



asgmwp.net

# Elimatta

September 2016

Aboriginal Support Group – Manly Warringah Pittwater

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

## OUR TRIBUTE TO NANCY HILL WOOD

Members of the Aboriginal Support Group - Manly Warringah Pittwater make their tribute to long standing and highly valued member Nancy Hill Wood (*right*). See Pages 2 – 4



## \$60 BILLION A YEAR FAILS ABORIGINES

According to CIS researcher Sarah Hudson (*left*) it's important to ask the communities involved what needs to be done, rather than just telling them what will happen. Full story Page 5

## 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WAVE HILL WALK-OFF

Jimmy Wave Hill (*right*) was a young stockman on Wave Hill cattle station who walked off the job in 1966 with Vincent Lingiari, to protest against poor conditions and pay, and to demand the return of their lands. Full story Page 6



## WHY A TREATY IS VITAL

Natalie Cromb (*left*) holds a discussion surrounding *Treaty* – from the lack of awareness of non-Indigenous Australians – to what a *Treaty* is and why on earth Indigenous people would want one. Full story Page 7





## Nobody's Child

*The shadow within a little girl*

*A nothing, a misery.*

*Within me to stay*

*Not knowing the feeling*

*That's in my heart.*

*Her soul is sad*

*That she knows no love.*

*No care, no cuddles.*

*No comforting word.*

*Surrounded around me*

*My brothers and sisters*

*And yet I can't see*

*A smile on their faces.*

*No joy in their voices*

*Nor sound of their laughter*

*The look on our faces*

*So sad and forlorn.*

*The stolen generation.*

*Kidnapped from happiness*

*A mum and dad we never knew*

*Still lingers in my heart.*

*The place where we were born*

*One day we will return.*

*It may be sad and sorrow*

*When we hear the real truth*

*Of what had really happened*

## An Elder and much loved ASG-MWP member

Nancy lived on the Northern Beaches of Sydney for over 54 years.

Before we heard Nancy tell her life story many of us did not know the tragic lives Aboriginal children from the *Stolen Generation* endured. Nancy's book of poems, *Nobody's child*, published by the Support Group in 1999 and reprinted recently, is a deeply moving account of the suffering and sadness felt by the *Stolen Generation*.

As Nancy became willing to share her story with others, she became a wonderfully forgiving person, much respected and beloved by those who listened to her powerful speeches about of her early life.

Her mother had died shortly after she was born in Kyogle, northern NSW in 1941. Then Nancy was taken as a baby from her father and placed in the Bomaderry children's home. "My poor dear father, so sad and lost. ...They broke his heart so long ago They took his daughter Away from his life... far away from his world" (poem "My Mum and Dad").

At the age of 12 she was transferred to Cootamundra Girls' Home where after minimal education she was sent out to work for a number of families as a cleaner and domestic servant when she was 15. Her youth was one of hard knocks and insults. She recalls, "We who are the *Stolen Generation* have suffered from verbal and child abuse. And even when we are growing old we get it from both black and white". (poem, *Liars*)

Eventually, she came to Sydney where in 1967 she met and married Tony Wood, and they settled at Narrabeen, adopting and raising Aboriginal children, John, Raelene, Suzie, Rodney, and Sacha.

Later, Nancy became a wonderful grandmother to Simon, Alison, Anthony, Hannah, Ryan, Tayla, Nathan and Mackayla. More recently a great-grandmother to Aaron, Thomas and Savannah.

Over the years, she spoke regularly in schools, at annual *Sorry Days* and served on many community committees. Her activities were acknowledged in the *Manly Daily* and officially recognised by Warringah Council as well and by the Aboriginal Support Group.

When interviewed in Elimatta (Winter 2005) Nancy said: "*Sorry Day* is a wonderful event and it is very important for the *Stolen Generations* to tell their stories. The highlight of the Day was me being the Chairperson and having a voice and speaking to and for our people."

"I am becoming strong and proud. Once Kooris begin to talk they are free and can say things that are important to them. You have to say it as it is."

We will always remember what you told us, Nancy!

Ruth Latukefu

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## Vale Nancy Wood, my friend

I will miss your smile, your easy acceptance of me as a friend and the many times we shared the frustrations and pleasures of being mothers and grandmothers.

You taught me a lot about strength and resilience.

