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Elimatta

Winter 2012

Aboriginal Support Group – Manly Warringah Pittwater

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



Constitutional Recognition of Indigenous Australians WILL WE GET IT RIGHT?

You are urged to attend this free event on Monday July 9

Panel Discussion

The government has received the recommendations of an expert panel on amendments to the Australian Constitution to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Will you support the 6 changes to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples? Recommendations for changes to the Constitution in plain English on page 3.

ASG-MWP Information Night start 7.30pm

All welcome – No booking required – Light supper after

Mona Vale Memorial Hall, 1606 Pittwater Road, Mona Vale (next to Mona Vale Library)

Guringai Festival

May 26 - July 8

2012: One Voice – Still Talking



Discovery Walk in Guringai Country

Saturday June 23, 9am-1pm

A FREE Event at Kuringai Chase National Park
A guided tour of Aboriginal rock carvings by Les McLeod, a Discovery Ranger – to be followed by Aboriginal games and barbecue with marinated kangaroo, emu sausages and jonny cakes and a cup of tea. Remember to bring appropriate clothing, comfortable walking shoes, water, hat, sunscreen and be prepared for a great experience. Participants receive Free entry to National Park. RSVP to Laurie Bimson 0438877509 by June 15, 2012 for catering purposes. (Donations welcome). Sponsored by ASG-MWP and NPWS.



Jimmy Little passes away but leaves strong legacy

NEWS.com.au April 2, 2012

Jimmy Little was a Yorta Yorta man

Jimmy Little, whose wife died last year, had been battling illness for a long period before passing away in his bed at the age of 75.

The country singer enjoyed a string of hits from 1959 onwards including *Danny Boy*, *Royal Telephone*, *El Paso*, *Baby Blue* and *One Road*, written by Bee Gee Barry Gibb. He was inducted into the ARIA Hall of Fame in 1999, following the success of the album *Messenger*.

That album saw Little cover songs by a new generation of Australian musicians including Paul Kelly, *the Church*, *Crowded House* and Nick Cave.

In 2001 he recorded a version of the Triffids' *Bury Me Deep in Love* as a duet with Kylie Minogue.

Always keen to appeal to a new audience, his last album, 2004's *Life's What You Make It*, saw Little reinterpret songs by Red Hot Chili Peppers, U2, PJ Harvey and Elvis Costello.

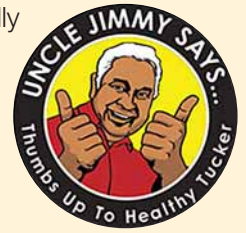
Little suffered kidney failure in 2004, receiving a successful kidney transplant before starting The Jimmy Little Foundation in 2006.

The foundation aims to increase the life expectancy of indigenous Australians in regional and remote areas.

Little was awarded an Order of Australia in 2004 for his work with indigenous health and education programs, won Aboriginal of the Year in 1989, was named NSW Senior Australian of the year in 2002 and received the Australia Council's Red Ochre Award in 2004.

Little was also an actor, seen in the Wim Wenders film *Until the End of the World*.

In 2003 Little reflected on his career stating "Music is surely the only language truly caressed by every tongue, treasured across every culture, equally by young and old. It has been my greatest wish in life to experience the best of people, across all boundaries and to give the best of myself alike, and so music has carried me softly and naturally into a life where much of this wish has been fulfilled".



TWO of Australia's longest-lived Aboriginal people have died on opposite sides of the Country

Tracker – April 3

Western Australian Aboriginal elder Ned Cheedy, who worked to preserve the law and culture of his Yindjibarndi people in the Pilbara region, has died aged 105.

Federal Indigenous Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin has paid tribute to Mr Cheedy, calling him a remarkable Australian who helped improve the lives of Aboriginal people in his Yindjibarndi homeland and beyond.

Last year Mr Cheedy was awarded the prestigious NAIDOC Lifetime Achievement Award for his contribution to caring for Yindjibarndi law, culture, language and the future of his people.

Born in 1907 at Hooley Station in the Pilbara, Mr Cheedy became a skilled stockman and windmill man on the station before moving to Roebourne Reserve so his children could receive an education.

He spent years teaching young people about his country and the importance of education, became a lay preacher at the Pilbara Aboriginal Church and travelled across WA helping families affected by alcoholism.

Mr Cheedy, who died on Sunday, was a cultural teacher, custodian and elder in his community for more than 20 years, teaching people about the land and its stories through books and films.

Ms Macklin extended her condolences on Monday to Mr Cheedy's family, friends and community.

The Australian – April 3 by Jamie Walker

Queenslander *Aunty* May Beckmann, 105, who was said by her family to be the oldest Aboriginal woman alive. Mrs Beckmann died in Toowoomba on March 4, and *The Australian* was asked by close relatives to mark *Aunty May's* lifelong devotion to her family and community in Queensland.

She was born on October 22, 1906. As was common in that era, her parents, Norman Hoad and Alice Richards, were refused permission to marry by the then Protector of Aborigines in Queensland.

"She had contact with her Aboriginal grandmother and other members of her Aboriginal family, none of whom spoke English," her niece, Marlene Watson, 74, said. "She learnt a little of their language and experienced some of their cultural practices."

Mrs Beckmann spent her early childhood on a property at Wyandra, 800km west of Brisbane, where she helped cook for the stockmen.

She would become *carer* to her family after settling in the Pomona area in the Sunshine Coast hinterland, her niece said.

"She did everything she could to make her family happy," Mrs Watson told *The Australian*.

The ASG-MWP extends our condolences to the Families





WILL WE GET IT RIGHT?

