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Elimatta

Spring 2014

Aboriginal Support Group—Manly Warringah Pittwater

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



TIME TO FIX A SILENCE AT THE HEART OF AUSTRALIA'S CONSTITUTION

A silence lies at the heart of the Australian constitution. The document reflects Australia's history of white settlement, but fails to mention the much longer occupation of the continent by Aboriginal peoples. It is as if their history does not matter, and is not part of the nation's story.

The Constitution was drafted in this way because, at the time of Federation in 1901, Aboriginal people were cast as a dying race. They were described as a *problem* and as a people lacking any future in the nation.

As a result, they were excluded from the political settlement brought about by the Constitution. They were immediately denied the vote in federal elections, and the Constitution even said they could not be included in counts of the Australian population.

Continued on Pages 2-4



HOME OF SKIPPY TO BECOME ABORIGINAL HERTIAGE AND CULTURAL CENTRE

Waratah Park at Duffys Forest will be handed over to the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council in the next fortnight, ending years of uncertainty about the site's future.

The 13ha Park, famous as the location of the television series *Skippy the Bush Kangaroo* in the late 1960s and early 1970s, will become an Aboriginal heritage and cultural centre, while *Sydney Wildlife*, the *Friends of Skippy* and the *Duffys Forest Residents Association* will continue their involvement with the site.

Land council chief executive officer Nathan Moran said he had hoped the site would be handed over tomorrow (14-8-2014) but had been advised by the Lands Department that the hand over had been delayed.

He said the use of the site as an Aboriginal cultural and heritage centre would complement the existing activities at the park.

"We just want to use the site as best we can and utilise the existing infrastructure," he said.

He said he was also keen to see the collection of props used during the making of *Skippy* available for visitors to see.

The hand over will mark the end of a long and sometimes tortured history for the park.

After filming ended, the park continued as a tourist destination and wildlife park from 1998 but in 2003 the then lessee was charged with animal cruelty and his licence to operate the park was revoked.

Continued on Page 11



TIME TO FIX A SILENCE AT THE HEART OF AUSTRALIA'S CONSTITUTION

These injustices led to a referendum in 1967. At that poll, more than 90 per cent of people voted to change the Constitution to permit the Federal Parliament to make laws for Aboriginal people and to allow them to be included in population counts.

However, the referendum left unfinished business. It did not add any text to the Constitution recognising Aboriginal people and their history and failed to deal with clauses that allow discrimination on the basis of race.

Section 25 of the Constitution recognises that a state can disqualify whole races from voting. In addition, the races power in section 51(26) authorises the Federal Parliament to make laws that discriminate for or against people due to their race. According to Edmund Barton, Australia's first prime minister, the power was included so Parliament can *regulate the affairs of the people of coloured or inferior races*.

These clauses reflect long-discredited Australian values from the time of the *White Australia Policy*. I am not aware of any other constitution in the world that still contains material of this kind.

Tony Abbott came to office as prime minister well aware of these problems. He has spoken in the months since about the need to change the Constitution to recognise Aboriginal Australians. He has described this as completing the constitution to further strengthen and unify the nation. With this in mind, he has moved towards holding a referendum.

An initial step is to identify exactly how the text of the Constitution should be altered. This has been the focus of a special parliamentary committee composed of members of Australia's major political parties, and led by Aboriginal members Ken Wyatt of the Coalition and Senator Nova Peris of the ALP.

An important milestone was reached on Tuesday when the committee released an interim report containing options for how the Constitution should be changed. It represents a refinement and narrowing of the recommendations made to then Prime Minister Julia Gillard by an expert panel in early 2012.

The committee identified three changes. First, symbolic words of recognition must be added. For example, it is suggested that the Constitution recognise *that the continent and its islands now known as Australia were first occupied by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the continuing cultures, languages and heritage of such peoples*.

Second, clauses that permit discrimination on the basis of race must be deleted. There is no place for these in a modern democratic Constitution, let alone in a country such as Australia that prides itself on the idea of a fair go for all of its citizens.

Third, the races power must be replaced with a new power to make laws for Aboriginal people. Without this, laws already passed for Aboriginal people in areas such as native title, conservation and economic development could become unconstitutional. This new power needs to be limited by words that prevent it from being used to discriminate against Aboriginal people.

The committee has identified the right changes to the Constitution. They would fix a major problem with the document.

