

GURINGAI FESTIVAL AWARDS CEREMONY

Cocktails, kangaroo canapes from Lillipilli in the Rocks and entertainment from the Nadeena Dixon Band greeted those gathered for "the Awards". Young and old enjoyed the family performance of the Thullii Dreaming Dancers. Expectantly we awaited the Award giving ceremony.

North Sydney Council hosted this enjoyable occasion on Friday July 2, 2004 to celebrate and acknowledge groups and individuals in the community who have made a significant contribution to Reconciliation. Mayor Genia McCaffery presided over the evening's events.

Rob Welsh from the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council presented the winners with their beautiful prizes – artwork by Shane Haurama and framed awards to the following:

Youth AwardJessica Birk
CulturalDavid Watts
EducationEnid McIlraith

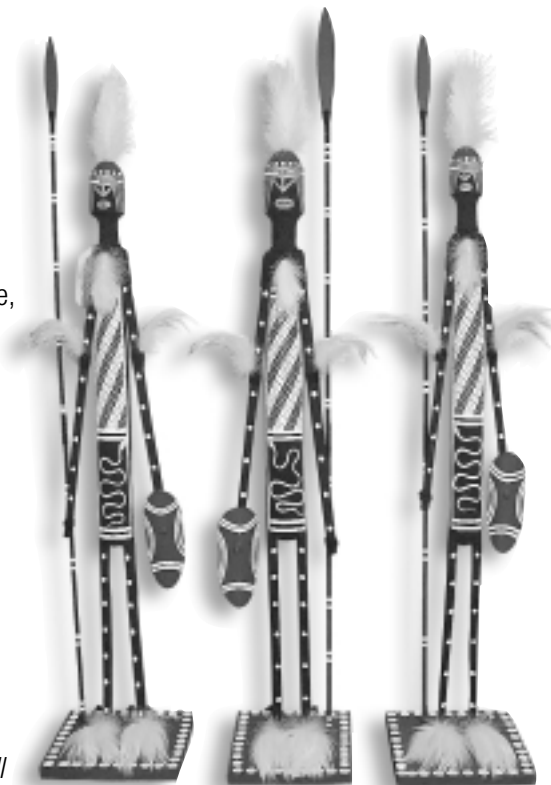
Individual AchievementSusan Moylan Coombs
GroupAboriginal Support Group Manly Warringah Pittwater

Awards were also given to Carol Ritchie, Helen Ford, Carolyn Pattison, Ian de Vulder, Virginia Gow and the Lane Cove Residents for Reconciliation.

We are honoured that our Group and several individual members have been recognised in this way at the inaugural Guringai Awards.

We hope all ASG members who have worked so willingly during the Guringai Festival will have an opportunity to enjoy the Shane Haurama statue that we have received.

Anna Bell



Guringai festival awards: sculpted by Shane Haurama

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS ON THE ROAD TO RECONCILIATION...

Join members and friends of the Aboriginal Support Group on **Sunday 21st November** from 3pm, to celebrate our 25th birthday.

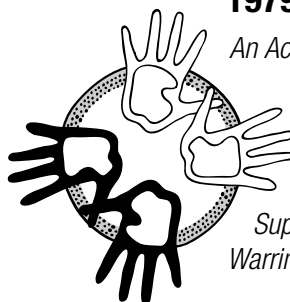
The venue is the Narrabeen Scout Hall on the shore of Narrabeen Lake (near the end of Robertson St), south of Tramshed bus stop.

Please bring a plate of food to share.

Further information

Anna Bell **9913 7940**

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



An Account of the
First Twenty-One
Years of the
Life and Work
of the Aboriginal
Support Group Manly
Warringah Pittwater.

Original artwork by Lisa Buxton

In the foreword to **A STORY TO TELL**

Kevin Cook wrote:

"This is an important book for all Australians. It is a grass-roots story of how non-Indigenous people can make a real stand in the fight against racism and for justice."

Recently reprinted copies of **A STORY TO TELL** are now available. Cost \$30 each plus \$4 packaging and postage. Copies can also be purchased at the 25th birthday celebration on Sunday 21st November and at ASG meetings.

IMPRESSIONS OF THE GURINGAI FESTIVAL 2004

Festival Launch

The 2004 Guringai Festival got off to a colourful and happy start at the Willoughby Civic Centre, Chatswood. A multi-coloured puddle of hands provided by ANTaR identified the cause.

It was a beautiful, sunny day and the venue on a busy street ensured a lot of curious bystanders.

The councils and local schools were well represented.

Susan Moylan Coombs, the Chairperson of the Festival, set the tone with a warm welcome. She was followed by the Acknowledgment of Country by Allen Madden of the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council and a flag raising ceremony.

However, the highlight was the uninhibited and joyful dancing of young school children as part of the performances by the Yidaki Didg and Dance Group and then the Wombat Wobble by Helen Moran and Johnnie Huckle. It just goes to show that our children are the hope of a reconciled future.

Carol Macintosh

Journey of Healing

This year's Journey of Healing commemorated the sixth anniversary of Sorry Day. The ASG-MWP organised the annual local tribute at the Bilarong Scout Hall on Narrabeen Lake, one of hundreds of such events around the state and nation. The hall was packed to the rafters with members of the community, ATSIC representatives, local and state government representatives, and an abundance of children.

Local school children contributed art work on the theme of Reconciliation to decorate the Scout Hall. Girrawaa Yaruudanginya (Goanna Dreaming) entertained the crowd with dances from several NSW Aboriginal nations. Local artist Nikki McCarthy encouraged people to contribute to the painting of a dreamcatcher, a collaborative artwork in progress. The evening was skillfully facilitated by Susan Moylan Coombs, who touched everyone with her own story of being removed from her family. Several Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people were invited to speak

about what Sorry Day and Journey of Healing meant to them and what they could do personally to nurse Reconciliation in their own lives and community. One point stood out clearly amongst the many things said: the Stolen Generations is not a phenomenon of the past – the legacy of the removal policies will remain with us as a nation until truthfully and meaningfully addressed.