Constitutional Recognition of Indigenous Australians

Recommendations for changes to the Constitution – Plain English

The Panel recommends that:

- section 25 is removed
- section 51(xxvi) is removed
- a new section 51A is adopted to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to preserve the Australian Government's ability to pass laws for the benefit of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- a new section 116A is adopted, prohibiting racial discrimination
- a new section 127A is adopted, recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages while confirming that English is Australia's national language
- the Government considers carefully the Panel's advice on how to achieve a successful referendum

Section 51A—Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

The Panels suggestion for a new section 51A:

Recognising that the continent and its islands now known as Australia were first occupied by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;

Acknowledging the continuing relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with their traditional lands and waters;

Respecting the continuing cultures, languages and heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;

and **Acknowledging** the need to secure the advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Parliament shall, subject to this Constitution, have power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the Commonwealth with respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Section 116A Prohibition of racial discrimination

The Panel suggests the following words for a new section 116A:

- (1) The Commonwealth, a State or a Territory shall not discriminate on the grounds of race, colour or ethnic or national origin.
- (2) Subsection (1) does not preclude the making of laws or measures for the purpose of overcoming disadvantage ameliorating the effects of past discrimination, or protecting the cultures, languages or heritage of any group

Section 127A Recognition of languages

The Panels suggestion for a new section 127A:

- (1) The national language of the Commonwealth of Australia is English.
- (2) The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages are the original Australian languages, a part of our National heritage

Recommendations on how to achieve a successful referendum:

To keep it simple, the referendum should ask voters in a single yes/no question if they support the 6 changes to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It's been around for more than 100 years, but have you ever taken the time to actually read the Australian Constitution? Read the full Constitution here.

<http://www.youmeunity.org.au>



HORNSBY AREA RESIDENTS FOR RECONCILIATION

Hornsby Area Residents for Reconciliation (HARR) organised a forum to try to raise public awareness and understanding of the proposal for a referendum to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Constitution.

About 80 people heard the opinions of our federal and local government representatives, local Aboriginal residents, Traditional Owners, a secondary student (see *article on page 5*) and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Mick Gooda, who was a member of the panel which made the recommendations to the government.

Some of the main points to emerge were:

There is general agreement that a statement of recognition will be uncontroversial and universally supported.

There also appears to be bipartisan support for eliminating any reference to race in the constitution.

The expert panel's advice was that it would be necessary to replace the race power with a power to permit existing laws like native title and land rights.

However, the federal coalition appears wary of what might be proposed to address this need. They say they need to see what the government proposes and are suspicious of *unintended consequences*.

Mick Gooda and other Aboriginal speakers made the point that if a referendum fails it will be devastating not only for the Aboriginal community but also for the general Australian community and will reinforce Australia's image as a racist country. Clearly, the prospects of a referendum being put to the people and passing are far from guaranteed.

Both Patrick Dodson and Malcolm Turnbull have recently spoken against putting a referendum unless its chance of passing is high.

Failing to pass a referendum would put the cause of Reconciliation back decades.

So the question for us all now is *what can community groups and individuals do to build momentum and support for constitutional recognition?*

Continued page 5

Always was, and always will be

Tracker – Geoff Scott, March 20

Entering the resources sector is a way of getting a seat at the table, instead of settling for the crumbs, CEO Geoff Scott says. At the end of the last month, the NSW Aboriginal Land Council ventured where no other Aboriginal organisation has before – as an equity player in the resources sector. NSWALC CEO Geoff Scott explains why he's seeking to break the mould. Aboriginal people have always maintained that we own the land from the sky to the core. The problem for us, of course, is that Australia does not recognise that prior ownership. The NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act, introduced by a parliament with great foresight in 1983, has returned a very modest amount of land back to its original custodians. As it sits today, our land base represents less than one-tenth of one percent of the total NSW land mass. That's 0.1 percent, if you're struggling with the math. Despite the claims of some, Aboriginal people have not made out like bandits in the land claim process. Some of our land, of course, is very valuable, a fact which we readily acknowledge. But it's taken almost 30 years to get to this point. While land rights will always remain one of NSWALC's primary areas of focus, we figure that if we can't get back our land back, then we're going to try and get back some of what's in it. Hence, last week the Sydney Morning Herald broke the story of NSWALC's application to the NSW Government for three petroleum exploration licenses. Specifically, we are hoping to look for oil and gas. Two of the applications are on the north coast, one in the north west of the state. Combined the areas take in more than half of the total NSW land mass. The licenses do not permit extraction of oil or gas – if granted; they simply give NSWALC the right to look for gas and petroleum reserves. If and when we find something, we then seek a license to extract that reserve. In order to successfully gain an exploration license, the NSW government will look closely at our capacity. Government will want assurances that not only can we afford to enter the resources sector, but that we have the necessary expertise. Obviously, we can't explore for petroleum on our own. So we are currently negotiating with a strategic partner who has the resources, the expertise, and the cash to help us realize our goal. Strategic partnerships, of course, are nothing new to NSWALC. In 2008, we dug into our own coffers to commit half of a \$200 million joint water and sewerage program with the NSW government. The aim of the project, which operates over 25 years, is to provide more than 60 regional and remote Aboriginal communities in NSW with basic water and sewerage infrastructure. It was a bold move on the part of my Governing Council, and it attracted some criticism, albeit muted, within our own network. Some questioned why we should spend our own money to provide services that were the responsibility of government. There's a few reasons why our Board chose the direction they did. Firstly, they understood that if Aboriginal people waited for government to invest properly in their communities, they'd be waiting a very long time. It is a measure of the under-investment in Aboriginal communities by government over generations that in 2008, there were more than 60 communities without basic water and sewerage infrastructure. Secondly, self-determination – which is the ultimate goal of the NSW Aboriginal community – comes at a price. If we want

to loosen the reigns of government around our necks, then we have to be prepared to lead the way on issues, and that includes investing our own resources. The water and sewerage initiative was part of a longer-term play – an attempt to transition the Aboriginal community of NSW towards self-determination. And that issue of long-term strategy is foremost in our minds when considering our entry into the resources sector. That and the current volatility of the share market. As the Global Financial Crisis has clearly demonstrated, we cannot rely solely on the share market – neither in Australia nor internationally – for our long-term economic viability. As with all other investors in the equity markets, NSWALC suffered not insubstantial losses when the GFC hit. We lost less than others, thanks to our defensive investment strategies, but it still hurt. Currently, our Statutory Investment Fund sits at more than \$600 million. It is a source of immense pride for my organisation and its members that we have managed our finances prudently, and that we do not rely on the public purse. However, the needs of the Aboriginal community in NSW are substantial, and they are increasing. It might sound like a lot of money – and of course \$600 million is – but it's comparatively small when you leverage it across the entire NSW Aboriginal community of more than 160,000 people. And it's not at all a large sum when you understand that we cannot simply spend all our money today, and hope for something more tomorrow. Our investment fund needs to grow. It must be available for future generations of Aboriginal people. It is their birth right. They can have a reasonable expectation that they will inherit something from the fruits of land rights. And just as we've relied on crumbs from governments for generations, we would stand condemned if that's all we left for our children after several decades of land rights. So we must find alternative ways to generate the revenue sufficient to meet the needs of our people. Our proposed entry into the resources sector is a business decision. If successful, we will enter it on a business footing. This is about being an equity player in the resources sector. While we're seeking to make a profit, we have other goals in mind as well. Aboriginal employment has been one of the key areas of focus of the O'Farrell Government's joint ministerial taskforce into Aboriginal affairs. This proposed venture is about providing some solutions to that enduring problem. Resources sector companies more than most have been active in engaging Aboriginal people in the workforce. But an Aboriginal-owned resources/energy company will obviously set the bar even higher. Another of our goals is to see the profits from the resource sector spread more equitably across the community. Last week, Jessica Irvine wrote a very interesting analysis in the *Sydney Morning Herald* about the need for mining companies to pay the people of Australia a greater dividend for their exploitation of the minerals that we all own. I couldn't agree more strongly. <http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/politics/theyre-our-resources-and-its-time-miners-paid-more-to-dig-them-up-20120308-1un6r.html>

Continued page 5

Continued from page 4

Always was, and always will be

It's about time the government made decisions around the resource sector that delivered real profits to people, rather than to just corporations. Other players must be allowed into the market.

The NSW Aboriginal Land Council is the nation's largest Aboriginal organisation. It is democratically elected, and owned by its 23,000 plus members around the state. If we enter the resources sector, then the profits from that venture will be shared among our members, and beyond.

Of course, like most Australians, NSWALC members share concerns about the impact of mining on our landscape. NSWALC has a long and proud history of advocating for the protection of our culture and heritage, and our environment. We don't see that being involved in the resources sector will prevent us from continuing that work. Indeed, we believe it will empower us further, with greater capital to direct towards projects that benefit our land and our people. The fact is, oil

and gas is going to be extracted, whether NSWALC is involved or not. We can sit on the sidelines, or we can take an active role. The NSWALC Board prefers the latter. For too long, Aboriginal people have been reliant on government. We've waited for the crumbs to fall off the table.

This proposed venture is about getting a seat at that table, and ensuring that Aboriginal people in NSW, and beyond, share in the wealth of this nation.

Ending poverty is very expensive. We owe it to ourselves, and to future generations of Aboriginal people to be in a position to meet our own needs.

The resources sector is one way in which we hope to start a process of change. And that change will have come when Aboriginal people are no longer reliant on the public purse, when we are part of the Australian economy, instead of existing on the margins.

*Geoff Scott is the CEO of NSWALC.
He is Wiradjuri, from Narromine.*

Continued from page 3

Starting the Conversation on Recognition

On the 30th of March, Hornsby Area Residents for Reconciliation (HARR) held *Advance Australia Fair* at the PCYC Hornsby, a community Q&A forum on the current move for constitutional recognition of Aboriginal people. I was fortunate to be invited to participate in the panel providing a young person's perspective gained through Aboriginal community engagement research in an Aboriginal studies HSC project.

The panel comprised of Aboriginal Social Justice

whether a purely symbolic constitutional change would be an *empty gesture* to Aboriginal Australia.

Members of the audience posed a number of questions to the panel which resulted in a robust conversation amongst the panellists.

The forum encouraged that we initiate a conversation of the referendum within our own networks – our families, our friends, our neighbours, through social networking, and even suggested by a participant *with our taxi drivers*.

This movement requires us to initiate this dialogue ourselves, rather than to simply wait. Terry Chenery explained that when we contribute to this conversation we get something back from the Aboriginal community, gaining *richness in character, sharing in culture and inclusion*.



Commissioner Mick Gooda, Darug Artist Chris Tobin, Councillor Nick Berman Mayor of Hornsby, Councillor Jennifer Anderson Mayor of Ku-ring-gai, The Hon. Phillip Ruddock MP Federal Member for Berowra, Paul Fletcher MP Federal Member for Bradfield, Terry Chenery, an Awabagal man and local resident, and myself, an HSC Aboriginal Studies student providing perspectives encountered throughout my research.

