

An invitation to join
the **ABORIGINAL SUPPORT GROUP**
in celebrating its

25th

BIRTHDAY

on **SUNDAY NOVEMBER 21st at 3pm**
by **the shore of Narrabeen Lake**
at **Narrabeen Scout Hall,**
near the end of Goodwin Street –
south of the Tramshed bus stop

Relive the Group's long journey *On The Road To Reconciliation* that started in 1979. Bring along any photographs and memorabilia of interest that you have as there will be time to reminisce, meet old friends and make new acquaintances.

We will have a sausage sizzle after 5pm and a birthday cake. Your contribution of finger food and drinks of your choice would be appreciated. We have the Scout Hall booked so we can party in any weather but if a glorious evening no doubt we will end up sitting in our usual spot by the lake, so throw in a chair or blanket for this purpose.

Nature Nature, the duo of didgeridoo and flute, will be performing its musical magic during the afternoon. *Nature Nature* feature an exciting blend of virtuoso didgeridoo playing by Henry Phineasa with flute, clarinet and percussion by David McBurney. Their music is inspired by and infused with the sights and sounds of nature, its magnificence and many moods. Henry creates incredible bird and animal sounds on his didgeridoo.

David and Henry met many years ago through their links with the Royal Blind Society – Henry as a client and David as the gardener for the Society.

Henry is an Indigenous Australian who from the age of seven received didgeridoo lessons from his grandfather. This led to a lifelong relationship with the didge. He was a formidable sportsman well before he lost his sight in his early teens and he now plays blind cricket.

Dave has also been playing music since he was young. Nature is a big part of his life and music, always drawing inspiration from his farm in Southern NSW. He is responsible for the fragrant garden project created for the Royal Blind Society.

We are very excited that *Nature Nature* has agreed to play at our 25th birthday celebrations.
Be part of this special occasion!

And how did it all begin?



GENESIS OF A GROUP Once...Many Years Ago

People meet in many and different ways. Movements often begin through happenstance, from small and insignificant events. This is the story of a group of people living on the Northern Beaches of Sydney, who came together because they had a shared passion to see the right relationships forged between Indigenous and settler Australians.

Pam Beasley and Tom Gavranic were both travelling on the top of a double-decker bus along Barrenjoey Road toward Narrabeen. Pam was reading about Aboriginal Australia. Tom was interested in her book and papers – looking over her shoulder. It was a casual meeting between strangers, out of which a mutually stimulating conversation ensued. At Narrabeen, Enid McIlraith, an old friend of Pam, joined the bus. Pam was delighted to introduce her to Tom. An even more interesting conversation flowed throughout the duration of the journey. A future meeting was suggested and agreed to – the beginning of an ongoing commitment.

Pam had a deep interest in, and concern for, Indigenous people. A teacher, she had studied anthropology and history. One of her daughters had married into the Mumballa family, a well-known Aboriginal family. Tom, a physician, was Medical Officer, at Yirrkala and Groote Eylandt early in the 1970s. He was enthusiastic about the Aboriginal Treaty Committee, which had gained publicity and some support throughout Australia. Enid had experience in the Trade Union Movement and had also been personal assistant to Rev Alf Clint, who had established Tranby Aboriginal Cooperative College in Glebe.

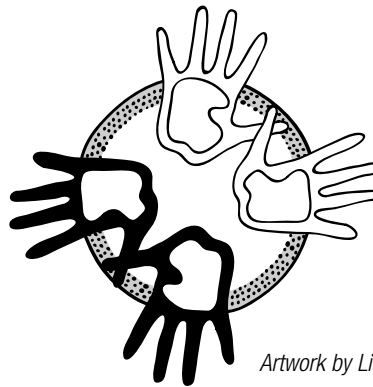
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On that day in 1979, none of these three people would have thought that a community of people calling themselves the Aboriginal Support Group – Manly Warringah Pittwater would in the year 2000 be celebrating twenty-one years of striving for a more just Australia.

From **A STORY TO TELL**
... ON A ROAD TOWARD
RECONCILIATION 1979 to 2000

Copies of **A STORY TO TELL** will be available on Sunday November 21. Cost \$30. If purchasing by mail please add \$5 for postage



Artwork by Lisa Buxton

SPINNING THE WEB

I have wondered from time to time whether the hard work and effort our website Co-ordinator Vanessa Walsh puts in to her work is justified.. Does anyone out there access www.asgmwp.net? Well it seems I have my answer and it is that they do. Here are a few examples.

One recent enquiry was from an Australian who lives in France. He had bought a boomerang for his French girlfriend when last in Sydney and was trying to find out more information about the Aboriginal artist. As it happened we could help him. I passed on the information to my Koori friend who through her network was able to give Louis in France his answer.

One obvious use of the information on the web is for students seeking information for all sorts of assignments. From Trinity College, Dublin, came a request from a PHD student doing a thesis on political apologies – Why is it important for Aboriginal people to have an apology? Closer to home a student from Macquarie University is doing a Masters in Wildlife Management and had a question which I could pass on to the local Aboriginal Community. Last month UTS students doing Aboriginal studies as part of a primary teaching assignment obviously were alerted to our website as I had no less than eight students asking for help.

Isn't it great to know that connections are being made in different countries and for different reasons. Oh, one last request this time from a phone call. Jacqueline Martin (also known as Millane) was a student at Narrabeen High in 1986/7. Her best friend was an Aboriginal girl, Christine Everett, who lived at the Lakeside Caravan Park at Narrabeen. They shared lots of secrets and good times. Jacqueline has recently found out that she is Aboriginal and would dearly love to meet up with Christine again and share this with her. Jacqueline can be contacted on 0403 513 756.

