

## ROBERT ALFRED (BOB) WATERER – Warringah resident and Guringai descendent

Over my years with the ASGMWP and the Reconciliation Learning Circles, years of listening to stories, I was pretty sure that there are many people walking around who are unaware of their Indigenous heritage. I also thought that some would be of Guringai descent. For many years it had been 'safer' not to identify, not to let others know, to 'forget'. When Ian Jacobs rang to tell me about Bob Waterer I was thrilled but not surprised. My surprise is that Bob has documentation to authenticate his heritage.

*Lizzie Landers*

In September 2005, through an extraordinary stroke of good fortune, I found the documentation which confirmed my Aboriginal heritage. My mother had spoken about our family's ancestry which had been traced to Bidy Bungaree (1803-1880). Bidy, who adopted the name Sarah Wallace, was a tribal Aboriginal woman who appears to have belonged to the Broken Bay Group. Her mother is thought to have been Matora, one of the wives of Bungaree who was the head of the Broken Bay tribe in the early 19th century and a well-known mediator for early NSW Governors. Bidy's father was thought to be Richard Wallace, an English convict seaman.

I believed that after my mother's death the information I sought was in my sister's possession. However, it was not until my sister died in 2005 that I had the opportunity to search for the documents. Her house had been sold and just days before it was to be demolished I decided to look once more. This last minute effort was rewarded when I found, pushed to the back of a high wardrobe shelf, the folder I was seeking. It contained the original birth, marriage and death certificates going back to Bidy and her German husband John Lewis Ferdinando, later know as John Lewis. I am the great, great grandson of Bidy Bungaree.

The youngest of five children, I was born on October 13, 1924, at 39 Carter Road Brookvale. The name of the house was *Winona*. My mother had been born on Scotland Island in Pittwater in 1894, near where Tennis Wharf is now situated. My father, from Middlesex in England, came to Australia about 1900.



He joined the Australian Permanent Army and later served in France in the First World War. Some years after my parents married they settled in Brookvale.

I lived in Brookvale all my life until 2005. Brookvale was a very rural suburb, with Chinese market gardens, poultry and dairy farms and a pig farm on the hill where Freshwater High School now stands. A large dairy farm was on the present site of Manly High School and covered the area bounded by Abbott and Harbord Roads and Makim Street and back to the top of the Makim Street hill.

*Continued Page 2*

When I was ten years old I worked on the dairy's milk cart (horse and cart) getting up at 4am and working until about 8am, then going to school. I loved to work even at this age earning three-pence or sixpence which I would give to my mother. After school I would ride one of the milk cart-horses and take the cows to graze along the lagoon at North Curl Curl. I would be given firewood from the dairy which I loaded onto my four wheel trolley to take home, also manure for the garden. We would get small plants from the Chinese families who had the big gardens in Winbourne Road and replant them in our garden. We also kept chooks and always had our own eggs – and a chook for our Christmas lunch.

Whitakers Timber Yard on the corner of Delmar Parade and Pittwater Road, Dee Why, allowed us to take waste pieces of timber which I carted home on my trolley pulling it up the Stony Range hill, then a lot steeper than it is now. Sitting on top of the timber I would ride down the hill to Carter Road. It's a wonder I was never killed! Just before Christmas, along with a few other boys, I would sell Christmas bush to passing motorists between Harbord and Carter Roads for sixpence a bunch. Some we would get from trees that were growing wild, particularly in Harbord Road. We also sold it for people who had it growing in their gardens, giving them three pence a bunch and keeping threepence for ourselves. We used to make quite a bit of pocket money.

I was a student at Brookvale Public School from the age of five until I was twelve when I went to Manly Intermediate High School on the corner of Wentworth Street and Darley Road, Manly. I would go by the tram which operated until 1939 or I would ride my bike. I left school one week before my fourteenth birthday and got a job serving petrol at Frank Delandro's Service Station, Pittwater Road, Manly. After three months I gained an apprenticeship as a baker with Warringah Bakeries, Sturdee Parade, Dee Why. I started there on March 13, 1939 and stayed for 43 years until the bakery closed down in 1983 and I retired.

I served in the Army from 1943 to 1946 joining the 2/4th Field Regiment as a signaller. I saw action at Balikpapan in Borneo participating in the biggest amphibious landing undertaken by the Australian Army and remained with the Infantry for the six weeks of the campaign. I am NSW Secretary of the 2/4th Field Regiment Association and have been a Life Member for the past twenty years.

My two great sporting loves were playing rugby league and body surfing. I surfed at Dee Why and North Curl Curl Beaches. I played football at Brookvale School and my first try was scored where the 18th green is now located on the Warringah Golf Course, once a football ground. In 1940 I played in the first ever D Grade competition in Manly Warringah and was selected in the combined team to play St George, a game which we won. In the Army I played front row in the 2/4th Regimental team which went on to win all its games. I was very proud to be in this team as there were 800 troops in the Regiment.

In 1946, while still awaiting discharge from the Army, I played in the Brookvale A Grade team which won the competition and the next season I captained the team. In 1948 and 1949 I again played in the team and both years we won the Grand Finals.

For many years I had no connection with rugby league until my son Robert started playing football at Brookvale School. I coached the school team for two years. Later I spent eighteen years coaching the North Curl Curl Life Savers team and also held the positions of President, Secretary and Treasurer during that time. I am a Life Member of the club, now known as the North Curl Curl Knights.

It was through football – on a day trip by train to Penrith – that I met my wife Joan. We were married in 1948 and built our home in Shackel Avenue, Brookvale. Joan was a wonderful person, dearly loved by all who knew her. A keen tennis player and swimmer, Joan excelled at physical culture winning many championships. We had four children – Christine, Robert, Dianne and Kevin – and now have five grandchildren – Adam, Emma, Jasmine, Kelly and Simone. Joan died in 1979.