The event, attracting a community audience of more than 100, was a platform for interactive and thoughtful discussion about the issues surrounding the proposed constitutional referendum.

Among the many issues covered, discussion points included the role social media has to play within advocacy in this dialogue, the activism and momentum around the 1967 referendum, and the question of

HARR's community forum hopes to be a first of many, encouraging communities across Australia to begin this dialogue and incite grassroots interest in this referendum. Most Australians are not aware that embedded in our constitution are acts which enable and anticipate discrimination on the basis of race.

If you are interested to learn more about constitutional recognition for Aboriginal people contact HARR on 0410080434.

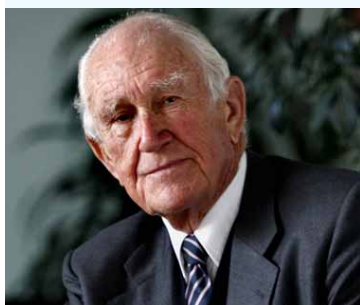
You can also visit <http://www.youmeunity.org.au> and <http://www.getup.org.au> who are also providing the platform to begin the conversation on constitutional recognition.

by Alison Bejma, Cheltenham Girls' High School Student



REPORT CLAIMS INTERVENTION PROCESS A SHAM

NationalTimes - Michael Gordon March 9, 2012



Former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser has accused the Gillard government of “old fashioned white paternalism at its very worst”, insisting that consultations with indigenous communities on the future of the

Northern Territory *Intervention* were fraudulent.

“Aboriginals were not involved in the process and have not been involved in the development of policy outcomes,” Mr Fraser said, backing the findings of a report on the consultations launched in Melbourne last night.

Things have been presented to them by the government and consultation has consisted of trying to persuade Aboriginals that what government has decided is right.” The 144-page report, *Listening but not Hearing*, which was prepared by the Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning at the University of Technology Sydney, and whose authors include academic Larissa Behrendt and activist Eva Cox, claims the consultation process denied genuine engagement, in breach of the UN declaration on the rights of Indigenous people.

Indigenous Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin yesterday rejected the findings, insisting the consultation process was “thorough and fair. Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory have been clear with me that having their kids go to school and get a decent education, having jobs for local people and tackling alcohol abuse are the priority issues for them in building a stronger future,” she said. Legislation linking welfare payments to school enrolment

and attendance, and continuing alcohol restrictions was drafted after the consultations. It has passed the House of Representatives and is being examined by a Senate committee. Ms Macklin maintains the *Stronger Futures* in the Northern Territory legislation reflects the priorities identified by Indigenous people during consultations that included more than 450 meetings last year.

But the report asserts that documents for guiding the consultations were not translated into Aboriginal languages and that many meetings were “more like a controlled chat run by departmental officers. They were not real consultations in the sense that you don’t get a true voice of the Aboriginal people across the Northern Territory, nor in particular communities,” said Ian Viner, a Fraser government indigenous affairs minister, at the report’s launch.

“The *Stronger Futures* legislation is supposed to be a special measure under the Racial Discrimination Act – that has to be based on informed consent – but there’s no underlying informed consent by the Aboriginal people for all this massive new legislation that is just continuing the *Intervention*.”

Mr Viner also criticised the legislation for ignoring the underlying role of traditional law and custom within Aboriginal communities.

Mr Fraser said the failure to properly consult left the government open to legal action.

“They just haven’t got the patience ... to show genuine respect for Aboriginal people,” he said. “It’s only if Aboriginal people have ownership of programs being developed – that means being involved in the decision-making right through – that they have any chance of success.”

News from the

Koori Mail ...

Indigenous pair conquer Boston marathon

17 April 2012 Two Indigenous athletes have completed the 2012 Boston Marathon as part of former marathon runner Rob de Castella’s Indigenous Marathon Project. Tegan Pigram from Derby, Western Australia, and Jamie Wunungmurra from Yirrkala, Northern Territory, overcame many hurdles to make their way through the tough 42.195 km course. With a temperature of 31 degrees at the start line, Tegan completed the course in 5 hours and 14 minutes, with Jamie coming in at 6 hours and 7 minutes.

Call for Opal to combat petrol sniffing

12 April 2012 Opal fuel has dramatically reduced the incidents of petrol sniffing where it has been introduced. An outbreak of petrol sniffing in the remote community of Beswick in the Katherine region of Western Australia has prompted calls for the introduction of low-aromatic Opal fuel into all five petrol outlets in Katherine. Sunrise Health Service Aboriginal Corporation chief executive Graham Castine along with Beswick community member Malcolm Fox both said genuine action was needed to save young people’s lives.

AMSANT welcomes 10 year funding

30 March 2012 The Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory [AMSANT] has welcomed the Federal Government’s *historic* announcement of a ten year funding commitment for Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services in the Northern Territory as part of its *Stronger Futures* funding package. AMSANT chief executive John Paterson said it was the first time in history that Aboriginal Community Controlled organisations in any sector had received a commitment funding extending to ten years.



THE WAY AHEAD: The new land grab **Tracker** March 19, 2012

Jeff McMullen was on the ground in Maningrida when the Senate inquiry probing *Stronger Futures* rolled into towns.

Aboriginal leaders in the Northern Territory have issued a strong warning that the Australian government's new land grab in the form of the proposed 10-year extension of the Intervention will send many communities into a downward spiral with still more death and misery.

As a Senate Committee from Canberra listened to elders and community representatives in Maningrida, 600 kilometres east of Darwin, I watched men in ceremonial paint dance into the centre of the proceedings to assert their right to Aboriginal Law and challenge the increasing take-over of their rights to land, language and culture.