Anna Bell

ELIMATTA ONLINE NATIONALLY



www.asgmwp.net

A request has been received through the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) for the National Library of Australia (NLA) to archive *Elimatta* "because of the significance of the community service" it provides.

Elimatta will be included in the PANDORA Archive, Australia's Web Archive, which was set up by the NLA in 1996. PANDORA enables the archiving and provision of

long-term access to online Australian publications which are "considered to have national significance" and are "of lasting cultural value".

The NLA will catalogue *Elimatta* and add the record to the National Bibliographic Database (a database of catalogue records shared by over 1,100 Australian libraries) as well as to the AIATSIS online catalogue. This will encourage among the researchers using libraries an increased awareness of *Elimatta* and the Aboriginal Support Group – Manly Warringah Pittwater.

All contributors to *Elimatta* need to be aware and in agreement that their work will be archived by the NLA. Additional information about PANDORA can be found on the Library's server at
[:http://pandora.gov.au/index.htm](http://pandora.gov.au/index.htm)

In one Aboriginal language Elimatta means 'our home'. In naming our newsletter this way we express our dream for this country – a real home both to Aboriginal people and later settlers. That depends on us being 'at home' with each other and to each other.

The Support Group's first newsletter was produced in March 1982. The 1987 Winter edition was named *Elimatta* for the first time.



BURIED COUNTRY

The Story of Aboriginal Country Music

The video *Buried Country* was shown at the August Information Night.

Normally when we view videos we have the pleasure of the big screen, and a professionally projected image. But not on this occasion.

The screen was 'homesize' – about average for the normal lounge room. But despite its comparative smallness it had a distinct advantage. Perhaps because of its smallness, it drew the 40 plus members together as we might have been drawn together around a campfire. And indeed there were scenes of campfires on the video which no doubt inspired this reflection.

It was in that warm, intimate atmosphere that we gathered to enter into this important piece of history – Aboriginal country music.

The video starts in 1963 with Jimmy Little and his *Royal Telephone*. Some of us with our modern agnostic intellects might have balked at the idea of praying to Jesus. Others of us with pseudo theological sensitivity might have found it improper for prayer to be put on the same level as telephone usage. But despite all that, everyone was pleasantly caught up in the memory of Jimmy Little and all were happy to recall the time when we too might have found the metaphor of the telephone helpful.

A note that was jarring for me was hearing and seeing Aboriginal children sing in their own language – *O Come All Ye Faithful*. I suppose that back in the 1970's there

was some well-meaning Christian missionary who was delighted to hear this Christmas evergreen coming from the lips of Aboriginal children. But on Monday night it did nothing more than remind me of manipulation and the sad demise of Aboriginal culture through the imposition of strange European customs.

Although much of the Aboriginal culture was lost, the spirit took hold of country music style and told the stories through that medium. Names like Tex Morton, Slim Dusty and Billy Bargo came to the screen. And we heard the ache in the heart that lay behind titles like *Give the Coloured Kid a Chance* and *My Brown Skin Baby, Don't Take Him Away*.

And we heard the pleasant but sharp reply of Auriel Andrews to the woman who stupidly thought that she was passing a compliment by saying – 'But you don't look Aboriginal. You are not dark enough.' Auriel replied with charm and cheekiness – 'I wish I were darker'. And we heard of Bobby McLeod buying a guitar in Bathurst Gaol for two packets of Drum tobacco.

I would have liked to have heard more of the story of the 'Club' in Fairfield, Melbourne, organised by Harry and Wilma Williams. Every Monday night for a couple of years Aboriginal people gathered together to learn and hone their skills for the stage and recording studios. One beautiful melody still lingers in my mind as I write – *Bluegums Calling Me Back Home*.

I was a bit surprised that there was only a passing reference to Yothu Yindi and then I

realised that the story has moved on since the video was made. Then, Yothu Yindi, I guess, only started to gain acknowledgment and would no doubt feature in a second video.

When I came home on Monday night, I played a couple of tracks from Yothu Yindi's *Tribal Voice*. I found myself listening in a way that would not have been possible when I first bought that disc. The track *Gapu* from the Gumatj clan of north eastern Arnhem Land made me aware of the life-giving movement of the tides and the importance of salt-water. I will think of that song when next I walk Dee Why Beach.

Such is the power of music. That was the theme of the video. It made us aware that a statement can be made and a story can be told but there is a powerful addition when the story/statement is linked to music. With that addition we sense more than just the blunt fact of history. Rather, the power of the words enters the heart and we are different people. That is true for all of us who had the chance to see the video. You may be interested to know that it is available from Warringah Library – *Buried Country: The Story of Aboriginal Country Music IND 781.642 WAL*.

And if you would like a regular update on what is happening with Aboriginal music, you could tune into Koori Radio 93.7 FM.

Graham Ellis



GURINGAI AWARDS



*Tribal Metaphysics -
Sculptures by Nikki McCarthy*

Unfortunately the article in the last issue of *Elimatta* about the 2004 GURINGAI AWARDS omitted to include details of the award presented on the night to Narrabeen artist Nikki McCarthy. The award acknowledged her ongoing contribution to *Reconciliation, Aboriginal Rights and Issues*. Nikki is a Wiradjuri woman from the Dabee tribe and is a member of the Support Group.

Ku-ring-gai Council commissioned Nikki to create a series of bronze sculptures for instillation in the courtyard at Gordon Library.

The totems were unveiled during the 2003 Guringai Festival. Entitled *Tribal Metaphysics*, they contain symbolic designs and came from a need to create awareness of the many sacred sites and tribal groups in the Ku-ring-gai area.

In July, two of the totems were stolen and to date no information about the theft is known.

