

## SUE PINCKHAM

### Aboriginal Project Officer – Northern Sydney Aboriginal Social Plan



I am a Biripi descendant from the Hawke's Nest area on the mid north coast of NSW. I believe in my culture, customs, lore and people. I have a strong connection with country and a commitment to respect for land, water, people and air. My totems are shark and turtle.

I grew up in Balmain in the 50s and 60s. Amongst many other roles I am a Mother and Grandmother. Over my life I have been privileged to foster many Indigenous children.

My friends are deeply valued and time spent yarnning is very special. I enjoy quiet but at times I also love to catch up with my mates and have a bit of a dance to some good music.

Much of my work has been in sectors focusing on the needs of women and

children who have experienced domestic and family violence/sexual abuse. I have also worked with young people, most recently with the Youth Drug and Alcohol Court. I believe that it is important for our future that young Aboriginal people are supported in gaining skills in advocacy for the future and also it is important to share stories and help each other in life where we can.

My commitment to the advancement of Aboriginal people gaining equality and respect is strong. I have been fortunate to be involved with a range of organisations related to advocacy and change, about which I am passionate. I was a founding member of Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women, Children and Youth Legal Service (NSW Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre) and a national representative for Aboriginal women in the Women's Services Network (WESNET) and the National Partnership Against Violence Committee. My time as a board member for NSW Rape Crisis and NSW Women's Refuge Movement highlighted the ongoing need for these services. I am a proud recipient of an award of recognition from the *Vagina Monologues* and the NSW Premiers *Stop Domestic Violence Award*. I was nominated for the Aboriginal Law and Justice Award. For two terms (six years) I was an Official Visitor advocating for the rights of Indigenous people in the mental health system.

I am very concerned about the state of the planet and the abuse of natural resources

pertaining to the sustainability of Mother Earth and all that live on her.

On a frivolous side...

I believe in fairies.

I believe that *Star Trek* is true and that the human race needed this show to adjust to the advancement in technology and lifestyle.

I support the Wests/Tigers and the Koori Football Knockout (great to catch up).

I love to grow veggies in my yard. The taste is amazing when you can just walk up the yard and pick your own after tending them from inception.

I am based at the recently opened Aboriginal Heritage Office at 39/137-145 Sailors Bay Road, Northbridge.

If you wish to contact me please telephone 9949 9882 or email

[Sue.Pinckham@northsydney.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Sue.Pinckham@northsydney.nsw.gov.au)

*Sue Pinckham*

These words are added by Pamela Foster, an *old* friend of Sue:

In essence... Sue is kind, generous, loyal and persistent. She is frequently witty and entertaining, but on a bad day, watch out if someone crosses her who is behaving in a manner that is bullying, disrespectful or racist. She often relaxes back just before a bit of feistiness in that quiet powerful way. She is a strong black woman who is full of substance. The world would be a better place if there were more women like Sue.



# NORTHERN SYDNEY ABORIGINAL SOCIAL PLAN

The decision to prepare a Northern Sydney Aboriginal Social Plan (NSASP) was taken when all local councils were required to develop a social plan to ensure that government services are more responsive to community needs and diversity. Difficulties foreseen in developing a local Aboriginal Social Plan included the small Indigenous population which was widely dispersed and to some degree unidentified, the scarcity of local Aboriginal service agencies and the fact that the northern Sydney Councils' previous communication with the Aboriginal people had largely been through peak Aboriginal bodies rather than at grass roots level.

A working group formed in September 1998 decided that the development of a credible Aboriginal social plan depended on effective leadership of the process by an Indigenous person. As a result, funding for the position of Aboriginal Project Officer was provided by the NSW Department of Community Services, NSW Ageing and Disability Department and Hornsby, Hunters Hill, Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove, Manly, North Sydney, Pittwater, Ryde, Warringah and Willoughby Councils. Mosman Council joined the project at a later stage.

Caroline Pattison was appointed to the position of Project Officer in 1998 and the first Plan was published in September 2000. Responsibility for writing and coordinating its implementation was carried out by Caroline, social planners employed by northern Sydney Councils and members of local reconciliation groups. Phyllis Orcher followed as Project Officer in 2001 and Susan Moylan Coombs in 2003. The current Plan was written by Susan with input from the NSASP Advisory Committee, various government departments and representatives of the northern Sydney councils. Her task of integrating the input of so many stakeholders and at the same time maintaining the integrity of the Plan was not easy. That Susan was able to successfully do this is testament to her commitment to the Aboriginal community and her determination to ensure that the views of Aboriginal people living in northern Sydney were accurately reflected.

The Plan went through various consultative processes and was endorsed by the ten participating councils.

Acknowledgement should also be made of the important role of the Manly Community Centre and the Centre Manager Jacqui Smith for auspicing the project over many years and the enormous amount of time and energy that they invested in supporting the Plan and the Project Officer.

In the past ten years there has been significant change in the presence of Aboriginal services and projects operating in the northern Sydney region, requiring a high level of coordination, partnership building, and facilitation. During the development of the NSASP many projects and services either did not exist or were in their formative stages. The work of the Project Officers has demonstrated the need for a planning framework, service delivery models and a regional umbrella body to auspice or

coordinate a number of these projects. The expertise and knowledge of providing services that are culturally appropriate and relevant to the local Aboriginal community are of particular importance. As a result the role of the NSASP has changed and will continue to evolve.

Through the planning process and other related projects, the presence of Aboriginal communities in northern Sydney has been highlighted as has the emergence of different local Aboriginal voices advocating on behalf of their community.

Hopefully, from the Funding Group's perspective, two key ingredients have been reflected in the current NSASP. Firstly, the need to have a culturally appropriate auspice with the relevant expertise in successfully delivering projects on a regional level. Secondly, the level of resourcing for the Plan needs to match the scope and the breadth of its recommendations. The Funding Group has attempted to address these issues through basing the project with the Aboriginal Heritage Office, increasing the number of hours of the position to full time and providing additional resources for implementation of the priority recommendations during the first twelve months.

In November 2007 Sue Pinckham was appointed as Aboriginal Project Officer for the Northern Sydney Aboriginal Social Plan. Sue is a woman of the Biripi Nation. Her last two positions were with Blacktown City Council as the Aboriginal Community Development Worker and with Parramatta Council as the ATSI Community and Capacity Building Officer.