In 2005 I sold our home in Brookvale and moved to the War Veterans Retirement Village, Narrabeen. At nearly eighty-three years of age my main interests are playing lawn bowls and following the Manly Warringah Rugby League team. I also take a great interest in my children and grandchildren.

Bob Waterer

**THANKYOU to  
THE  
Manly Daily  
for its  
continuing support  
of the ASGMWP**

The Saturday July 7 *Weekend* magazine featured an excellent article on Bob Waterer and included the painting *Northern Beaches* by Newport artist Paul McCarthy which is the image of the Guringai Festival.

The *Your Diary* pages regularly give our events and Information Nights coverage including photographs of the guest speakers. We also would like to thank journalists Sue Hoban and Marj Belessis for their sensitive feature articles, always well researched and informative.

# TRACING GURINGAI HERITAGE

A recent discovery of Aboriginal heritage is that made by Bob Waterer, a longtime Brookvale resident, who can trace his Aboriginal descent, with documentation, to Biddy Bungaree (Sarah Wallace).

Biddy Bungaree was the daughter of Matora, the first partner of Bungaree, 'Chief of the Broken Bay Tribes' as recognised by the British with a breastplate. Biddy's father was an unknown non-Indigenous man. Her half-brother was Bowen, the son of Matora and Bungaree. Bowen was a fisherman, intermediary, adventurer, detective, tracker and translator, and was a popular and well known identity in the Pittwater and Broken Bay area from the 1830's until his murder in 1853. Both Bungaree and Bowen acted as interpreters and advisors and must have had some faith in an invader imposing different laws and justice over a dispossessed people.

In 1815 Bungaree's immediate clan was 'granted' farmland at Georges Head (in fact it was Middle Head) under Governor Macquarie's policy of creating a native farming class. This was one of the many misguided Aboriginal welfare programs initiated by the Governor and his wife and was designed to relocate Aboriginal people away from Sydney town where racism and segregation characterised British rule. The 'grant' included construction of shelters, farming advice, seeds, convict labour, fishing gear and a fishing boat. The land was not productive and when Macquarie paid his last visit to the farm Bungaree humourously quipped that while the carrot seeds sprouted the planted fish hooks did nothing. The clan resorted to making traditional weapons, tools, ornaments and curios which were traded, usually for grog, with curious crew and passengers on newly arrived vessels to Sydney Harbour.

Biddy Bungaree was described as attractive. She became the partner of John Lewis. We can speculate that he was probably one of the convict labourers working at Bungaree's farm at Middle Head and hence the contact with Biddy.

He was Prussian born, served in the British forces and sentenced by a British military court in Spain for an undocumented reason. In 1828 Biddy and John Lewis set up home on the upper reach of Marra Marra Creek on the Hawkesbury (Deerubin). The descriptions of the Lewis property and surrounding properties paint a squalid picture of poverty, deprivation and hardship. The couple had ten children and three died in infancy or childhood. The active Anglican Minister at Wiseman's Ferry, the Reverend William West Simpson (an early principal at The King's School, Parramatta), converted Biddy to Christianity and formalised the partnership to Lewis. The ten children were baptised and Biddy, by this stage, had adopted the names Sarah Wallace. At a later stage she filed a land claim on the property, presumably following her husband's death.

Now, while the story could be put to rest, descendants have emerged with remarkable stories filling in the jigsaw of their history, their life and ancestry. One of these fascinating traces of

ancestry is that of Bob Waterer who now lives in the War Veterans Retirement Village at Narrabeen. In an interview with Bob he recalled his mother claiming Aboriginal ancestry relating to Bungaree and ownership of land at Middle Head. Following the passing of Bob's mother and sister in recent years he was curious to find family birth, death and marriage certificates which have taken him on a journey of research showing his ancestry from Biddy Bungaree. In the process of investigation he has found distant relatives and has sparked the intrigue and interests of researchers and historians.

The very congenial Bob and his relatives are living proof that the descendants of the original Guringai of the Northern Beaches of Sydney are alive and well.

*Ian Jacobs*

*Photo courtesy of Bob Waterer*



*Martha Catherine Bens (nee Lewis) 1838-1920. Catherine is the great grandmother of Bob Waterer. She was the fifth of the ten children of Sarah Lewis (Biddy Bungaree) and John Lewis. By the 1860s Catherine had settled on Scotland Island, Pittwater, where she lived for many years with her husband Joseph Bens. She acted as midwife bringing many residents of the Island into the world. Her daughter Emily is the mother of Harriet whose son is Bob Waterer.*

# ASG INFORMATION NIGHTS

## NORMAN LAING

Norman Laing is a Dunghutti man from Kempsey. He lived at Burnt Bridge Mission and left home when young. He was inspired by Paul Keating's Redfern speech (Dec. 1992) and by the Mabo judgement also in the same year. Norman structured his life to gain a good education and was a soldier from 1995-2003. He served in East Timor in 1999, then with the Legal Corps and Australian Military Prosecutions.

In 2002 Norman was one of the first Indigenous graduates of the new Bachelor of Laws and Indigenous Australian Law degrees. He is a member of the NSW Attorney-General's Sentencing Council and a practising barrister.

At the March ASG Information Night Norman spoke of the anniversaries being held this year:

- 🕒 the 40th of the Referendum
- 🕒 the 15th of the Mabo judgement
- 🕒 the 10th of the *Bringing Them Home Report*

He spoke of his hopes as a young teenager, of the inspiration of the years since 1967 and of the frustrations and loss of hope of recent years. As he said – love or hate it – ATSIC (1990) was the culmination of attempts to achieve Aboriginal self determination and now there is no vehicle at that level for the Aboriginal voice.