POOR CHURCH

The **ABC Radio National *Encounter*** program *Poor Church* was broadcast on Sunday July 25. It dealt with the St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church in Redfern which had been in the forefront of a social justice ministry. The Aboriginal community does not own the church but it has been a refuge and home for them the past thirty-five years. Right next door to the church is the Aboriginal Medical Centre, which is on land handed over to the Aboriginal community by the Sisters of Mercy twenty years ago.

Until recently, the church and community had been served by an extraordinary parish priest Father Ted Kennedy. He came to Redfern in 1971 inspired by the reformist spirit of the Second Vatican Council and ministered to the poor and marginalised of Redfern particularly its Aboriginal community. His ministry extended beyond St. Vincent's Church – the congregation has members living outside Redfern and even Sydney. Under Father Ted Kennedy the church became a community centre, every Tuesday and Friday morning putting on meals for whoever wanted to come. Aboriginal people still talk of Father Ted's services to them, at funerals, christenings, marriages and caring for those who needed help.

Rhonda Ansiewicz and Hilary Bone, who were active in the Aboriginal Support Group – Manly Warringah Pittwater and involved with the St. Vincent's Church in Redfern, took part in the **ABC Radio National *Encounter*** program.

Rhonda Ansiewicz said *The guidance Ted gave in what he would defer us – and himself – to the Aboriginal people.*

If you wanted to work out something, or something was amiss, he'd say "ask Mum Shir!" or "go and ask Auntie Gladdie". It kind of threw us all into this chaotic, unknown space, where you had to work through it yourself, Ted wasn't there to help. Like he'd offer you the space and you could take it, but he wasn't there holding your hand. And then relationships developed out of that. It drew you into that vortex of suffering, of celebration, of struggle of social justice and that for me encapsulates a lot about Redfern.

Hilary Bone commented: *There was this total absence of hierarchy. So when you walked into the church – Ted's church, as it was and always will be I guess – you felt at home. And I think the irony now is that we have this hierarchical church imposing power from the top down to the bottom. With Ted's church it was empowerment, rather than being subject to the imposition of power.*

Hilary is referring to the recent changes which have occurred under newly appointed priests who are followers of the Neocatechumenal Way, a conservative formation within the Catholic church. They disapprove of the community meals and want to place more emphasis on formal worship and appropriate Church decorations. They are failing to win over the Aboriginal community which is unhappy with the changes in what has been their community church for so many decades.

Ruth Fink Latukefu

Indigenous News Summary, May - August 2004
Aboriginal Support Group website www.asgmwp.net

IS ABORIGINALITY GETTING A FAIR GO IN OUR SCHOOLS?



Aboriginality = Aboriginal students, Aboriginal staff and Aboriginal studies both as a curriculum strand and as a subject.

The fact that thirty four people were present when the Forum began indicated the level of interest in this topic. A question and discussion session that lasted more than an hour following the two presentations was confirmation of the Support Group's appreciation of the quality of the presenters' presentations and its sincerity in probing further into the issues involved.

Charles Davison, President of the Australian Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, presented some confronting information about attitudes to Aboriginality, the levels of literacy and of health among Aboriginal children. He drew on his vast experience in working with community organizations and government bodies such as the Department of Education and Training, the Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board and the Board of Studies as well as his own life experiences. The purpose of his work over the past several months, as co-chair of the Committee to review Aboriginal Studies in New South Wales, has been to finalise recommendations for changes to improve outcomes and life opportunities for Aboriginal students.

In last year's NSW Basic Skills Test for Year 3 students, Aboriginal children were nineteen months behind the State average. This was much the same for Year 5 Test results and Charles pointed out the effect of this on children's attitude to school, to learning and non achievement (sometimes also due to hearing problems) leading to a very high drop out rate by High School age. While Charles' work on the Review Panel was initially to look into the HSC Aboriginal Studies course the Minister broadened the scope to review Kindergarten to Post Compulsory education. This Review has obviously been much needed and, if the recommendations (at an

estimated cost of \$20 million per annum) are approved and acted upon, could result in historical and significant reforms which will indeed let Aboriginality begin to have a fair go in our education system.

One teacher who has already been proactive in heightening the awareness of her school to Aboriginal issues is Lorelle Savage who is an English History teacher at St Catherine's Anglican School for Girls, Waverley. Lorelle also works on the Council of Churches in relation to the Stolen Generation. The three students (Years 8, 9 and 10) whom she brought with her are from a group of ten students on boarding scholarships that the school has offered over the last five years to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who otherwise would have limited educational opportunities. She believes that just the presence of Aboriginal students gives the impetus to raise in the other girls an awareness of others in the community.

At St. Catherine's Lorelle has also included significant activities during NAIDOC and Sorry Week in an attempt to change the culture of the school to be more accepting and approving of Aboriginality. It is crucial that the Principal supports staff in such attempts as well as in allowing courses such as Aboriginal Studies to be time-tabled despite low numbers and encourages the inservicing of all staff on Aboriginality.

Two reasons were offered by Lorelle as to why Aboriginality is not given a fair go: firstly, that a vast majority of teachers don't know where Aboriginal children "are at" in terms of their own diverse backgrounds in their own Aboriginality. Secondly, the wider social injustices result in Aboriginal children coming to school with a sorrow and worry that many Aboriginal people bring with them from the past.

Lorelle is very hopeful, however, that one day Aboriginality will have a fair go through our children and her students who may be able to bridge the gap better than we have. Both Charles and Lorelle have a heightened sense of hope due to great achievements being made with Aboriginal students in Ryde TAFE and schools in Mount Drutt which have programs that encourage the involvement of local Elders in imparting some of their knowledge to the students.

