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# Elimatta

Winter 2018

Aboriginal Support Group – Manly Warringah Pittwater

ASG acknowledges the Guringai People, the traditional owners of the lands and the waters of this area

## AUSTRALIA'S FRONTIER WAR KILLINGS still conveniently escape official memory

**But change is inevitable. The commemoration of the Myall Creek massacre is emblematic of a broader push for recognition.**

Australia has a memory problem – what it chooses to publicly remember through its special officially sanctioned days and events of remembrance illustrates equally its capacity for willful forgetting.

This has been a big year for official Australian remembrance: 230 years since British *invasion* on 26 January 1788, and a century since the end of the first world war, a global conflagration that Australia has nonetheless chosen to mark with a parochial \$600m, four-year festival of commemoration, *Anzac 100*.

No other country has gone so over the top (pun intended) or spent so much money on each dead soldier as part of its first world war commemorations.

Other critical elements in Australian history, meanwhile, conveniently escape the official memory in all its manifestations. This is especially so of the thousands of massacres, shootings and poisonings of this country's Indigenous in the name of European civilisation – an oxymoron on this continent when it came to the devastating impact of colonial *settlement* on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Still, dozens of unofficial monuments have been erected – symbols of community-inspired commemoration of the darkest events in our colonial and post-federation history. On certain days of the year people gather at these places to remember happenings that the Commonwealth would gladly keep confined to memory's outer corners, subsumed into the category of *other* history, overshadowed by Anzac and the myths of benign settlement around 1788.



This weekend it is 180 years since white stockmen murdered 28 unarmed Aboriginal men, women and children at Myall Creek in northern New South Wales.

The Myall Creek massacre was part of a pattern of violence against Indigenous people; hundreds of such massacres happened across the continent from 1788 as British soldiers, settlers and pioneering explorers clashed with Indigenous people resisting pastoral expansion. By some credible accounts at least 60,000 Indigenous people – roughly the same number as Australians killed in the first world war – died.

Myall Creek was, however, remarkable for another reason. It was the only time on the colonial frontier that non-Indigenous men were successfully prosecuted for murdering Aboriginal people. Seven perpetrators were eventually hanged.

Each year the commemoration at Myall Creek gains more official recognition.

Year after year for almost two decades crowds have been steadily growing each 10 June at Myall Creek. Last year about 400 people, including direct descendants of both the victims and the perpetrators, turned up.

*Continued on Page 2*

**Bikalabarley murraring walla giballee yaddung Guringai  
Wanangini Wahroong yennieubu**

**Let us / walk / together / in / Guringai / Country / as one**

## AUSTRALIA'S FRONTIER WAR KILLINGS still conveniently escape official memory

*Continued from Page 2*

One of the event's organisers, Graeme Cordiner, estimates up to 1,000 people will turn up this year from different parts of the country to take part in what is evolving into a significant moment of black/white conciliation and an act of broader remembrance for all killed in Australian frontier conflict.

Cordiner, from the organisation *Friends of Myall Creek*, says that on Saturday buses are bringing people from as far as Canberra and Toowoomba. A delegation is also coming from Appin outside Sydney, where at least 14 Aboriginal people were massacred in 1816 by British troops at the instruction of Lachlan Macquarie, the then governor whose official legacy remains, paradoxically, one of enlightened compassion towards Indigenous people.

"The striking thing about Myall Creek is its capacity to draw together white and black – and a rainbow of others, one year including a busload of Koreans from Sydney who donated \$1,000," Cordiner says.

"For Aboriginal people – and non-Aboriginal people – rather than a site to avoid it now has become a place of healing, a totally different energy. Myall Creek does not exist in a vacuum. It is prominent in Australian consciousness because it was the one and only massacre brought to book. But there were so many more. As such we have a national responsibility, with others, to tell the story of the *frontier wars*."

Each year the commemoration at Myall Creek gains more official recognition. Cordiner says Gwydir Shire Council is effectively the commemorative partner of Friends of Myall Creek. Inverell Shire is also supportive.

Meanwhile, the NSW Labor opposition has pledged \$3m towards the construction of a Myall Creek Education and Cultural Centre that would be dedicated to public education of the massacre and *frontier war*.

There is little at Myall Creek but an old overgrown tennis court. Symbolic of the growing tensions between Australia's Anzac foundation narrative and the growing national awareness of the violent frontier, a first world war commemorative hall stands close to the newer Myall Creek massacre memorial.