One of the finest folk I met at the ASG was Nancy. She and her friend Jean Begg were local Indigenous women. Both had been taken from their families as babies and were children together at Bomaderry Home and later at the Cootamundra Girls Home and were both part of the *Stolen Generation*. Now as adults, mothers and grandmothers, their lives and experiences illuminated the stories being published daily in newspapers, and on the radio and television during the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families (1995-1996).

The scales fell from many non-indigenous eyes during the course of the Inquiry. In the ASG we had the advantage of having members whose lives were affected by this.

Earlier this year, some of Nancy's long time buddies in the ASG took Nancy out to celebrate her birthday. It was a happy, warm, chattering, reminiscing type of lunch. I am so glad we did. *Lizzie Landers*

## A wonderful woman

Nancy Wood and Jean Begg came to the Aboriginal Support Group in the early days, the 1980's. Two quiet Aboriginal ladies who were *Stolen* as children and taken first to Bomaderry and then to Cootamundra Girls' home. Nancy was only 6 months old when she was taken away. They told us about their lives, isolated from families and growing up without love. We were honoured to have them as our friends.

Nancy lived in Terrey Hills with Tony and their family most of her married life. She came to many of our meetings. She always had a beautiful smile and was so pleased to be with us. Nancy and Tony were married at St Faith's Narrabeen and this week she left St Faith's on her final journey to Mona Vale Cemetery. It was a wonderful Aboriginal funeral with maybe 400 people.

A beautiful sunny day to say goodbye!

Nancy became a very confident person. She studied at Tranby College at Glebe. She wrote such amazing poetry. She was ready to tell her story and encourage people whenever she could.

When Nancy and Tony did not have any children they 'adopted' four Aboriginal children whom they loved and cared for. Nancy loved them and was so proud of her grandchildren. We were fortunate to have known Nancy and have her as a friend. *Hellen Ford*

## A great storyteller

I met Nancy Hill Wood in 2010 when Lizzie Landers asked me to record Auntie Nancy's oral history with a view to it being included alongside a reprint of her poems which were published in 1999 by the ASG-MWP. Our first meeting was at a Dee Why coffee shop to get to know one another informally and I felt honoured that Nancy herself asked me to undertake this project.

We met in Nancy's kitchen and over the next couple of weeks she told me of her earliest memories; of life at the Bombaderry Children's home where, as a baby, she was placed after her mother died. An isolated lonely childhood made bearable by her friends, Nancy remembers she was "one of those children that sort of stayed on my own and I was quiet and rocked myself to sleep". Nancy talked about the ability of children to come to accept situations where they had no power. Another of her memories "we had our meals in the dining room and there was a big picture, now this is really discriminating. There were the golden stairs to heaven and the golden gate and Jesus was standing there welcoming people and all you see is white people going up there. Under the stairs there was a fire and there were cards being played in hell and it was only dark people sitting there."

Nancy talked openly about her experiences of being moved at age 12 to Cootamundra Girls Training Home and at 18 being put on a train to Sydney to begin work, I glimpsed a little of her lonely and constrained childhood, always feeling demeaned because of her Aboriginality. I listened with ever growing admiration to how she surrounded herself with lifelong friends, and after meeting Tony they established their own family. All the while Nancy continually gathered strength to become an effective public voice for all Aboriginal people. We will miss her so much, particularly those chuckles. *Sandra Blamey*

## Thanks Nancy for helping us understand

It was a great privilege to sit with Nancy at a 2015 *Seniors Week* event and talk with her about her book of poems, *Nobody's Child*.

As she read from her book Nancy's poetry reached out to us all. There were a few in the audience who had to wipe away a tear or two as the reality of her childhood was revealed. There were laughs too when Nancy described the time that she and her friend Valerie decided to run away from Cootamundra to *the big smoke*. It was 1959 and even then Nancy was off to right just one of the many injustices she had already known while still a child.

Nancy's voice was always strong in an ongoing campaign for a fair and appropriate resolution to many issues. Nancy stood tall and proud to be a Bundjalung woman. *Nan Bosler*

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### Dear Nancy

Pinpointing the first time that I met Nancy is a bit hazy – I remember she and Jean Begg being at an ASG Meeting, in the room above the old Radio shack and Jill Perkins introducing them to the Group. I certainly was present at a *Meeting* when Nancy and Jean spoke about their early lives and having been taken away by the Government and consigned to living their lives in Bombaderry and Cootamundra Girls' Homes. Their stories had a great impact on all of us present. How could our Governments get it so wrong! What injustices had been suffered by our Aboriginal friends and what did the Government intend to do about it now?