Sharon Esterman

ANNUAL AECG PRESENTATION NIGHT

The Guringai Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) holds an annual end of year presentation night for Aboriginal students who attend schools throughout Northern Sydney. For the second year the Support Group will be presenting the *Sue Osborn Memorial Prize* to a student who has shown outstanding aptitude in Computer Studies.

Sue Osborn was a dedicated and passionate worker for the Support Group. She was responsible for the layout and design of 'our' history, *A Story To Tell* and was Editor of *Elimatta* for many years before her death.

An invitation has been extended to the Group to be part of this important event.

For details of date and venue please contact Lara Rutley, Chairperson, Guringai AECG, 9905 2200



NEWS FROM NGUNAWAL COUNTRY

INDIGENOUS BOOK GROUP

The University of the Third Age (U3A) is one of the most enthusiastic and ever-growing groups in the ACT. Classes have waiting lists. When we first came to live here I was interested in an Indigenous study program but it did not continue into the next year.

I was exchanging Indigenous books with an old friend who has been living here for many years and very involved in U3A. One day over lunch I suggested that it would be great to have a book group discussing works by Indigenous authors. U3A committee members were enthusiastic and on July 5 the first group came together. It will continue until December.

At the first meeting members introduced themselves and talked about their expectations, choosing relevant autobiographies. Friends from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) invited the group on a guided tour of their building to explain their work. The National Museum of Australia and AIATSIS are situated close to one another on the Acton Peninsula on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin.

According to Aboriginal Studies Press (ASP) the Institute is the world's leading centre for research into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and lifestyles – past and present. In addition to research facilities, the Institute houses community outreach and family history services, major archival collections, an extensive public library and a publishing arm.

When the Institute was opened in 2001 it was a wonderful event blending the deeply cultural with contemporary symbolism and speakers. One of the long-time supporters of such an Institute, and an enthusiastic speaker on that occasion was the Hon. W.C. Wentworth. Even as a very old man he spoke with passion, recalling something of his own commitment to justice for Aboriginal people over many years. I remembered him as a local Member of Parliament on the Northern Beaches. I recalled how encouraging he was of the tentative beginnings of the Support Group. He was surprised to learn it was active still.

To experience something of the work of the Institute and to be so warmly welcomed and guided by the staff made the day a very special one. There was an open invitation to visit. Back in the National Museum to conclude the morning's program there was an enthusiastic request that the course be continued into 2005!

The Tears of Strangers by Stan Grant was one of the books chosen to be read and discussed by the group. Mr Stan Grant Senior, a Ngunawal Elder, and a member of the Indigenous Education Unit, ACT Schools, was invited to speak to the group about his own life and work in this area. This was a good opportunity for the group to meet a local Elder and to learn of his commitment.

Sally Morgan's *My Place*, Leah Purcell's *Black Chicks Talking; Songman. The Story of an Aboriginal Elder of Uluru* by Bob Randall and Connie Nungulla McDonald's *When you Grow Up* are other volumes chosen for the course.

In reflection, and thinking about the volume of autobiographical material available now, I realise how much has happened over the years. The voices of Indigenous experience are helping us to learn, and to feel a history, that has been denied. Indigenous women and men are being heard now as they tell their stories. Their books are on sale in big bookshops; they are being read on radio; they are in libraries. "Sorry" may be a word the Prime Minister will not say but the words that are strung into sentences, paragraphs, pages and books by Indigenous women and men are reaching the world. They are integral to our history.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA HOSTS GROUND-BREAKING MEETING

In August the National Museum of Australia was the scene of a meeting of overseas and Australian guest speakers and participants to an outstanding symposium – *Narrating Frontier Families in Australia and North America*. This was a collaborative project with Yale University, The Australian Centre for Indigenous History at the Australian National University (ANU), The National Museum of Australia (NMA) and the Charles Darwin University. The U.S. Embassy in Canberra also collaborated.

Two long days were insufficient to cover the magnitude of the subject, however the presentations were impressive and very challenging. There was an excellent combination of Indigenous and Settler speakers from around Australia and North America. Some Australian speakers included Professor Ann McGrath (ANU), Dr Tom Griffiths (ANU), Vicki Grieves (Wollotuka School of Aboriginal Studies, University of Newcastle), Dr Gordon Briscoe (ANU) who spoke movingly on *Half-caste policy*. Prof. Ann Curthoys (ANU) presented a paper on *Theoretical Perspectives on Frontier and Nation*.

Guest speakers from North America included Assoc. Prof. Nancy Shoemaker (University of Connecticut) whose topic was *American 'Squaw Man' on the Fiji Frontier*. This was a very interesting history of the pushing of frontier white settlement into the Pacific. Dr Michael Kral (Yale Group for the Study of Native America) spoke on *The Cry of Love: Colonial Culture Change and Social Perturbation among Canadian Inuit, 1953-2004*. Listening to him was akin to hearing again the story of this country's Indigenous peoples. I learned that, despite the fact the Inuit have a pride of place in Nunavut, there are countless problems still within the society.

Professor Clara Sue Kidwell, Director, Native American Studies Program, University of Oklahoma, was the Keynote Speaker at an enthusiastic public meeting. She was welcomed to the podium and to Australia by Dr. Mick Dodson. Her topic was *Native American Women as Cultural Mediators*. As a woman whose tribal affiliations are Choctaw and Chippewa, she spoke of the role of Indian women – including Pocahontas, the Algonquin woman whom we have mythologised. Many of these Indian woman were strong and able to play major roles in their own tribes, between tribes, and among the white invaders of their lands.

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Professor Jay Gitlin, Deputy Director, Howard R Lamar Centre for the study of Frontiers and Borders, Yale University, presented a fascinating audio visual titled *Images of Indigenous People in Nineteenth Century American and Australian Landscape Painting*. It was especially telling seeing how the land was seen by those early settlers and the techniques used to paint it.