The tone of commemoration at the annual Myall Creek remembrance ceremony was set in 2000, when Aunty Sue Blacklock and Des Blake, direct descendants respectively of massacre victim and perpetrator, embraced.

*Right – Illustration of the Myall Creek Massacre made 40 years after the event. Image Courtesy Mitchell Library.*

Cordiner says, "We have a Myall Creek saying – 'The path to the future passes through the past.' Until there is that honest reckoning with the past which Myall Creek represents we are doomed to repeating the past."

The Myall Creek commemoration is emblematic of a broader push for the official recognition of frontier war deaths. Each year the crowds, black and white, who commemorate frontier war killing on Anzac Day and Australia Day, continue to grow. This year tens of thousands gathered in some capital cities.

Public museums, galleries and other institutions (with the exception of the Australian War Memorial, which will not depict frontier war even though the conflict happened on Australian soil and involved some locally raised paramilitary, military and police units) continue to dedicate more resources to the story of the violent Australian frontier.

But as yet there is no official Commonwealth memorial to the dead of the *frontier wars* in Canberra, the capital, whose monuments and institutions also serve as a national memory.

But it will happen, just as inevitably as the date of Australia Day is bound to change from the day of *invasion*, 26 January.

*Paul Daley  
The Guardian Australia  
8 June 2018*



# ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART

**We, gathered at the 2017 National Constitutional Convention, coming from all points of the southern sky, make this statement from the heart:**

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes were the first sovereign Nations of the Australian continent and its adjacent islands, and possessed it under our own laws and customs. This our ancestors did, according to the reckoning of our culture, from the *Creation*, according to the common law from *time immemorial*, and according to science more than 60,000 years ago.

This sovereignty is a *spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or mother nature, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors. This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty.* It has never been ceded or extinguished, and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown.

How could it be otherwise? That peoples possessed a land for sixty millennia and this sacred link disappears from world history in merely the last two hundred years?

With substantive constitutional change and structural reform, we believe this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia's nationhood.

Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people.

Our children are alienated from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future.

These dimensions of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. *This is the torment of our powerlessness.*

We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a *rightful place* in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country.

We call for the establishment of a *First Nations Voice* enshrined in the Constitution.

Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: *the coming together after a struggle.* It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination.

We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and *First Nations* and truth-telling about our history.

In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

## CLOSE THE GAP

### 2018 Report Card

#### Not on track

- ✗ Life expectancy: Close the gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a generation.
- ✗ Employment: Halve the gap by 2018.
- ✗ Reading and writing: Halve the gap in reading and numeracy for Indigenous students by 2018.
- ✗ School attendance: Close the gap in school attendance by the end of 2018.

#### On track

- ✓ Child mortality rates: To halve the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five within a decade (by 2018)
- ✓ Early education: 95 per cent of all Indigenous four-year-olds enrolled in early childhood education by 2025
- ✓ Year 12 attainment: Halve the gap in Year 12 attainment by 2020



## FIRST INDIGENOUS DOCTOR GRADUATES from Charles Darwin University's medicine course

**The Northern Territory's only university has produced its first Indigenous medicine graduate, who says his top priority is heading out bush to help where it is needed most.**

The first batch of graduates from the Territory's medicine program, run at Charles Darwin University in conjunction with Flinders University in South Australia, entered the workforce this year.

Among them is Dr Kane Vellar, the first Indigenous person to graduate from the program, which provides all four years of training in the Territory.



"Being an Indigenous graduate here in the NT is very special," he said. "It's where we get to practice to best help our people in remote areas. Also in Darwin up to 50 per cent of our patients are Indigenous. Having an awareness of being

able to communicate properly with patients [is crucial, as is] having that awareness to know when people don't understand when they're being spoken to by clinicians."

Dr Vellar, who lived in the Territory for several years before starting his degree, is completing his internship, the first year in the workforce for medical graduates, at the Royal Darwin Hospital hospice. He said working in palliative care "can be quite daunting. It can be draining but there's lots of supports in place. We work as a team".

He said his family was very proud of his achievement. "My mum, she raised four kids by herself so she's very proud that I've graduated in this field, coming from a difficult upbringing to be able to work now as a doctor is something special.

### **Retaining remote doctors, a nation-wide problem, says AMA**

Australia has long struggled to entice and retain medical workers to rural and remote regions.