Services are now out to tender and mainstreamed. Indigenous citizens remain the most socio-economically disadvantaged. The grim statistics on health, incarceration and employment are considerably less so in New Zealand and Canada. Indigenous people are not “dying out” and the projected population will be 470,000 by the end of 2007 with the average age being twenty years (in contrast to thirty one years for the total population).

On May 27, 1967, 90.7% of Australians voted to try to improve the lot of Aboriginal

people. 'Vote Yes for Aborigines' said the act and they did! It was a symbolic high point and needs to be honoured and appreciated. Again, in 2000, one hundred thousand people crossed bridges in support of Indigenous people and reconciliation. It was Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people working together in 1967 and 2000.

Norman believes people, both black and white, who toiled long and hard to achieve social equality, land rights, who opened doors and created opportunities, should be remembered and that we should hold governments to account for failing to alleviate Indigenous suffering. He was generous and open in both his talk and his responses to questions. Many of those present would have learnt quite a lot listening to Norman.

Thank you Norman.

*Jim Quigley and Lizzie Landers*

## I DON'T WEAR OCHRE ... I WEAR REVLON!

After numerous attempts to find a suitable time in her busy schedule Dr Anita Heiss was able to address our Support Group on May 7. There was much anticipation as the audience looked forward to meeting this Aboriginal academic and writer who had been promoted as 'black and eloquent' in an article by Sue Hoban in *The Manly Daily* (May 1).

As a very experienced university lecturer both in Sydney and three years in the USA on the Peace and Justice Tour, Anita was able to blend into her talk a number of personal anecdotes, many of which were the basis of situations which her fictional characters experience, with the reading of extracts from her novels. Her desire was to show the connection between her three books *Not Meeting Mr Right*, *I'm Not Racist But*, *Yirra and her Deadly Dog Demon* and the diversity of Aboriginality in Australia in the twenty first century.

Anita challenges the stereotypical images of Aboriginal people. 'I don't wear ochre... I wear Revlon, I don't go walkabout... I drive a sports car. Who is an Aboriginal? Am I black enough? What does it mean to be an Aboriginal in Australia today?' These are some of the questions she has confronted in her own experiences and has worked towards answering in her lectures and literature. She has tried to present the view of Aboriginal people as one identity with many heritages. Yet she has also attempted to show in *Not Meeting Mr Right* that there are issues that all women face.

Anita is very aware of her privileged position compared to many other Aboriginal people. As a result of her hard work she was awarded a PhD at twenty nine, the same age that her mother was when she finally received full citizenship. She is still however '...in the top one percent of the bottom two and a half

percent' in Australia.

While Dr Heiss' address was entertaining and informative she did underestimate the group's genuine interest and desire to support Aboriginal people which it has worked towards over many years. We could have benefited, as we have with previous guest speakers, from her being available to either answer questions publicly or privately from the audience. Previous speakers have been quite pessimistic about the progress of Aboriginal people, especially in terms of education. It is a shame that such a positive story, not only of her personal academic achievements but of the inspiration given to the children of La Perouse Public School, was not able to be further discussed.

*Sharon Esterman*

## CONSULTATION WITH DR. PHIL

It was natural that my brain responded to the word. It was unusual. In fact you might hear it once a year. But there, in one evening, in one talk, he used it, at least twice. The word was epiphany. It does have a distinctly religious connotation but there was nothing distinctly religious about the evening.

It was a regular Information Night of the Support Group. A cold July evening. And a reasonably good crowd had gathered to hear Philip McLaren. He was born in Redfern, a descendent of the Kamilaroi people. He has worked as a television producer, a director, an architect, a sculptor and as an author.

He left school at fourteen and then educated himself. He has now completed a doctorate.

But back to the word epiphany. Outside its religious context it has come to mean a perception of some basic truth. Often the perception is sudden and is likened to a blinding flash of light/insight. Epiphany was the word Philip used. He was talking about how he came to be a writer on Indigenous issues. The intriguing story was that he found himself making a program for the Canadian Broadcasting Commission on North American Indians. In keeping with his character Philip was completely engrossed in what he was doing. And then came the epiphany. He realised that he knew more about a particular tribe of

American Indians than he did about his own people – the Kamilaroi. The blinding flash of this insight led him to research his own people and then tell their story. This was the motivation for his book *Sweet Water, Stolen Land*.

And it was this blinding flash that set him on the path which has made him famous. Philip acknowledged that in some ways he was more famous outside Australia as a writer than he is here at home. Translations of his work into French and Japanese have given him a readership that augments the sales of his books here in Australia.

'Of all the books you have written', Phil was asked, 'what is your favourite?' Philip's immediate response was 'my next one'. This was an introduction to the comment about his ability to be self-critical. He finds it easy to look back over his work and see the ways in which he 'could have said it better'.

But he did have some observable pleasure in his next publication *West of Eden*. It tells the story of *The Man from Snowy River* immortalised by Banjo Patterson but now correctly revealed by Philip McLaren.

The truth is that 'the man' was Aboriginal. His name was Toby.

He was a member of a tribe who, unlike the general image, lived in the snow. They knew about ugh boots long before they became commercial and a subject for trademark litigation. To my disappointment Philip chose

not to read an extract from his new book, soon to be released. He had the manuscript with him. Maybe it was a marketing ploy but I am hooked already. There is no question, I will buy the book.