At NAIDOC week in October 1999, Nancy's book of poems *Nobody's Child* was launched. That was a great moment. Nancy confidently reading her own writings – and looking gorgeous in her red dress. It was on *Sorry Day* each year that she was especially in my thoughts and an inspiration to goad me on to helping with another *Sorry Day* event. Nancy spoke at most of our Remembrances for *Sorry Day* and reminded us of the importance of keeping the annual event alive and at least once a year reminding people of the harsh injustices of the past.

Who could forget the excitement of Prime Minister Rudd's Apology to the *Stolen Generations*. I was with other ASGMWP friends in Canberra and afterwards we came upon Nancy in the Hall and all exchanged wonderful hugs. That was a top moment.

Nancy was also our ASGMWP Indigenous delegate to many Reconciliation Annual Meetings. She was not afraid of a microphone by this stage and she spoke her mind on those matters which she was concerned about with great persuasion. We shared many of these times together and I valued them.

She was very generous in giving her time to any occasion that would further knowledge of or human rights for Aboriginal people. Being asked to do *Welcome to Country* at so many local functions was one such example. I smile as I recall how pleased she was that the ASG did the *Welcome Bookmarks* and that she could carry a few in her handbag and not have to memorise and fear forgetting what she was to say. One occasion I remember was at the Warringah Council *Citizenship Awards*. Another example of giving her time and knowledge, was when I asked her if she would speak to my Quaker Sunday school class. Without hesitation she said yes and I know that her presence and chat with them was so meaningful and achieved far more than I could have ever done.

Dear Nancy, thank you. You were a great Ambassador for Indigenous people and friend to all of us in the ASG-MWP. You achieved much. I will miss your presence and cheeky giggle – your influence will be with me always.

Anna Bell



## FREE EXHIBITION OF ABORIGINAL ARTEFACTS

Sunday October 2  
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Elanora Scout Hall – Bilarong Reserve  
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– Donations always welcome –

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Hosted by the ASG – MWP  
For more information contact:  
Neli Evers 9999 3045



## \$6 BILLION A YEAR FAILS TO HELP ABORIGINES SAYS CIS REPORT

Indigenous affairs spending worth \$5.9 billion a year is not delivering results because few of the schemes being funded are properly evaluated, the assessment of what is needed is inadequate and some programs are poorly designed.

A landmark survey, which for the first time takes account of non-government organisation spending as well as that of federal, territory and state governments in indigenous affairs programs, has found that less than 10 per cent of a total 1082 programs had ever been evaluated.

Of these 88 evaluations, few used methods that could provide evidence of the program's effectiveness, the Centre for Independent Studies found.

It documents annual spending on indigenous-specific programs by the federal government of \$3.28bn, state and territory governments of \$2.35bn and the indigenous not-for-profit sector of \$224 million. It is expected that this third figure will be massively increased once further research takes into account non-indigenous NGO spending in the indigenous sector. Factoring in not-for-profit institutions such as universities could add billions of dollars to the total.

The report describes the figure of 1082 programs as "just the tip of the iceberg".

The CIS study, by researcher Sara Hudson, has found instances such as an East Arnhem Land community with no notable history of suicides being required to undergo a suicide-awareness training program. Not only was the community not consulted about the need for the program, some of its young men had already been flown to a suicide-awareness program in another community at significant expense two years earlier.

In Western Australia, however, where there is desperate need for suicide prevention work, \$107m earmarked for relevant programs in communities went unspent, the report finds. It documents massive duplication of services, with Roebourne in Western Australia having 67 local service providers and more than 400 state and federal funded programs for a population of 1150; Toomelah in NSW has more than 70 service providers for a population of only 300.

Poor program design had meant that the federal government's Indigenous Home Ownership program's success rate of approving only 75 loans in a year equated to one loan for each person employed to run the program. Further, most of these loans were delivered to people who could have qualified for a mainstream loan.

"It's important to ask the communities involved what needs to be done, rather than just telling them what will happen," Ms Hudson said.

"Then, one simple way of addressing (the evaluation) issue is that evaluations should be funded as a part of the programs, to be performed alongside the implementation of the programs. That way you build evidence as you go.