The president of the Australian Medical Association's NT branch, Robert Parker, said it was an ongoing challenge. "The remote and rural regions of Australia have been under serviced by medical professionals," he said.

There is a nation-wide undersupply of Indigenous doctors, and a great need in many areas like the Northern Territory, where Indigenous people make up almost a third of the population and have a higher burden of disease.

"The Territory's issues are that a third of the population are Aboriginal. The majority of that population lie in rural and remote areas."

The Territory's issues are that a third of the population are Aboriginal. The majority of that population lie in rural and remote areas.

Dr Parker also claims a loss of Federal Government funding for a rural work placement program had contributed to the problem of a shortage of young doctors working in remote areas.

New data from the NT Clinical Workforce Strategy, commissioned by the Federal Government-funded Northern Territory Regional Training Network, highlighted the shortage of doctors in the bush compared to towns.

While the report found Darwin had 70 medical practitioners per 10,000 people, Litchfield, which covers Darwin's rural area, had just 5 per 10,000 people, the East Arnhem Land region 20, and West Arnhem zero.

The report also showed that while almost a third of the Territory's medical workforce were recent graduates, many did not stay on in the longer term.

There is a high staff turnover rate with 92 percent of all medical workers on temporary contracts.

And in areas classified as *very remote* – most of the Territory's land mass – general practitioners were on average five years older than they were in urban and regional areas. "There's a concern with attracting young people, because GPs do have a retirement date," notes Dr Parker.

### **'Rural origin' a good indicator of intentions: professor**

The doctor of medicine degree run out of Charles Darwin University aims to change those statistics by training up Territory-bred doctors with the hope they will stay. The course is run by Associate Professor John Wakerman, the associate dean of Flinders NT.

"There is very strong evidence that rural origin is a good indicator of rural practice," he said. "So if you select students from rural or remote areas for medical school, they're much more likely to work in those areas.

"We preference NT students and prioritise those."

There is also a strong focus on attracting Indigenous students to the degree, Dr Wakerman said, to increase the woefully small pool of remote-working Indigenous doctors. "We prioritise Indigenous applicants," he said.

All of the students' fees are covered with the condition they stay on to work in the NT when they graduate.

Dr Vellar said he intended to stay in the Territory anyway.

"I'll definitely be working here in 10 years," he said. "I certainly have no plans to leave and I'm quite passionate about working in rural and remote health."

He said he wanted to train up at the Royal Darwin Hospital and then bring those skills to remote Aboriginal communities in the Territory, to improve the health outcomes of Indigenous Australians.

Nadia Daly  
ABC News  
10 May 2018



# I was told I couldn't do it because I was Aboriginal: Erika Chapman Burgess's journey to becoming a Doctor

**Erika Chapman-Burgess is becoming a leader in Indigenous health, but it has not been easy as she has tackled racism, discrimination and prejudice throughout her journey.**

Dr Chapman-Burgess is a quintuplet and grew up in the small country town of Glen Innes in northern NSW. While it was an idyllic childhood, she also faced her fair share of racism.

"It's not until you move away to a bigger place like Newcastle that you realise just how racist regional Australia can be," Dr Chapman-Burgess said.



When she first entertained the idea of becoming a doctor she had to keep it a secret, only telling her mum and dad because she knew

what people would say. "I was told by my careers advisor that I wouldn't get into medicine, so I shouldn't bother applying," she said.

When she shared the news that she was accepted into the University of Newcastle to study medicine, people reacted with disbelief.

"'Oh, medical science?' And I'd say 'No, medicine'," she said. "Their reaction would be 'Oh, like how?' And then people were double-checking in the paper with the university's first round offers, that my name actually had Bachelor of Medicine next to it."

Positive racism has also been a challenge, and she has faced criticism from her cohort for being admitted to the course through the university's Indigenous pathway scheme, called Yapug.

"I was constantly justifying myself," Dr Chapman-Burgess said. "I worked my butt off to get academic awards, but you still feel like an imposter by the way other people treat you."

Dr Chapman-Burgess is now working as a resident for the Hunter New England Local Health District in NSW, and is hoping to become an obstetrician.

## **'We're told we're dumb, we're stupid'**

Yapug program convenor Sharlene Leroy-Dyer said statistics showed Indigenous people were well behind when it came to educational outcomes.

"Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are less likely to go to university — realistically it's harder, we don't get the same opportunity base," Dr Leroy-Dyer said.

"A lot of Aboriginal people come from a deficit base within school, so we're told we're dumb, we're stupid — I was a classic example of that.

"It's heartbreaking that, in this day and age, our kids are still being told that. I could give you hundreds of examples of people in exactly the same situation as Erika.

"When I first came to university, I handed in my first assignment and I was told I didn't belong here."

Dr Leroy-Dyer is the first Aboriginal person to get a PhD in management at the University of Newcastle. She said Yapug was a program that helped local Indigenous students complete any university degree. "We instil within that program not only skills for education, but skills for life as well as culture," she said. "We can do it. We do have the ability and the skills, we just have to have the right programs and the right support mechanisms."

## **Sixty per cent experience racism or bullying**

Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association (AIDA) president Kali Hayward said racism continued to be a problem. The association surveyed Indigenous medical students and doctors in 2016, with more than 60 per cent reporting they had experienced racism, bullying or both at least once a week.

"It does need to be spoken about — the word racism needs to be out there, and we need to have some conversations about what we can do about it," Dr Hayward said. "We at AIDA are working with the universities and colleges to face this issue around racism and bullying. It's a very real issue."

Dr Hayward said it was not just an issue for Indigenous healthcare practitioners. "I think this is something that needs to be tackled right from very early on," she said. "From kindergarten to Year 12, we need to normalise the discussion around Aboriginal history and Aboriginal people so that it isn't something other."

"I think within medical school training we need to normalise teaching around Aboriginal health and Aboriginal health issues, just like we do with cardiology and dermatology. It's an ongoing learning practice, rather than just a once-off and a bit of a novelty. I think we need to embed it into our system."

## **It needs to start with government**

Dr Leroy-Dyer said there was still a lot of work to do and a lot to overcome.

"We need to change the mindset of a lot of people, and I think it needs to start with our Government actually recognising the true history of Australia," she said.

"If they did that, and if they promoted the true history of Australia, then I think we would have steps towards actually getting out of the deficit for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. "We're the most disadvantaged people in our own country. It's actually a crime, and it really needs to change."

*Sarah Shands and Dan Cox  
ABC Newcastle  
30 May 2018*



# CARVED TREES NEWEST ATTRACTION

## for by-passed town on NSW mid north coast

**At the entrance to Bulahdelah Mountain Aboriginal Place, on the New South Wales Mid North Coast, visitors can now discover carved trees alongside modern signage, pointing the way to two spectacular summits.**

It is the newest tourist attraction for a town that was bypassed by the Pacific Highway in 2013, but still boasts the tallest tree in NSW, *The Grandis*, on the western edge of Myall Lakes National Parks.

At last week's *Reconciliation Week* launch locals said they hoped the place they call *Boolah-Dillah* will become a crowning jewel of the region's surrounding tourist attractions – Newcastle, Port Stephens, and Hunter Valley.



*A young man carves a dendroglyph into a tree at Bulahdelah Mountain Aboriginal Place*

"It's a centrepiece," said Len Roberts, CEO of the Karuah Local Aboriginal Land Council. "From the sands of Port Stephens to the snow gums of the Barrington Tops."

Worimi Country, traditional home to 18 clan groups of the Worimi People, is bounded by four rivers – the Hunter to the south, Manning to the north, and the Allyn and Paterson Rivers to the west.

"It's a place where we can have camping, we can have cultural experiences and dancing," Mr Roberts said.

"We can link the lot and we can make this a unique and wonderful tourist experience."

### **Indigenous experience for international visitors**

Beverley Manton, a board member of the Bulahdelah Local Aboriginal Land Council, and a traditional custodian of the Worimi Nation, said the opening ceremony was "a recognition of past ownership of the land. It's about giving Aboriginal people the opportunity to have a say in what happens on this mountain," she said.

"Our hope for having this Aboriginal place in our name now is that it will give us an opportunity to develop an enterprise." Ms Manton said the land council is in talks with Tourism Australia about running cultural tourism

ventures on the mountain. "When people come to Australia they want to have an Indigenous experience," she said. "They want to learn about the traditional owners of this land, they want to know what it is that makes us tick, why we are the oldest living people on this earth."

To meet that expectation Ms Manton said the land council has worked hard in recent years 'to build and restore our culture to the way it was years ago'.