The target of the rising anger across the homelands and larger communities like Maningrida is the federal government's provocatively named *Stronger Futures* legislation now before the Parliament.

If approved it is a massive assault on Aboriginal Land Rights, an extraordinary shift of power to the federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs and a tightening of government hands slowly throttling Traditional Owners, Aboriginal organisations and the voices of Aboriginal people.

These Aboriginal people have good reason to be full of anguish over the extraordinary increase in federal control. Maningrida, a community of 3200 people nestled against the Arafura Sea, has been declared one of the government's *growth towns*.

The population is increasingly stressed because of the oppressive shortage of housing and the burden of some 800 countrymen scattered around 35 surrounding homelands that are now feeling increasingly abandoned by the government.

Instead of utilising the local labour force and the organisational leadership of the BAC the *Intervention's* masterminds awarded \$500,000 of work to contractors for work on school housing and up to \$50 million for a larger housing project.

These fly-in, fly-out, *whitefellas* huddle each night in their own compound. Very little of this tax-payer funded investment actually improves the local economy. As the local Aboriginal men of the BAC run their own earth brick factory and have just finished Maningrida's excellent new art and culture centre, why not boost their employment and real wages by letting them build up their own community?

The *Intervention* will deliver Maningrida about 100 small houses now being constructed on former swamp-land but some locals claim the new housing project will be inundated in the frequent big wets. The low, concrete slab houses look like hot boxes, painted neatly in pastels with high wire fences, a mini Mac-mansion that someone has decided is good enough for Aboriginal families.

Across town, many huge families of twenty people or more are crowded under rusting tin roofs, with flapping tarps to keep out the driving rain.

Old cars and trucks are pulled up at the sides. Many here told me that what they truly hate about the new tenancy rules imposed by the *Intervention* extension is that they will not be allowed to light an open fire in their yard, not for cooking, not even for ceremonial purposes after a death in the family.

As men, women and even school students addressed the senators their unmistakeable collective message was that Jenny Macklin had not listened to their voices and that last year's government consultation was an insulting farce, disrespectful of all of their most important rights and beliefs.

Is it any wonder that Aboriginal people can't fathom white politicians?

The Canberra mob can't even settle on who they want to be their own boss but they are always determined not to allow Aboriginal leaders and communities to manage challenges that government has never and will never be able to solve.

The *Stronger Futures* bill also includes harsh penalties that could see people jailed for six months for possessing a bottle of beer or 18 months for having a six pack (more than 1.35 litres of alcohol) in the prohibition zones.

White people often get exemption permits to drink alcohol in places like Maningrida and the double standard and discrimination is glaring.

The Maningrida mob wants to manage any troubled youth or sick adults by caring for them on their homelands where the wellbeing is stronger.

But the Northern Government's blind folly in herding people towards twenty larger growth towns leaves the homelands feeling abandoned.

What the visiting politicians rarely see on their fleeting fly-in and fly-out visits is the scale of the poverty and hunger.

In these Aboriginal homes a big extended family is struggling to survive on about \$800 a fortnight, paying \$240 or more on rent under the new tenancy rules, battling to find the \$500 a week that they must pay for meagre rations, over-priced sacks of flour and sugar for damper.

If the government had truly been listening they would have directed the intervention money to improve transport costs of vital food supplies.

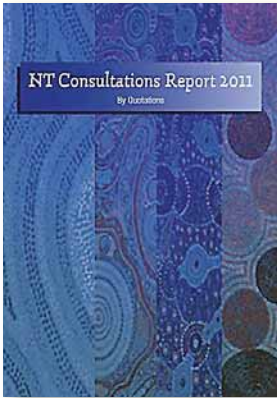
A senior insider in the Northern Territory government told me that the *feds* had spent \$400 million over four years just to bring in the income management of these families. It would cost another \$25 million a year to extend the control and punishment program by taking away the money when school attendance lagged.

In Maningrida and in so many other communities where spirits are being crushed by the government's approach there is no sense of a *Stronger Future* for the heartlands of this country.

Is anyone listening to the truthful voices in remote communities?

Jeff McMullen is a prominent Australian journalist, and a winner of the UN Media Peace Prize. He is Honourary CEO of the Ian Thorpe Fountain of Youth Foundation.

NT Consultations Report 2011 By Quotations



ISBN: 978-0-646-57214-7
72 pages, hard cover book
with Aboriginal cover design
Published by 'concerned
Australians'
Photography by Becka
Mezzatesta, Sinem Saban,
Hilary Tyler, Pia Pagotto

NT Consultations Report 2011: By Quotations, published in February 2012, is an important sequel to the highly regarded

This Is What We Said (February 2010) and *Walk With Us* (August 2011).

Between June and August 2011 the Australian Government conducted *Stronger Futures* consultations in Northern Territory communities with the stated purpose of finding out what worked and what didn't work under the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) – commonly called the *Intervention* – which started in 2007. This book is presented in a most accessible and attractive format with highlights of quotations taken from ten consultations which were independently recorded.

Beautifully illustrated, this hard-backed book gives voice to the views of Aboriginal people living under the *Intervention*. Mainstream media has given much commentary to the controversial laws under which Aboriginal Peoples in the Northern Territory now live. In this book we hear the true voices of Aboriginal people calling out to be heard. Each page speaks volumes about their frustration and despair at the failure of Government to listen.