Sue has been integral to securing national funding for a range of legal services targeting Indigenous women and children. She also has extensive experience in accessing relevant services for Aboriginal people and facilitating consultations between the grass roots community and government. Her project management experience spans more than twenty five years.

The Northern Sydney Aboriginal Social Plan 2007-2011 was officially launched at Manly Art Gallery and Museum on November 13, 2007, providing an ideal opportunity to introduce Sue Pinckham to key stakeholders and to distribute the Plan.

*Danny Houseas*

*For the Northern Sydney Aboriginal Social Plan Funding Group*

## RECONCILIATION WEEK

The theme for 2008 Reconciliation Week  
(Tuesday May 27 to Tuesday June 3)  
is *Relighting the Fires of Reconciliation*.

# Liyarn Ngarn



In the language of the Yawaru (Yawuru) people from the West Kimberley region of Western Australia *Liyarn Ngarn* means 'coming together of the spirit'. Gary Highland, the National Director of ANTaR, in his introduction to the showing of the DVD *Liyarn Ngarn* at the November ASG Information Night, expanded on this definition to mean inner spirit and where salt water and fresh water meet. The world premiere of *Liyarn Ngarn* was held in August 2007 in a venue, perhaps purposely, in the seat of Bennelong. Our viewing was also well attended by many who were moved and impressed by what they saw and heard.

Despite Gary's warning of a sense of brutality in the film, the re-enactments and information relayed about the deaths of Indigenous youths and men were disturbing in their senselessness and inhumanity. This documentary was privately funded by Bill Johnson, the father of an adopted Aboriginal boy who was murdered in 1992 on his nineteenth birthday, simply because he was black. Moved by the script presented to him by Johnson, English actor Pete Postlethwaite attempts to discover the depth of racism and discrimination that our Indigenous population face in Western Australia in particular. As his journey progresses Pete narrates, reflects on what he observes, interviews people he meets and even sheds tears with his fellow companion on the journey, celebrated Indigenous songman Archie Roach. The songs and, in particular, the lyrics of Archie's songs are almost hauntingly present throughout the film. As one of the *Stolen Generations* he still suffers from the pain of not knowing

his parents. Archie identifies very strongly with the suffering of Bill's son Louis and he and Pete are present when Louis' body is returned to his family in Alice Springs.

Aboriginal leader Patrick Dodson is not only an interviewee but also a co-producer and a Yawuru man from Broome. His roles as a Commissioner into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and Chairman of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation have placed him in high regard not only by Indigenous population but also non Indigenous. Patrick embraces Pete and Archie's journey through Australia's outback and historical past in an effort to change people's perceptions and attitudes towards Indigenous people: 'It's a recognition of our common fate, and it connects an individual to family, to country and to spirit.'

Gary remained after the viewing of the DVD and answered the many questions asked by the enthusiastic audience.

A testament to the popularity of the DVD is that it is currently awaiting a re run. The proceeds from its sales go to the Lingiari Foundation, an Indigenous organisation which focuses on the achievement of full citizenship in all its dimensions for Indigenous Australians (<http://www.lingiari.org/index.html>).

For further information on the DVD or an order form <http://www.antar.org.au/>

Sharon Esterman

It is hoped that a further screening of *Liyarn Ngarn* will take place during the 2008 Guringai Festival.

## THANKYOU to



Warringah Council

**Warringah Council** for the funding to scope and research a book which has the working title *Biddy Bungaree and Her Descendants*.

The discovery was made recently by Narrabeen resident Bob Waterer confirming that his great, great grandmother was Biddy Bungaree, one of the Aboriginal people of the Guringai area. This has led to the interest in recording Bob's family and the times in which they lived. Nan Bosler is coordinating the research for the book which, it is hoped, will be launched during the 2009 Guringai Festival.



**Manly Council** for a grant to purchase display materials which will be used for information and promotional stalls and events. Two future occasions when they will be used are at the Manly Council Launch of the 2008 Guringai

Festival on Sunday May 11 and the *Sorry Day* commemoration at Narrabeen Lagoon during the last weekend of May.

## IMPORTANT DATES

### MONDAY FEBRUARY 18

is the first ASG Business Meeting for 2008. 7.30pm.  
Your attendance and ongoing support will be greatly appreciated.

### MONDAY MARCH 3

is the first Information Night for the year at 7.30pm  
Our guest speaker will be Minmia, an Aboriginal senior woman, educator and healer. Her book *under the quandong tree* is due for release on *Survival Day* 2008.

Both evenings will be held at the Nelson Heather Centre, corner Pittwater and Jacksons Roads, North Narrabeen.

– All are welcome –

For further details please contact Lizzie Landers  
9918 2594 or visit the website

[www.asgmwp.net](http://www.asgmwp.net)

# GAWURA OPENING ON THE NORTHERN BEACHES

Gawura, the Aboriginal Learning Centre at Brookvale's Northern Beaches College of TAFE NSW, was officially opened on Thursday November 22, 2007. The *Acknowledgement of Country* was given by Lois and Jessica Birk. Guests were entertained by the delightful singing of a group of young children and later by popular musician and dancer Les Saxby.

Built at a cost of more than \$900,000, Gawura represents a partnership between the Aboriginal community of the Northern Beaches and TAFE NSW. It is a 'first' for such a centre within TAFE.

Professionally registered Aboriginal architect Dillon Komoumerri designed the centre in the shape of a whale – *Gawura*. A modern and attractive building, the open-plan design which is based on traditional Aboriginal learning styles adds to its warm and welcoming atmosphere.

It is set in a tranquil, natural environment and is wheelchair accessible.

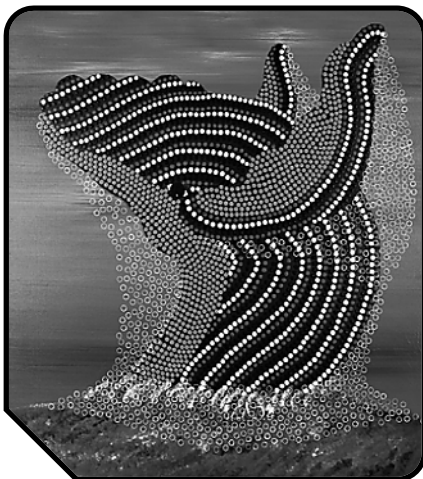
Biala students at Mackellar Girls High School painted a vibrant mural adjacent to one of the walkways leading to the centre.