Polls have shown that these reforms have strong community support. Australians overwhelmingly want a Constitution that speaks with pride of the nation's full history, and no longer permits discrimination against Aboriginal people. The community believes that Aboriginal people are entitled to recognition and to the same fair treatment as other Australians.

Importantly, the committee's report shows that these options have the unanimous backing of members of the major parties. This is the first time they have agreed on specific wording for the referendum. This is vital, because the main reason why 36 of Australia's 44 referendums have failed is a lack of cross-party support.

If bipartisanship can be maintained, this referendum will have the best chance of success of any proposal since 1977, when three changes to the Constitution were passed on the same day. We should also look to the remarkable outcome of the 1967 referendum. The community then was united in a way never seen before or since in voting to remove some of the discriminatory clauses from the Constitution. Surely, nearly 50 years later, Australians can be convinced to finish the job.

With concrete options for reform on the table, the government should move the debate forward by indicating a willingness to hold the referendum in 2015. It should not delay further, lest the momentum built up by campaigns such as *Recognise* be lost. Waiting also risks the issue becoming mired in politicking as the 2016 federal election approaches.

No final decision to hold the referendum need be made until the New Year. The lie of the land will then clearer once people and interested organisations have responded to the committee's report. To proceed, the move will not only require strong backing from the community and politicians, but from Aboriginal people. No referendum to recognise them in the Constitution should be put without their clear support.

George Williams
Professor of Law at the University of NSW
July 18, 2014

Continued on Page 3



WILL WE GET IT RIGHT? WHAT DO WE NEED TO KNOW? OR IS IT A WASTE OF TIME?

Do we need a **Treaty** a **Legislative action** or **Recognition**?

There are several different points of view to consider...

Constitutional recognition will do nothing for Aborigines

Michael Mansell July 25, 2014

It is not clear what benefits Aborigines will get from *constitutional recognition* or why time is being spent on it. After all, NSW, Queensland, Victoria and South Australia have already recognised indigenous people in their State Constitutions and the Federal Parliament passed the *Act of Recognition* in 2013. Not a single benefit to anyone has flowed from those measures. One of the bewildering proposals for *constitutional recognition* of indigenous peoples is to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages as the original Australian languages, but confirm English as the official national language. This is reminiscent of the military government in Sudan in the 1960s that declared Arabic would be the official single language despite the many languages spoken. Aboriginal languages are the most threatened in the world and the proposed constitutional declaration would sound the death-knell of those that remain.

Another proposal is to delete section 25 of the Constitution – which recognises that the states can ban people from voting based on their race – is on its face racist but which was originally installed to punish racist states. It has never been used in 114 years, is never likely to be used, and even if it was, any law made under it would be struck down as contrary to the *Racial Discrimination Act* 1975.

A third proposal is to limit the Federal Parliament to only make positive laws for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders by changing the word *race* power to *Aboriginal*. The High Court is then to judge if a law is good or bad for Aboriginal people. This will not work. The court has stated time and again that it is for the parliament to make the laws, and the courts to interpret those laws. Whether parliaments are making good or bad policy is up to the electorate, not judges.

If the race power is to be tampered with, it should be done properly. After 226 years Aboriginal people are still prevented from making their own decisions.

The *Recognition* proposal condones that immoral position. Why not declare self-determination a constitutional right? After all, the Ethiopian Constitution of 1994 provides in article 39 that *Every nation, nationality or people in Ethiopia shall have the unrestricted right to self-determination up to secession*. Is Australia not willing to catch up after Ethiopia, 20 years later? Such an insertion in the Constitution provides a standard against which Australian government policy can be considered and allows for Aboriginal people to sue for its breach. *Recognition* is supposed to deliver benefits to Aboriginal people yet the beneficiaries are denied the chance to have a say. Public meetings on recognition have been held around Australia without a single meeting to hear

Aboriginal opinion. If Aboriginal people had a say they would call for legislative action, not constitutional tampering. Legislation is quicker, more predictable and cheaper. Whereas Federal Parliament can create instant law, parliamentary support for a referendum does not guarantee the outcome. With 36 of 44 referendums rejected since federation, a *no* vote is more than on the cards.

None of the recognition proposals confer any right on Aboriginal people to sue, nor do they impose any obligation on government to act. If

Prime Minister Tony Abbott wants to be constructive and practical, change the date of Australia Day from January 26. The only significance of the date is that it marks the arrival of whites to the detriment of indigenous peoples, making the celebrations race-based. Hardly appropriate for a national day.

As Gary Foley said: "Who gives a damn about whether we're mentioned in the Australian Constitution. What real difference will it make? It's a grand token gesture and will mean nothing in the long run, so it's a waste of time for people to be even talking about it".

Michael Mansell is an Aboriginal lawyer from Tasmania.



Cartoon by Peter Nicholson

Continued on Page 4



TIME TO FIX A SILENCE AT THE HEART OF AUSTRALIA'S CONSTITUTION

Justice leader rejects constitution recognition

When this country is built on truth it will lay a solid foundation for the nation to come to maturity and accept the past, deal with it, and then find it within their hearts to pay respects to the *First Nation* people as equals and not an imitation of the 1901 model of the master and slave relationship.

Michael Mansell is a proven Aboriginal Justice Leader who also concurs that Constitutional Recognition will do absolutely nothing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples.

Another Aboriginal Justice Leader that stood on the front line with the late Charlie Perkins, Gary Foley, once said: "Who gives a damn about whether we're mentioned in the Australian Constitution. What real difference will it make? It's a grand token gesture and will mean nothing in the long run, so it's a waste of time for people to be even talking about it"

For further reading on this topic go to:

<http://asgmwp.net/justice-leader>



Cartoon by Peter Nicholson <http://nicholsoncartoons.com.au>

WHAT IS PROPOSED

We need to fix the historical exclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from Australia's Constitution. And we need to remove discrimination – like the section of our Constitution that says people can be banned from voting based on race.

An expert panel – which included Indigenous and community leaders, constitutional experts and parliamentarians – consulted extensively across the nation and reported to the Prime Minister in January 2012.

It recommended that Australians should vote in a referendum to:

- Remove Section 25 – which says the States can ban people from voting based on their race;
- Remove section 51(xxvi) – which can be used to pass laws that discriminate against people based on their race;
- Insert a new section 51A – 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;
- Insert a new section 116A, banning racial discrimination by government; and
- Insert a new section 127A, recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages were this country's first tongues, while confirming that English is Australia's national language.

The Parliament has now appointed a Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to finalise the words that would form the amendment to the Constitution.

It will be chaired by the two Indigenous members of the Commonwealth Parliament, with Mr Ken Wyatt MP as the Chair and Senator Nova Peris as the Deputy Chair.

The Government has also promised to establish a special committee including individuals outside the Parliament to progress constitutional recognition. This committee will also include representatives from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The Government also announced in December 2013 that the draft wording will be finalised by the end of 2014.



RETHINKING ABORIGINAL HISTORY

Bruce Pascoe claims the history of Aboriginal people has been badly misrepresented and that research into their agricultural practices can benefit us today.

Hundreds packed the La Trobe auditorium to hear Bruce Pascoe present the final session of the *Mildura Writers Festival* on Sunday, where he spoke about his new book, *Dark Emu* – which argues the idea that the first Australians were hunter gatherers has been invented to undermine Aboriginal people.

“My message to my own people,” he says, “is the rest of the country’s not going to change if we don’t stick up for our culture; and our culture was one where we had an agricultural economy.”

“If we stick up for our culture, it’ll be useful not just for us but for the whole of Australia, because some of those crops that our people were growing are going to be useful in the future.”

Perpetuating a misconception

Mr Pascoe says a commonly held belief in Australia is that Aboriginal people were immediately defeated with the arrival of Europeans.

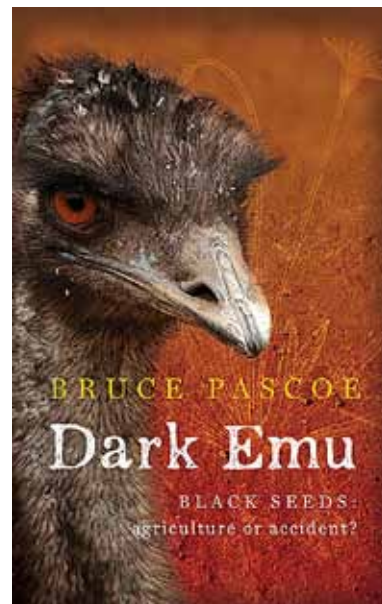
“There was a war for the possession of the soil, and Aboriginal people lost the war,” he says.

He says it is cruel to deny the pre-existence of Aboriginal people and their involvement with the land. “As a country we’ve got to get over that.”

Mr Pascoe says he believes Aboriginal people are pragmatic enough to know that history cannot be reversed, but he says the attitude between people does need to be redressed.

“We could all benefit from just looking at the products that Aboriginal people were producing, because a lot of them didn’t require a lot of water to keep them alive.

Commercially, there’s a lot of sense in looking at those products, like the grains and the tubas.”



Researchers few and far between

But Mr Pascoe says there is currently very little research being conducted into this area. “There are a few people conducting yam trials and I met a man yesterday in Mildura who is keen to conduct trials on native millet.” The scientist he is talking about is the Japanese artist, Yutaka Kobayashi, who is currently residing in Mildura.

Mr Pascoe says Mt Yutaka’s interest fits with an ongoing trend for people from outside the country to lead the interest in researching Aboriginal history. “The archaeologists tended to be Italians and Americans; Australians, not being able to look over their shoulder at the past, couldn’t fully engage in that history.”

But he says the opportunity remains for young Australians to do this. “We have the capacity for change, and it’s going to happen”, he says.

*Charlotte King and Deb Banks
ABC Mildura - Swan Hill Victoria*

FOOD CULTURE: ABORIGINAL BREAD

How Do Hunters Bake Their Bread?

Stuart Humphreys © Australian Museum

The First Australians were iconic hunters. An extreme theory makes them even responsible for exterminating giant prehistoric animals. Yet, they spent a good part of their time baking bread.

Sure, this was bush bread, resembling damper in method and pita or Egyptian bread in its form. Ethnographic and archaeological evidence show the baker’s tradition well entrenched in Aboriginal cultures, especially in the arid regions, which make up about three quarters of the country.



In Central Australia, for example, native millet (*Panicum*) and spinifex (*Triodia*) were commonly used, supplemented by wattle-seed. Elsewhere pigwig (*Portulaca oleracea*), prickly wattle (*Acacia victoriae*), mulga (*Acacia aneura*), dead finish seed (*Acacia tetragonophylla*) and bush bean (*Rhyncharrhena linearis*) were mixed into flour.

Reliance on the seeds became more pronounced in the Holocene – the recent, post-ice-age period – but some archaeological sites, such as Cuddie Springs

Continued on Page 6

FOOD CULTURE: ABORIGINAL BREAD

contain grinding stones dated to about 30,000 years. These stones were used to grind wild seeds into flour which in turn was baked as bread. They were and continue to be found in large numbers on numerous Aboriginal sites across the country.

But the reliance on seeds required an ample investment of labour and forward planning that would challenge our superficial idea of the *nomadic* way of life.

However, humans cannot digest most of the raw seeds. So, they need to be mechanically crushed to small particles (flour) and cooked, and only then can we absorb their nourishing matter.

Women and children would spend a large part of a day collecting seeds, often very small, to provide a meal for the family. Separating seeds from the husks and winnowing would take considerable skills and practice.

Grinding seeds into flour on the large stone slab (grindstone) was a hard physical task that would take about two hours to produce about a half kilogram of flour. Bread-cakes were baked in the ashes or on the hot charcoal of a campfire.

The use of seeds in this form required not only suitable equipment but advance planning and indeed constant provisioning of seed-grinding tools. For grinding hard seeds into flour the large oval slabs of sandstone were essential. It's estimated they could last for up to 9 years, but grinding stones needed to be provided for each adult women on each major campsite, possibly four or five, used frequently in a cycle of coming and going by the local group in its homeland.

Bread was made, on average, 90 days a year in arid regions. The grindstone's surface would get smooth and need to be roughed by gently dressing with a hammer. A combination of grinding and dressing would eventually make the slab too thin for further use.

Such slabs, often weighing nearly 30kg could not be found anywhere. They were carefully cut from the quarries and shaped nearby to reduce their bulk before the long journey home. The outcrops of suitable materials for grinding stones are relatively rare, so obtaining the slabs often involved long travels and complex negotiations or other arrangements with the group on whose land the quarry was located.

This was men's major contribution to a benefit of *daily bread* and the most compelling illustration that feeding family was not a lucky chance but systematic, well-planned labour, supplemented by technical knowledge, specialised equipment and complex maintenance of, what we would call, infrastructure.

Essentially the same technology of making flour was used in all civilisations, until the water and windmill constructed a little before the beginning of the *Common Era* made this job a lot easier. Yet, in many poor communities, the hand-milling of seeds persisted for many more centuries.