Margo Neale, the Program Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Programs (ATSIP), National Museum, whose creativity and boundless enthusiasm fashions so much that is the life of the Museum, talked about *Museum Frontiers*. I find the NMA a compelling place to visit. I am hoping that all that was achieved under the directorship of Dawn Casey will remain. I hope, too, that relevant 'frontiers' will ever be a part of the life of the NMA.

A highlight among many was the presentation by Amanda Reynolds who is currently a Curator, ATSIP, NMA. For the past 18 months she has been working with communities from Southeast Australia to build the National Historic Collection and develop two new exhibitions *Tooloyn Koortakay: Squaring Skins for Rugs* and *We're Here: Tasmanian Aboriginal Communities*. The exhibitions were officially launched on August 9. They were wonderful!

Jill Perkins



NORTHERN SYDNEY ABORIGINAL SERVICES DIRECTORY

The Northern Sydney Aboriginal Social Plan was launched in September 2000 and was endorsed by the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council. The plan was a project of the Northern Sydney Planning Co-ordination Forum (NorthPlan) and was co-ordinated by a working group consisting of local Councils and a number of State and Commonwealth Government Departments. The plan covers the 11 local government areas in Northern Sydney (Willoughby, Lane Cove, Hornsby, Ryde, Warringah, Manly, Pittwater, North Sydney, Ku-ring-gai, Mosman and Hunters Hill).

One of the projects identified in the Aboriginal Social Plan was the development of an Aboriginal Services Directory. Funding was made available by the Department of Community Services for the compilation of the Directory and DOCS has undertaken to continue this funding for three more years.

Hornsby Shire Council which auspiced the project has undertaken to update this Service Directory electronically on an annual basis. This ensures that Recommendation 6.1 of the social plan *'that a strategy be developed to ensure that the database of services and networks is maintained on an ongoing basis'* is carried out.

The Service Directory has been made available in hard copy to ensure that it is accessible to its target group – the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Northern Sydney. The vibrant artwork on the cover of the publication is from a painting by Aboriginal artist Jessica Birk of Cromer. It was created by Jessica especially for the project.

The Directory was launched by Hornsby Shire Council on Wednesday July 7 during NAIDOC Week in the presence of Dharug Elders Aunty Mavis Halvorson and Aunty Edna Watson. A smoking ceremony also took place.

Contact Larry Trudgett, Department of Community Services on 43238941, if you would like to obtain a hard copy of the Service Directory.



Cover Artwork by Jessica Birk

KAY-YE-MY POINT, FAIRLIGHT

On Friday September 17 a ceremony was held to name one of Manly's most beautiful lookouts – *Kay-ye-my Point* – in recognition of the traditional owners. Manly Council's Heritage and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committees, with representatives of the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council and the Aboriginal community, reinvested the site with the spirit of the Kay-ye-my people. Allen Madden, Metro Education Officer, acknowledged Country. Rick Shafter, Aboriginal Heritage Officer for Manly Council, spoke honouring the memory of the traditional owners and describing the site as part of the cultural landscape, one of a series of significant places in the district.

The Mayor of Manly, Dr. Peter Macdonald, officiated at the unveiling of a plaque commemorating the Kay-ye-my people.

The plaque also outlines for visitors the historical and cultural significance of the renamed point. Dr. Macdonald said that during his term of office he hoped Manly Council would continue to support the restoration of traditional names.

Kay-ye-my Point with its panoramic views across Sydney Harbour to the Heads, is located on the Manly Scenic Walkway above Fairlight pool and below Margaret Street. It is an easy walk from Manly wharf suitable for wheelchairs and strollers.



The Mayor of Manly with committee members and guests at the commemoration.
Photo: Manly Council



New Life Baptist Church - Cross Connecting

Greg Stigter, the Pastor at the NEW LIFE Baptist Church, Dee Why, has been a friend and supporter of the ASG for many years. We have enjoyed his music at several *Journey of Healing* commemorations.

Greg has invited Aboriginal Pastors to speak at evening services at the Baptist Church during the year. I heard Pastor Yowandi Clancy speaking when he was visiting Sydney with his wife Nooni. Yowandi and Nooni are a unique Apostolic Aboriginal Ministry in the Western Kimberley and Pilbara Region of Australia. Yowandi was born and raised in the desert country of Western Australia and until he was a youth had made no contact with Europeans. In the early 1990s he took on an assistant role in the Looma Church and later decided with Nooni to undertake an outreach program in the community. At present they are based at Newman and visit many surrounding communities including the area near Jingalong, made famous by the film *Rabbit Proof Fence*. Though already speaking a number of Aboriginal languages and dialects,

Nooni and Yowandi are learning the local language to be able to communicate effectively in the heart language of the people in this region.

I also heard Pastor Ella Gordon speak. Ella is an Aboriginal Elder from Brisbane, whose people come from the desert country near Uluru. She is the mother of eight children, has thirty six grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. It was when she was pregnant with her eighth child that she made the decision to join the ministry.

Ella, who was in Sydney for a conference, has a delightful sense of humour and seems tireless - this was the fourth time she had spoken that Sunday. She was accompanied by family members and friends and amongst them was Noelene Dempsey from Toowoomba. Noelene is a health worker, who with her brother is planning a program to support Indigenous students at several Toowoomba high schools. She spoke of the need for signage and resource materials such as brochures to be culturally appropriate especially when working with young people.

Yowandi and Ella are gifted and passionate speakers, committed to their ministries and to spreading the message of love, understanding and peace across the nation.

The NEW LIFE Baptist Church is in the heart of Dee Why at 28 Fisher Road. A parking area at the rear of the Church is accessible from Francis Street. Greg Stigter can be contacted on 9971 5209 or mobile 0401 274 636 if you would like to know more about the Church and its outreach program – *Cross Connecting*.