My final reflection on the evening has to do with the fact that Philip sat down to give his talk. I can clearly recall the two other occasions when I have heard lectures delivered by people from a sitting position. The now three occasions have all been ones where the lecturer/speaker has given a warm, natural, unostentatious and relaxed presentation. And again, on this night, there was no attempt to persuade or cajole or convince. Philip, seated, just told his story reflecting on his work with a charm that invited us to reflect with him. And with that charm there was an openness that was just there, unselfconsciously – in the words and in the breath that gave them life. Now, that is a rare combination – charm and openness. I might even call it an epiphany. Thanks to Lizzie and the Committee for organising yet another important evening for the Support Group.

Grahame Ellis

Readers of *Elimatta* might like to know that Philip's books are available from most good book shops and especially from *The Next Chapter* at Warriewood Square.

### CHANGED PROGRAM

### ASG INFORMATION NIGHT ON MONDAY AUGUST 6

## BUSH SCHOOL ... by special request

Education in Aboriginal communities is currently a hot topic. *Bush School* is a film released in 2006 about a small school for Aboriginal children who live on the edge of the Tanami Desert in Central Australia. Soon after teacher Colin Baker and his wife Sandra arrived at Warrego, it became a ghost town when the gold mine closed. To keep the primary school open the Bakers, with Elders from the community, developed an innovative curriculum based on the children learning to ride horses. It achieved the distinction of being the only school in the Northern Territory with 100% attendance. Four of the students featured in this inspiring documentary are now boarders at secondary schools in New South Wales and Victoria.

*Bush School* is written, directed, filmed (in beautiful colour) and produced by Bryan Duffy. The Support Group purchased a copy of the DVD as there have been many requests for the film to be shown at an Information Night. A discussion will follow.

#### 'The time to talk' is NOT over

For more information phone Lizzie Landers **9918 2594** or visit the website **www.asgmwp.net**

Venue: Nelson Heather Centre,  
Jacksons Road, North Narrabeen

Time: 7.30pm

Cost: Free



# BANGARRA dancetheatre

[www.bangarra.com.au](http://www.bangarra.com.au)

## CLAN

*CLAN* was staged by the Bangarra Dance Theatre at Glen Street Theatre, Belrose, from February 28 to March 6. The award-winning choreographer Frances Rings was responsible for a brilliant evening's entertainment. The dancers were all faultless showing their varied abilities with drama, humour, coordination, acrobatics, sensitivity and truly amazing skills throughout.

The first act, *Rations*, was based on Aboriginal history after white invasion. It commenced with the women chatting round the waterhole, then carrying buckets of water into the house. Next was the training for domestic service, scrubbing floors; the infected blankets; the men in the old smoking ceremony, then the new tobacco used as part of their 'payment' for labour; finally a shelter, once of branches, later a piece of galvanised iron.

Act Two, *Unaipon*, was a work about famous Aboriginal inventor, philosopher, writer and storyteller David Unaipon who features on our \$50 note. It was divided into three sections: David Unaipon's Aboriginal Nation, Science and Inventions, and Religion. The second part was like a full stage cat's cradle but better, and the latter like the perpetual motion of turbines.

At various stages of the performance there was a storyteller or a traditional singer and everything fitted together so beautifully. The set was simple but versatile – a very large hula hoop representing the waterhole, the bar room, a light and so on.

A truly wonderful production with such talented dancers.

*Pat Fisher*

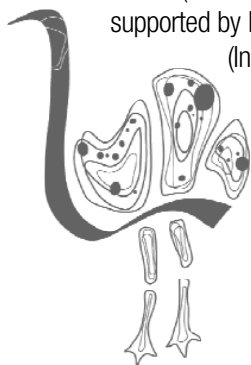
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## VISIT TO THE OLD EVERLEIGH RAILWAY WORKSHOPS

During March, Elaine Russell, an Aboriginal mission artist, and I visited a dear friend Beryl Van-Oploo at her new work venture. Elaine and Beryl's friendship goes way back, both being Elders from Kamilaroi country.

Aunty Beryl retired from TAFE as a Home Economics (cooking) teacher a few years ago and since then has gone from strength to strength. First, she took on the management of *Lilli Pilli*, the Indigenous restaurant in The Rocks. During and following this, Aunty Beryl taught Aboriginal youth to cook at *Pialla Garang*, an initiative of MTC (Marrickville Council) supported by IWAC

(Inner West  
Aboriginal  
Community).



**Yaama Dhinawan**

The trainee chefs worked from a caravan in the grounds of the former Marrickville Hospital providing free meals for the community.

On top of all this Aunty Beryl worked tirelessly at Redfern Community Centre catering and remarkably also providing her signature Indigenous food for corporate, cultural and political functions.

Yaama Dhinawan Training Centre is her new venture which offers a unique learning experience to Indigenous and non-Indigenous unemployed people. Specialising in Indigenous cuisine and culture it somehow wraps together all Aunty Beryl's experience – and I'm only talking post-retirement. Housed at the old Everleigh Railway Workshops canteen, it has been

transformed into an ultra-smart café/function space to compliment the performing exhibition spaces. Still a work in progress, the training, catering and function spaces are in operation with the café soon to be opened.

The day after our visit was graduation day for the second intake of students – young Aboriginal single mums. I've met them twice now and I'm impressed by their work ethic, enthusiasm and emerging empowerment.

Aunty Beryl Van-Oploo was honoured on International Women's Day 2007 when she was nominated for the local *Woman of the Year Award*. Bravo Aunty Beryl!

*Denise Barry*

**The Yaama Dhinawan Training Centre at 255 Wilson Street, Darlington, specialises in Indigenous culture and cuisine. It offers accredited Certificate 2 training in Hospitality (Operations) with a focus on gaining employment in the hospitality industry to Indigenous and non-Indigenous unemployed people.**

For further information contact: **Louise Wagner** at the Redfern-Waterloo Authority **9202 9100** or email [louise.wagner@rwa.nsw.gov.au](mailto:louise.wagner@rwa.nsw.gov.au)

## REMEMBERING THE 1967 REFERENDUM

### 'Our Founding Fathers in their Wisdom'

As May 27, 2007, loomed closer on our calendars and in our minds, thousands of words were written, broadcast and exchanged in personal discussion about the memorable overwhelming YES vote for the most significant part of the referendum of May 27, 1967, to change the Constitution.

