near to where I spend many wonderful holidays) followed by smaller group training closer to the homes of the participants. As the twelve steps of the CJC mediation model were taught the need for flexibility was recognised and an Aboriginal 'flavour' was gradually added to the process.

Auntie Bernadette Wilkes, a Gumbayngirra woman and a respected Elder in the Nambucca Valley community, was the next speaker. A trainee in the course, Auntie Bernadette is now a CJC mediator, She

believes that the mediation process offers "some justice in this land for the Aboriginal people", citing this as one of her reasons for participating in the program. She described the balance achieved amongst the trainees of different ages and both sexes and commented that "men are starting to play a role".

Auntie Bernadette struck a chord with the many mediators present when she talked about the difficulties experienced with the role plays during the training, acknowledging however that they were an important part of the course.

A similar program is planned for Sydney and the south south-west of the state. The Community Justice Centres have undertaken to deliver a mediation service to all Indigenous communities throughout NSW within the next financial year.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Mediation Program (ASTSIFAM), has been developed by the Legal Aid Commission of NSW with funding from the Commonwealth Government. Two programs are operating at Dubbo and South West Sydney. Included in the funding was a component for evaluation which will be undertaken at the end of 2003 when a decision will be made about the future of the program.

Linda Fisher, the ATSIFAM Training Committee Coordinator, is one of Australia's most experienced mediators and trainers and I was fortunate that she was one of my trainers before I became a CJC mediator in 1985. Linda commented on the program from a non-Aboriginal perspective. She sees mediation as being compatible with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture as it has the ability to heal conflict in the family and in the community. She spoke of the differences and the difficulties in transplanting the process from one culture to another and stated that consultation was the defining characteristic of the ATSIFAM program.

There were eighteen Aboriginal trainees in the intake of twenty four and all but one trainee finished the course. Flexibility and consultation became the "training mantra" with healing and yarning a recurrent theme. A definition of a

mediator was developed as, "one who listens, helps others to listen and does not get involved". (This is a description I can relate to.) A comparison of the Sydney and Dubbo programs will be valuable.

The fourth speaker was Will Burns, A Wiradjuri man, an endorsed representative of his community in the Dubbo ATSIFAM program, a TAFE teacher, mediator and coach. Will, when speaking of the need for mediators to be non-judgmental and to have basic listening skills, noted that only two of the twelve trainees in his course were men.

He raised several issues including the difficulties in bringing the parties together for mediation given the distances in western NSW that may need to be travelled.

When mediating with couples in what Will termed "mixed marriages" experience is showing the benefits in matching the two mediators with the parties, an important point for family mediations.

The following issues were raised during the forum and in the lively question time:

- the presence of Elders at mediation and the role they may take
- preference for a verbal agreement rather than a written document
- informal venues – a park or riverbank – to keep parties in their "comfort zone"
- possible disruption of the flow of the mediation when breaking for private sessions
- inter and intra relationships within the families and communities of the parties and mediators and the questions surrounding confidentiality
- need for cultural competence among non-Indigenous mediators

The forum recognised that a positive start has been made along the pathway to developing culturally appropriate and acceptable mediation services for Indigenous people. I believe that empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities will be one of the key factors in the success of future ADR programs.

Pat Frater

Gelam Nguzu Kazi – Dugong My Son

Limited edition linocuts by artists of the Muiagau Mineral Artist Collective from Mua Island in the Torres Strait.

This exhibition is a 2003 Guringai Festival event and is toured by The Australian Art Print Network.

You are invited to the opening on **Friday 20 June 2003, 6–8pm**

To be opened by **Cathy Craigie**, Director Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts, Australia Council
Susan Moylan-Coombs, Festival Director – Guringai Festival Northern Beaches, will acknowledge country and traditional owners

Exhibition dates 20 June – July 2003

Artist & Director Talk Sunday 22 June, 3pm

Join **Michael Kershaw**, Director of the Australian Art Print Network, and artist **Billy Missi** in a talk about the genesis of the exhibition and its incredible artworks.

Exhibition guided tours

Tours of the exhibition will also be held at 3pm, Sundays 6, 13, 20 and 27 July.

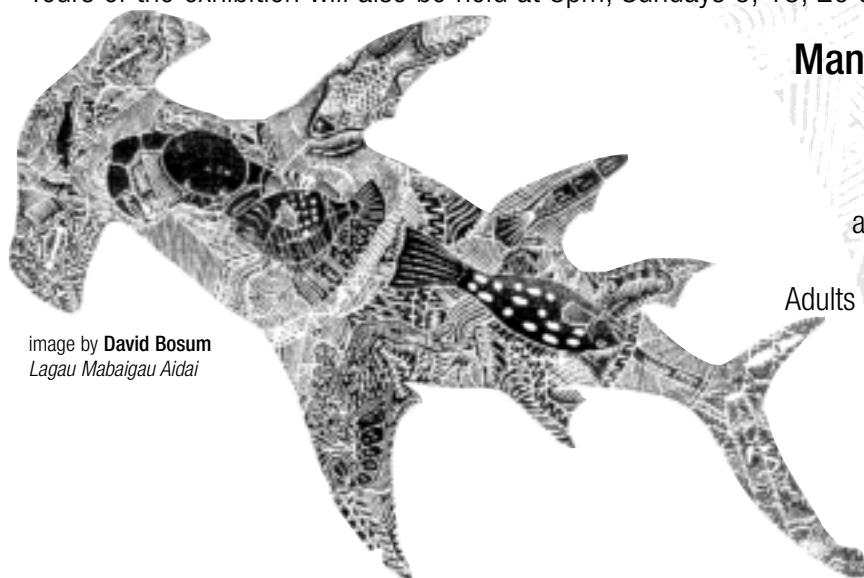


image by **David Bosum**
Lagau Mabaigau Aidai

Manly Art Gallery & Museum

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10am – 5pm Tuesday–Sunday

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Adults \$3.50, Conc \$1.10, Members Free

Guringai Festival Event

Saturday 12 July 2003, 3pm

'Saltwater Dreaming' – Talk by Denis Foley, author of *Repossession of our Spirit: traditional owners of northern sydney*, and Susan Moylan-Coombs, Manly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee

