

# Elimatta



## Aboriginal Support Group Manly Warringah Pittwater

ASG acknowledges the Guringai People, the traditional owners of the land and the waters of the area.

Summer 2010  
asgmwp.net



## 2010 Aboriginal Hostels Graduation

On Saturday 20th November Aunty Nancy Wood and I (Carol Ritchie) attended the 2010 Aboriginal Hostels graduation, this year hosted by Biala Hostel. Mackellar Girls High School kindly allowed Lara from Biala to organise and hold this event in the school hall at Mackellar. Other Hostels from Sylvania, Newcastle and Dubbo also attended.

The girls from Biala were Teoka, Ainslie, Janie, Leilanie, Siehanna, Tahlia, Rhana (a friend of Tahlia from Mackellar), Tallulah, Nadia, Amanda, Tayler, Shannon and Jessica and they all looked really wonderful in their beautiful dresses. The boys looked smart dressed in suits for the night.

Some of the girls' family members had come a long way to attend the graduation.

It was nice to see the Biala staff, Di and Zita also staff from Mackellar attend. These teachers work closely with the girls and their attendance showed how much they support the girls. The hall was decorated beautifully and the meal organised by Lara was delicious.

The guest speaker for the night was Clair Jackson (from **ASGMWP**) who gave a very inspiring talk which seemed to capture everyone's attention. Three students from one of the other hostels sang wonderfully. Teoka's father, two brothers and a cousin, performed for us.

The star graduate next year from Biala will be Teoka as she finishes Year 12 and there will also be some Year 10 graduates. Awards were given by all houseparents for such things as encouragement and sport.

After the official proceedings were over, a DJ began the dance music. The girls and the boys all seemed to enjoy the music, loud as it was. The Biala girls didn't want the night to end. However some people had to go a long way home and it began to wind up.

Thanks to Lara and her staff and to all the girls for putting on such an enjoyable evening.

Nancy Hill Wood and Carol Ritchie



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### **Trip to Richmond Hill Memorial**

#### **To Honour the Darug People**

After a wonderful lunch prepared by Aboriginal young people which we ate sitting around the big table at Tranby Aboriginal College 11/13 Mansfield St, Glebe.

People made their way to the site of the beautiful old St. John of God Hospital at Richmond, to visit the Memorial. There were probably 50-60 people all together for this important visit.

The Richmond Hill Memorial Garden is within the beautiful grounds of the old hospital with wonderful rolling hills and trees surrounding the site. This garden which has been underway for some years now is taking shape towards its final stage.

The garden is to honour and commemorate the Darug people of the Richmond/ Hawkesbury area. The site commemorates the "Battle of Richmond Hill" which occurred in 1795. It is perhaps the first time that the colonial authorities sent in the troopers and expressly stated their intent to 'destroy' the whole local Aboriginal population of an area. Darug people fought bravely here to defend their land from invasion. Many people were killed at Richmond Hill.

This important moment in Australia's history has been kept silent until hard work from volunteers and support from the NSW Reconciliation Council has enabled this memorial garden to be established. It is a truly beautiful place to feel the peace of the spirits even though it commemorated a very sad event. Knowledge of the true history of the area will in future be able to be understood.

The shape of the garden is of a long necked tortoise which was an important animal to the area and the Darug nation. In the centre there is a water and river stone feature which symbolises the spiritual and material value of the strong and beautiful Nepean River.

People were asked to place a river stone on the stone mound in the centre of the tortoise's head which was a very significant act to do. There is also a fire circle and new plants are being grown around which will really add to the beauty of the site.

As the NSW Reconciliation Council's creed says "The memorial represents a further step on the journey towards achieving reconciliation. Acknowledging past injuries is crucial to fostering the healing process and in moving forward."

It was a really interesting and worthwhile day visit to the Memorial. It is hoped to have an official opening of the site next year.

Lizzie Landers and Carol Ritchie





## Recognition for Aboriginal People

In the light of the statement from the Aboriginal Heritage Office (Elimatta, p3 spring edition) it is appropriate to note that the NSW Parliament recently passed the Constitution Amendment (Recognition of Aboriginal People) Bill 2010. The purpose of the Bill was to amend the Constitution Act 1902 by inserting the following:

- (1) Parliament, on behalf of the people of New South Wales, acknowledges and honours the Aboriginal people as the State's first people and nations.
- (2) Parliament, on behalf of the people of New South Wales, recognises that Aboriginal people, as the traditional custodians and occupants of the land in New South Wales:
  - (a) have a spiritual, social, cultural and economic relationship with their traditional lands and waters, and
  - (b) have made and continue to make a unique and lasting contribution to the identity of the State.
- (3) Nothing in this section creates any legal right or liability, or gives rise to or affects any civil cause of action or right to review an administrative action, or affects the interpretation of any Act or law in force in New South Wales.

The Bill received bipartisan support and was especially welcomed by the Peninsula's three MPs, Mike Baird, Brad Hazzard and Rob Stokes.

### CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT (RECOGNITION OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLE) BILL 2010

22 September 2010 Page: 25856 Extract

#### Mr. ROB STOKES

I have come to the conclusion that the recognition of Aboriginal people is important because it is an essential precondition to reconciliation. One cannot have reconciliation without recognition. European settlement of this continent was based on a lack of recognition. Lack of recognition was worse than invasion as invasion recognises the prior occupation and nationhood of a society. By not recognising the ownership of land and the existing system of justice the European settlers—my forebears included—condemned Aboriginal people to a status of non-recognition as if they never existed.

My electorate of Pittwater is owned by the Cannalgal and Garigal peoples of the Guringai language group. Today very few people can trace their heritage back to the Guringai language group. However, one such person who springs to mind is Bob Waterer. Bob is the grandson of the famous Aboriginal Bungaree. He is a respected elder statesman of the Pittwater community who lives in the RSL Anzac Village at Narrabeen, and is a much-loved part of the Pittwater community.

The overwhelming impact of European settlement in Pittwater was the terrible decimation of the Aboriginal peoples who lived in and owned Pittwater.

Pittwater is a place where the recognition of Aboriginal settlement is visible and tangibly clear.

The Shore Regional Organisation of Councils estimated there are more than 300 Aboriginal heritage sites in Pittwater fabulous beaches. Currawong is known as a birthing area for Aboriginal women. It is a significant Aboriginal site. Narrabeen Lagoon has evidence of more 8,000 years of continuous occupation by Aboriginal people. The middens, the axe grinding grooves and the engravings are all part of the fabric of the Narrabeen Lagoon environment. The entire environment has been shaped by its interaction with Aboriginal people. One needs only to walk into Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park.

A major part of the culture of Pittwater is its surf clubs. Two of its surf clubs, North Palm Beach Surf Club and South Narrabeen Surf Club, which are located at either end of the electoral district of Pittwater, are running hugely successful and enduring Bush to the Beach programs. An issue that I want to focus on is the recognition of the occupation and ownership by Aboriginal people of the land itself, not just recognition on paper in the Constitution.

## Indigenous icon dies

Source: *The Age* November 17, 2010

INDIGENOUS rights campaigner and writer Roberta Sykes was the Aboriginal tent embassy ambassador in Canberra in 1972.

In the 1980s, Dr Sykes became the first black Australian to attend Harvard University.

She was a vigorous activist for Aboriginal civil and political rights and was awarded the Australian Human Rights Medal in 1994.

She wrote a three-part autobiography: *Snake Cradle* in 1997, *Snake Dancing* in 1998 and *Snake Circle* in 2000.

Dr Sykes, 67, died in Royal Prince Alfred Hospital on Sunday 14/11/2010.

Bikalabarley /Murraring Walla/ Giballee/ Yaddung / Guringai /  
Wanangini Wahroong / Yennieubu.  
Let us / walk / together / in / Guringai / Country / as one.

## Legends Team Up



Some of Australia's song-writing legends have teamed up with Ian Thorpe and Jeff McMullen to create for Australian children a brilliant new series of history and Aboriginal Culture.

Ian Thorpe's Fountain for Youth [www.ianthorpesfountainforyouth.com.au](http://www.ianthorpesfountainforyouth.com.au) and the publisher, ONE DAY HILL [www.onedayhill.com.au](http://www.onedayhill.com.au) have launched the series of iconic songs with illustrations by Aboriginal children in the remote communities.

This follows the success of the book, FROM LITTLE THINGS BIG THINGS GROW, based on the Kev Carmody/Paul Kelly ballad about Vincent Lingiari's

historic Land Rights struggle at Kalkaringi in the Northern Territory.

Shane Howard has contributed his classic, SOLID ROCK - SACRED GROUND, Neil Murray his beautiful anthem, MY ISLAND HOME and Archie Roach's song, THEY TOOK THE CHILDREN completes the series.