Megan van Frank

'Yolngu Boy'

A wonderful film screened at Collaroy Cinema to a full house. It featured spectacular imagery of the East Arnhem Land and Kakadu regions of the Northern Territory. The story reveals the unbreakable bond of friendship between three young Aboriginal boys. As the boys grow, they struggle to blend their traditional culture with that of modern white society. The plight of young Aboriginal teenagers is portrayed through the boys' journey to stay true to each other, their lore, traditions, land and their dreams. The film was great and viewing is highly recommended. Yolngu Boy is now available on video.

Sally Raymond

Whale Songlines Community Workshops

From old Blinds and Lunch Paper... Cane, pull ties, gaff tape, bamboo, masking tape, old bamboo blinds, chalk, – adults and children – expectancy!! Third eye ??? Put different sized circles on cross struts on long bamboo pole, see a shape; clever. More cane in wavy shapes to link outside of circles, children making small circles to fill gaps. Three other sections being made in similar way.

Next a glueing production line, lunch paper to gluers, to runners to "It", messy fun. The design was drawn on so we painted it, the sewers were kept busy making coverings.

Time to transport "It" to Freshwater Beach, but too big – cut off end. Next day rejoin, mend a few tears, put lights in. It was definitely all worth while. We had enjoyed working together to make the puppets and 10 metre whale. Thankyou Warringah Council for the opportunity to be involved

Pat Fisher

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Whale Songlines: The community built the Whale and operated it on the night.

– Photo Courtesy of Warringah Council

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Whale Songlines

Thousands of people, young and old gathered at Freshwater Beach and watched as the hundreds of children with lanterns alight moved along the beach. They were followed by the magnificent, colourful whale which shone and seemed to move along the waves. There was music and dancing and a story with the tall spirits Kia and Durak of how the whales returned. Fireworks exploded in a grand finale. It was a moving and beautiful experience. Congratulations.

Helen Ford

A History of the Aboriginal Clans of Sydney's Northern Beaches

Author Ian Jacobs generously gave his time to speak of his recent book "A History of the Aboriginal Clans of Sydney's Northern Beaches." Ian is a true local, a teacher whose passion is history and one of his special interests is Aboriginal history. Ian talked about the Kuringai/Guringai people and the 3 clans (extended families) Gadigal, Kayeemaigal and Kannaigal.

They suffered near elimination through disease, mainly smallpox in the early years of colonisation, then dispossession of their land and culture through white settlement. The Aboriginal population was estimated to be at 200 at this time. An important Aboriginal figure was Bowen "Chief" of the Broken Bay tribe (1836 register). He was murdered in 1853.

Inconsistencies, imprecise records leave many unanswered questions, even the name Kuringai/Guringai, but the Aboriginal spirit remains on the Northern Beaches with the abundant rock art and middens.

Denise Barry

Where are we now?

A Public Forum at Warringah Council Chambers about the Northern Sydney Aboriginal Social Plan was opened by the Warringah Administrator, Mr. Dick Persson.

After the Acknowledgment of Country he introduced Sarah Morgan and Paul Hogan, Social Planners at Pittwater and Warringah Councils respectively, and Susan Moylan Coombs, Project Officer for Northern Sydney Aboriginal Social Plan.

They outlined the development of the Social Plan since 1998, supported by the Department of Community Services, Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care and local Councils. The main aims of the Social Plan are to improve outcomes for the local Aboriginal community and to increase coordination and cooperation between individuals, groups and government agencies. Priorities are health, education and housing.

Susan spoke of her hopes and her visions for the Indigenous residents of our area and her concerns about the recent reduction of funding by the Department of Education through Restructuring.

Marcia Rutter

In The Flesh Youth Forum

This was attended by Year 10 students from Pittwater High and some students of Aboriginal Studies from other high schools. The program featured a dance performance, student workshops and the following three guest speakers.

Philip McLaren is a Kamilaroi man who grew up in Redfern, An award-winning author, he focussed on the craft of writing and Aboriginality and the need for continuous broadening of ideas. Some students were interested to hear from 'an expert on writing' and all were interested in a successful life 'against the odds'.

Susan Moylan-Coombs grew up in Sydney but is of Northern Territory descent. She was 'speaking from the heart', telling us of her mother and grandmother and herself, as successive members of the Stolen Generations. Susan spoke of how she has dealt with the losses and gains in her life and the Year 10's were given hope in their part in making our society's future.

Adam Drylie is a Wiradjuri man whose dance group Girrawaa Yarruudanginya (Goanna Dreaming) performed for us. Linking his talk with Susan's, he spoke of the living of Aboriginality in present-day Australia. Adam has much hope that equal opportunity is what we are moving towards and that the youth of today will not allow a slipping back into negative attitudes and actions of the past.

In the Workshops that followed the main points were the positive effect the speakers had on the students. Hearing personal stories from 'real people' brought alive the facts they had read and learnt and allowed them to understand more directly and personally. This was a very positive event for all concerned, leaving speakers, students, teachers, dancers and workshopers energised.

Clair Jackson

BLACK CHICKS TALKING

In the documentary *Black Chicks Talking* the acclaimed actor, writer and director Leah Purcell talks with five dynamic Aboriginal women. This film is a passionate and challenging exploration of black identity. It will be shown at the **ASG Information Night on MONDAY NOVEMBER 1 at 7:30pm**. Several Aboriginal women from the Northern Beaches will be present to discuss the issues raised in the film in the context of their own lives.

Black Chicks Talking will be screened in the Angophora Room, Nelson Heather Centre, on the corner of Jacksons and Pittwater Roads, North Narrabeen. The entrance to the centre's car park is from Boondah Road, off Jacksons Road.