"We've worked really hard with the Saltwater Freshwater festivals and developing our own young dancers, that we've [seen here] today," she said. "We've worked very hard in building our culture and building it up for something to be proud of. To make our young people proud of that as well, and in turn recognising the elders, and what they have left for us to work with."

### **Partnership makes forests more available to the community**

The Bulahdelah Mountain Aboriginal Place is the result of a partnership between the Forestry Corporation and the Karuah Local Aboriginal Land Council.

General manager of hardwood forests for the corporation, Dean Anderson, said the organisation is "keen to make the forests more available for community wherever we can".

"If we can have Aboriginal places, where they can share the culture with the wider community, and we can help with that ... then it's a real special feeling," he said.

Mr Anderson said the corporation has been "custodians of the forests for a hundred years now, but the Aboriginal were custodians for 50,000 years before that. We've just had the last moment in time, and to be able to add to that legacy, in terms of looking after the forest, is an absolute privilege."

### **Reconciliation in a practical way**

Carvings, or dendroglyphs, depicting Aboriginal motifs of dolphins, goannas and boomerangs were produced by local Aboriginal people, who learnt the skills during workshops on the mountain.

It is a project that the head of NSW Aboriginal Affairs Jason Ardler said is a great opportunity for jobs, tourism and reconciliation.

"It's getting people on to traditional Aboriginal land, it's exposing them to traditional Aboriginal practice, it's revitalising the practice of carving in the local Aboriginal community," he said. "The great opportunity is for the local community and [tourism], obviously – and that will be great for the local economy."

"To expose people to local Aboriginal culture, and to share that history and that experience, it's all about reconciliation, and in a really practical way, so it's a great initiative."

*Anthony Scully, ABC Newcastle  
11th June 2018*



# NATIONAL SORRY DAY 2018

## SUNDAY 27 MAY

### The recent ASG's annual Sorry Day commemoration at Mona Vale was another outstanding success.

Just listening to local Aboriginal Wassell sisters singing in language to start the day was a delight.

Not to mention the *Welcome to Country – Smoking Ceremony* by Laurie Bimson  
- Aboriginal Dancers, Ged McMinn and Hayden from the Central Coast  
- and Didgeridoo playing by Matt James.

A special thanks goes to chair person Carol Richie and her reading of Auntie Nancy's poetry.

Thanks also to Alan and Helen for the sausages and onions, and Laurie with the BBQ.

We appreciate Amelia Corr as one of the *Stolen Generation* for sharing her family's story.

Thumbs up for Karleen and her basket weaving, and Eve for her Beeswax food wraps.

Our thanks goes to John and Gary for the display of Aboriginal artefacts  
– and the wooden boomerangs for the kids to paint.

And a big round of applause to all those that brought afternoon tea to share  
– and all the kitchen hands and those helping with the setting up of the hall  
and the clean-up afterwards.

ASG–MWP also gratefully acknowledges the generosity of Woolworths and the Northern Beaches Council for their financial assistance.



## KARAJARRI COUNTRY back in Aboriginal hands

**Unspoilt beaches, brilliant blue skies, and saltwater lagoons with glimpses of whales and dugongs. Welcome to Karajarri Country – the gateway to the Kimberley in remote WA – one of Australia's best kept secrets.**

Port Smith, about 170 kilometres south of Broome, could soon be seeing more tourists flock to this exquisite patch of natural beauty.

The traditional owners of the land, the Karajarri people, have grand plans to create an Aboriginal-owned and managed tourism gateway to the Kimberley.

The Karajarri Traditional Lands Association is already issuing tourism permits, and next year plans to open a hub for visitors and a new base for rangers.

In 2002 and 2004, the Karajarri won native title claims to be recognised as the owners over most of their country. And a recent acquisition of a four-hectare park



at Port Smith, with help from the government-funded Indigenous Land Corporation was one of the final pieces of the puzzle.

*Bridget Brennan*

See the full story at:

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-06-17/kimberley-indigenous-land-could-be-your-next-travel-destination/9873826>





# BECAUSE OF HER, WE CAN!

8-15 JULY 2018

**Under the theme:**

**Because of her, we can! - NAIDOC Week 2018 will be held nationally from Sunday 8 July and continue through to Sunday 15 July.**

NAIDOC Week 2018 is a celebration of the invaluable contributions that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have made – and continue to make – to our communities, families, rich history and to our nation.