Some programs do this, but far from enough. Without all of this we just can't know how money should be spent."

The review notes that of 550,000 indigenous Australians in the 2011 census, 65 per cent were in employment and living lives similar to other Australians; 22 per cent were welfare-dependent and living in urban and regional areas with other welfare dependent Australians; and just 13 per cent, or 70,000, were welfare-dependent and living on indigenous land where education and work opportunities were often limited.

This third group needed the greatest focus and yet most indigenous affairs policy tended to treat the entire indigenous polity as a homogenous group, the review found.

"Funding must be allocated on the basis of need and not just of indigeneity," it notes.

The report follows the Coalition government's drastic reordering of indigenous affairs funding two years ago, when about 150 separate programs were rationalised from a range of agencies into five streams delivered from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and \$500m was cut from the indigenous affairs budget. That process was harshly criticised in a Senate committee report in March that found the government's new arrangements, known as the Indigenous Advancement Strategy, did not take enough account of indigenous needs, tended to award short-term and ad-hoc contracts to the detriment of the communities the programs were supposed to assist, and had not adequately informed indigenous Australians how the new arrangements worked.

An Australian National Audit Office assessment of the IAS is due in December.

The CIS report makes clear that without proper assessment of outcomes, it is impossible to know which programs are vital or productive, and it questions whether the federal government will be able to meet its budgeted expenditure under the IAS of \$4.9bn over four years, given that \$3.85bn will have been spent in the first two years.

It also notes that while NSW, with the highest Aboriginal population of any state or territory, had the highest number of grant recipients, the monetary value of these grants was lower than those allocated to Queensland, the Northern Territory and Western Australia combined.

*Stephen Fitzpatrick, The Australian  
Indigenous Affairs Editor  
The Australian*



# THOUSANDS COMMEMORATE WAVE HILL WALK-OFF, BIRTH OF INDIGENOUS LAND RIGHTS BATTLE

Thousands flocked to the remote Aboriginal community of Kalkarindji on Friday to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Wave Hill walk-off.

Among the politicians, union members, and supporters gathered at the *Freedom Day* festival, were the participants of the August 1966 strike and their families. Many attendees used the event to protest against current employment programs which they argued still treated Indigenous people like second class citizens working for below minimum wage.

The Wave Hill walk-off came after years of exploitation, violence and murders of Aboriginal people in the region. In protest against poor conditions, meagre wages and rations in return for hard work, Vincent Lingiari led 200 people off the Wave Hill cattle station. The fight stretched for seven years, and laid the foundations for the Indigenous land rights battle. It wasn't until 1975 that

Jimmy Wave hill, one of those to walk off in 1966, told Guardian Australia the station owners, Vesty's, did nothing for Aboriginal people in return for their hard work.

"They used us, just like a slave," said Wave hill. "They used to tell us to just work hard. It made it good for them, but not good for us. They could have made something good for us, we could have been a family and we wouldn't have walked off the station. But they done the wrong thing themselves. It wasn't Aboriginal people that started it. They didn't like Aboriginal people."

Central Land Council chair, Francis Kelly, told the crowd the fight "wasn't finished yet". "We're proud of those people, the Gurindji mob, fighting the government, [but now] the government is making us weak."

Kelly called for greater government support of Indigenous rangers to protect outstations and lands, and to work with elders.



the Gurindji won their land back in a historic ceremony attended by the then prime minister, Gough Whitlam.

Selma Smiler, the granddaughter of Lingiari, said her grandfather "had nothing but courage and pride and his people behind him" when he led the stockmen and families to Wattie Creek.

The ceremony participants and crowd had walked from the nearby Kalkarindji, where they had unveiled new signage for the heritage listed walk, before taking to the trail themselves. The family of Eddie Mabo tearfully thanked the Gurindji for inviting them to the event.

Smiler spoke about her grandfather. "He's a legend among Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders," she told the crowd, gathered in a bush clearing near the Victoria River. "I'm very proud to be part of his bloodline even though people always ask what it's like growing up in his shadow. I'm a very proud granddaughter."

"He fought for every other tribe on Gurindji country," said another granddaughter. "I'd like to see there are changes happening."

Federal and NT Labor politicians, as well as Indigenous affairs minister Nigel Scullion and Greens leader Richard Di Natale, also addressed the crowd, promising to keep speeches short as people wilted in the heat.