Please Note: There will be NO ASG INFORMATION NIGHT in October due to the Long Weekend.

REMEMBERING PAULINE MCLEOD

On Saturday evening 29th May, I attended the Pauline McLeod Memorial Concert, together with several other members of our Group. This concert was held at the Sydney Town Hall, both to honour the memory of Pauline and her wonderful career as a story teller and writer and also to launch the Pauline McLeod Foundation which will foster Aboriginal artists and performers.

The artists on the program were Adam Hill and his amazing didgeridoo playing, wonderful dancers from NAISDA and the Fresh Dancers, singer Emma Donovan and the beautiful harmonies of the Stiff Gins, the group Nature Nature, a fantastic combination of didgeridoo and flute playing, Betty Little and the wonderful Mr. Jimmy Little with his soft and melodic voice.

Between some of the acts writings of Pauline were read with much emotion. This was both a moving and entertaining concert, well befitting the memory of Pauline McLeod.

Carol Ritchie



PAULINE MCLEOD
AN ABORIGINAL STORYTELLER
Sorry Day 2003

*We heard the news that you had passed away.
The sky cried as we gathered together.
We remembered your smile and the way you were
Always there, the teller of tales.
You always came when we called.
The children listened when you told us of the frog,
That greedy frog, that drank up all the water.
We all listened when you told us about the little black
Snake who obtained the poisoned pouch.
You told us of your pain, of being taken from your family
of going to live with a German couple who raised goats
for a living on their farm.
It was not an easy childhood, but you survived and told
stories to while away the time.
When you grew up you told your stories on Play School
And reached millions of children all over Australia
You told the story of Reconciliation.
How the woman on the river bank had said
"You're welcome", when the squatter said she could stay.
Internationally recognised, you travelled to many lands,
Yarning of the Dreamtime.
Yet fame never made you haughty.
You always had that open smile for a friend.
There's one more dolphin swimming in the star ocean.
Peace be with you, our sister-gal, lest we forget.*

Virginia Gow
22/05/04

Ever thought of being a KOORI FOSTER CARER?

Sometimes things happen within our families and communities that make it difficult for children to live with their parents.

Individuals, couples and families are

needed to look after and care for children until they can go back to their families.

The children range in age from babies through to adolescents and they all need safe and loving environments. Children may need care on a crisis, short term respite or long term basis.

The NSW Department of Community Services (DoCS) has issued an urgent call for foster carers to care for children and young people who can no longer live at home. DoCS primary goal is to work with a family to prevent a child or young person going into care. However, children may need to be placed in foster care as a last resort and there is a commitment to placing Indigenous children with foster carers from the same cultural background wherever possible.

DoCS is looking to recruit individuals to provide crisis and short term care (24 hours to a few weeks) or long term care for several months or more. Training for carers and on-going support is provided.

For further information please contact Cheryl Purchase
(02) 9245 1724

TRIBUTE TO CARA STORM

Cara and Sep moved into the house adjacent to mine in the 1980's. As I travelled back and forth to work, I saw this couple transform their garden into an oasis of colour and restfulness.

We finally met when Cara came knocking at my door to introduce herself as the Neighbourhood Watch person for our area. We chatted and discovered we had interests in common. She also persuaded me in her most persuasive way to be the Neighbourhood Watch person for our adjoining streets. She commented on a beautiful hanging piece in my hall and I told her the background story of the piece created by Aboriginal artist Glory Gnarla from Utopia. Cara then told me of her dismay at the strange and outright racist attitudes of some Australians she had met when she expressed a curiosity and interest in finding out more about Aboriginal culture and heritage. I commiserated.

In 1996 I joined the first Aboriginal Reconciliation Learning Circle and the Aboriginal Support Group. By then Cara was a widow, her beloved Seppy had passed away. I told her about my enthralling course and she joined the second series and the Aboriginal Support Group. From then we were on our way in a shared passion that captured almost every waking hour. It broke our hearts and inspired our actions. Cara had a lifelong devotion to social justice for those disadvantaged.

When she joined the Group she told me that for the first time since arriving in Australia she'd met a group of people with whom she felt at home in spirit. In the winter of '96 Cara attended to witness and support almost every session of the Stolen Generations Inquiry. Her presence was recorded on national Television...always a camera magnet with her wonderful hair and gentle face, I've seen her again and again in documentaries.

She longed to see a time when all Australians were more supportive of Aborigines and so began a campaign of letter writing on every issue that arose. She congratulated, supported, questioned, upbraided and lamented the whole spectrum of our political leaders. A great letter writer and a gifted creative writer – she'd won at least one prize for short story writing. She was a relentless and prodigious letter writer.

When the magnificent Mary Robinson, President of Ireland, was announced as the Human Rights Commissioner for the United Nations, Cara decided to write to her. She sent books, videos, newspaper cuttings, so that Mary would really know the situation of the Indigenous people of Australia. Her efforts were for the most part really appreciated.

Cara worked with Pittwater Council in helping to formulate their wonderful Reconciliation Statement and in all their Reconciliation events. Her particular love and skill was in encouraging young people to express themselves in art and writing.

On the last day that I saw Cara at Mona Vale Hospital, I happened to glance at the flag pole for some reason or other and saw to my

surprise that the Aboriginal flag was flying along with the others. One of our activities has been to encourage this as a sign of respect to our Aboriginal heritage.

I felt then, as I feel now, that the passionate hopes and dreams for which Cara had worked so tirelessly were slowly, slowly ever so slowly moving towards a day when we will be a nation that respects and values Aboriginal people, their culture and heritage.

In Cara's passing, I have lost a friend, a neighbour and a confidante. Our Group have learned so much from her. We will always be grateful for her presence in our lives.