Gawura is providing a meeting place for Aboriginal students and for the teaching and training of TAFE students. It is available for use by schools and the wider community.

Pat Frater



# GAWURA OPENING AT ST ANDREW'S CATHEDRAL SCHOOL



Artwork by Colin Davis

The opening of Gawura campus of St Andrew's Cathedral School, Sydney, also took place on November 22, 2007.

St Andrew's Cathedral School's vision for Gawura is to provide a quality Kindergarten to Year 6 education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in a caring, Christian environment emphasising standards of literacy, numeracy and social skills that are foundations for life.

The day of historic 'firsts' began in the Cathedral Square before the Cathedral service:

- ☉ The *Welcome to Country* was given in the language of the Gadigal people of Sydney who were living in the region in 1819 when Governor Macquarie laid the Cathedral's foundation stone.
- ☉ Uncle Max led the smoking ceremony to cleanse the sacred space.
- ☉ Nine of the first Gawura students who enrolled a few months ago performed a welcome dance accompanied by didgeridoos. Biripi women also danced.
- ☉ For the first time Aboriginal people led a procession into the Cathedral for the Service of Celebration.

In his welcome Phillip Heath, the Head of School, emphasised that he and other members of the school were already beginning to learn about Aboriginal culture from Gawura students and parents. In an interaction between cultures, they looked forward to learning from one another.

At the official opening of Gawura, George Negus, (well known SBS commentator) reminded people of non Indigenous descent that *'we are tenants in this country, yet we behave like landlords... We should learn from the Aboriginal people how to live in this land.'*

Jim Leftwich, the Aboriginal Bishop of North Queensland, unveiled the *Welcome to Country* plaque in the school entrance. He spoke of his own difficulties as an Indigenous child. *'Education weaves a story'*. The wonder of Gawura is that students will have the chance to hear and celebrate their own story. The venture is a brave and controversial one. He hoped that it will enable all students at the school to strive together for Reconciliation.

I was struck by the enthusiasm of excited Aboriginal parents who had already seen the vision coming to life since their children began at Gawura a few months ago. A glimpse of this was evident in student activities and the display of work in the 'penthouse' classroom at the top of the main school building.

The name Gawura (meaning whale in the Eora language) was suggested by the school's Redfern community consultation group as it refers to the creature which is totem of the Sydney region. Colin Davis, a recognised artist in the Redfern area, created the whale painting. The colouring is symbolic: the dots on the whale are in the Aboriginal colours against a deep blue background with lighter blue air bubbles.

Val Horniman

# Congratulations

At the recent annual event honouring Pittwater volunteers **Lizzie Landers** was awarded an Outstanding Community Service Certificate of Appreciation. This was in recognition of Lizzie's voluntary work as Reconciliation Coordinator of the Aboriginal Support Group. She has set up and run a total of 24 Reconciliation Study Circles in conjunction with the Manly Warringah Community College. For the past eight years Lizzie has organised and facilitated the Support Group's monthly Information nights, when guest speakers, films and discussion are used to inform members and the public on topics relating to Indigenous issues. Lizzie is always working towards a just Reconciliation and national healing.

Another valued member of the Support Group, **Nan Bosler**, has been named the Inaugural Winner of the Apia Adult Learning Ambassador Award in recognition of her outstanding contribution to third age learning. The award program aims to strengthen alliances and communication amongst organisations that support life-long learning. As Ambassador Nan will promote Australia both as a world leader and committed nation in relation to adult learning. She is the foundation and current President of the Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association and represents the Society with the Microsoft Unlimited Potential Program working with other partners: The Smith Family, WorkVentures and the Yarnteen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Corporation. Microsoft has invited Nan to be Australia's representative at the *IT and SENIORS* Conference at Seoul, Korea, in February this year.

**Stephen Page**, the internationally acclaimed Indigenous dancer and choreographer, is the NSW Australian of the Year for 2008. In 1991 Stephen, who had danced with the Sydney Dance Company, was appointed Artistic Director of Bangarra Dance Theatre. His choreography has included the ceremonies for the Sydney Olympic Games and the traditional smoking ceremony to mark the 75th anniversary of the Sydney Harbour Bridge last year. Aboriginal Elder **Joyce Donovan**, who is known as Auntie Joyce in her local area on the South Coast, has been named the NSW Local Hero of the Year.

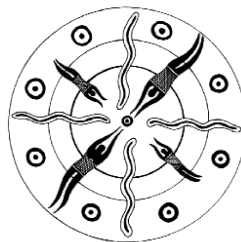
The state award winners are national finalists for the 2008 Australian of the Year Awards.

The newly appointed director of NAISDA – the National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association – is **Kim Walker**. Kim was one of the Sydney Dance Company's star dancers. As principal dancer with the company he performed in such productions as *Daphnis and Chloe*, *After Venice*, *Boxes* and *Kraanerg*. For the past ten years he has been Artistic Director of the Flying Fruit Fly Circus. This is the world famous children's acrobatic troupe which is based in Albury-Wodonga.

NAISDA moved from The Rocks in Sydney to Mount Penang near Gosford NSW at the end of 2006.

## Christmas in the Bush

### Aboriginal Child, Youth and Family Strategy



Proud communities  
Strong families

This is the third *Christmas in the Bush* put on by the Aboriginal Child, Youth and Family Strategy organised by Community Facilitator Herb Smith and his willing helpers.

The first two were held at Putney, this year's on Sunday December 15 at Bobbin Head.

Invitations went out to all ATSI families across the Northern Suburbs, including of course the Northern Beaches and to the good friends in support groups.

Also, some communities from other parts of Sydney rang in and some came over. A great opportunity to make new friendships and renew and strengthen old and present friendships.

Buses were supplied for transport, leaving from and returning to Manly and Hornsby, and there was free entry to Ku-ring-gai National Park for those driving.

About 100 people, adults and children, were there and a great program with an excellent bbq plus soft drinks and haute cuisine healthy desserts.

After the Welcome to Country by Dharug Elders, we had a Murri Magical Magician Show, children's sports games whilst parents (and Aunties and Uncles) went on a beautiful one-hour boat cruise. Black Santa arrived after lunch to chat with kids, have photos taken and give presents. During the day, fishing in the Hawkesbury went on from the bank, with prizes for the biggest and smallest fish caught (and returned to the water, of course) and for the oddest object caught.

The setting literally in the bush at Bobbin Head was perfect and, after all the rain we've had recently, the bush was blooming and the day was clear and sunny though a bit hot for poor old Santa. Herb has started a great tradition and we hope it goes on for many years to come.

Congratulations to Herb and team.

Clair Jackson

## ASG Picnic

Later on the same day the Support Group held its Christmas get-together on the shore of Narrabeen Lagoon. A good sized group including several who had been to the *Christmas in the Bush* relaxed under the whispering casuarinas enjoying the picnic spread and watching the children – Dashiell, Juliette, Marcus, Saskia and Zoe – playing happily.

It was perfect weather and most of the group stayed until the sun set. The next afternoon we realized how fortunate the choice of day was when one of Sydney's summer storms struck and the heavens opened suddenly.

Pat Frater

# TRANBY 2008

## 50th Birthday Celebrations

Tranby Aboriginal Co-operative College, located at 13 Mansfield Street, Glebe, is an Aboriginal, independently owned and managed cooperative. It is the oldest educational institution for Aboriginal people in Australia and one of the oldest in the world. Throughout the year Tranby will be celebrating fifty years of Indigenous education with the main events being held in September and October.

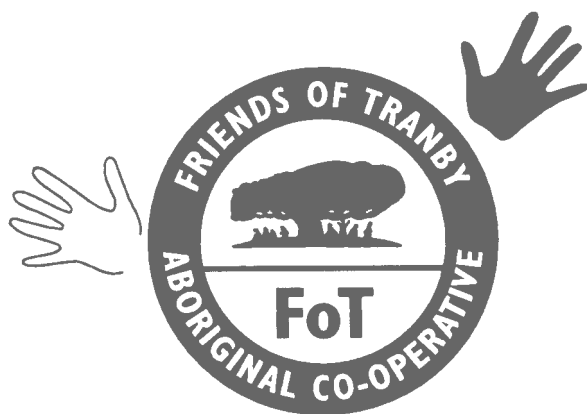
A focus for Aboriginal self-determination, Tranby has participated in the on-going struggle for social justice and Indigenous rights. These have included the 1965 *Freedom Rides*, 1967 Referendum and *Black Deaths in Custody*.

Thomas Newman, the Site Manager for Tranby and the Chairperson of the *Friends of Tranby*, has applied for grants to research the College's history. In the 1800s the Tranby buildings were part of a sheep station and were quarters for the workers. It later became a church under the Reverend Alf Clint, then it became a hostel for Sydney University students.

Today Tranby conducts two-year Diploma Courses in National Indigenous Legal Studies, Applied Aboriginal Studies, Governance (Indigenous Organisations), Development Studies (Aboriginal Communities), Business Certificates 2 and 3 and Literacy/Numeracy courses. There are at present 150 adult students from across Australia.

The programme for the 50th birthday celebrations will be included in future *Elimattas*.

If you have any background information about Tranby or wish to support the College by joining the *Friends of Tranby* (FoT) please contact 9660 3444 or email Thomas Newman on [thomas@tranby.edu.au](mailto:thomas@tranby.edu.au)



### RECOLLECTIONS OF TRANBY COLLEGE

My introduction to Tranby Aboriginal Co-operative College was in late 1968. Max Brown, journalist and author of *The Black Eureka*, the account of the first Aboriginal stockmen's strike in Western Australia, asked if I could type the program for the upcoming Tranby summer school for Reverend Alf Clint, then general secretary of the co-operative. So began years of involvement with Reverend Clint and Tranby – an education and inspiration for me and my family.

The summer schools catered for students from around Australia, Papua New Guinea and sometimes the Pacific Islands, who could not attend the longer courses at Tranby. They were an intensive introduction to co-operative principles and practice – in horticulture, agriculture, mining, rain forest management, trades and business.

The tutors were devoted people who shared their great knowledge of the co-operative movement and Tranby ideals. Staff of the co-operative movement of South Australia came during their summer leave, a Catholic priest from the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area fruit growing co-operative, personnel from NSW Department of Fisheries and from the South Coast Fishermen's Co-operative. There were many others. What an introduction for me to a brilliant concept.

Some years later in a break from employment with trade unions, I worked for the co-operative in Trades Hall, in Goulburn Street, with some very committed people and I also worked as Reverend Clint's secretary at Tranby or at his home office.

In the early 1970s the regular co-operative classes were expanded to accept young Aboriginal students who lacked adequate high school education, enabling them to undertake the more advanced courses. One year was devoted entirely to this program when a retired headmaster was the full time tutor to these students.

Decisions about Tranby courses were made with input from local families, such as the Bostocks' mother Phemie, her daughter and her son Lester, who later became head of the multi-lingual radio station 2SER, and Lester's brother, Gerry Bostock, who became famous as co-director of the powerful film *Lousy Little Sixpence*. There was strong support from some trade unions. The Bakers Union took responsibility for the placement of Percy Neal from Yarrabah, Queensland, as a baker's apprentice during studies at Tranby. His win, as a top apprentice, filled us all with pride.

*Continued on Page 7*

Continued from Page 6

Communities selected their students to attend Tranby and young Percy Neal was chosen so he could become the first baker in the Yarrabah Co-operative, meaning people were no longer forced to buy bread from commercial sources.

During Percy's training, a bakery at Branxton in the Hunter Valley of NSW was closed. Members of the Bakers Union dismantled the valuable fire bricks from the bread kiln and donated them to Yarrabah and members of the Seamen's Union organised and paid for their transport.

Contrasting this good hearted support for the Yarrabah Co-operative, a bureaucrat representing the Bjelke Petersen Queensland government, through the principal Administrator of Aboriginal Affairs, the notorious Pat Killoran, tried to pressure Alf Neal, Percy's father, to register the bakery as a family business rather than a co-operative – it would not do to have a successful co-operative run by Aboriginal people.