INDIGENOUS KIDS SUFFER IN CURRENT SYSTEM

Australia risks a repeat of the *Stolen Generation* if it does not do more to protect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

That's the view of a national body charged with overseeing issues faced by indigenous families.

In the past decade, there has been *an explosion* in the number of Indigenous children removed from their homes and placed in protective care, Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) spokeswoman Geraldine Atkinson said.

"We are seeing a modern version of the *Stolen Generations* unfolding in terms of the devastating impact the removals are having on children, their families and communities."

About 14,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are in the system, representing about one-third of children in care.

Ms Atkinson said governments must invest more money and reform Indigenous family support services, which were overburdened and failing to meet the needs of the vulnerable.

Indigenous families feared the present system.

"It doesn't listen to their needs and it doesn't understand cultural differences, including traditional child-rearing practices, which at times is leading to children being wrongly removed from their families," she said.

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day is on Monday, and SNAICC has compiled a list of measures to address child protection services.

The recommendations include handing more responsibility to Indigenous people for the design and delivery of family support and out-of-home-care services.

It also seeks an improvement in cultural competence among those working in the child protection sector, including child protection officers, family support workers, police officers and judicial staff.

See more at: <http://www.skynews.com.au/news/national/2014/08/02/indigenous-kids-suffer-in-current-system.html#sthash.oARCEg5u.i1zW1id6.dpuf>



R

QANTAS UNVEILS NEW PLANE DESIGN TO SUPPORT *RECOGNISE*

Keep an eye on the skies in coming months – and you might spot the *Recognise* logo on a QantasLink plane travelling across Australia.

QANTAS is supporting a drive to constitutionally recognise the presence of Indigenous Australians before European settlement. The national carrier has unveiled a large *R* logo on the side of a new QantasLink Q400 aircraft to take the *Recognise* campaign to the skies. The campaign wants to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the Constitution and remove discrimination from the country's founding document. Qantas ambassador and indigenous Aussie Rules superstar Adam Goodes encouraged Australians to join the *Recognise* campaign and sign the petition for a referendum. "It's so important that every one of us plays our part in campaigning for this referendum and securing a resounding yes vote," Goodes said. "I ask every Australian to sign up to the movement today at recognise.org.au." Goodes says he's pleased that more than 214,000 Australians have supported the campaign. *Recognise* joint campaign director Tanya Hosch welcomed the partnership with Qantas.



"We hope that many Australians will see this huge *R* on the plane as it travels around the country and be inspired to get involved in this historic opportunity to bring the nation together," she said. Qantas, as reported in The Herald Sun, says smaller versions of the *Recognise* logo are planned for its entire fleet of 31 Q400 aircraft.

Read the full story @ <http://goo.gl/QCBxp1>

ABORIGINAL REMAINS RETURNED FROM CHICAGO MUSEUM

The remains of three Tasmanian Indigenous Australians have been returned to the Launceston after almost 200 years.

In the 1830s, three skulls were donated to a museum in England and then transferred to the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago in 1958.

And today in Launceston a delegation of Indigenous Australians from Tasmania returned from the United States with the precious cargo.

At the museum in Chicago, the group took part in a repatriation hand over and ceremony and discussed the possible return of cultural items, including spears and shell necklaces.

On their return today they were greeted by an emotional crowd.

"We bought our old folk home where they belong, they're finally home," delegation member Dave Warrener said. "They're definitely Aboriginal Tasmanian Palawa Kani people. We do know that one is a male, one is a female and the other is unknown."

Annette Peardon, another member of the retrieval party, was grateful for the way the Americans managed the hand over.

"They did not have any of our things on display, they gave us the quality time required to spend with the old folks that we brought home," she said.

"More importantly, they showed respect."

The Aboriginal community plans to bury the remains.

Repatriation of Aboriginal remains

- The repatriation of Truganini's remains in 1976 was the first return by an Australian museum.
- At least 1,000 Aboriginal remains are still held around the world.
- Since 1990, around 1,150 have been repatriated.
- Australian museums still hold more than 10,000 items considered to be Aboriginal remains.

Claire Todd



Supporters at Launceston airport welcome the return of Aboriginal remains repatriated from Chicago.





NAIDOC

SERVING COUNTRY – CENTENARY & BEYOND

NAIDOC – National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee

NAIDOC's theme for 2014: *Serving Country – Centenary & Beyond* is equally relevant to all Australians – especially as so many remain unaware of the sacrifices made by Aboriginal people in times of war and international conflict.