Much of the event's focus was on the assistance of the union movement to the Gurindji and others camped at Wattie Creek, and many now called for wage equality and reform of welfare and employment programs.

"It takes a particular kind of courage to quietly pack up the belongings you have and just walk off work," said the federal opposition leader, Bill Shorten.

"Seven years to fight. It is amazing. Nine years until we saw that scene of Gough Whitlam pouring sand into Lingiari's hand. What were they fighting? Power, privilege, money, racism." He said it also made him proud of the trade union movement which came down and provided assistance.

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# WHY A TREATY IS VITAL

When I was asked to speak at the forum 'First Nations Women Speak for Treaty', held at Redfern Community Centre I considered the questions that are usually pondered: what, why, how?

I realised that the discussion surrounding treaty, for me, is inherently frustrating. The frustration faced was due to the fact there are so many obstacles to treaty from the lack of awareness of non-Indigenous Australians as to what a Treaty is and why on earth Indigenous people would want one; the political factions (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) competing between Treaty or Constitutional recognition as if it is a one or the other dilemma; and, ultimately, the political machinations of how a treaty would be put together functionally to ensure maximum support of the Indigenous people and the government.

Despite many attempts to rewrite and sanitise history, we know that, under English law at the time of Governor Phillip's claim, there were three legal regimes under which a colony could be acquired:

- 1 Settlement** – where territory is uninhabited and the 'settlers' brought English law with them;
- 2 Conquest** – where territory was inhabited and the native laws survived provided they weren't discordant with laws of the crown; or
- 3 Cession** – where the territory was inhabited and the sovereignty was ceded to the Crown and the applicable law would be determined by agreement, but in the absence of any agreed changes, local law would continue to apply.

The prevailing legal doctrine is that Australia was acquired through settlement, despite the presence of an Indigenous population because the English common law contained a definition of 'uninhabited lands' that considered lands uninhabited if they contained peoples 'uncivilised' by the 18th century English norms.

Ultimately, through the doctrine of *terra nullius*, Indigenous people were subverted as savages and this was integrated into the Australian Constitution, which was drafted on the premise of Indigenous people being so inferior as to not garner a mention and considered to be a fading race in any event.

*Terra nullius* was a deliberate social construction designed to enable settlement, parcel of land at a time to enable expansion of colonial settlements and to do so without any compensation to the lawful owners.

The illegality of the actions of the Crown was clear even as far back as 1832, when George Robinson, who became the Chief Protector of Aborigines at Port Phillip, wrote: *I am at a loss to conceive by what tenure we hold*

*this country, for it does not appear to be that we either hold it by conquest or by right of purchase.*

This is not new to Indigenous people; we know that this country was not 'settled'. We know that sovereignty was not ceded. It is this disparity of understanding between what we know and what white Australia is told happened that we need to overcome.

This is a critical point to the success or failure of any cause – the truth and the wide acceptance of truth as fact. The average Australian simply does not know about the fight for equality and rights that the Indigenous people have been waging for 227 years.

The don't know that Indigenous people were the subjects of forced and violent dispersals from their cultural lands; they were the victims of massacres and murders; rapes and retributory attacks to any resistance; there were genocidal policies based on pseudoscience of Indigenous inferiority; there were sinister attempts to murder countless Indigenous people when the introduced diseases weren't killing enough Indigenous people to the white man's liking and there was a pervasive mind set of the Indigenous people being sub-human.

Some Australians may recall the 1967 Referendum and all of the hope and positivity surrounding the concept of equality in the lead up to the vote and think that following this purportedly momentous event in Australian history that the Aboriginal people then had the equality they fought for.

We know that is not the case, however. There are many generations – especially the younger – that are simply not taught about the history of this nation, that are not taught about the Indigenous culture beyond boomerangs and spears; they do not know that statistically we have the highest Indigenous incarceration rate compared to non-Indigenous people in the world, they do not know of our appalling mortality rates, they do not know about the welfare indicators that demonstrate Indigenous people are the lowest on the socioeconomic pyramid.

This is not an indictment on the Australians who do not know, this is an indictment on the education system and those who draft the curriculum that perpetuates the ignorance that pervades our country. And it is an indictment on mainstream media for failing to report on the real issues, on the brave men and women agitating for the very thing that Australia hangs its hat on: a fair go!

A fair go cannot be achieved without a Treaty.