Pat Frater

REGIONAL METRO OFFICE



A new neighbour of the Baptist Church is the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council. Metro has opened its first regional office at Suite 203, 30 Fisher Road, Dee Why. Margaret Sutherland is the Office Manager. Telephone **99841877** or mobile 0413 242 272.

2004 OXFORD FALLS PEACE PARK ANNIVERSARY EVENT

On Saturday 14 August I attended the Oxford Falls Peace Park to be part of the Anniversary Event. There was a very good crowd of people and it was evident that the mixture of people was very diverse, there being many different nationalities among the large group.

Paul Couvret from the Peace Park Advisory Committee was MC and Susan Moylan Coombs, Project Officer of the Northern Sydney Aboriginal Social Plan, acknowledged Country. Stephen Blackadder, Warringah Council General Manager, welcomed the community and a message from the Mayor of Chichibu, Warringah's sister city in Japan, was read. The guest speaker was Mr. Abdullah Eissa from the Islamic Society of Manly Warringah who gave a very inspiring address on his ideas of peace for our world and also how different religions or cultural groups had very similar ideas showing that in many ways the majority of people in this world do agree.

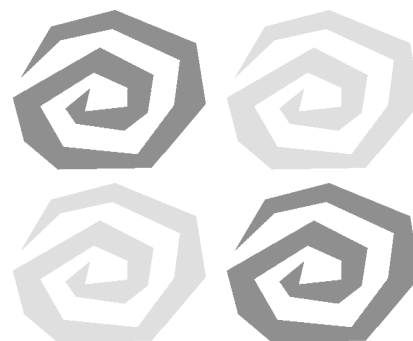
We were then inspired by various performances. The *Thullii Dreamtime Dancers* were really wonderful to see. Cassie Davis' two little children, Kalina and Jordan (Jackie O'Hare-Ferguson's grandchildren) joined in the dancing, this being only their second performance with this group. They were a real delight to watch as they joined in with the other dancers – they are learning quickly.

There was a song from students from Chichibu who are currently on an exchange visit to our community. A group of Tibetan dancers, in their very beautiful traditional costumes, performed two traditional dances. Then a quartet of women singers, *Eloquence Quartet*, sang three songs in their accapella style – what a wondrous sound they made.

We were all invited to make a peace flag from a piece of fabric with Jizo (a Buddhist symbol of compassion, optimism and courage) images and a message for peace, either painted or drawn onto the fabric.

These peace flags which are being made all over the world will be collected together at a Buddhist Monastery in America and made into special banners to be displayed in the cities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, Japan, during the 60th anniversary, in August 2005, of the horrific atomic bombing of these cities. It is hoped to get enough Jizo flags for each of the people who died in or as a result of these bombings, approximately 270,000 people. The whole event was very moving and the Peace Park itself is a beautiful place with a really good atmosphere and feeling about it.

Carol Ritchie



OXFORD FALLS PEACE PARK

A park that inspires peace and preserves our heritage

In 1986 Oxford Falls Public School closed. This last one teacher school in metropolitan Sydney had been an important part of the Oxford Falls community. The present building, constructed in 1930, provided a meeting hall for locals and was the site of a War Memorial built by World War II veterans from the local area.

The Oxford Falls Progress Association approached Warringah Council to help save the site and in 1995 the school and surrounds came under Council's care and management.

During this time many suggestions had been made as to how the school and grounds should be used. Paul Couvret, Warringah Councillor and World War II veteran, proposed that the school and grounds become a Peace Park. This proposal would ensure that the historical aspects of the school site were celebrated as well as giving the site an important and inspirational new role.

A series of workshops with the local community were conducted. Two of the aims emerging from the workshops were to celebrate peace and to acknowledge local and regional heritage -both Aboriginal and recent.

An olive tree was planted to commemorate the opening on the 19th August 1995. In early 1996 the concept designs were complete and 3 stages were planned.

1. War Memorial, prunus grove and restoration of schoolhouse.
2. Recreational area of grass terraces.
3. The still centre surrounded by a frieze wall.

The frieze wall surrounding the contemplative still centre is constructed from sandstone. The wall pulls together the strands of heritage evident in the history of the school and its site - geological, Aboriginal, environmental and social.

Tina Graham
Local Studies Librarian
Warringah Library Service

Reference: Oxford Falls Peace Park – a park that inspires peace and preserves our heritage.
Report by Warringah Council.

SEASONALLY ADJUSTED

You thought there were four seasons, right? Wrong, says an Aboriginal teacher who turns European concepts of weather on their head.

Did you notice that the cicadas were late this year? So were the blooming of the waratahs and the mating dance of the eagles. Perhaps you noticed that the jacarandas were purple way past university exam time and the roses were slow.

All of this means the bushfire season will also be late, says Frances Bodkin, a D'harawal Aborigine on her mother's side, a knowledge-holder about weather and time, and a part-time education officer at Mount Annan Botanic Garden. Bushfires were unlikely at Christmas time, she says, with problems more likely to arise during February.

When Bodkin and I met late last year, the news was full of dire warnings about the imminent impact of global warming. The international insurance industry was telling the world to expect premium hikes to cover the costs of natural disasters, and the temperature had jumped 20 degrees in a matter of days.

None of this had come as a surprise to Bodkin. She says she saw the signs of tempestuous weather a long time ago. The three different cycles that in local Aboriginal lore describe the weather have come together in a dangerous collision. The hot, dry season of the small annual cycle is matching up with the hot, dry season of the 12-year "Life" cycle and, worse, both are meeting up with the hot dry season of the much longer 10,000-year "Dreaming" cycle.