Between 1899 and 1902 some fifty Aboriginal trackers – many of who were not enlisted men – were rounded up and sent to South Africa to serve in the second Boer War.

Yet as a result of the *White Australia Policy* enacted in 1901, some of these same Aboriginal men were not allowed to return home to their families – being sent to New Zealand instead.

Why any Aboriginal service men and woman would be willing to die for this country when they were not even counted as citizens is not an easy question to answer. Times must have been different back then, yet one thing we can be sure of is these people were hoping for a better life after the war.

The young Aboriginal people would have been like every other adventurous young Australian – wanting to go out and see the world, get paid good money, see some action and *be home before Christmas*.

Lest we forget that a century ago Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders lived under the *Aborigines Protectors Act* – a means of government control over where Aboriginal people could live; over how they would relate to Europeans; over their labour and earnings and over the *care, custody and education* of all Aboriginal children.

Our *First Australians* could not enter a public bar, could not vote, could not marry a non-Aboriginal, nor could they buy property.

The *Act* provided clothing and blankets for winter but they were on loan only – and the Minister of the Crown was always the owner. To dispose of them without the authority of the commandant of the mission, they were subject to prosecution for disposing of Crown property.

They were unable to leave the mission without permission, and banned from traditional activity. They lived on missions or on reserves and were tightly controlled.

These young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders fellas that joined up stood out in the crowd, they were proud to be Aboriginal.

They had put up with racist slurs and attitudes almost daily in their civilian life – but to their mates in the trenches they were Mick, Ben and Harry.

The misconceptions and negative stereotypes that surely many non-Aboriginal diggers had in their minds when they joined would have quickly disappeared when they were living, eating, laughing and dying with these young *fellas*.

Today the bodies of those that fell in the battlefields of France and Belgium remain with their mates, thousands of miles away from their ancestral homes.



Pictured: The concept for this year's NAIDOC poster depicts three brothers with their land behind them and the horizon before them. Their Elders are reflected in the water, giving the brothers the strength to overcome the challenges that may lie over the horizon.

Probably about a third of the Indigenous soldiers who served overseas were killed in action or died of wounds or disease. Some being sent home with horrible wounds.

But the most tragic aspect of their service was not from *going over the top* and running at machine guns and dying. The most tragic aspect came when the survivors returned to Australia. Back home in Australia they were shunned and told to go back to the reserve *where they come from*.

Their sacrifices ignored.

Their families oppressed even further by their respective State and Federal governments with such cruel initiatives as the *Soldier Settlement Scheme* which only appropriated land to non-Aboriginal soldiers.

This scheme also affected the Aboriginal population who did not go to war, because some of the fertile land which was being given in the *Soldier Settlement Scheme* had previously been *Aboriginal Reserve Land*.

This meant that many Aboriginal people were forced to leave the land which they had lived off for decades. They had no place to go and were left without any money.

A second dispossession.

These returned Aboriginal soldiers were not allowed to have a drink with their comrades at their local pub, not allowed in RSL clubs, not to march on Anzac day.

Continued on Page 9



NAIDOC SERVING COUNTRY - CENTENARY & BEYOND

Returned Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service men and women were often denied the honour and rights given to other returned servicemen and women.

There was no Government support at the time for the wounded or mentally scarred Indigenous veterans, and their children were still being removed...

However, the service of these *black diggers* helped provide momentum to the growing *Aboriginal Rights Movement* in the 1930's.

They provided hard evidence that they, as a people, were willing to serve Australia but, *white Australia* were not willing to help them get on with life.

October 1917 the military order was issued: "Half-castes may be enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force provided that the examining medical officers are satisfied that one of the parents is of European origin."

Many men enlisting described themselves as Spanish, Italian or Maori.

1940 the Commonwealth Government barred enlistment of persons *not substantially of European origin or descent*.

However on February 19, 1942, the Japanese launched two air raids on Darwin. The attacks resulted in the deaths of at least 243 people and led to widespread panic that Australia was on the verge of invasion.

The immediate threat to Australia led to the easing of enlistment restrictions. Essentially, because Australia needed all its available manpower, the race of enlistees suddenly did not seem important.

In 1942 the first Japanese Prisoner of War in Australia was captured by an Aboriginal after the Japanese plane crashed on Melville Island, north of Darwin. The Aboriginal snuck up behind the Japanese pilot with his tomahawk and said "Stick 'em up!"