Lizzie Landers

“Compassion is a kind of fire – It surprises. It ignites. It burns. It sears and it warms. Compassion incinerates denial; it especially warms and melts cold hearts, cold structures, frozen minds and self satisfied lifestyles. Those who are touched by compassion have their lives turned upside down.”

Matthew Fox; Creation Spirituality

...quoted by Kath Moody in her tribute on behalf of Amnesty International.

These two tributes formed part of the funeral service for Cara held on 2nd August 2004 at Mona Vale.

A POEM

BY PEGGY FORD LEWIS

*It's not that I have done some wrong, my friend,
But rather that I failed to do some right.
For many years I've wished I could amend
My lack of empathy to ease her plight.
Newly motherless, Gracie came
From an outback place with a long, long name
Of native derivation.
Suburban life she had never faced
And being suddenly displaced
Was utter devastation.
Classmates, we did not realise
How shoes and gloves could agonise
An eight year old not used to rule,
A shame on us – for we were cruel!*

Peggy Ford Lewis died in 2002 aged 104 years

*Poem courtesy of Dee Why. School
for Seniors Anthology for 2002*

52 Years worth of cuddles

Bundjalung man David Dyall recently caught up with some 52 years worth of cuddles.

That's how long it took before Mr Dyall finally met his family, after he was adopted out at birth by his mother, Noreen Grace Jackson (nee Roberts).



Meeting for the first time in 52 years.
David Dyall (52) embraces his oldest sister Gaye Alley (nee Jackson) (51) at Sydney domestic airport terminal

The 52-year-old Principal of Pinnacle State Primary School near Mackay (QLD) said he began his search for his mother in the mid 1970s, and never gave up hope that he might one day find her.

His relentless journey saw him scouring parks and streets in small towns throughout Queensland and New South Wales in order to uncover any piece of information that might lead him home. But nothing came of his ventures, and he began to lose heart.

Meanwhile, Mr Dyall's own daughter 24-year-old Danielle Dyall became so desperate to see her father's anguish resolved that she decided to contact Link-Up (QLD) Aboriginal Corporation – a family tracing and reunion service – for help in finding her father's family.

"Family means a lot to me," Ms Dyall said. "I approached Link-Up initially with a lot of my own interest to search for our family, but now I see how much it has meant to dad as well," Ms Dyall said.

12 months later, after some extensive research and investigation, including a letter published in the Koori Mail in May 2003 which led to some vital information, Link-Up (QLD) caseworker Brett Nutley organised a date for Mr Dyall and his daughter Danielle Dyall to fly to Sydney to meet his newly found family.

But there was good news and bad.

Mr Dyall's mother had passed away ten years previously, never having seen her estranged son again.

But Mr Dyall had siblings, a half-brother and two half-sisters.

Although initially shocked to hear the news via a Link-Up telephone call, Mr Dyall's siblings were eager to meet the brother they had never been told about.

Greeted by family, flowers, and warm hugs all round, Mr Dyall began a new chapter of his life after stepping off the plane at Sydney domestic terminal.

"It was the best day of my life – I was on cloud nine," Mr Dyall said.

"I looked at my brother and sisters for the first time, and the first thing I noticed were their eyes – they were like mine. I thought: 'You are the family that fill in the missing part of my life'".

"I'm catching up on 50 years worth of cuddles," Mr Dyall said.

"Till now, I haven't known who I am, or where I'm from. I haven't been able to fall back on my (blood) family for inner strength – and all of a sudden I have brothers and sisters that are my own blood.

"Now I have the birth of a new life – I have the family I thought I'd never have. It's a wonderful feeling – I don't even have the words to describe it – just feelings of immense love and happiness.

"I can go the grave happy now - this just completes my life," Mr Dyall said.

Daughter Danielle is equally ecstatic at the reunion: 'Hearing Dad say it was the happiest day of his life when he met his brother and sister brought a glow of pleasure, and great warmth to me. I have a whole new family now," Ms Dyall said.

David's younger sister is 38-year-old Lee Jackson-Price.

She remembers feeling 'floored speechless' when the call came from Link-Up breaking the news that she had another brother.

"I just cried," Ms Jackson-Price said.

"Mum (Noreen Grace Jackson) chose not to tell us about David, and I feel sad for her, and sad thinking that I could have had another sibling there to play with growing up... instead of one brother picking on me, there could have been two (laughs)," Ms Jackson-Price said.

Meeting her brother for the first time at the airport, Ms Jackson-Price said she felt an instant connection.



Brothers and sisters moments after meeting for the first time ever.
Gaye Alley (nee Jackson), David Dyall, Bruce Jackson Jnr, and Lee Jackson-Price.

"I just knew he was 'ours' straight away – as soon as I saw his eyes," Ms Jackson-Price said.

"It was like I had hugged him before, even though I hadn't."

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Bingin Dreaming

Peninsula Youth of Today

Think of what the Aboriginal culture means to you. Now create an art piece, in any medium, reflecting your views.

Think you can do it? Because that is the challenge Kai Graham and I put to the youths on the Northern Beaches as part of an Aboriginal art youth expo Bingin Dreaming, in conjunction with the Guringai Festival.

To give you a background, *Bingin Dreaming* was initially a proposal that was created one weekend when we saw art competitions advertised in an Aboriginal newspaper. As a proud mother myself to Kalina and Jordan and Kai as their aunt, we started fantasising about our future Koori Monets. After our short period of lunacy, we came to the realisation that unless our young ones are taught the ways of Aboriginal art this may never happen. This led on to discussions regarding youth within the area. How to give them the knowledge they need as well as the community recognition they deserve.

After a Monday of phone calls, Kai was invited to a meeting at Warringah Council with the organisers of the Guringai Festival. That day she impressed them with a proposal of a youth art exhibition for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists, reflecting their feelings about Aboriginal art and culture. Any medium, traditional or modern, ages 15-24. Art workshops would be run beforehand over a 6 week period, to give them a background in Aboriginal art, artistic ideas and a place to meet people with similar interests.