Jeff McMullen says, "Archie's late and great soul mate who passed away earlier this year literally worked up until the last day of her life to complete the paintings for their moving song about children like Archie who were stolen away from their parents. Proceeds will go to the Ruby Foundation. The other books will also steer support to the education of children who contributed to the series."

Jeff adds: "These are songs that every Australian should know because they share the deep Aboriginal attachment to land and the important history that continues in the Aboriginal Struggle for equality. The landscape painting by artist, Peter Hudson, give each children's book a special sense of place. Peter Hudson



also worked with Aboriginal children in these communities so that they would have a sense of ownership of the stories by helping illustrate the books and discussing the history them with their elders. Each book has an

Aboriginal language version of the song and this supports the right of Aboriginal people to celebrate their Culture and languages."

A video about the series can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iLm9mvpKxhc>

## Thank You:

Pat Frater and Anna Bell for all the work you have put into making and keeping the *Elimatta* such an informative newsletter.

As the new editor it is my endeavor to maintain this high standard.

The *Elimatta* has a new look as does the ASGMWP web site; asgmwp.net Your feed back would be appreciated. Please send your comments to the.elimatta@gmail.com

Neil Evers.

## Congratulations

### Larissa Behrendt,

Indigenous advocate, author and Bangarra board member was named NSW Australian of the Year. She was given the award in 'recognition of her passionate and articulate advocacy for the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders'.

### Madeleine Madden and Generation One,

You stopped the Nation and made us all take notice. We can show our support; become a member of Generation One! This is a not for profit group, an Indigenous employment group started by mining magnet Andrew Forrest. We can all help "Close the Gap" in one generation. Find out more go to [Generationone.org.au](http://Generationone.org.au)

### Aden Ridgeway

#### Language is power; let us have ours.

Source - SMH November 26, 2009

Part of what Aden said:

This is not to say that English should not be taught. Of course it should. But the reality in northern Australia is not whether maintaining language hinders a child's future but whether the best of life's opportunities are available to all.

As such, we need to cast our minds ahead one generation to understand fully the detrimental impact. While much needs to be done in these places, the reality is it can't be achieved without the involvement of the people most affected and certainly not through ill-thought out interventions.

### Indigenous Marathon Project

Robert de Castella has helped 4 Indigenous men to run in the November 2010 New York marathon Juan Darwin, Joseph Davies, Caleb Hart, Charlie Maher .What a trip, lots of stories to tell. The hope is to have Indigenous runners in the Olympics and why not!

Follow the project: [themarathonproject.com.au](http://themarathonproject.com.au)

### Dan Leo Sultan

He started playing guitar aged four and wrote his first song at ten.

September 2010 Daniel received four ARIA Music Awards nominations: 'Best Blues and Roots Album'; 'Best Male Artist'; 'Best Independent Release' and 'Most Popular Australian Artist'.

On November 2nd, 2010 Daniel won his first ARIA Music Award for Best Blues and Roots Album winning over contenders such as John Butler and Ash Grunwald.

On November 7th, 2010 he won an ARIA for Best Male Artist.

### Grace Karskens

Source - SMH November 9, 2010

Grace knew her book, *The Colony: A History of Early Sydney*, would be different.

She did not know until she won that the Prime Minister's Award carried a prize of \$100,000.

She now plans to give some of it to the Indigenous Literacy Appeal because "reading and literacy are the key to so many things".

## NSW Reconciliation Council AGM

On Saturday 6th November 2010 Lizzie Landers and Carol Ritchie attended the NSW Reconciliation Council AGM Held at Tranby College.

This year the AGM consisted of a special general meeting concerning some changes to the constitution followed by the AGM.

Voting was carried out and the Chairpersons this year are Kirsty Masella who is also the CEO of Tranby College, and Kerrie Murphy who has worked in education for many years and is now retiring. She has worked in the Indigenous policies and reconciliation strategies in schools.

In our area Sue Pinkham and Kerrie McKenzie are the Sydney regional representatives and Jessica Birk is the youth representative. It was a successful meeting with a good attendance.