In 1944 approximately 440 Torres Strait Islander men were members of the *Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion*.

In proportion to population, no community in Australia contributed more to Australia's effort in World War II than the people of the Torres Strait Islands.

Torres Strait Islander men job was to patrol the Torres Strait and to provide mechanical and logistical support for ships passing through. This unit received lavish praise from superiors and visiting officers, yet its members received less pay than non-Indigenous men serving alongside them. Moreover, like the experience of many WWI Aboriginal men, part of their wages was quarantined by the Queensland Chief Protector and this became part of what is now referred to as *The stolen wages* and it was only in 1982 that surviving members of the TSLIB received back-pay.

In 1946 the ban on persons *not substantially of European origin or descent* returned in full force.

Australia's first Aboriginal officer, Reg Saunders,

who was commissioned during the WWII received an MBE in 1971. He argued, "Now that the danger is past I feel my race is entitled to equal opportunities with other Australians. We don't want privileges, but opportunities for advancement and fair treatment."

Despite rules against their enrolment, over 3000 Aboriginal and 850 Torres Strait Islander men and women are known to have enlisted in WWII – possible a further 1000 have served in WWI.

Today there are up to 7000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander veterans and war widows in the Australian community.

More than 800 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander serve with distinction in the Australian Defence Forces Today. Indigenous soldiers, sailors and airmen have been part of Australian service history every step of the way.

Some were captured – like Private Douglas Grant, who suffered the indignity of being separated from his fellow Australian prisoners of war so German doctors and anthropologists could study him.

Then there is the Lovett brothers who occupy a special place in the history of Australia, with four of the brothers serving in both WWI and WWII – and a total of 21 Lovett family members – men and women – serving in the Australian Armed Forces.

In recent years, the long-forgotten service of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander man and woman who have made significant contributions in all wars and peace keeping operations Australia has been involved in are starting to be acknowledged and celebrated.

Yes – Indigenous Australians have played a significant part in our military history over the past two centuries and will continue to do so into the future.

We acknowledge and honor our *black diggers* who have contributed so much to our National identity.

A N Evers

Lest We Forget Aboriginal Service in War

1880-1881	First Boer War
1899-1902	Second Boer War
1914-1918	World War I
1937-1945	World War II
1946-1951	Occupation of Japan
1950-1953	Korean War
1950-1960	Malayan Emergency
1963-1966	Indonesian Confrontation
1962-1975	Vietnam War
2003	Gulf War

THANKYOU!

to Bunning's Narrabeen

again for helping ASGMWP
with NAIDOC week

Together we can make a difference!



A REPLICA OF BENNELONG'S HUMBLE BRICK COTTAGE IN 2016?



Governor Philip and Bennelong became good friends. Bennelong was quite a comedian. He liked to dress up in British uniforms and fortunately some excellent paintings of him had survived. Governor Philip built a where the *Sydney Opera House* is today. Fortunately a contemporary painting of this hut did survive. It occurred to me that a replica of it should be reconstructed in the vicinity where the original was. First I approached the present Governor Professor Bashir if it could be rebuilt next to her palace. I met professor Bashir a number of times at Aboriginal events, more recently at the Sydney University, where the two of us discussed the dreadful effects the British invasion had on the indigenous people of Australia.

Unfortunately my proposal was knocked back. I then went to the Botanic Gardens Office and asked them if my proposal could be implemented. I received an email from them the same day. It said that the plans they have for 2014 are complete and nothing could be added to it. However in 2016 the Botanic Gardens will be 200 years old and the person in charge to come up with new projects is very keen to realise my suggestion.

When then treasurer Mike Baird handed over my *Senior Award* which was mainly a recognition of my several decades involvement in Aboriginal Affairs I brought to his attention that the recently completed documentary *UTOPIA* should be screened in every Parliament of Australia in front of all the Members of Parliament and Upper House as it is not even common knowledge to what extent in the *Outback* there are Aboriginal people who live under far worse conditions then at the time of the British invasion.

Mike Baird, who since our meeting became the Premier, promised me that he wants to view the film first before showing it in Parliament. I think that there is a good chance that this project will come to fruition, and I am sure that the necessary steps will be taken to connect them to tap water and electricity facilities that we take for granted as well as improvement in housing, education and welfare. And once it will be screened in the Premier State of NSW I am confident that it will be shown in all State Parliaments and in the Federal Parliament as well as all Parties there are committed there to change the Constitution through a Referendum to recognise the historical fact that the *First Australians* were here 50,000 years before us and the subsequent Australian Governments and Institutions caused them more damage than good ever since.