She then proceeded to pound the pavement, finding prize donations from local businesses and getting the local community aware of the potential of our youths. Manly Youth Council kindly offered their help and the use of their Youth Centre for workshop and exhibition use.

The Biala Girls and their host parents were also welcoming, letting us conduct workshops at their home. Workshops were made more effective with the generous donation of canvases and paints from none other than the ASGMWP!

There were 20 entries into the exhibition, and come 18th June we were eager to see how the public accepted the entrants and their works. The crowd was smaller than expected but the atmosphere was fantastic, with the Biala Girls reading poetry and dancing for the occasion, and speeches aplenty from ourselves and the judges, Nikki McCarthy, Susan Moylan Coombs and Allan Rutledge.

It was amazing to see so many young people taking such an interest in the workshops and finding their voice through their art. With such enthusiasm and dedication, many were surprised at their seemingly undiscovered talent and we were proud to hear that their new found confidence in their creativity was also reflected into the rest of their lives.

As this project came to an end, another one opened for Kai: Indigenous Youth Art Co-ordinator for Warringah Council's annual art exhibition, also a fantastic exhibition filled with talent. On the opening night the expertise of Peter and Sharron Williams from Thullii Dreaming was appreciated, resonating our pride in the recognition of the Indigenous youth section, the first year this section has been in the exhibition. Some members of Thullii Dreaming conducted a smoking ceremony and Acknowledgement of Country, bringing a wonderful traditional feel to the whole evening.

As a youth of 19 herself, Kai brought with her the vitality and empathy that is important when working with young people from various walks of life.

Throughout this journey, I find it encouraging that all involved, Kai included,

contribute their talents to our community and stand up for what they believe in. In recent newspaper articles I have viewed, they speak of the youth of today being 'lounge chair activists', only interested with the issues that seem morbidly appealing on television, though not being morally objective enough to fight for their opinions. Having met these wonderful teens, I have renewed faith that this is not so, and I only have one thing to say to these journalists ...see you at our expo next year!

Cassie Davis



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Pittwater resident and older sister 51-year-old Gaye Alley (nee Jackson) agreed: "It was like we'd already known him...and he really is one of ours."

Ms Alley said she readily welcomed him into her home and heart from that moment on: "We are family orientated, mum gave us that – why wouldn't we welcome him in?" Ms Alley said.

David's brother Bruce Jackson Jnr (40) shares the sentiment: "I feel there's a lot of 'brother things' that I've missed out on growing up without David. I'm looking forward to the experiences we can share now as family together – more birthdays on the calendar, those kinds of things."

"I just feel sad that David's mother wasn't here to experience this (reunion)," Mr Jackson Snr, step-father to Mr Dyal said. "Noreen would have tears running down her face."

Link-Up is a family tracing and reunion service for adopted, fostered, removed or 'other' Aboriginal people. The toll free number to call from around Australia is 1800 200 855.

Jodie Patterson

This article and photos first appeared in the Koori Mail.

Jodie, an ASG member and former correspondent for Koori Mail, is currently lecturing in Journalism at a University in Ohio, U.S.A. Members of the Support Group are missing Jodie and her family and wish her well in her overseas venture.

BREWARRINA MISSION

MEMORIES OF BREWARRINA MISSION

What a wonderful night it was when June and Roy Barker came to Warriewood to talk with us all.

The room was full of over 70 laughing and chatting people eager for them to appear.

June and Roy were introduced by Megan van Frank, who gave the Acknowledgment of Country and a background to their interesting lives. In 2003 June and Roy became the first Aboriginal people to receive the NSW Government Heritage Volunteer Award "for their outstanding work in the conservation of the State's cultural heritage".

I could tell once June and Roy were seated that here were a couple of people with tales to tell that could keep us listening all night!

Roy talked first telling of his passion for traditional weapon making and artifacts and his reverence of the Elders who taught him, and his excitement of teaching the young fellas that were coming through the ranks. He displayed his weapons made from the beautiful wood of the Mulga and Gidgee and we could admire their smoothness and beauty.

Roy was born on Brewarrina Mission and is of Irish and Aboriginal heritage. He was of no mans land, not white or black.

In the horror of those years, children were taken away and many people died through illness aggravated by substandard living conditions. One result from this was extreme infestations of body lice. It was all out of control. Roy remembers the women wailing.

June's early life was very different to Roy's. Her memories are happy ones. Her life was ruled by bells, the ringing of the bells to indicate different activities in her day. She was a child without any of the hassles and pain of the adults. At age 14 June was sent to the Blue Mountains to work in a boarding house. She was treated well and has fond memories of this time. Many of her contemporaries were treated badly on station properties, abused, raped and many became pregnant.

June then told us the story of how the platypus came into being. She has a lovely melodic voice that picks you up and takes you on her journey. June and Roy met on the mission, married and raised a family. They worked hard, lovingly teaching their children their values of respect and the importance of their heritage.

At the end of the evening I asked both Roy and June if they would like to share any feeling that they may have with the youth of today. Both stressed health, saying "If you stay off drugs and alcohol then you have a chance to shine and become useful in the community and to yourselves. Get a good education. Promote life, think of positions like Doctors/ Nurses. Long life is assured through tending to your body."

This sounds like great advice. We have a lot to learn through our Elders.

Roy and June are very respected Elders in Lightning Ridge, with strong links to Brewarrina.

They have been involved with preserving and teaching Aboriginal heritage for many years. The Barkers have a Goondee, a "keeping place", a type of museum at Lightning Ridge which tourists and school groups visit. June tells her stories and is involved with language programs in schools. They visit prisons once a month and run cultural programs for Aboriginal inmates. Thanks Roy and June for a wonderful evening of sharing.

Brylee Todd

TALES MY MOTHER TOLD ME

My mother often told me that her Great Grandmother, Louisa Truganina came over the water when she was taken from her homeland, and that she spoke a different language from the other Aborigines on Cummeragunja Mission.