While listening to one Radio ABC broadcast on the subject I snapped to extra alertness on hearing the phrase 'our Founding Fathers in their wisdom decided...'. The words were not spoken with irony but I certainly registered the amazing irony of still using such an archaic phrase to politely explain to the 21st century descendants of the dispossessors, civilisers... what you will... of the original people of this land, just what was the background of the referendum.

What "wise" decision did our Founding Fathers come to, and why?

Those Victorian era legislators decided to exclude the Aboriginal people from the count of citizens (the census) because they were 'always on the move', therefore difficult to count, and in any case they 'were a dying race'.

It is claimed the Constitution did not exclude the Aboriginal people from citizenship as such, nor deny them the right to vote, but did not include any powers or responsibility to pass laws for the benefit of the original inhabitants. The Constitution did, however, allow for legislation regarding people of other nationalities such as those who came to follow gold rushes or seeking work before returning to their homelands in Europe, America, Asia, or settling permanently in due course.

The power to legislate for Aboriginal people was left to the states, in reality giving only powers of control. These included the historically infamous administrators, forced mass removal of people from their homelands to out-of-the-way settlements, and betrayal of their parenthood and childhood by removal of children to places far from their home and grieving kin.

Two questions were put to the vote in 1967. It was conjectured that the question of giving powers for the Commonwealth Government, at last, to legislate for the benefit of Aboriginal people would be passed because of the acknowledged support by that time for this recognition as a matter of justice.

The other question, linked I think with rat cunning, was to get agreement to alter the Constitution to effect a 'nexus' of both houses of parliament, ie they be 'tied' together by simultaneous elections for the House of Representatives and the Senate. There was, however, strong argument that, if this was agreed to, the result would be an increase in the numbers of Parliamentarians.

Hopefully the voters, known through decades since Federation to generally oppose giving governments any extra powers, could be fooled into voting YES to both proposals.

The voters in their wisdom turned down the proposition for the 'nexus' – and possibly an enlarged parliament – but voted, by 90.77%, in favour of the inclusion of Indigenous people in the census and for the Commonwealth Government to legislate for their benefit. Though it has been claimed Aboriginal people had the right to vote since the adoption of the Constitution it was not made easy in any way. Can one imagine an administrator of any of the infamous settlements encouraging the people to register on the electoral roll?

About a decade after the famous YES vote my husband Shaun McLraith, a journalist, was with Professor Fred Hollows on the 'Trachoma Trail'. Shaun later told me about Reg Murray, an Aboriginal member of the team, who encouraged people they met to enrol as voters because an election was soon due. Word came from Bjelke Petersen's government spokesperson that the 'Trachoma Trail' would not be allowed in Queensland as they were engaging in political activities!

There is so much still to do about righting wrongs.

Enid McLraith

## CONGRATULATIONS

**NANCY HILL WOOD** who received *The Manly Daily Centenary Medal*.

These medals were awarded by *The Manly Daily* to honour one hundred of the peninsula's most influential citizens of the past one hundred years. Nancy is a much-loved and highly respected Aboriginal Elder in the Northern Beaches community and beyond. She is a member of the *Stolen Generations* and is Chairperson of the NSW Sorry Day Committee. Nancy's book of poetry *Nobody's Child* is available through the Support Group.

**SUSAN MOYLAN-COOMBS** on her appointment as executive producer of the ABC Indigenous Programs Unit. Prior to this appointment Susan was executive director of ABC TV *Message Sticks* (6pm Mondays and 1.30pm Sundays).

**PEGGY NAMPILJIMPA BROWN, JOHNNY "Hooker Creek" JAGANPARDI MILLER and ANDREW STOJANOVSKI** who received the Medal of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for their 'service to the community of Yuendumu and the surrounding region of the Northern Territory through programs addressing substance abuse among Indigenous youth'. They established the remote Mount Theo as a rehabilitation place for young petrol sniffers and the program is now recognised internationally.

**ALEXIS WRIGHT** whose novel *Carpentaria* won the 2007 *Miles Franklin Literary Award*. Alexis is a member of the Waanyi Nation of the southern highlands of the Gulf of Carpentaria. Published by Giramondo Publishing, *Carpentaria* is now in its fourth print run.

### The GURINGAI FESTIVAL

**Committee** for winning a 'Highly Commended Project Award' at the Local Government and Shires Association 2007 Cultural Awards Ceremony. The festival is showcased on the LGSA website:

[www.culturalawards2007.lgsa-plus.net](http://www.culturalawards2007.lgsa-plus.net)

Pat Frater

# 2007 GURINGAI FESTIVAL

The 7th annual Guringai Festival with the theme *Corroboree, Culture, Community* presented a varied and inspiring program of more than thirty three performances and events across the ten local government areas of Northern Sydney.

On the Northern Beaches the ASG's first event was to commemorate *Sorry Day* at Bilarong Reserve, North Narrabeen, on Sunday May 27. As always it was a very moving occasion, a wonderful evening shared by many.

Following is a snapshot of some of the events in the Festival.

## THE ABORIGINAL EXPERIENCE

Three very moving talks were given at a combined Guringai Festival and Jews for Social Action event held at the North Shore Temple Emanuel Chatswood on May 27, the actual 40th anniversary of the 1967 referendum,

The speakers were Darryl French, program manager and teacher, and Thomas Newman, site manager and artist – both from Tranby Aboriginal College, and Paul Sinclair, Aboriginal Education Officer at Taronga Park Zoo. Paul opened the evening with a very moving Acknowledgement of Country in language and English and with the didgeridoo/yirdaki.