Every quotation contains a clear expression of the participants' thoughtful responses to the issues faced by their communities. The reader cannot fail to be moved by the deep commitment of the community members who gave their time yet again to engage in consultations with the government. This commitment was given despite the betrayal of having their voices ignored in previous consultations documented in *This Is What We Said*. Though these quotations are short they provide insights into the cumulative impact of the NTER laws from 2007. The responses are presented under various topics such as feelings about the consultations, requests for the return of control over communities, support for homelands and the importance of education, including the restoration of bilingual programmes. Also addressed are job losses, confusion about constant change of government policies, lack of promised housing, unaffordability of healthy fresh food and as well, the fact that 80% of Homelands were *dry* before the *Intervention* started. Within these quotations are carefully considered, locally-based solutions which could be easily implemented.

These solutions should be genuinely considered by the Government – if only they were *really* listening. *Are we going to be heard?* [referring to the previous round of consultations] *It just went in here* [pointing to right ear] *here* [pointing to left ear] *and blew it out, the wind blew it out*. One cannot fail to notice that the solutions offered by Aboriginal people are consistent with the articles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples for which the government expressed its support on 3 April 2009.

The introduction to this book gives an overview of the strength of the most constant recurring themes during the consultations; the demand for community control to be returned to the people and for the right to self-determination to be re-established. Ironically these are not referred to in the published Government's *Consultation Report*. Similarly the desire for the return of bilingual learning programmes to Northern Territory schools, repeatedly called for during the consultations, hardly gets a mention in the Government Report.

What makes this book so unique is that it is based on the only recordings of the 2011 consultations. This book is essential reading for every citizen in Australia. It provides the opportunity to listen to this country's *First Peoples'* authentic voices which often fail to reach the mainstream media. These voices deserve to be heard and respected. Full transcripts of the quotations can be found on the *concerned Australians* website. The prequels are also highly recommended and further information about them is at: www.concernedaustralians.com.au

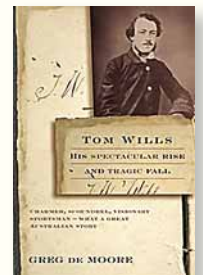
Cathy Gill and Sabine Kacha

Tom Wills His spectacular rise and tragic fall

Greg de Moore

This is the story of Tom Wills – flawed genius, sporting libertine, fearless leader and agitator, and the man most often credited with creating the game we now know as Australian Rules football. He experienced first-hand the devastating effects of racial tension when his father was murdered in the biggest massacre of Europeans by Aboriginal people. Yet five years later, Tom coached the first Aboriginal cricket team. Tom Wills lived hard and fast, challenging authority on and off the field. But when his physical talents began to fade, the psychological demons that alcohol and adrenaline had kept at bay surged to the fore, driving him to commit the most brutal of suicides. He was forty-four and destitute.

<http://www.allenandunwin.com/default.aspx?page=94&book=9781741754995>





The Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory are fighting for their freedom. The *Stronger Futures* legislation proposes to extend key elements of the Northern Territory Intervention until 2022. The Northern Territory *Intervention* has been condemned by the United Nations as racially discriminatory and against international human rights principles.

Take Action

The *Stronger Futures* legislation is opposed by Aboriginal people across the Northern Territory, as well as civil society groups across Australia. We need your help to make the Government listen to their concerns, to all of our concerns. Aboriginal people have the right to control their own futures. Let's come together and stop *Stronger Futures*!

Why This Is Important

The Australian Government is currently considering passing legislation that will undermine the human rights of Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory for the next 10 years.

The *Stronger Futures* legislation will maintain many parts of the Northern Territory Intervention; a policy that has attracted United Nations condemnation for its racial discrimination against Aboriginal people and their cultures.

It will grant complete Commonwealth control over townships and camps. It will increase punitive measures and alcohol bans, while slashing funds to vital jobs programs. And it will expand a failed program that quarantines welfare payments based on school attendance.

The government should withdraw this legislation.

It has been developed without the free, prior and informed consent of Aboriginal communities and it will give the Government 10 more years of control.

Aboriginal Elders, community leaders and Aboriginal organisations across the Northern Territory have opposed the legislation, and are demanding the right to control their own futures. Years of this top-down policy-making by the Government have taken power away from communities and have overseen increasing poverty and social breakdown.

Since the Northern Territory *Intervention* started in 2007:

- Incarceration of Aboriginal people has increased 41%
- Attempted suicide and self-harm amongst Aboriginal youth has doubled
- Aboriginal life expectancy continues to be the lowest of any Indigenous group in the world.

The Government should give Aboriginal people the right to control their own futures. Please sign the petition, and ensure the Government withdraws the legislation in its current form.

<http://standforfreedom.org.au/>



Winner of the UNESCO Award and nominated for the best performance of an actor at the Asia Pacific Screen Awards, this highly acclaimed film is set in Toomelah, a remote Indigenous community on the border of NSW and Queensland, that was created as a mission during the 1930s.

The story centres on Daniel, a small ten year old boy who's dreams of becoming a gangster turns into a nightmare.

You are welcome to attend a free Screening of *Toomelah*, followed by a discussion led by actor Dean Daley-Jones at a forthcoming ASG Meeting. See *Whats On* back page for more details

Jolts across desert as earthquake strikes central Australia

From SMH March 24, 2012

The earthquake that struck in South Australia's far north could have been felt as far away as Uluru. People living near the epicentre of Australia's biggest quake in 15 years have reported being shaken, but otherwise escaping unscathed. The 6.1 earthquake struck near Ernabella, in South Australia's far north, just before 8.30pm local time (9pm AEDT) yesterday.