When I was a girl living on the Brewarrina Mission, my lifestyle was the same as my mother Blanche's. Every day swimming and fishing with your friends, always in the company of the mission Aunties who passed on the local legends and Dreamtime Stories.

My mother would hear the girls talking about how lovely the water was. Cool and clear as we swam in the Barwon River. She would say with pride, "My River is bigger and better than this river. My people of the Yorta Yorta tribe called it Tongala, which meant Mighty River. But it was changed to the Murray River".

Granny Louisa and the Aunties would often take the girls to the Moira Lakes. They were shown how to gather swan and duck eggs by swimming and dog paddling slowly and so quietly not to even make a splash in the beautiful clear lake water. They were told not to frighten the swans and ducks away. When they were at the lake, Granny Louisa with the Aunties would get the girls to gather an armful of reeds each and they would be shown how to weave and make the traditional baskets and other containers.

When my mother was a girl in the 1920's they said Granny Louisa was over 100 years old. Mother said Granny Louisa always wore the long dress, which was issued by the government. These dresses hung down to her ankles and from under the hem of her dress her bare feet could be seen. She refused to wear shoes. Granny Louisa also liked to smoke her pipe but she didn't like anyone to see her smoke, so when people came to visit she would hide her pipe in the folds of her dress.

When Granny Louisa died in 1925 she was buried under the pine trees in the tribal burial ground on the sand hill at Cummeragunja Cemetery on Yorta Yorta land, a long way from her homeland. The perfume of the wild flowers which the children gathered to place on her grave could be smelt from a mile away. About ten years ago I first saw the Tindale Genealogy taken in 1938 on Cummeragunja. Louisa Truganina-Briggs came over the Bass Strait waters when she was a girl and through her, my heritage goes back to Truganina – the last of the Tasmanian Full Bloods.

June Barker

2004 TAFE NSW ABORIGINAL AWARDS

It was a real privilege to attend the Aboriginal TAFE Awards in Bondi recently. I was present as the proud wife of the Aboriginal TAFE Teacher of the Year, Bill Ferguson. As well as teaching Mechanics, Bill acts as mentor for students in summer school programs and is currently involved in courses for problem youth, some of whom are referred to TAFE from the court system. Bill always includes discussions on culture to help instill a sense of pride in his Aboriginal students and understanding in non-Indigenous students. His co-ordinator, who nominated him for the award, listed the high attendance rate in his classes, the excellent relationship he has with both staff and students and his many extra-curricular activities with the students. An example was Bill's approach to Peter Brock who supplied VIP tickets to car races at Bathurst for a group of students from Walgett, Lightning Ridge and Goodooga. Bill also helped in the fund-raising needed for transport costs and food for the boys.

All award recipients – young and mature-aged students, staff, industry programs and members of the Aboriginal Programs Unit – were inspirational. Some of their stories caused tears; all made us feel real admiration for the recipients.

The guest speaker was Professor John Lester from Newcastle University (an Indigenous man who was involved in TAFE for many years). Dr. Andrew Refshauge, NSW Minister for Education and Training and Aboriginal Affairs, was the keynote speaker. Both were excellent. They spoke of the commitment of people working in Aboriginal education, the improvements that have occurred in Aboriginal education outcomes and they issued challenges to all present.

The great evening gave a sense of the culturally-focussed opportunities being made for Aboriginal students across a very wide range of options.

Jackie (O'Hare) Ferguson

BOOK REVIEW



White Man, Black Man

by W. Michael Ryan

Brisbane, Jacaranda Press, 1969

The book is long out of print, but it is well worth pursuing this meandering tale of blackfellow and whitefellow life in South Western Queensland in the early years of the 20th century. It should be available through your local library on inter-library loan and it often pops up in secondhand bookshops and opportunity shops. It is the first volume in the Jacaranda Pioneer Library series and the author was a white man who enjoyed a close relationship with Aborigines of the area. Ryan states that his objective in writing this book is to teach the reader more about the original inhabitants of Australia. He notes that blackfellows have been forced to learn about white men and their ways but few whites have had the opportunity to learn of the blackfellows' traditional way of life.

Ryan's father, originally from Adelaide, worked as a drover and at various other jobs on stations and was kindly disposed to Aborigines which allowed young Mick to become as close to Aboriginal people as he did. Ryan was born at the end of the 19th century beside the Bulloo River under a Minga or Spirit Tree. This Minga belonged to the family of a blackfellow called Byno whose wife, Mirra had planned to deliver a boy child beneath the tree. However, when her time came, she found the white family already camped there so she had to deliver her child further down the River and had another girl. A wise man, Curraweenya, explained to Ryan's father, that they had unknowingly stolen Byno's son from him. Young Mick was his parents' first child and his mother was having difficulty feeding him so when Mirra visited their camp after her confinement and heard the white baby crying with hunger she suckled him as well as her daughter. Ryan's parents allowed Mirra to take him back to her camp to show him to all her relations and let them see what a nice fat boy was her son.

The family eventually settled in Cunnamulla but stayed in touch with Byno and Mirra and young Mick spent periods of time with them. When he was about 14, it was time for him to prepare for initiation. He was not very interested himself, but he did not want to

disappoint Byno who had set his heart on it. Byno wanted his son to be a proper feller, as he put it. His initiation was opposed by one of the tribe because he was white but Curraweenya declared he was Byno's son and one of the people. Ryan describes many of the customs and practices of his Aboriginal family and is always at pains to defend blackfellow ways and compares them favourably with European practices. For example, in a chapter on education and health, he notes that the Aboriginal was the cleanest man on earth. He gave no diseases of any kind to the white man.

As the century progressed, Ryan often had to be careful about visiting the blacks' camps because the white police did not like whites visiting the blacks' camps. Ryan never analyses the situations he finds himself in but reports in detail what is happening.