The speakers shared their personal stories of growing up and making their way in Australian society, impressing the audience of over seventy people by their amazing resilience and inner strength in achieving so much against such odds to become, as they are now, models for their communities.

*Nic Witton*

*Jews for Social Action, Chatswood*

## HOPE TREE

Approximately three hundred people attended North Sydney Council's *Hope Tree* event which was held on Friday June 1 as part of the Guringai Festival.

Members from the community were invited to write messages of reconciliation which were placed on a *Hope Tree* in Civic Park located next to the Council Chambers. These messages have been collated and will be made into a book which will be on display at Stanton Library and a copy will be given to the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council. Local artist Jessica Birk designed the front image for the message card.

Genia McCaffery, Mayor of North Sydney, gave the opening address and the James Henry Band and Matthew Doyle performed throughout the day. Matthew had previously conducted some workshops with local school children who joined in enthusiastically with his performance. A barbecue lunch was provided for the community and fine weather contributed to the warm atmosphere of shared hope for future reconciliation.

*Narelle Spooner*

*Coordinator of Arts & Culture, North Sydney Council*

## LANE COVE CHILDREN'S VOICES FOR RECONCILIATION

Lane Cove's Guringai Festival events were highlighted by the 11th *Lane Cove Children's Voices for Reconciliation* held in the Lane Cove Plaza on Thursday May 31. This happy event is organised by Lane Cove Residents for Reconciliation and the Lane Cove Council each year. Schools and preschools from the local area and the Alexandria Park Community School (previously Redfern Public School) take part in performing drama, music and dance with the themes of Indigenous culture and reconciliation.

This year's program began with Aboriginal students from St Ignatius, Riverview, giving an Acknowledgement of Country followed by remarks from Phil Hunt of the Aboriginal Heritage Office and Ian Longbottom, Lane Cove Mayor.

The children from Birralee Preschool performed a song in an Aboriginal language and students from Greenwich and Lane Cove Public Schools acted out Aboriginal Dreamtime stories. The children from Lane Cove Occasional Childcare Centre had made tapping sticks to perform an Indigenous Tapping Stick song and there were wonderful items from Currumbena School and Lane Cove West Public School as well. The exciting climax was the performance of traditional Aboriginal dances by the children from Alexandria Park Community School.

It was a beautiful day and the children and the audience in the Plaza had a marvellous time. Currumbena School had invited the Alexandria Park students back to their school for lunch to round off a wonderful morning.

*Jill Chambers*

*Lane Cove Residents for Reconciliation*



*Hope Tree event*

*Photo courtesy North Sydney Council*



## HORNSBY CHILDREN'S VOICES FOR RECONCILIATION

Hornsby Area Residents for Reconciliation (HARR) and Hornsby Shire Council hosted their 6th annual celebration of Reconciliation Week in Florence Street Mall, Hornsby, on Friday June 1.

Students from ten local schools performed items of music, dance and talks on reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Visiting groups from two schools including Aboriginal students also performed as special guests.

After *Welcomes* by Aunty Edna Watson on behalf of the Dharug People and Tracey Howie on behalf of the Guringai People, the Mall was *smoked* in a traditional cleansing ceremony by Uncle Wes Marne. Representatives of the Stolen Generations were honoured at the event and NSW *Sorry Day* Chairperson Aunty Nancy Hill Wood met the children and told her story.

Hornsby Chamber of Commerce and Industry presented a prize of a cruise on the Tribal Warrior to two students from Hornsby Girls High School for the best essay from year 9 and 10 students on 'What Reconciliation Means to Me'.

HARR members are heartened each year by the positive comments of local people and visitors and by the way the children are advancing reconciliation by expressing their thoughts and listening to the stories and thoughts of others. We also enjoy the company of increasing numbers of local and visiting Aboriginal people who join us to socialise and meet the children.

*Helen White*

*Hornsby Area Residents for Reconciliation*

## KANYINI

'I cried...'- 'so did I'... from my daughters and their friends as we left *Kanyini* at Avalon RSL and felt the clear full moonlight 'connect us to country'. Lily [14] sad to see her ancestors so diminished - 'so small now mum...' I cried for the taken ones - 'from their families...why mum?' - and feared '*Brownskin Baby*' would crunch my heart once again but it wasn't sung tonight. Mimi [12] saw the destruction 'so much drugs and alcohol...' Tjammu [Grandpa Bob], ever generous and understanding the indifference and ignorance, elucidated the causes of the genocide through defining *Kanyini* :

- 🌀 Belief system – one law in Aboriginal law
- 🌀 Spirituality – what you hear, read, experience
- 🌀 Land – and your connection to it
- 🌀 Family/tribal community.

All are integral to healthy communal life and strong social wellbeing.

Quizzed later on how to foster good inter-racial relations, Tjammu Bob stressed the need for friendly approach and dialogue [echoing H.H.Dalai Lama the week previously]. I regret not speaking out about the journey we made in 2004 to Mutitjulu where we lived as guests of the community – kids at school, bush tucker trips in the trusty Toyota with the ladies, adventures around Uluru with local kids, engaging in community – cultural beauty and despair, living at The Rock. There was kinship recognition by Tjammu Bob for the girls whose father lost his own father when he was four – Tjammu Bob grew up with and knew the girls' grandfather in the mission days they shared.

I would encourage all to explore/engage in dialogue with all our countrymen, keeping an open mind, nurture the good heart and recognise change is inherent in all living things.

May this film be a catalyst for removing ignorance and generate harmony and understanding.