Ernabella, an indigenous arts hub, is home to about 500 Aboriginal people, with more living in about six communities in the surrounding region. The remote area is just south of the border with the Northern Territory, about 317 kilometres south-west of Alice Springs, 230 kilometres south-east of Uluru and 415 kilometres north-west of Coober Pedy. Geoscience Australia seismologist David Jepsen said people in the communities around the earthquake epicentre had reported strong shaking.

Photo: Jason South

STOLEN WAGES SCANDAL: WA govt offers pennies for a lifetime of lost wages *Amy McGuire*

3 April 2012. The Barnett government has offered \$2,000 ex gratia payments to Aboriginal people who had their wages withheld on government missions. The offer has been labelled a “slap in the face” by the Aboriginal Legal Service of WA. From the 1905 until the 1970s, Aboriginal people had their



wages and entitlements funneled into a complex system of trust accounts. The WA government is the latest state to offer a settlement. A \$2000 one-off ex gratia payment in exchange for what, in some cases, was a lifetime of stolen wages. That's the Barnett government's offer to the thousands of victims who had their wages and entitlements

funneled into trust accounts throughout the state between 1905 and 1972, under legislation like the Aborigines Act 1905 and the Native Welfare Act 1963.

There is no evidence that the funds were ever paid back, and the state government claims much of the documentation was lost. The practice compounded the disadvantage of Aboriginal people, not just in Western Australia, but all around the country. “This was a vast amount of money,” historian and stolen wages expert Dr Ros Kidd told *Tracker*.

“It's not only the amount of wages that went missing in government hands, which is bad enough, but it's also the amount of pensions and child endowments that weren't paid, that the government knew about. We know that governments were well aware, particularly in WA that hundreds and thousands of dollars weren't being paid. There are many letters by government inspectors which showed people were not being properly fed and housed, that (the government was) not looking after the worker. All this vast deprivation is because the government failed in its duty of care... I think that's a terrible stain on the way governments behaved and it's obscene they are walking away from it now. The poverty that we've got today in Aboriginal families would not be there if workers and pensioners had received the money they were entitled to.”

The WA government's offer comes six years after a federal Senate inquiry probed the national scandal, and three years after the state government completed its own report.

The report was only made public last month, on the same day the offer was announced. It was an internal government report, and although it was written in consultation with communities, the author remains undisclosed.

To be eligible for the payment, a claimant must be born before 1958, was aged 14 years or older and resident at a Government Native Welfare Settlement in WA. Their wages must have been withheld from them. Descendants of claimants are not eligible for the payment. Claimants will only have six months to compile documentation and send off their applications.

Dr Kidd calls it a “disgustingly low amount to offer”. “The WA government, perhaps of all governments, given their mining boom and being the richest state in Australia, should have paid some reasonable amount. It really is an insult to cancel out so many people from the deal again.

They say only 1,500 might be eligible. In terms of any sense of justice, the West Australian government have been a failure on that score.”

The offer was also derided by Aboriginal Legal Service of WA CEO, Dennis Eggington, who labelled it a “slap in the face”. He told *Tracker* that the fact it is not open to descendants is a “disservice” to victims.

“What this did is it created an intergenerational affect. This isn't about saying a person went to work and didn't get \$2,000, so they should be given it back as fair compensation,” Mr Eggington told *Tracker*.

“We're talking about people who worked a lifetime and were effected by this. In that period, they had families; they had children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren... I would even say for those families it is still having an intergenerational effect. “If the government doesn't change its mind and give (reparations to descendants) then they are doing a great disservice to the families who would have got the benefit and should still get the benefit.”

The ALSWA is currently considering legal action.

“We've been doing a fair bit behind the scenes,” Mr Eggington said. We're getting all our files in place, and looking at particular issues, particular people who have got stronger claims than others. We've been looking at the pros and cons of the schemes in NSW and Queensland and we've been seeking opinions about the legal merit of class actions and test cases.” He says, unfortunately, many Aboriginal people will want to accept the payment.

Mr Eggington is still receiving legal advice about whether that will mean they sign their legal rights away. “We're hoping that we can get a similar opinion (as the WA redress scheme) that if people accept the offer from the state government they will still have legal recourse to be a part of a class action or pursue their legal rights if there were a successful test case.”

There is currently a legal action against the Queensland government's \$55.4 million take-it-or-leave-it reparations offer on behalf of Yarrabah man Uncle Conrad Yeatman.

Uncle Conrad is taking action to recover his decades of lost wages, withheld since he began work as a carpenter and labourer at age 14. It will put the onus back on government, which Dr Kidd argues is essential.

She argues that government, as a trustee of Aboriginal money, must be the ones held responsible for documentation.

“Anyone which gives itself the legal obligation as trustee of a person's finances has the duty to keep the records,” Dr Kidd said. She said the legal issues were similar to those in the United States – a similar practice was widespread among First Nations communities, except they won a \$3.4 billion settlement in the ‘Cobell case’. “The United States class action showed that the courts were likely to find if you can't find a record that is automatically a breach of duty as a trustee.”

Dr Kidd says Aboriginal people shouldn't trust government claims that records have been destroyed. “I don't think we can trust government to tell us what's there or not. The Queensland government said records didn't exist, and I actually received photocopies of them. So you can't trust governments at all. It's also quite perverse that the body that is on the defensive, and being charged with fraud and admits many times in its own records it is defrauding people, should be the body that determines who can find records.”

Numerous attempts by *Tracker* to contact the office of state Indigenous affairs minister Peter Collier were ignored.

Millions do little to help NSW Aboriginal community *Elise Scott*

29 March 2012. Millions of dollars of state spending to improve the lives of Indigenous people is having little effect, the NSW Ombudsman says. The outlay amounted to \$21.9 million in funds allocated to the Office of Aboriginal Affairs in the 2011/2012 state budget and \$193 million across other government portfolios.