As pillars of our society, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have played – and continue to play – active and significant roles at the community, local, state and national levels.

As leaders, trailblazers, politicians, activists and social change advocates, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women fought and continue to fight, for justice, equal rights, our rights to country, for law and justice, access to education, employment and to maintain and celebrate our culture, language, music and art.

They continue to influence as doctors, lawyers, teachers, electricians, chefs, nurses, architects, rangers, emergency and defence personnel, writers, volunteers, chief executive officers, actors, singer songwriters, journalists, entrepreneurs, media personalities, board members, accountants, academics, sporting icons and Olympians, the list goes on.

They are our mothers, our elders, our grandmothers, our aunties, our sisters and our daughters.

Sadly, Indigenous women's role in our cultural, social and political survival has often been invisible, unsung or diminished.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women were there at first contact. *Because of her, we can!*

For at least 65,000 years, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have carried our *dreaming stories*, *Songlines*, languages and knowledge that have kept our culture strong and enriched us as the oldest continuing culture on the planet.

They were there at the *Torres Strait Pearlers Strike* in 1936, the *Day of Mourning* in 1938, the 1939 *Cummeragunja Walk-Off*, at the 1946 *Pilbara Pastoral Workers' Strike*, the 1965 *Freedom Rides*, the *Wave Hill Walk-Off* in 1966, on the front line of the *Aboriginal Tent Embassy* in 1972 and at the drafting of the *Uluru Statement*.

They have marched, protested and spoken at demonstrations and national gatherings for the proper recognition of our rights and calling for national reform and justice.

Our women were heavily involved in the campaign for the 1967 Referendum and also put up their hands to represent their people at the establishment of national advocacy and representative bodies from the National Aboriginal Congress (NAC) to ATSIC to Land Councils and onto the National Congress for Australia's First Peoples.

They often did so while caring for our families, maintaining our homes and breaking down cultural and institutionalised barriers and gender stereotypes.



Poster by Bigambul woman, Cheryl Moggs, from Goondiwindi

Our women did so because they demanded a better life, greater opportunities and – in many cases equal rights – for our children, our families and our people.

They were pioneering women like Barangaroo, Truganini, Gladys Elphick, Emily Kame Kngwarreye, Eleanor Harding, Mum Shirl, Ellie Gaffney and Gladys Tybingoompa.

Today, they are trailblazers like Joyce Clague, Yalmay Yunupingu, Evonne Goolagong Cawley, Nova Peris, Lowitja O'Donoghue, Banduk Marika, Linda Burney and Rosalie Kunoth-Monks – to name but a few.

This year's NAIDOC poster (above) was Painted by Bigambul woman, Cheryl Moggs, from Goondiwindi showing the courage and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. The painting has three sections with image overlays depicting stories. Uniting as one!!! (Spiritual and cultural connection) Across the stars (skies), connected to our lands and waterways. Keeping our *dreaming stories*, *Songlines*, language, knowledge and future strong for all *First Nations* and generations to come.



# Manly Beach honours local Aboriginal woman for Reconciliation Week

**The Sebel Manly Beach managed by Accor Vacation Club brought the community together to recognise and honour National Reconciliation Week which is running from the 27th of May to 3rd of June this year.**

The lobby of the Sebel, which was animated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artwork, resonated the theme *Don't Keep History a Mystery*.

The lobby featured an Aboriginal poetry piece called *Reunion*, written by Nancy Hill Wood, from her poetry book *Nobody's Child*. Nancy Hill Wood is the foster mother of Sacha Wood, a staff member of The Sebel Manly Beach. Nancy is a respected Elder in the Aboriginal community and has resided on the Northern beaches for 38 years. She is very well known in the community and her poetry depicts her challenging, yet incredible life story as an Aboriginal woman. During her life Nancy was a proud member of the Aboriginal Support Group Manly Warringah Pittwater. Nancy was committed to helping those in her community and strived to preserve her

culture, traditions and stories through her poetry. Sacha, was delighted with the recognition and homage paid to her mother by The Sebel Manly Beach.

The Sebel Manly Invited Royal Far West, Manly Surf Club, Manly Life Saving Club, local restaurants and retailers as well as the hotel guests and staff to learn more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories and to share that knowledge within the Northern Beaches community. Aboriginal Dreamtime Fine Art Gallery from The Corso Manly had a beautiful exhibition in the hotel lobby. The morning concluded with a surprise performance by Les Daniel organised by The Sebel Manly. Les is one of the true veteran performers in indigenous dance in Australia. He came to The Sebel Manly to share the culture and histories of Australia's First nation's people, through his stories, songs and didgeridoo performance.