The saddest period described follows the enactment of the Queensland Aboriginal Protection Act in 1916 which was in reality the Aboriginal Destruction Act. Most of the young Aboriginal men and some of the young women had been taken to work on the various stations and all the Elders from the area met at Dingera Creek. When the Elder, Curraweenya, came back to Ryan's people, he called all the men together and said, "This is the end. The white man does not know or obey the Law, and we must do what the white man tells us. The young men are all taken and the young women also. The white man says that it is wrong for young men to feed old people and there is no place for us in the white man's thinking. We have buried the Turinga (a wooden object either made by or given to the first Elders when the tribe was formed in the Dreamtime and which gave the Elders the right to their country and the right to govern the people under the Law) for ever. There is no more to say."

Ryan says, "Little did I know that I was hearing the epitaph of my peoples; and, in fact, of all the Aboriginal tribes of the South West."

I always think of these words on Anzac Day when I see young, non-Indigenous Australians asked what Anzac Day means to them and they usually say, often with tears in their eyes, those men fought and died for our Freedom. They do not know that the period meant the terrible loss of freedom for Aboriginal Australians.

Carol Gerrard

Sentencing Circles

At a recent Aboriginal Support Group Information Night I heard Brendan Thomas, Executive Director, NSW Aboriginal Justice Advisory Council, speak about Sentencing Circles. Sentencing Circles are based on a Canadian model and have been trialed in Nowra with a program starting in Dubbo last year with plans to expand to other areas. The talk covered why it was needed, what it was and what outcomes have been achieved to date.

Some of the statistics that Brendan had on Aboriginal crime demonstrated that the current system was not working for Aboriginal people and appeared to be making their situation worse. Brendan said that 20% of men in NSW prisons are Aboriginal and that this figure is up from 12% in 1991. 34% of female inmates are Aboriginal and 40% of juvenile offenders are Aboriginal.

Brendan made a link between the high re-offending rate and the fact that Aboriginal people are far more likely to be charged with lesser offenses such as offensive language. The previous offending history is then more likely to result in a prison sentence for subsequent offenses. The re-offending rate was extremely high among Aboriginal people and the current justice system seemed to have very little affect as a deterrent for future offending.

The reason that Sentencing Circles are so different to the current court system is that they involve communities. Elders from the local communities sit down with the magistrate, victim and offender to talk about what should happen. This is not the cop out that some people imagine it to be. I have been involved in Juvenile Justice Conferencing and I know from personal experience how confronting it can be for the offender to admit a crime in front of victims and other people, especially if you have any respect for those people.

The court system allows the offenders and victims to be cogs in a machine with little participation and to be punished in a way that is not meaningful. Sentencing Circles give people voices and the magistrate is one of those voices but not the only one. All people attending a Sentencing Circle contribute to the outcome for the offender and if there is no consensus then the matter must go back to the court system.

Brendan said that a magistrate at the beginning of the Sentencing Circle trial wanted to sit behind a desk and not in a circle. When he was challenged about this the magistrate admitted that he felt 'naked' without something to sit behind.

I thought this comment was very telling as in Circle Sentencing all parties have to participate in more than just an official capacity. The simple tool of sitting in a circle can have an enormous impact on how people behave and feel. People in authority must prove themselves in a very human way and not rely on a desk or any other device to impose their authority on the proceedings.

The Sentencing Circle has the same powers as a court but it is more effective in addressing the underlying causes of Aboriginal crime. The proof of the pudding being that out of 50 offenders who have been through the Nowra trial, covering a period of four years, only three have re-offended.

Brendan's talk gave a clear understanding of how the system had been changed to enable all parties to be more engaged by empowering a community in the process. The huge pay-off is not only a drop in incarceration and offending rates but the overall well being of a community.

Frances Smyth

For further information about the Sentencing Circle Program go to www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/ajac



BIALA HOSTEL NEWS

Hi and welcome to the first newsletter of the year from everyone at Biala. My name is Lara and together with my husband Allan we are the new houseparents. We also have 4 children of our own Jami, Adam, Molly & Keely.

We have quite a lot of new faces here this year and everything is going very well.

There are 16 students who come from Newcastle, Lightning Ridge, Armidale, Tamworth, Kempsey, Goodooga, Mt. Druitt, Albury, Redfern, Nowra, Walgett, Grafton, Coonamble and Lawson. They are spread across Years 7 to 12, with some in each year.

We have a full house now so any new enrolments will go on a waiting list.

Since the start of the year all the kids, Allan and myself have been very busy with surfing lessons when it was warmer, picnics, footy matches, hockey, netball & soccer. We even followed the Manly Sea Eagles to Canberra to see them play. The girls are having much success at Mackellar Girls High School and also the two of our girls who are attending Narrabeen Sports High School in the Targeted Sport Program. The girls have also danced at the Guringai Festival Whale Songlines on Freshwater Beach, which was fantastic. Latoya & Cassie ran some art workshops with us and the girls' work was displayed in Manly at the Youth Centre and also in the Warringah Council Art Exhibition. Thanks to the Support Group who provided the money for the art supplies. We went on the Derubbin for a Harbour cruise, which was also enjoyed by all.

The girls, Allan and myself have had an extremely busy 7 months and we look forward to the rest of the year, which is shaping up to be even busier.

Well that's it from us

*Lara, Allan & All the Girls at Biala
Biala Aboriginal Girls Hostel
Alambie Heights*

Local Government Initiatives



Pittwater Council



Warringah Council



Manly Council

Pittwater Council on June 21, unanimously adopted that the following Acknowledgement of Country be read at the start of each Council (monthly) meeting and at all formal Council functions that are presided over by the Mayor:

"Pittwater Council honours and respects the spirits of the Guringai people. Council acknowledges their traditional custodianship of the Pittwater area". The *Acknowledgement of Country* will also be included as a written statement on all Council and Principal Committee Meeting agendas.