I knew from early in my acquaintance with Reverend Clint that he strongly believed that Tranby should be headed by an Indigenous person. The first of these was Lester Bostock. Young Kevin Cook followed. Reverend Clint had recognised Kevin's strength since he had come to Tranby as a young leader and tutor in trade union studies.

He encouraged Kevin to attend the co-operative university of Antigonish, Nova Scotia, Canada. This was a great challenge to a young man who was the only Australian student and knew no one on campus.

Kevin distinguished himself in his studies, overcame loneliness and, on his way back to Australia, attended a course in credit unions in the Pacific region. Reverend Clint's confidence in the young man and his belief in the rightness of Tranby having an Indigenous Director was vindicated by subsequent history. Other co-operatives and communities under extreme pressure were at Warrabri in the Northern Territory and at Arakuan on Cape York. The Warrabri co-operative was able to buy directly from Adelaide, rather than through Alice Springs, thus considerably cutting food costs. A call for help came to Reverend Clint with news that local government bureaucrats were trying to undermine the co-op by persuading older members to register it as a club which would have given government staff authority to intervene.

I told this to my journalist husband, the late Shaun McIlraith, who worked for the Sydney Morning Herald. The paper sent a senior features writer Jim Cunningham to follow it up. This took the pressure off the co-op for a while.

The story of the Arakuan people has often been told. They were lured away from their homes with a promise of medical treatment for the community. They boarded boats to transport them to the mythical medical centre and their homes were burned behind them. By the time Reverend Clint was contacted by the Arakuan people he was dying of cancer and passed the cry for help to another Aboriginal organisation.

To the everlasting shame of the bureaucrats involved, the Arakuan were dispossessed. Valuable bauxite deposits had been found on their land.

Tranby had its financial ups and downs but Reverend Clint would never consider anyone working for less than the proper wage rate. He remained a clergyman and a member of his union, the Amalgamated Workers Union.

The up to date story of Tranby will be told by others but I would like to share my recollections of a hearing at Leichhardt Town Hall when the development application by the college was heard at a public meeting. One objection related to a resident's concern that the new building would shade a couple of olive trees in the family backyard; another was about potential noise, presumably from the hordes of Aboriginal students. The council solemnly decided to have a full day light/shade study, vis-à-vis, the noble little olive trees. I was with my local Aboriginal Support Group at the meeting and submitted that the co-op had commissioned an architect to advise on restoration of the old house to its Victorian design.

After reflecting on this part of the Tranby story, I feel sure that my good friend Reverend Alf Clint would be proud of how the co-op has fared and that it is in good hands.

Enid McIlraith

This is an edited article from one written by Enid for The Tranby College Summer 2007/8 Newsletter

## Aboriginal Terminology

NSW Department of Health published ***Communicating positively – a guide to appropriate Aboriginal terminology*** (2004).

**This book recommends that, although it is grammatically correct, we need to be aware that the term 'Aborigine(s)' has negative connotations with many Aboriginal people. 'Aboriginal person' or 'Aboriginal people' can be used as an alternative.**

**This is the policy that the Editors follow in *Elimatta*.**



## **BEULAH LOWE AND THE YOLNGU PEOPLE** by Betsy Wearing published with the help of Coast Biographers 2007

This book won first prize for non fiction in The Society of Women Writers NSW Biennial Book Awards 2007.

*'Beulah sat on the ground with the old Aboriginal people, and it was obvious to me that for the first and only time in my quite extensive career I was involved in a real "consultation" with Aboriginal people.'* Ted Egan AO (Administrator Northern Territory Australia)

On the day before her twenty-third birthday in December 1950 Beulah Lowe flew to Darwin on her way to become the first teacher on the Methodist mission station at Milingimbi, a tiny island 400 kilometres east of Darwin in the Arafura Sea. From the moment she set foot on the island she began to learn the language.

Beulah lived amongst the Yolngu people for twenty-seven years. She was teacher, linguist, interpreter and missionary. This book, based on her letters and diaries for those years, traces her struggles to transform the oral Gupapuyngu language into its written form and to give it back to the people to whom it belongs. She believed that *'one of the biggest barriers between races is the language barrier'*. She listened carefully to the Elders, mothers, aunts, uncles and children of the tribe, gaining an appreciation and understanding of the *otherness* of their culture and the conflicts of the old ways versus the new.

Language has been described as *the shrine of a people's soul*. If one's language is lost then the shrine is desecrated and the soul robbed. Aboriginal people know this from experience and whilst keen to acquire good English are adamant that their own languages should not be lost as a consequence. Beulah Lowe tapped into this concept early in her career in Northern Australia, successfully learning to speak, read and write the local languages with the Aboriginal people. English was then taught more successfully than it had been in the past, and the native languages remained to enrich the community's life.

*Betsy Wearing*

Betsy is a sociologist and former Associate Professor in the School of Social Work, University of NSW. She can be contacted by email at [bmwearing@cci.net.au](mailto:bmwearing@cci.net.au)

---

## **MODERN WAYS FOR ANCIENT WORDS**

Daryn McKenny from the Arwarbukarl Cultural Resource Association (ACRA) gave a passionate demonstration called *Modern Ways for Ancient Words* at the 9th Australian Computer Conference for Seniors which was held at the Powerhouse Museum Sydney in August. Of the some 250 native languages and 800 dialects spoken at the arrival of Europeans only about 80 dialects are still spoken today. Many of these are in danger of extinction as well.

Daryn, through the ACRA project which is based in Newcastle, has developed a user friendly but powerful computer program to provide a language preservation and learning system.

With admirable passion Daryn reminded his audience *'Internationally, every two weeks at least one Indigenous language disappears. Digitisation is the quickest way to get a record of a language and stop that trend... If our languages disappear everything else about us disappears... the Aboriginal people of Australia are the oldest living race. We have the oldest religion, the oldest traditions, the oldest languages, and we are not going to let that go.'*

No one in the audience doubted he will succeed!