What a wonderful way to unite and educated the community on such an important day!



## *Reunion*

*It's an exciting day  
To see our friends again.  
Our sisters and brothers  
Of long ago.*

*My heart pounds fast  
As the day begins  
To this very special day  
Of a reunion, and happiness too.*

*I arrive at the place, wondering  
Who will be there  
As they seem to be less every time  
When we gather together again.*

*It was a beautiful welcome  
I will never forget, as we all  
Come together as one.*

*Our faces light up. As we remember each other  
Of the boys and girls of long ago.*

*We all grew up from babies to teens.  
From the memory of sadness and torture too.  
We will never forget the childhood we had.  
It won't go away. Until our lives fade away.*

*by Nancy Wood Hill*





# ACT treaty needed to right past wrongs made against Indigenous people

It is an interesting coincidence that the newly declared *ACT Reconciliation Day* public holiday falls between two significant anniversaries relevant to Aboriginal demands for sovereignty and self-determination without which reconciliation is illusory. It was held the day after the first anniversary of the presentation of the *Uluru Statement* and two weeks before the thirtieth anniversary of the *Barunga Statement*.

*Barunga Statement*, despite having been effectively ignored for the last 30 years, has been given life by the Northern Territory government which has announced that it will, consistent with the demands incorporated in the statement, begin negotiations with the Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory (NT) for a treaty.

In committing to negotiations for a treaty, the NT has followed the example of the governments of South Australia (SA) and Victoria where the path to a treaty has been the subject of detailed consideration. Regrettably, the incoming Liberal government in SA has terminated the process for a treaty in that state. However, Luke Foley, the Opposition Leader in NSW, the jurisdiction with the largest Indigenous population in Australia, has accelerated the momentum for state-based treaties by committing a Labor government in NSW to a treaty with that state's Aboriginal people.

While differing in content and structure, the *Barunga* and *Uluru Statements* are in essence concerned with the same issues, namely self-determination, self-management, sovereignty, land rights, truth telling, an historical reckoning and justice. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia are calling for these rights to be recognised and guaranteed through a treaty or a *makarrata*.

The response of successive national governments, of both persuasion, over the last 30 years to the widespread aspiration of Indigenous Australians for a treaty has been disappointing, to say the least.

On June 12, 1988 when the then-Prime Minister Bob Hawke was handed the *Barunga Statement* by one of its main proponents, the then-chairman of the Northern Land Council, Galarrwuy Yunupingu, he promised that he would enter into a treaty with Indigenous Australia during that term of government, before 1990. Unfortunately, after returning to Canberra with the *Barunga Statement*, the Prime Minister abandoned his commitment to a treaty. So disappointed was Galarrwuy Yunupingu that the promised treaty did not eventuate that he asked for the *Barunga Statement* to be returned to his people. In doing so he made the comment: "Sovereignty turned into a treaty, the treaty turned into reconciliation and reconciliation turned into nothing." He asked, therefore, for the *Statement* to be returned to Barunga, where he said: ". . . we will hold a sorry funeral ceremony. We will dig a hole and bury it. It will be a protest... The time has come to send a strong

message to Canberra and the world about the disgraceful state of Indigenous Australia, where governments have failed ..."

The rejection by the current PM, Malcolm Turnbull, of the central features of the *Uluru Statement from the Heart* was far more categorical than that of Bob Hawke 30 years earlier. It is of course not only the federal government that has failed to meet the expectations or needs of Aboriginal people. ACT-specific data on Indigenous disadvantage in Canberra, whether it be incarceration rates, child protection, housing, educational outcomes, rough sleeping, homelessness, drug abuse, mental health or poverty, is as bad, and in many cases worse, than in other jurisdictions in Australia.

In response to the aspiration of Aboriginal people across Australia for formal recognition of their sovereign rights and rightful place in their own country, progressive State governments, followed by the NT government and now the Labor Opposition in NSW, have not been prepared to wait for leadership or action from the Commonwealth, and each has formally committed to the negotiation of a state-based treaty.