This motion was moved by Cr. Natalie Stevens and seconded by Cr. David James.

Warringah Council on Tuesday August 3, 2004 became the first local government authority on the Northern Beaches to sign a Principles of Cooperation agreement with the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council. Members of the Support Group were present to see this important agreement signed. It establishes formal communication and negotiation processes between the two bodies and opens the way for community initiatives.

Warringah Administrator Dick Persson said the signing was a symbolic signal of intent which will provide a framework for discussion on future development proposals. Rob Welsh, Metro Chairman, is confident the agreement will promote a greater understanding of Aboriginal culture and history among the local community. He said that Warringah, with more than 400 sites of significance, is one of Australia's greatest art galleries. Its treasures, located around the

bush and suburbs, are the rock engravings some of which are more than a thousand years old.

Metro, Warringah's largest landholder, is establishing a regional office in Fisher Road, Dee Why. It will be a resource for the peninsula community and a base for Metro's Aboriginal heritage protection officers.

Manly Council has appointed Rick Shafter to the position of Aboriginal Heritage Officer. His role is :

- To provide advice on Aboriginal heritage within the Manly local government area.
- To assess items of Aboriginal heritage
- To work cooperatively with other key agencies
- To promote cross cultural awareness and an appreciation of the significance of Aboriginal heritage within Manly and the Guringai Homelands.

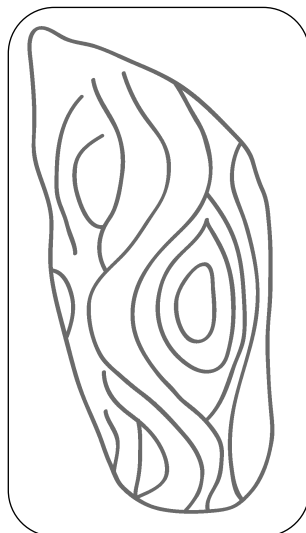
Pat Frater

NEWS FROM WIRADJURI COUNTRY

On May 29, a very cold bitter morning, Kevin and I met up with Mike Cooper from the Orange Reconciliation Group and James William from the Aboriginal Land Council. We travelled in a small convoy, then assembled at Yuranigh's grave historic site which is located about 5 kms south east from the town of Molong in central west New South Wales.

Yuranigh was a Wiradjuri man who went with Thomas Mitchell on his last expedition to Queensland, 1845-46. Mitchell found he could not have survived without the invaluable help of Yuranigh and thought so highly of him that after Yuranigh's death in 1850 Mitchell put a headstone at his grave. In the tradition of the Wiradjuri people the site was chosen where there were five eucalypts growing. These were carved in honour of Yuranigh.

One hundred and fifty two years later, four of the eucalypts are still standing tall and strong with only a small indication that they were once carved. One tree died and the trunk with the carving saved. It is in a protected area of the site.



*Carved Tree drawing
Reproduced courtesy of
the NSW National Parks
and Wildlife Services*

Next we raced to our cars and headed for Federal Falls at the base of Mt. Canobolas, a Wiradjuri word meaning two shoulders. This area was used by the Wiradjuri people in the summer months for camping and ceremonies. Here we found stone-flaked artifacts which we were allowed to touch and then put back. James dates this material to the late Holocene period which puts it around the 5000 to 15000 year period.

The final stop was the summit of Mt. Canobolas where the women in the group view the Scarred Trees and the men viewed the Initiation area.

It was really great day.

June Mason

*An invitation from June and Kevin
If you are up our way please drop in.*

**Our address is
Lot 66, Molong Road, Mitchell Highway
Orange 2800. Telephone 6365 0716**

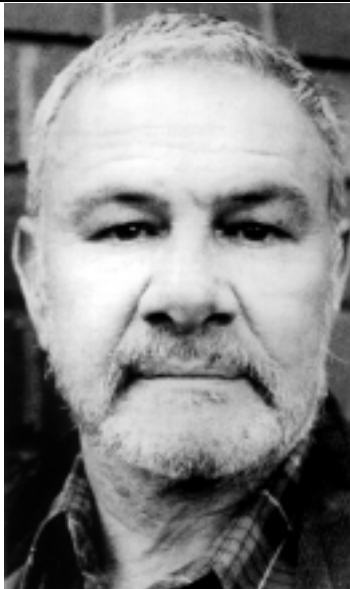
Little Black Bastard

Little Black Bastard, written and performed by Noel Tovey at the Glen Street Theatre, Belrose, will run from Tuesday October 5 until Saturday October 9.

"Tovey's performance is gripping and intensely moving...a remarkable story and performance of great cultural and historical importance" – The Age

Telephone Glen Street Theatre
9975 1455

for further details or visit its website
www.glenstreet.com.au



 Glen Street Theatre

THANKYOU!



RSL CLUB

The Aboriginal Support Group thanks the Dee Why RSL for its support. A grant from the Club has covered the design, printing and postage cost of this 12 page issue of Elimatta.



Welcome to your new
information resource on local
and national Indigenous issues



www.asgmwp.net

The Aboriginal Support Group
Manly Warringah Pittwater

Now online!

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 conduct an Information Night
at 7.30pm.

**Please note: October 2004
Information Night is Cancelled**

*Please join us at the
Angophora Room,
Nelson Heather Centre,
Cnr Pittwater & Jacksons Roads,
North Narrabeen.*

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

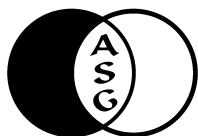
 *For further information* 

(02) **9913 7940** (02) **9982 1685**

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Elimatta is produced by the Aboriginal Support Group Manly Warringah Pittwater. Articles are welcome with the understanding that editorial changes may be made. 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 we would appreciate the extract being set in context and the source acknowledged.

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