*Amanda Farquharson*



*Uncle Bob Randall*

*Photo courtesy of Melanie Hogan*

*Kanyini* was an overwhelming success. What a privilege that the Director Melanie Hogan and Narrator Uncle Bob Randall, a traditional owner of Uluru, were present to talk about their extraordinary film. The three screenings of *Kanyini* at Manly, Avalon and Collaroy (June 27 to 29) had capacity houses with people unfortunately being turned away.

Ticket sales, totalling \$3681, are being donated to *The Kanyini Foundation* for the Mutitjulu community at Uluru. This was a joint venture of the ASG with Manly and Pittwater Councils. The Support Group would like to thank the Mustaca Family for once again making Collaroy Cinema available free of charge, Warringah Council for financial assistance with promotion and Harvey World Travel, Manly, for flying Uncle Bob to and from Sydney and Uluru. If you were unable to see *Kanyini* it will be shown on SBS TV later this year or ask at your local library to borrow the DVD.



# MESSAGE STICKS



## INDIGENOUS FILM FESTIVAL



On Saturday May 5, I had the privilege of attending the afternoon session of *Message Sticks* at the Opera House with four girls from Biala for company which is something that I really enjoy. The girls are always fun to be with and I thought they might like to see a program of short films. A full house gathered for this session and we were treated to six wonderful short films in the first part of the program – we enjoyed these so much that we lined up for the second session to see another seven. The films ranged from funny to sad and compassionate, to *'outrageous, courageous, mysterious, simple, straightforward and complex; the good the bad and the ugly of Indigenous Australia'* (quote from festival program). Following each session there were very interesting

talks on the stage with the directors of these films, many of the directors being first timers.

The girls and I really enjoyed all the films and found it difficult to choose our real favourites.

There were stories about grandmothers and granddaughters; a boy trying to find a job and coming up against racism and prejudice; a young girl who had been fostered by a white family and her first meeting with her Aboriginal family; a boy sent to live with his grandfather for a role model; two wonderful grandmothers who went out at nights (but where to – cards? – no!!!) – they actually were working as 'phone sex girls'; a big Aboriginal check-out chick; and 'Nana' about an elderly Aboriginal woman who is always doing

things for her people – including demolishing a white man's stock of grog meant for an Aboriginal community.

So many terrific short films – it is really amazing what can be told about people in such a short time. As one director said, it is really harder to make a short film and still say what you want. But they all did it wonderfully well.

We had a really enjoyable afternoon – the girls wanted to stay for the later session but we had to get home on the ferry and back to Biala. I was really happy that the girls enjoyed the films as much as they did. I recommend the festival to anyone who is able to get there next year.

*Carol Ritchie*

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# THE DREAMING

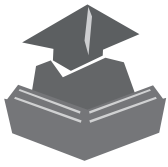
## INDIGENOUS FESTIVAL

Over the June long weekend we were privileged to attend Australia's international Indigenous festival *The Dreaming* in Queensland's Sunshine Coast hinterland. It proved to be an exciting three and a half days, packed full of fantastic entertainment, learning and a spirit of friendliness and respect. Held at the Festival grounds near the charming little town of Woodford which hosts a major Folk Festival, this was the third annual *Dreaming Festival* – and by far the biggest. Children and families were there in large numbers but our age group (seniors) were also well represented. Many of the thousands of attendees camped at the grounds. The hundreds of professionals and organised performers were joined by dozens of young (and not so young) kids busking by the roadside. Food and drink of all descriptions were readily available together with the usual stalls offering clothing, jewellery, novelties and memorabilia. ANTaR and other groups associated with Indigenous matters had kiosks. The program commenced with an open-air Opening Ceremony on Friday evening in surprisingly cold and windy conditions. But this

did not daunt the warm spirit and feeling of excitement that enveloped the large crowd. It was followed by a plethora of concerts, drama, dances, films, discussion forums and art/craft displays, performed by a variety of Indigenous artists/groups plus some Maori, South Sea Islanders and Native Americans. The weekend culminated in a colourful closing ceremony on Monday evening, held by the side of a small lake lit up with lights and fires producing wonderful reflections.

Listening to, observing and participating with Indigenous performers, who are the inheritors of an 80,000 year old cultural ancestry, was an uplifting experience. The performers – musicians, dancers, speakers and filmmakers – showcased their culture with passion and justified pride, in ancient as well as modern form, as they celebrated their ancestry and talents. A spirit of friendship and respect permeated the crowd throughout the weekend and it was a joy to be a part of such a memorable festival.

*Virginia and Tony Benedek*



# THE ABORIGINAL EDUCATION COUNCIL (NSW)

The Aboriginal Education Council (AEC) exists to provide educational opportunities for Indigenous students. It is a charitable organisation and its awards are limited only by the generosity of donors. As a result this year it has been possible to award 120 scholarships to year 6 primary students, 160 scholarships to students in years 8, 9 and 10 in secondary schools and 15 awards of \$3000 each to tertiary students.

It is anticipated that, as has happened in previous years, we will be called on to provide equipment to numerous schools and pre-schools; and to help students with special needs or those who display outstanding artistic or sporting abilities for which they need some financial support.

The AEC's Executive Committee includes representatives of the NSW Dept. of Education, Parents' and Citizens' Federation, Teachers' Federation and the AECG (Aboriginal Education Consultative Group), all of which we consult with extensively.

This year we are establishing a *Patrick White Essay Competition*, which recognises the long-term support given to us by this famous author and the substantial amount provided for the AEC in his will. The investment of this amount and the generosity of several other donors in similar fashion now provide sufficient income to cover all our administrative costs whilst still providing a substantial balance towards scholarships and our other activities. In consequence, we are able to assure donors that scholarships and awards are passed on in full to the student – surely a unique situation!