However, in light of the example of these other jurisdictions, it is a matter of some surprise that the ACT government has not evinced any interest in exploring the question of a treaty with the Aboriginal community of Canberra. The fanfare greeting the declaration by the ACT government of the *Reconciliation Day* Public Holiday, and its purported commitment to reconciliation, should be considered against its apparent disinterest in a treaty and indeed the paucity of new Indigenous-specific funding in the recent ACT budget. It is, after all, a widely, if not universally-held view within the Aboriginal community that a negotiated treaty is a pre-condition to achieving reconciliation.

An additional barrier to reconciliation in the ACT is the assumption that native title in the Territory was extinguished by the conversion of all land in the Territory (other, perhaps, than some historical cemeteries and old stock routes) into leasehold following the transfer of the land from NSW to form the national capital. This issue presents a massive challenge to our capacity to ever achieve reconciliation in Canberra.

If the ACT cannot find a way of reversing the extinguishment of native title we are doomed to never be reconciled. It is time for the ACT government to get serious about reconciliation. It is time we in Canberra began to talk about a treaty to acknowledge and right the wrongs perpetrated by the dispossession of Aboriginal people in the ACT from their lands, without consent and without compensation.

Julie Tongs OAM  
CEO of Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal  
Health and Community Service



**Monday July 9**  
7.30pm - 9pm

**ASG-MWP Information Night**  
Guest Speaker Ian Jacobs talks about Aboriginal rock engravings  
Mona Vale Memorial Hall, 1606 Pittwater Rd.  
Includes light refreshments. Free event – All welcome.



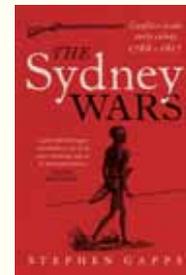
**August 4**

**National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day**  
SNICC – the national voice for Indigenous children  
Theme for 2018 – *Celebrating Our Children for 30 Years*  
<http://www.snaicc.org.au/news-and-events/>



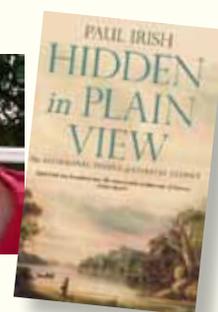
**Monday Aug 13**  
7.30pm - 9pm

**ASG-MWP Business Meeting**  
Mona Vale Memorial Hall, 1606 Pittwater Rd. All ASG members welcome.



**Thursday Aug 23**  
6.30pm

**Meet the Author Stephen Gapps**  
***The Sydney Wars: Conflict in the early colony 1788–1817***  
Event cost: \$5.00 includes light refreshments. Bookings essential.  
Phone: 9847 6614 or Email: [library@hornsby.nsw.gov.au](mailto:library@hornsby.nsw.gov.au)  
Venue: Hornsby Library, 28-44 George Street, Hornsby.



**Monday Sept 10**  
7.30pm - 9pm

**ASG-MWP Information Night:**  
Paul Irish talks about his book ***Hidden in Plain View***  
Includes light refreshments. Mona Vale Memorial Hall,  
1606 Pittwater Rd. Free event – All welcome.

**Monday Oct 8**  
7.30pm - 9pm

**ASG-MWP Business Meeting**  
Mona Vale Memorial Hall, 1606 Pittwater Rd.  
All ASG members welcome.

**Monday Nov 12**  
7.30pm - 9pm

**ASG-MWP Movie Night:** A film by Stephen Page  
***SPEAR – A foot in each world. A heart in none.***  
Includes light refreshments. Mona Vale Memorial Hall,  
1606 Pittwater Rd. Free event – All welcome.



**Monday Dec 10**  
7.30pm - 9pm

**ASG-MWP Business Meeting**  
***2018 End of the Year Get-together***  
Mona Vale Memorial Hall, 1606 Pittwater Rd. All ASG members welcome.

ASG-MWP would like to thank Dee Why RSL, Pittwater RSL, Forestville RSL,  
and Avalon Beach RSL for their continued support in 2015



## An Invitation to join us

**Aboriginal Support Group  
Manly Warringah Pittwater**

Founded 1979

Membership is \$25 per year

**(02) 9982 1425**

P.O. Box 129 NARRABEEN NSW 2101

**[www.asgmwp.net](http://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. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Editors or members of the ASG.  
Please email articles where possible to [the\\_elimatta@gmail.com](mailto:the_elimatta@gmail.com)  
If you use any of the material it would be appreciated if the extract is set in context and the source acknowledged.



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