NSW Ombudsman Bruce Barbour says current programs are not producing results for Aboriginal Australians, despite some improvements following a change of government last March.

"There is an awful lot of money being spent," he told a conference on Indigenous health. "But on the ground, what we hear time and time

again, and what we see firsthand, is it's not getting through. "It's not providing the outcomes and the services and care that it needs to, and that's really what we've got to fix."

Mr Barbour and Aboriginal Affairs Minister Victor Dominello told the annual Social Determinants of Indigenous Health conference in Sydney on Wednesday there were many complex issues surrounding Indigenous health, education and employment.

Mr Dominello said the government formed a taskforce last year to improve economic and social outcomes for Indigenous Australians, but it would take generations to solve long-standing problems. "I'm not going to be one of those politicians that stands up and says there will be no child in poverty in 20 years, because that's just rubbish," Mr Dominello said. "The reality is the work we need to do in Aboriginal policy is going to take generations."

Mr Barbour told the conference that government must work closely with Aboriginal leaders to begin to solve well-known problems. "It's about identifying problems constantly. It's about making sure we're turning our minds to trying to look at solutions," he said. "That's why I'm hoping we'll be able to work with government in the future."

The ministerial taskforce, which focuses on improving education, employment and service delivery, is comprised of NSW ministers and senior Aboriginal leaders. Mr Dominello says the department plans to have reforms to Aboriginal policy presented to parliament before the end of the year.



ASG MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM DUE JULY 1, 2012

Please Complete and Return with your payment

Mailing this form will also facilitate prompt issue of a receipt

Name:

Street:

Suburb: Post Code:

Phone: Mobile:

Email:

Membership Renewal Fee \$ 25

Optional Donation *For Aboriginal Education* \$

TOTAL PAYMENT \$

I would like to pay by: Direct Deposit Cheque/Money Order

Please Tick appropriate Box

Payment via Direct Deposit:

Acc. Name: ASGMWP
Commonwealth Bank Dee Why
Acc. No: 00 906 332 BSB: 062 155
Please use your NAME as the reference
on your deposit slip or electronic transfer

Payment by Cheque/Money Order:

Payable to: ASGMWP
P.O. Box 129
Narrabeen NSW 2101



Monday May 14
7.30pm start

ASG-MWP Information Night FREE SCREENING of TOOMELAH

Classified: MA15+ Frequent Coarse Language
Followed by a discussion led by actor Dean Daley-Jones.
Mona Vale Memorial Hall, 1606 Pittwater Rd, Mona Vale. Light Supper afterwards. No booking required. Enquiries Lizzie Landers 9918-2594



Sunday May 27
3pm - 6pm

SORRY DAY 2012

Meet members of ASG - Manly Warringah Pittwater at Berry Park (near the Tramshed), Narrabeen for *Welcome to Country* then *Remembrance Walk* to Bilarong Scout Hall. The day will be commemorated with dancers and didgeridoo playing, storytelling, craft making and free BBQ. An opportunity for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal persons to come together and yarn, the way it should be.
Scout Hall, Bilarong Reserve, Wakehurst Parkway, North Narrabeen. Free event.
Enquiries: Neil Evers 9999 3045

Monday May 28
7pm - 9.30pm

Aboriginal Heritage of the Narrabeen Area

Speakers: Julie Janson, Lois Birk and Dennis Foley In association with: Friends of Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment. Narrabeen Tramshed, 1395A Pittwater Road, Narrabeen. Free event. Supper provided. Bookings essential, enquiries: Judith Bennett 9905 2135 or sydney.educ@npansw.org.au www.narrabeenlagoon.org.au

Monday June 11
7.30pm start

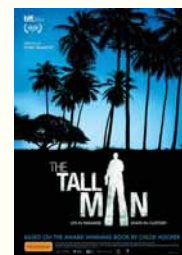
ASG-MWP Business Meeting

Mona Vale Memorial Hall, 1606 Pittwater Rd, Mona Vale.

Wednesday June 20
10am - 12 noon

The Tall Man

The Tall Man is the story of Palm Island, the tropical paradise where one morning Cameron Doomadgee allegedly swore at a policeman and forty minutes later lay dead in a watch-house cell. Collaroy Cinema, 1097 Pittwater Road, Collaroy. Admission: Gold coin donation.
Enquiries: Lizzie Landers 9918-2594



Saturday June 23
9am - 1pm

Discovery Walk in Guringai Country

A free event not to be missed – see cover page for details

Monday July 9
7.30pm start

Constitutional Recognition of Indigenous Australians, Will We Get it Right?

ASG-MWP Information Night and Panel Discussion
A free event with light supper afterwards. No booking required.
Mona Vale Memorial Hall, 1606 Pittwater Rd, Mona Vale.
(Donations Welcome) Enquiries Lizzie Landers 9918-2594



July 1-8

NAIDOC WEEK

National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee <http://www.naidoc.org.au>

Saturday August 4

National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day

All those who support children, including early childhood services, teachers, educators, foster carers, welfare workers, policy makers and government are encouraged to take a break from their normal routine and organise activities involving children and families. Such local events celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and reinforce how important it is for their wellbeing connection to culture. <http://www.snaicc.asn.au>

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

www.asgmwp.net

Elimatta is the newsletter of the Aboriginal Support Group Manly Warringah Pittwater.

Articles are welcome with the understanding that editorial changes may be made and that contributors agree that the material will be archived by the National Library of Australia.

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

Please email articles where possible to the.elimatta@gmail.com

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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