A Treaty would be the basis upon which the sovereign Indigenous people of Australia and the Government could negotiate the terms of rights to land, minerals and resources and the self-governing of communities.

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# Last ditch effort to save 'Aboriginal Scar Trees' in former Riverlands Golf Course

- *The Express*

Environmentalists have launched a last-ditch effort to save hundreds of trees in Milperra they believe have Aboriginal significance.

The Bankstown Bushland Society spent Thursday photographing scar trees at the decommissioned Riverlands Golf Course.

The evidence will be given to the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage.

Developers have proposed levelling a quarter of the 82ha bush block to prepare for roads and development, including almost 500 new houses.

It means hundreds of possible "remnant indigenous trees" could also face the axe. Scar trees were used by indigenous people to make bark canoes, shelters and containers.

A proposal to rezone a section of the former Riverlands golf course in Milperra is currently before Planning Minister Rob Stokes.

Bankstown Bushland Society vice-president Chris Brogan said the hope was that if the department's Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System deemed the trees significant it could halt development.

"It's insanity ... you will destroy the biodiversity values of Bankstown as well as the cultural history, it's just a complete act of vandalism," Mr Brogan said.

An environmental-impact statement prepared for developer State-wide Planning recommends relocating tree hollows to areas of the land set aside for conservation.

"Once the trees are destroyed, the ecological value is destroyed. The idea that they can offset that destruction by moving the hollows somewhere else doesn't make sense," Mr Brogan said.

Volunteers measuring the scar on a tree on the former Riverlands golf course site.

The society wants Canterbury-Bankstown Council to review the Riverlands planning process, like administrator Richard Colley said he would do with the corridor of Canterbury Road.

According to the OEH website, declaring an area an "Aboriginal Place" is a way of legally recognising and protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage. The National Parks and Wildlife Act states: "It is an offence to harm or desecrate a declared Aboriginal Place."

A heritage impact statement prepared by the former Bankstown Council in January said the site had "very little or no Aboriginal significance".

The proposal is before NSW Planning Minister Rob Stokes and is yet to be approved.



*Bankstown Bushland Society members Chris Brogan and Paul Wynn with a scar tree at Riverlands Golf Course in Milperra.*



*Volunteers measuring the scar on a tree on the former Riverlands golf course site.*





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## Your annual fee and optional donations support the ASGMWP Aboriginal Education Program

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## First Aboriginal Woman to receive PhD in Entrepreneurship



Sonya, a Gooreng woman, has invested 30 years in working alongside Aboriginal and Torres Islander communities in the challenging yet rewarding realms of education, spanning early childhood to TAFE and

University. Sonya recently graduated from UTS School of Business with a PhD (Management) the focus of her PhD was Indigenous Women and Entrepreneurship in NSW which she received an ARC Indigenous research Grant.

Sonya's has a sustained commitment for both the community and corporate sector, Sonya draws on her extensive academic background in social and economic development for Indigenous people, in particular entrepreneurship and commercialisation, to

provide a unique and refreshing approach to strategy and program development. She has a clear vision for the needs of Indigenous communities and seeks to inspire and promote Indigenous people to achieve social and economic self-determination through education and enterprise development. The compassion, influence and drive Sonya brings to the table will ensure that she will achieve targeted and sustainable results for your next project.

On her graduation date she was joined by her beloved family and close friends, sadly her father Peter Link was too unwell to travel, and her mother Ruth Link had passed before Sonya graduated, but she acknowledges a great debt to both sides of her family. To her parents and dad for always being there and supporting her from the very beginning and her mother who's love and encouragement never faltered.



## SERVICE KEEPING INDIGENOUS CHILDREN OUT OF YOUTH JUSTICE IN FUNDING PLEA

A service set up to keep Indigenous children out of the youth justice system says its pleas for funding have been ignored by the ACT and federal governments.

Tjillari Justice Aboriginal Corporation was created three years ago to support the children of offenders in Canberra, an attempt to break the cycle that traps many in foster care or the youth justice system.



*Tjillari Justice Aboriginal Corporation strives to stop children from offending and ending up at the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre. Photo: Elesa Lee*

The service's mantra is to train and work with parents, grandparents and the children themselves, providing training, workshops and support to help them cope when a family member is incarcerated.

It relies on a shoestring budget and small staff of volunteers.

Corporation director Deborah Evans said the statistics on the inter generational nature of offending were frightening.