## Impressions of the 2010 Garma Festival

The 2010 Garma Festival, from 6 to 8 August was special in that for the first time it was managed and operated by the Yolngu People of East Arnhem Land on behalf of the producers The Yothu Yindi Foundation. This event is concentrated around Yolngu culture and is designed to encourage the practice, preservation and maintenance of traditional dance (Bunggul), song (Manikay), art and ceremony. The festival aims to spread knowledge and appreciation of Indigenous culture to all who attend. There were daily performances of Bunggul and Manikay by the local people displaying cultures of great diversity, skill, and tradition associated with various homelands. The accompanying songlines and music were marvellous. Indeed the wonderful singing, dancing and musicianship rivalled anything that I have ever heard in the Opera House. It was a spectacular way to discover the vibrant living cultures of our land.

The Garma Festival was held on a plateau overlooking the unspoilt forest, dunes and sea at Gulkula Gulkula 40kms south of Nhulunbuy on Yolngu Land. Rhoda Roberts, a first time Festival director did a great job. This Festival involves thousands of people in many activities. Every night there was a concert on a large stage with Indigenous musicians, dancers and singers including *The Chookie Dancers* and a small performance/music space which operated every afternoon. Every night everyone could enjoy an outdoor Indigenous film programme. I saw some great films including the long awaited film on *The Intervention, Our Generation* which was introduced by Jeff McMullen. There were many discussions and debates after every film and some continued into the early hours of the morning.

There was an Expo area where 32 organizations concerned with Aboriginal affairs displayed their activities and a mobile federal election booth operated for a day for the convenience of people who lived in remote areas.

The Key Discussion Forum conducted this year was on the subject of Indigenous Education and involved many qualified speakers. This Forum was co-ordinated by Charles Darwin University with

Professor Marcia Langton as programmer and presenter. With the Youth Forum there were well over 70 presenters and speakers.

I enrolled into the Women's Cultural group, which as with the Men's Cultural group was restricted in number to 50 in each group. We met daily with our Aboriginal leaders and teachers in our special meeting circles. Our Elder woman was Lak Lak Burarrwanga. We went to visit Yirrakala School which was a sheer delight of welcome and good spirit with dancing exhibitions thrown in. The Women's Group learnt to weave from pandanus palm leaf string dyed by the women. We were taken into the beautiful tropical rainforest creek areas below the Garma Plateau where the women showed us plants, leaves, barks and roots that could cure many ailments, help skin problems and make implements such as dishes and cradles. We were given traditional women's dancing lessons, face and bark painting workshops and learnt about traditional skin and family lines which seemed complex to us but were known by the smallest children there. The Women's Group was a wonderful way to get close to our wonderful Aboriginal women teachers. We also were treated to a gourmet meal by the famous indigenous chef Mark Olive. He used wonderful herbs and seeds from the Australian bush and a fine meal it was. There was no wine of course as alcohol is banned in Garma. There was much at Garma. We could go and look at the brilliant night sky with Ian MacLean an astronomer who told us the ancient Aboriginal stories of the constellations. We could stroll in the forest art gallery where paintings were placed on tree trunks, listen to music or a debate or sit in the quiet forest and gaze at the beautiful surroundings. I made many good friends in the six days I was at Garma. It was a wonderful uniquely Australian experience and well worth the effort to briefly become a member of such a harmonious community over brimming with goodwill.

Garma Festival 2011 05 AUG - 09 AUG (Dates not Confirmed).

Margaret Millar



## ASG Information Night

### Our Generation

A large crowd attended the ASG Information Night on Monday 8 November 2010 at 7.30 pm in the Mona Vale Memorial Hall. Vanessa Walsh welcomed those attending on behalf of the Aboriginal Support Group and Uncle Bob Waterer acknowledged the Elders of the Guringai People and their spirits and talked about Bungaree and the Broken Bay Tribe. Corey Kirk then sang the Australian National Anthem in the Darug language – this rendering of the Anthem was truly beautiful and very moving.

Local resident and journalist, Jeff McMullen introduced “Our Generation”, the film by Sinem Saban and Damien Curtis which we were there to see. The film explored in depth the Federal Government Intervention into Aboriginal Communities in the Northern Territory. Jeff had told us that the film’s producers were not having any success in having the film shown on government or commercial media outlets and they were having to screen it in local community halls to show the community at large just what was involved in the Intervention. It is basically a war on Aboriginal culture. The dispossession of the Aboriginal people is simply continuing in a new guise.

Personally, I was puzzled when Mal Brough, the former Minister for Aboriginal Affairs was insistent that Aboriginal communities sign long leases on their land to the Federal Government in return for the services the rest of us in the Australian community take for granted. As a result of the Intervention more and more communities are or have been pressured to provide the Federal Government with long leases on their land. However, the promised services, house repairs and additional new houses are not materializing. And the same process is occurring under both Liberal/National Party and Labor Governments.