Andrew Partos
Seaforth

A Old coin shows early Chinese contact with Aboriginal people in Elcho Island near Arnhem Land : expert

A coin hundreds of years old found on a remote island off the Northern Territory coastline may be the first evidence of contact in the 1700s between Aboriginal people and traders in China, a heritage expert has said.

The brass coin has been identified as coming from the Qing Dynasty and was minted between the years 1736 and 1795.

It was found on July 25 during a week-long expedition to Elcho Island by a group of heritage enthusiasts who call themselves *the Past Masters*.

"It certainly shows the contact between Northern Australia and the trade with the Middle Kingdom, with China," said Mike Owen, a member of the group.

Mr Owen said this was the first time such an old Chinese coin had been discovered in northern Australia.

"It is the only evidence that Chinese merchants may have visited Northern Australia in the context of the trepang trade," Mr Owen said.

Elcho Island is part of the Wessel's group off the north-eastern tip of Arnhem Land, and came to prominence when 1,000-year-old African coins were found on one of the islands in the 1940s.

How those coins came to be located in such a remote area has not yet been determined.

Mr Owen said the Chinese coin was possibly brought to Australia by the Macassan people, who came from Indonesia to trade with Aboriginal people for trepang, also known as sea cucumbers, or from Chinese merchants.

"The [the Macassans] dealt with Chinese agents and they sold trepang down to China," Mr Owen said.

After being found by a member of the expedition using a metal detector the coin was photographed and then put back in the sand where it was found.

"Aboriginal oral history talks about Chinese merchants coming to Australia and they also speak of using Chinese coins as fishing weights," Mr Owen said.



Xavier La Canna
ABC





Continued from Page 1

HOME OF SKIPPY TO BECOME ABORIGINAL HERITAGE AND CULTURAL CENTRE

Later that year the licence was acquired by *Earth Sanctuaries* but the business floundered and was taken over by another company in 2006 and leased for the purpose of tourist facilities and services.

But the gates to the park remained shut and its future remained uncertain until the Lands Department agreed to hand the land to the MLALC.

In recent year's volunteers, including from the Duffys Forest Residents Association (DFRA), have been cleaning the site and undertaking re vegetation work, and Sydney Wildlife has been using the site to rehabilitate injured native animals.

Sydney Wildlife and the DFRA have letters of authority from the Lands Department for their respective activities.

DFRA spokeswoman Jenny Harris said she had been told the letters of authority held by the two groups will be respected by the land council.

John Morcombe

Manly Daily August 13, 2014



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NT INSPIRES!



📍 **The NT inspired Australian Garden** on display in the world's largest flower show – the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Flower Show at Hampton Court Palace, outside London – has won Gold!

📍 **The first ABC news bulletins in Aboriginal languages Walpiri and Yolngu Matha**
Many Aboriginal Australians in the northern Territory speak English as their third or fourth language so this service in two major Indigenous languages will provide people with important Territory and national news.

What's on details at www.asgmwp.net

Monday Sep 8

7.30pm start

ASG-MWP Information Night

The Life of Bungaree

– 200th anniversary of a land grant

With special guest speaker Keith Vincent Smith at the Mona Vale Memorial Hall, 1606 Pittwater Road, Mona Vale. A free event (donations welcome)



Monday Oct 13

7.30pm start

ASG-MWP Business Meeting

All ASG members are welcome
Mona Vale Memorial Hall, 1606 Pittwater Rd, Mona Vale.

Monday Nov 10

7pm-9pm

ASG-MWP Information Night

Guest speaker to be advised in next issue of *Elimatta*
Mona Vale Memorial Hall, 1606 Pittwater Road, Mona Vale. A free event



Saturday Dec 13 to Sunday Feb 22

Bungaree: the First Australian

Returning to Mosman Art Gallery as part of the bicentennial celebrations associated with the establishment of Bungaree's Farm, the first land grant by colonial authorities to an Aboriginal person in Australia.

**ASG-MWP would like to thank Dee Why RSL, Pittwater RSL, Forestville RSL
Pittwater Council and Warringah Council for their continued support in 2014**



RSL CLUB



Forestville
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PITTWATER COUNCIL



Warringah Council

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Founded 1979

Membership is \$25 per year

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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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