*Nan Bosler*

---

## **CULTURAL WARRIORS: NATIONAL INDIGENOUS ART TRIENNIAL**

*DO NOT MISS THIS!*

This inaugural exhibition is on at the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, until February 10, 2008. A magnificent collection of diverse Indigenous art practice and all created within the last three years. Thirty artists from across Australia are represented. There are eight rooms of breathtaking, thought provoking works humming with life.

Paintings on canvas and bark, sculpture, weaving, new media, photo-media, printmaking and installation work are all part of this treasure of a collection curated by Brenda Croft. The exhibition celebrates the 25th anniversary of the Gallery and the 40th anniversary of the 1967 Referendum.

As well, at the National Museum of Australia, there's the Papunya Paintings – *Out of the Desert* – until February 3 and two other exhibitions, *70% URBAN* and *1967 REFERENDUM* until January 31.

*Lizzie Landers*

## THE ATOMIC 'TESTS'

Out of the starry night  
orange desert and blood red sun  
of the Timeless Land  
-- burst the bomb from hell  
splitting time asunder  
firing the Emu Clay Pans  
blasting the Fields of Thunder.

The lost Children of the Dreamtime  
had watched the mushroom cloud.  
They didn't know the black mist  
was a black mist shroud  
and when the white frost fell  
the children played  
in the frost from hell.

Neither did the young men know,  
blinded through the backs of their  
brains  
standing like robots in a row  
--'We must obey---we must obey',  
--'Bloody Hell! Oh Bloody Hell!'  
What was that fateful day?  
They should have prayed  
and disobeyed.

Another time, Western time  
The mindset stays the same  
Another time, another place  
Invaders play another game.  
Flowers bloom in red desert sand  
People move softly on sacred land  
Under the earth the water flows  
--more precious than gold  
as the hot sun glows.

We'll take your land  
This nowhere land  
The Dreamtime, you'll lose it  
We'll mine it and use it  
For nuclear dumps  
and infuse it  
with time-toxic time  
ticking away  
on the countdown to zero.

*Barbara Couston Cliff*

## Tracking the Spirit

**An Exhibition of Indigenous Art – October 5 to November 19, 2007**

This is the second annual exhibition at the Hornsby Art Gallery and Community Arts Centre by Northside Indigenous artists, this year's exhibition bringing together twelve Indigenous artists, most resident on the north side of Sydney.

Artists exhibiting were: Joan Bourke [acrylics and ceramics], Bessie Dixon [acrylics], Lisa Finney [inks], Helena Geiger [batiks], Lorraine Granites [acrylics], Michael Huddleston [acrylics and wood carvings], Lila Kirby [acrylics], Jade Livingstone [watercolours], Ross Smith [acrylics], Gail Suttor [photographics and ceramics], Chris Tobin [acrylics], Yvette Walker [watercolours], Edna Watson [acrylics].

Shantay Belich exhibited three portraits of which she is the custodian.

These were painted in oils on velvet, probably in the 1950s, one by an artist called

Martinus, the other two by unknown artists, and are of great historical and artistic interest.

As well, one section held excellent unframed acrylics on canvas by artists from Yuendumu, Northern Territory.

The opening celebration was held on Friday night, October 5, at the gallery, with food and drink, pithy speeches,

celebrity guest and great performances of original song and didj/yidaki by Rhubee Neale, Letty and Nathan Scott from Chetchycherre Performance Group, plus didj/yidaki performances by Kyle Howie and Peter Kirkwood.

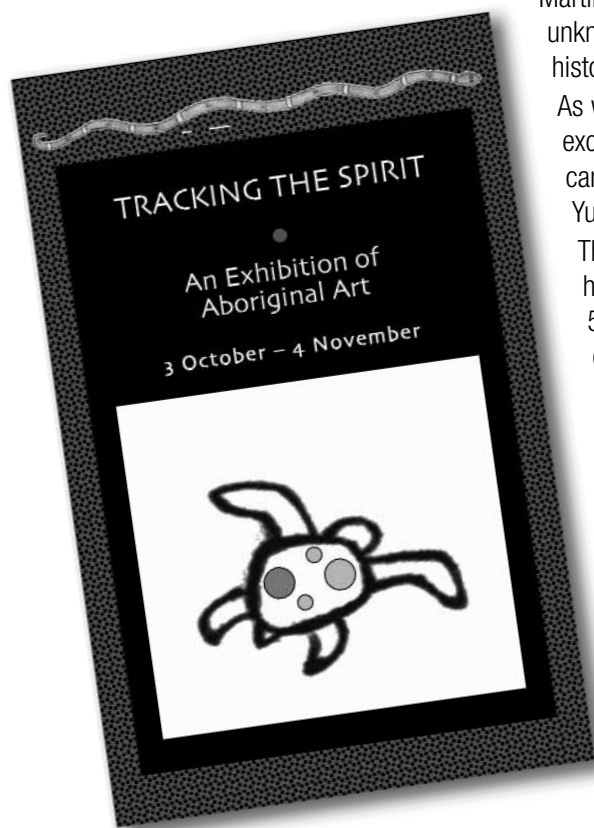
Dharug Elder Edna Watson Welcomed us to Country with some comments on land,

country and art. This was followed by a welcome and tribute to our special guest, Faith Bandler, revered activist and lover of all the arts.

Last year's exhibition was the brainchild of Kieli Shillington (2006 Director, Hornsby Art Society Community Gallery) and Herb Smith (Aboriginal Child, Youth and Family Community Facilitator). This year's organisers were enthusiastic Kieli and Hornsby Area Residents for Reconciliation (HARR), particularly Dorothy Babb, and special thanks to them for the hard work of getting it all together.

Thanks also to Hornsby Art Society, Hornsby Shire Council, North Shore Art Supplies and to Chroma Paints, who donated \$200 of art supplies for our raffle, and to everyone who supported and contributed to this exhibition.

*Clair Jackson*



# 2007 NSW RECONCILIATION COUNCIL ANNUAL CONFERENCE



The Darlington Public School was again the venue for this event held on October 27 and 28, 2007. The Support Group was represented by Clair Jackson, Lizzie Landers and myself. Unfortunately we were not able to attend the Sunday events.