The AEC has been developing its support of Indigenous students since 1963 when a group of academics and staff from Sydney University, together with a number of concerned citizens, established the Consultative Committee on Aboriginal Education. Their research quickly established that the most pressing need at that time was to provide financial support to secondary students to complete their schooling.

The organisation's name was changed to its present title and approaches were made to businesses, service clubs and private citizens to provide £1200 to support an Aboriginal student for the then 5 years of high school. Several hundred scholarships were funded and the £240 each year (subject to satisfactory performance) allowed many students to graduate from High School.

So successful was this initiative that the Commonwealth financed several of our scholarships and, as a result of their success, introduced scholarships for all Aboriginal secondary students nationwide (subsequent governments whittled away these scholarships and they are no longer available in this form). The success of a number of other innovative initiatives by the AEC in subsequent years has resulted in Commonwealth and State Education Departments recognising these needs and taking over that responsibility.

It has now become apparent that our current tertiary awards of \$3000 pa are quite inadequate for the cost of higher education. In consequence, commencing in 2008 we are hoping, with the support of industry and community partners, to introduce awards to students of \$5000 pa for the duration of their course (subject to continuing satisfactory results).

You and your friends are invited to join us in this initiative by fully or partly funding a tertiary award; or, indeed, making a contribution towards any of the AEC's activities which are having such a profound effect on Aboriginal education in NSW.

Please ring our office on **9699 2299** and request a brochure or enquire about any of our activities. As there is only a part-time staff person, please leave a message if necessary requesting literature or information or visit [www.aec.org.au](http://www.aec.org.au)

Donations are tax deductible.

*Geoff Hogan AM  
Vice President AEC (NSW)*



## YIRIBANA GALLERY ART GALLERY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

*'Art is the lifeblood of our communities, connecting us to the past, the present, and each other.'* Hetti Perkins, Curator, Yiribana Gallery.

The Yiribana Gallery is one of the largest permanent displays of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art. Representing artists from communities around Australia, Yiribana celebrates the diversity of Indigenous culture. Through the timeless tradition of paintings on bark, to sculpture and contemporary installation, the artists convey a strong connection to country, and provide social commentary on Australia's recent history.

Lower Level 3 – Admission FREE

# ANTaR NSW Annual General Meeting



Lizzie Landers and I represented the Aboriginal Support Group at the Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR) NSW AGM held at the Addison Road Community Centre, Marrickville, on April 3. After the Acknowledgement of Country, the President, Anne Byrne, welcomed those present and introduced Norman Laing, an Aboriginal barrister. Norman opened with some remarks about growing up in Kempsey where he had experienced many of the things that weigh down Aboriginal communities.

Norman then outlined Aboriginal 'progress', starting with the provisions of the Constitution that excluded Aborigines from the political, economic and social life of the nation. Highlights included the freedom ride in 1965; the Wave Hill walk out in 1966; the referendum that gave the Commonwealth the power to legislate on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people; the policy of self-determination leading to the formation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Commission (ATSIC); and the Mabo and Wik decisions and subsequent legislation.

Since then, much had been rolled back including legislation to limit the scope of Mabo and the dissolution of ATSIC. Mainstreaming was clearly not working. Gary Highland, ANTaR's National Coordinator, spoke about the future. He used a sports analogy – we won no medals at Montreal but this led to the Institute of Sports and medals' glory at subsequent Olympics. The same could be done in Aboriginal affairs by pointing to success stories. One success was on *Stolen Wages*. We need to hone in on achievable goals. An example was the *Breaking the Silence* report on domestic violence in Aboriginal communities in NSW. This made thirty eight sensible recommendations that seemed to have government backing including that of the Premier, only to have funding withdrawn. Lobbying could help put this right. Gary said the *Sea of Hands* was continuing but was harder to mount in the original manner because there aren't the volunteers to plant and take up the hands. But the website now has a virtual *Sea of Hands* and this appeals to young people. He concluded by pointing to the 40th anniversary of the 1967 referendum and the 10th anniversary of ANTaR and asking where we would be on the 50th anniversary.

We then turned to the formal part of the meeting with the various reports being dealt with very efficiently. This was followed by a well catered lunch and the opportunity to talk informally with those attending. I will send a letter to the Premier asking for funds to be made available to implement the recommendations arising from the *Breaking the Silence* report.

Andrew Macintosh

Recommended reading is *Success Stories of Aboriginal Health* recently published by ANTaR. Enquiries **02 9555 6138** or [antar@antar.org.au](mailto:antar@antar.org.au)

***Close the Gap***

## AN INVITATION TO JOIN US...

### The Aboriginal Support Group – Manly Warringah Pittwater

meets on the third Monday of each month, from February to November, at 7.30 pm

Information Nights are held throughout the year on the first Monday of most months at 7.30pm.

Venue: **Angophora Room**

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

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

☎ For further information ☎

**(02) 9939 0123 (02) 9982 1685**

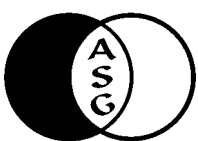
P.O. Box 129 NARRABEEN NSW 2101

**[www.asgmwp.net](http://www.asgmwp.net)**

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

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

Please email articles where possible to [annadbel@bigpond.net.au](mailto:annadbel@bigpond.net.au)



If you use any of the material it would be appreciated if the extract is set in context and the source acknowledged.

Editorial Committee: Anna Bell and Pat Frater

Proof Reader: Carol Gerrard

Graphic Design: Mark Ansiewicz: (02) 9979-9112

Distribution: Jackie O'Hare, Anna Bell, Pat Fisher, Carol Gerrard, Clair Jackson, Jan Kirk, Marcia Rutter, Don and Pat Frater.