"With these cycles coinciding we can expect extremes," says Bodkin. "It will swing from cold to hot and as we move towards the end of February it will keep swinging but everything will get hotter. Any rain that comes will only come as storms." Many of the Aboriginal Dreamtime legends were born in other times, long past, when the hot, dry periods of the three seasonal cycles coincided. For example, one legend says that many thousands of years ago

there was a terrible bushfire after two rainless years. The beloved Wiritjiribin – a wise woman who gave advice to mothers, lovers, children and even warriors – tried to save the people from the fire. She hid the children in potholes in the river, for example. But when the fire had passed, no one could find Wiritjiribin. They called her name and it was echoed by a creature hidden in unburned ferns. A strange bird stepped out, regarded the people with its head to one side, just as Wiritjiribin had done, danced and laughed like she did, and then spread its tail over its head showing a necklace of gold and brown in its feathers, just like Wiritjiribin's favourite necklace. As the lyrebird danced it began to rain.

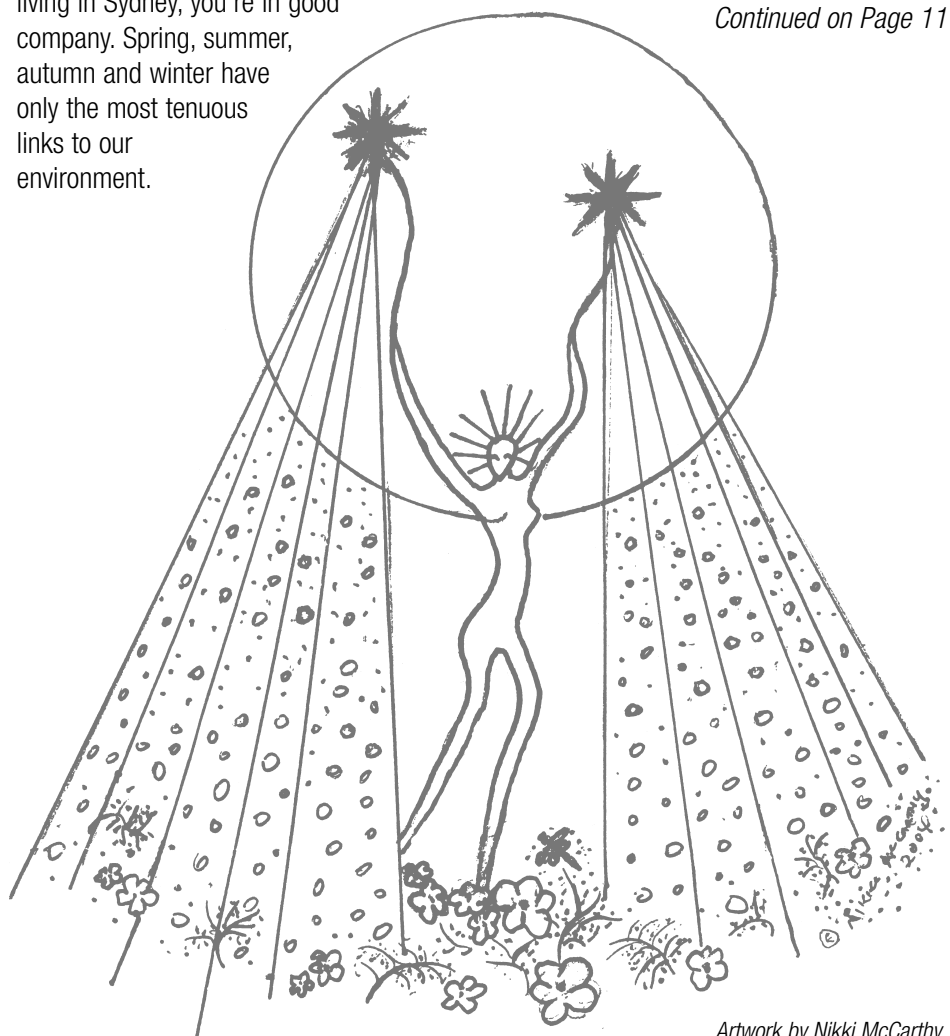
If you've ever thought the concept of four seasons, one imported from the northern hemisphere, doesn't fit your experience of living in Sydney, you're in good company. Spring, summer, autumn and winter have only the most tenuous links to our environment.

The Aboriginal people who lived in the Sydney area for tens of thousands of years before the arrival of the Europeans had a different way of seeing the seasonal change. They saw six seasons in a cycle based on the blooming of plants and the behaviour of insects and animals rather than on a counting of days.

In the D'harawal calendar, the year begins with the Murrui'yunggoray, signalled by the flowering of the waratah, *Telopea speciosissima*. The new year is celebrated with ceremonies involving a drink made from its nectar. Frances Bodkin has some in the fridge and brings me a glass. It's pale pink, sweetly delicious and knee-meltingly alcoholic.

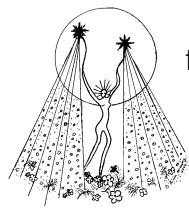
This is also the season that the dew on emerging flannel flowers can be collected to make a potent treatment for emotional stress and grieving.

Continued on Page 11



Artwork by Nikki McCarthy

Continued from Page 10



The correa is also flowering, giving lovers an opportunity to present each other with a bunch to form their marriage.

If all doesn't go well, explains Bodkin, they can divorce at the same time the following year by handing back a bunch of flowers from the same plant.

Bodkin's mother drew circles in the dirt to show how the annual seasons fit into larger cycles, the largest being the Talara'gandi. The word means ice and fire and it covers the geological time span that has seen ice ages, the forming of deserts and dramatic coastline change.

Local Aboriginal stories tell of a time when what is now Sydney was a three-day walk from the coast. So now the hot, dry parts of each cycle have come together.