The Chairman, Greg Davison, gave the Opening Address, reporting on the activities of the NSW Reconciliation Council for the past year. He spoke about the setbacks and challenges and drew attention to the Northern Territory intervention by the Howard Government, deploring the fact that there has been no consultation with Aboriginal people and seeing the need to forget the focus on politics and the need to make communities the focus of interest.

During the year NSW Reconciliation has worked with ANTaR on several projects. Elders met the public in the Sydney Town Hall and told their wonderful stories. The *Reconciliation in Parliament* Series was very well attended. One round of Small Grants Funding was dispersed. At a meeting with State Government on the completion of the previous ten year plan, Premier lemma reaffirmed their contract to Reconciliation and to the five recommendations put forward. The hope is for funding to be continued so that plans can be moved forward.

The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Paul Lynch, was the keynote speaker. He spoke of the importance of symbols especially of saying *Sorry*, of the change in parliamentary procedure so that Acknowledgment of Country can take place after the 'prayer' and of the great work done by volunteers.

The *People's Reconciliation Movement* website [www.reconciliationmovement.com](http://www.reconciliationmovement.com) was launched by its founder John Telford. This website is designed to highlight stories of the history and ongoing activity of the People's Reconciliation Movement in NSW. If you have stories you would like to post to the website please email them as an attachment to John Telford at the [telfords@gmail.com](mailto:telfords@gmail.com)

A book launch of *Demons at Dusk* by Peter Stewart took place. This is a story about the Myall Creek Massacre.

The afternoon session comprised a Community Forum and Discussion Panel a report of which follows.

Office Bearers for the coming year were decided at the AGM on Sunday. Renee Williamson was elected Chairperson.

Anna Bell

## COMMUNITY FORUM and DISCUSSION PANEL

*While significant achievements have been made at a local level, how has the reconciliation process advanced on a national level? Is Howard's 'new reconciliation' a step forward from 'practical reconciliation' or is it simply a new label?*

*While the federal government's commitment to reconciliation has been inconsistent and questionable over the past ten years, the people's movement for rights, respect and reconciliation continues to move forward.*

The Forum was opened with a wonderful Welcome to Cadigal Clan, Eora Country, danced by Auntie Ali Golding who then spoke briefly on the unity of peoples.

Excellent MC Renee Williamson (Co-Chairperson, ReconciliAction) introduced the speakers and then the topic of *New Reconciliation* with a clear analysis of the Howard government's recent actions regarding this term, including the avoidance of a formal apology by the non-binding 'offer' of mention in a new preamble to the Constitution. Renee's plea is for less talk and more constructive dialogue.

The speakers were:

1. **Shirley Lomas**, a member of the *Stolen Generations*, set up *Women for Eora* which provides health education for ordinary mums.
2. **Beryl Carmichael**, from the Menindee Community, Nyaampa people, gave an interesting telling of a camp she and others did for NAIDOC Week in 1982-3. They decided on a traditional gathering place well out in the bush and let it be known it was on. 300 people turned up!! The Menindee and Wilcannia mobs plus white locals and foreign visitors. What an example of spontaneous Reconciliation.  
There are many barriers to Reconciliation. We need to heal traumas, particularly with children and listen to them. Acting out stories is the best education for kids, as they are keen to learn the old ways. Communities need guidance from old people and Elders as mentors. People are lost through government policies and loss of hope. A problem caused by Native Title legislation and payouts is that it has split some communities into 'tribal' groups. There is a long way still to go to true Reconciliation.
3. **Eileen Cummings**, from Central Arnhem Land, was brought up on Croker Island Mission. She is a teacher and has been an advisor on Indigenous issues to successive Northern Territory governments. Many NT communities have been working well for a good many years.

The recent federal government intervention has demolished in one blow all of the good work and successful projects being achieved by some communities. As a prominent member of her community, Eileen has joined with *Women for Wik*, a nation-wide organisation of women which has reformed as a result of this intervention, to speak for her Top End community. Reconciliation is strong and shown in such groups and parties as *Women for Wik*, the Greens, doing marches, petitions, lobbying etc along with Aboriginal Nations. (This statement received an ovation from the audience). The loss of the permit system is a disaster for both land and people in the Northern Territory.

*Continued on Page 11*

This intervention has slipped back into building on past failures.

- 4. **Steven Ross**, of the Wamba Wamba Nation, Deniliquin, NSW, is of Wamba Wamba, Mutti Mutti and Wiradjuri descent. He represents the Murray-Lower Darling Aboriginal Nations Group, which was formed in 1999 after the Yorta Yorta people were denied their Native Title claim.

The aim of this group was to call for combined traditional ownership governance along the whole river system from the Victorian mountains, through NSW and SA to the Coorong. In other words, for all clan and nation groups with traditional rights to care for country along this river system, to meet, confer and act as a group to speak for the ecological survival of their countries with governments, ecological groups, agriculturalists, businesses etc.

The representatives and community members meet four times a year and have had quite some success in agreements with those bodies which realise the good health of the river system is beneficial to all and that Indigenous land management practices can reclaim the land from its degraded state after 208 years of misuse.

With state and federal governments, a major problem is that no precedent has been established for an Indigenous viewpoint of equal weight/importance – a policy of non-inclusion. What is required is essentially a reversal of legislated land practices to a different mode of resource management which also includes social and cultural management.

The requirements of present Native Title legislation for validation of *who we are*, of *correct lineage* is insulting and extreme in its insistence.

This group shows, in its many successful local agreements with and within the wider community, that reconciliation is possible for mutual interest and for the continuance of healthy land and healthy people.

- 5. **Geoff Scott** is the CEO of the NSW Aboriginal Land Council. He believes that a Bill of Rights is critically needed and that Aboriginal 'affairs' MUST separate social from political. Government should be *for the people* – ie. the government *owes us* – there is no *mutual obligation*.
- 6. **Nicole Watson** is a member of the National Aboriginal Alliance (NAA) and a Senior Researcher at Jumbunna, University of Technology Sydney. In a Press Conference on June 22, 2007, Prime Minister Howard and Minister Mal Brough announced the Northern Territory Intervention Strategy. At exactly the same time, Police Sergeant Hurley was acquitted in Townsville Court, North Queensland, of the death of Murandoo Yanner in police custody. In response to this Intervention Strategy, the NAA was formed in September 2007. A founding member Pat Turner stated that the *child abuse issue* was being used by the Howard government as *'the Trojan horse'* to regain Aboriginal lands for the use of the federal government. It has been perceived

that Aboriginal people cannot be assimilated unless they lose their identity as peoples in partnership with their particular or specific nation's land area.