Even more chilling, the Northern Territory Government has announced that in the future it will only fund services such as health, education and housing in 15 nominated townships and outstations and other small communities will cease to be supported. It now appears that both the Federal and Territory Governments may be clearing the land with the view to opening up for possible mining of identified mineral deposits.

Most of us in the audience felt very dispirited after watching the film and Jeff said that all Australians should be concerned at the discrimination against Aboriginals exercising their human rights. He urged us to contact our local Federal MHRs and Senators and the Prime Minister and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs registering our opposition to the Federal Government Intervention in the Northern Territory.

Carol Gerrard 

## Indigenous Referendum to be Held

Ballina Shire Advocate – 8<sup>th</sup> November 2010

PRIME Minister Julia Gillard says an expert panel will be set up to lead a national discussion on a referendum on recognising Indigenous people in the Australian Constitution.

"The first peoples of our nation have a unique and special place in our nation," Ms Gillard told a media conference in Melbourne.

The panel will report to government by the end of 2011.

Indigenous Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin said the panel would build consensus for the difficult task of constitutional change. To succeed, the referendum must attract the support of a majority vote nationally, plus a majority of votes in a majority of states. "We are very optimistic that this change can be brought about through goodwill," Ms Macklin said.

"This is a very significant day, a very significant step forward in that journey that we began with the apology."

## Guringai Festival

The theme of 2011 Guringai Festival is *ONE VOICE*.

The actual dates have not been given yet but it usually goes from around *Sorry Day (26 May)* through to NAIDOC week in July. We will let you know in the next edition of *Elimatta*, when we receive more info.

## What's on?

**Survival Day** - January 26 is not a day of celebration for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people the date marks the landing of the First Fleet in Sydney Cove, the beginning of invasion and dispossession.

***It is not a day of sadness.***

Survival Day has been named for very good reason despite the injustices of the past, Aboriginal people have survived. Today, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are thriving. Not letting the wrongs of the past 200 odd years defeat them.

We're seeing Indigenous high achievers in every facet of society from sport and music to politics and industry. The **Yabun Survival Day** concert is one of the biggest Survival Day celebrations in the country and draws people from all over NSW to Sydney. For more information go to [www.gadigal.org.au](http://www.gadigal.org.au)

**Visit Canberra** marvellous exhibition at the National Museum of Australia exhibition on the Canning Stock route "Yiwarra Kuju", it is one of the best, ends late January

**Bangarra** - Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> February at 8.00pm Sydney Theatre 22 Hickson Rd Walsh Bay

**February 14<sup>th</sup>** ASG Business Meeting 7.30pm, Mona Vale Memorial Hall (1606 Pittwater Rd)

**March 14<sup>th</sup>** ASG Information Night 7.30 pm – 9.30, ALL WELCOME

Mona Vale Memorial Hall, Free Entry - includes light supper. Enquiries Anna 9913 7940

## Breaking News

### First Nations political party: 2011

Source- Koori Mail 2 December 2010

INDIGENOUS rights campaigner Maurie Ryan has announced the country's first Indigenous political party would be launched early next year. Mr. Ryan said he believed the party could one day form government, and said the under-representation of Indigenous politicians was an indictment on mainstream politics.

### An Invitation to join us

**Aboriginal Support Group  
Manly Warringah Pittwater**

Founded 1979

Membership is \$25 per year

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

P.O. Box 129 NARRABEEN NSW 2101

### Volunteering With AHO

What's involved?

- Training is given for a couple of hours in the evenings or one full day
- You go one day a month or every two - three months on to a site that will be appointed to you
  - Record and photograph
  - Pick up rubbish, leaf litter
  - Report online

contact office - Phone : 9949 9882

email [info@aboriginalheritage.org](mailto:info@aboriginalheritage.org)

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

Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Editors or members of the ASG.

Please email articles to the [elimatta@gmail.com](mailto:elimatta@gmail.com) If you use any of the material it would be appreciated if the extract is set in context and the source acknowledged.

Editor: Neil Evers

Proof Reader: Carol Gerrard

## ASG Wishes all Members a Happy New Year

**Donations** to ASGMWP can be made @ CBA BSB 062155 A/C 00906332 Thank you for your support.