"Unusual things are happening," says Bodkin. "The ironbarks, which only produce viable seed every four to six years on their own individual program, all seem to have viable seed this year. You can tell because as they come into heavy flower, the plants growing underneath the trees all die, leaving the ground bare. When this happens you can't eat the seed."

At the same time, Bodkin notes, the persoonias (or geebung) are fruiting and flowering together; the parrots have had two separate layings; baby eels made a huge escape from the Botanic Gardens in

Sydney and held up river dredging at Menangle; and a grey box at Mount Annan, which was described by William Howe in 1810 as being dead, has produced new growth. It all points to bad weather. And, says Bodkin, global warming will only exacerbate an already volatile situation. She's predicting extreme weather for at least 200 years. That's the long-range forecast, but for something closer, she says to keep an eye out for the Cootamundra wattle *Acacia baileyana*. If it flowers well just after Easter, we'll be in for a pleasant season of mild days. But until then, prepare for headline-grabbing weather.

Robin Powell

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The Sydney Morning Herald

Youth Drama for Child At Risk Forum

The 2004 Northern Beaches Child At Risk Forum – *Connecting Families: Creating Communities* – was held on Thursday 9 September at the Manly Warringah Rugby Leagues Club in Brookvale. One hundred workers from various government and non-government agencies working with children and adolescents attended. The day began with an Acknowledgment of Country by Susan Moylan Coombs.

After morning tea there was a Service Integration Forum Theatre. This presentation involved young people from the Manly and Warringah Youth Councils and four students from Biala Aboriginal Girls Hostel, Allambie Heights – Marissa Barker, Larka Cutmore, Carmel Vale and Eliza Williams. They were trained at NIDA, at two weekend workshops given by NIDA acting coach Nicholas Flanagan. The young people interpreted scenarios around child protection issues and acted them out on stage. The role of the Forum Theatre was to allow workers to explore with each other ways in which organisations respond to clients needs and the impact this has on both users and other service providers. It gave a chance for service providers to look at ways in which their services could be more responsive in supporting clients effectively around child protection issues.

As a participant of the Forum day, I would like to thank the young people involved for doing such a fantastic job in really bringing alive issues of such significance within our community. THANKS!

Angela Hall
Student, University of NSW

VALE
Lynn
POLLACK

1940 - 26.9.2004

Lynn was a truly wonderful person who made a vast contribution to the People's Movement for Reconciliation.

She travelled with the Sea of Hands round Australia Tour in 1998, installing the hundred thousand 'hands' at places from Uluru to Broome to Perth.

Lynn's work in establishing and sustaining the valuable online contact through Reconnect was another wonderful contribution and linked up, at least in part, with her driving of the Older Women's Network diary 'What's On'.

Lynn has been an inspiration to those who knew and worked with her and will be sadly missed.

Frennie Beytagh.

BURIAL SITE OF TRINITY BAY



Photo: Margaret Berckelman

One of the least assuming sites in the Manly Cemetery is a simple sandstone block with a metal plaque. It marks the burial site of a young Aboriginal man who died in 1891 at the age of seventeen. He was known locally as Trinity Bay, named after his birthplace of Trinity Bay in North Queensland. When a baby he had been found abandoned on a beach near Cairns by Dr. Sachs of Manly who reared and educated him.

Trinity was well known and respected within the Manly District. He played cornet in the Town Band and took an active part in the local sport as a cricketer and footballer. It was following a game of football that he contracted a chill and died of pneumonia. Trinity was buried in Manly Cemetery and for many years his body lay in an unmarked grave. In 1956 the Manly Warringah and Pittwater Historical Society installed the headstone and plaque on the site. The Society also planted a West Australian Weeping Myrtle tree on the grave which is close to the western fence of the cemetery, plot B281.

Information is from an article in *The Manly Daily*, issue dated 7.1.71, courtesy of Manly Library's Wellings Local Studies Collection

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The ASG-MWP greatly appreciates the financial assistance it has received recently. Registered Clubs, under the Community Development Support Expenditure (CDSE), are required to distribute to the community 0.75% of all gaming machine profits that the club makes over \$1 million. The following clubs on the Northern Beaches have made CDSE grants to the Aboriginal Support Group.



RSL CLUB



- Dee Why RSL Club towards the publishing of the 2004 Winter and Spring issues of *Elimatta*
- Pittwater RSL Club to cover cost for guest speakers for Information Nights
- Manly Fishing and Sporting Association to assist with expenses for the ASG website www.asgmwup.net

A grant has also been received from Warringah Council for the 2005 Summer issue of *Elimatta*. Under the auspices of Warringah Council the Support Group applied successfully to the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services for a *Volunteers Small Equipment Grant*. The funding has purchased a projection screen for Information Nights, a photocopier and a small filing cabinet.

The 2003 Cultural Development Grant from Pittwater Council was used to purchase eight videos to be screened at the Support Group's Information Nights and for loan to the community. These were purchased from ANTaR (Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation), Film Australia and the ABC.

The titles are:

Sorry Proof Country	From Sand to Celluloid
Mr. Patterns	Buried Country
Black Chicks Talking	Bush Mechanics
Babakuieria	Blood Brothers

These are available for loan at no cost to community organisations, schools and churches where there is an interest in learning more about Indigenous issues.

Contact Lizzie Landers, 9918 2594, if you would like to borrow from our video library.

AN INVITATION TO JOIN US...

The Aboriginal Support Group – Manly Warringah Pittwater

meets on the third Monday of each month at 7.30 pm.

On the first Monday of each month we usually have an Information Night at 7.30pm.



Please note next Informtion Night is not until March 7 2005

Venue: **Angophora Room,**

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

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

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.

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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