The National Indigenous Council, which was appointed by Howard after abolishing ATSIC, are acting as traitors to Aboriginal people. The ALP has been complicit also. For example, in 1984 the Hawke government abandoned its Native Title offers in WA in order to keep a Labour government in WA. Following this, in 2006, the WA Labour government appealed against a Native Title decision that was in favour of the Nyoongar people.

The Howard government has been an eleven year land grab repealing sections of the Native Title Act, the NT Land Rights Act and in 2006 suspended the Racial Discrimination Act in order to *'intervene'* in Indigenous lives. All of these actions show a total lack of respect for all those warriors who fought for and obtained Land Rights.

In 2006, federal legislation appeared *'requesting'* 99 year leases of Aboriginal Native Title lands and government control by sub-leasing on this land for the 99 years. This Bill was rushed through parliament with no public discussion.

The Howard government reversed the changes to the Constitution brought about by the 1967 Referendum in that the two changes were assumed to be used positively for Aboriginal people. The government has used them negatively and thereby allowed other in the country to do likewise.

In Australia we have a lack of human rights legislation. Nevertheless this is a battle over Assimilation in which the Aboriginal People are the Victors. This is Positive.

Questions from the floor covered issues of police culture, racial discrimination, Aboriginal leadership in ecological issues, positive actions and directions to be taken or continued and strengthened. The Forum Session ended at 6pm and, to a person, we left feeling empowered, some to see the film, some not. This was a high level, important event.

Clair Jackson



GAVALA

Aboriginal  
Art Centre

Gavala is designed to promote the interests of Aboriginal artists and communities all over Australia and has become the premier place to purchase authentic Aboriginal artifacts and art, traditional and contemporary. Established in 1995 the centre is Aboriginal owned. It is located at Darling Harbour in the Harbour Shopping Centre.

For further information telephone (02) 9212 7232  
or log onto [www.gavala.com.au](http://www.gavala.com.au)



## From the Treasurer

**SUBSCRIPTIONS:** Of our 160 subscribing members 112 have responded to the *Subscription Due* note accompanying the Winter *Elimatta*. Of the 48 remainder some will have moved, (or 'moved on') but others will have just mislaid the notice or otherwise have overlooked payment. Happens easily! Receipts invariably are issued. If you know you are 'unfinancial' please enclose \$20 with name and address to the ASG at P.O. Box 129, Narrabeen 2101. If unsure please call me at 9971 4160. Thankyou.

**WHERE YOUR DONATIONS HAVE BEEN DIRECTED:** 'Optional donations' accompanying 2007/8 subscriptions totalled over \$2300. Once again our members have been very generous and these additional donations are greatly appreciated. These donations have been supplemented by drawings from monies given in memory of deceased members in the following areas:

- \$ \$1000 has helped replace a bus for Aboriginal school pupils at Wilcannia
- \$ \$1000 has subsidised secondary school fees for two Northern Territory Bush School students at a secondary boarding college in NSW
- \$ \$2000 will assist public primary, secondary and tertiary scholarships in NSW
- \$ \$500 will help expand Indigenous community-building in Sydney Northern Suburbs

These distributions follow suggestions accompanying the 2007/8 subscription notice which emphasised the overwhelming importance of education as a stepping stone to Indigenous health, employment, personal self worth and dignity. Thank you again.

David Harrison

# AN INVITATION TO JOIN US...

## The Aboriginal Support Group – Manly Warringah Pittwater

meets on the third Monday of each month, from February to November, at 7.30 pm

Information Nights are held throughout the year on the first Monday of most months at 7.30pm.

Venue: **Angophora Room**

**Nelson Heather Centre, Corner Pittwater & Jacksons Roads  
North Narrabeen.**

Entrance to the centre's carpark is from Boondah Road off Jacksons Road

☎ For further information ☎

**(02) 9939 0123 (02) 9982 1685**

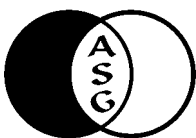
P.O. Box 129 NARRABEEN NSW 2101

**www.asgmwp.net**

*Elimatta* is the newsletter of the Aboriginal Support Group – Manly Warringah Pittwater. Articles are welcome with the understanding that editorial changes may be made and that contributors agree that the material will be archived by the National Library of Australia.

Contributors to *Elimatta* are from many different cultures and backgrounds. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the Editors or members of the ASG.

Please email articles where possible to [annadbel@bigpond.net.au](mailto:annadbel@bigpond.net.au)



If you use any of the material it would be appreciated if the extract is set in context and the source acknowledged.

Editorial Committee: Anna Bell and Pat Frater

Proof Reader: Carol Gerrard

Graphic Design: Mark Ansiewicz: (02) 9979-9112

Distribution: Jackie O'Hare, Anna Bell, Pat Fisher, Carol Gerrard, June Gibson, Clair Jackson, Jan Kirk, Marcia Rutter, Don and Pat Frater.

## CAN YOU ASSIST ??????????

The Manly Markets are held on the third Saturday of each month at Manly Village School and it has been suggested that the Support Group have an information table there. If you are interested in manning the table for an hour or two one Saturday please contact Suzen Meagher 9939 0123 or email [suzenmea@yahoo.com.au](mailto:suzenmea@yahoo.com.au)

If you know of other community events where our information could be distributed let Suzen know about them especially if you are able to help with any arrangements and with manning the table for part of the day.

The ASG bookmarks give our website address and suggested wording for an Acknowledgement of Country. They are available for members to give out at meetings and are proving very popular.

## YOLGNU DANCERS

An invitation to perform in Greece is one of many received by a group of Yolgnu dancers from Arnhem Land. Known as the Chooky Dancers, twelve young men, aged 12–22, fuse *Zorba The Greek* with traditional dancing. They became an international success after their video appeared on *Youtube*. Their debut outside Arnhem Land was in the Supreme Court in Darwin.