Eighty per cent of children who have an incarcerated parent will go on to become juvenile offenders, she said, and at least 85 per cent of those juvenile offenders will go on to become adult offenders.

Ms Evans said government funding typically follows out of home care, or comes in too late, when children are already caught up in the youth justice system.

She said the focus must be on early intervention and building up the capacity of families before children find themselves in trouble or in care.

Despite that, Ms Evans said she has been ignored by the ACT and federal governments for funding.

"That has been so frustrating. About 14 months ago, we contacted the ACT government and they were just plain and simply not interested because they were dealing with out of home care tenders," she said.

"We also spoke to the [Indigenous Affairs Minister], Mr Nigel Scullion, and the response was the same."

The ACT government said it directed Tjillari to tender for the *A Step Up For Our Kids* program, but the service failed to do so. Prior to that, Tjillari received a \$3000 micro loan under the *Brilliant Ideas* program, a spokeswoman for the Community Services Directorate said.

The spokeswoman also said its *Step Up For Our Kids* program already has a service that provides support within families to prevent children from coming into care.

"This program includes intensive, specialist support to children, young people and families in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local communities across the ACT, with the support of Aboriginal Services and Development Unit, 'Jaanamili'," she said.

Another service, the Red Cross' Birth Family Advocacy Support Service, also provides information and advice to birth parents with children in care, or children at risk of entering care.

The Justice and Community Safety Directorate said it was also approached by Tjillari, but referred it to the Community Services Directorate, where its work was more aligned.

The directorate says Tjillari has now approached it again, and that: "JACS is always willing to explore opportunities to work with agencies on justice system issues affecting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community."

Recent statistics in the *Closing the Gap* report show serious Indigenous disadvantage is still entrenched in the ACT.

Roughly one-quarter of all children in care were Indigenous, and, despite significant progress recently, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were still vastly over-represented in the ACT's youth justice system.

Ms Evans said the statistics were disturbing and were likely vastly under-reported.

She said there was an absence of records on the number of children of offenders in the ACT, despite knowing the vast majority were likely to go on to become juvenile offenders.

"That is frightening," she said.

"We're talking about trying to reduce the number of young people in places like Bimberi and Don Dale, but we're not looking at how we can do that.

"How we can do that is by more effective education to parents and carers, giving them strategies, helping them understand what's happening to their children."

*Christopher Knaus  
Canberra Times*





## WHY A TREATY IS VITAL

It would be a binding agreement that would have sanctions that would deter breaches of the terms of the treaty.

Getting a treaty is not going to be easy because it is the least palatable option for governments because it holds them to a set of obligations that they ordinarily would not live up to.

Treaty is essential because 227 years after colonisation we remain at the bottom of the socio-economic pyramid; because after 227 years children are still being removed arbitrarily from Aboriginal families; because after 227 years racism remains rife in society and none more so against Aboriginal people; because after 227 years we are still being subjected to cruel punishments including water being switched off, communities being closed and being forced into work programs that provide less than the minimum wage and then having to buy groceries in government run shops that charge \$6 for a kilo of flour.

To arbitrarily decide the fate of our people without our consultation and agreement will always be met with resistance.

And for those who champion the *Recognise* campaign and its intent to change the constitution to recognise Indigenous people, I say: We have the benefit of hindsight and know that constitutional recognition will not change the mortality or incarceration rates of our people. It will not stop the removal of children or turn the water back on in remote communities.

Constitutional change is symbolic; it is not a cure-all. A Treaty is vital to the future of this nation. But again, it is not a cure-all.

A Treaty is the first meaningful step in ensuring that there is engagement of all in the success of its outcomes. It will leave Indigenous people empowered and part of something positive in history, as opposed to disillusioned and disappointed at the millions of broken promises and setbacks we have suffered over the last 227 years.

The two critical elements to bridging the cultural divide, in my mind, are empathy and education.

People need to learn about Indigenous history and culture and do so with an open mind and pure heart. Once they know and truly understand and consider the impact such devastation would have on their lives, their wellbeing, their resolve to fight another day – only then will we really be able to have a meaningful discussion about what it is going to take to heal hurts and have hope for a future our ancestors would be proud of.

Treaty is the insurance policy we need that we can hold the government accountable for their actions so real gains can be made for the Indigenous people of Australia.

*Natalie Cromb*



## THOUSANDS COMMEMORATE WAVE HILL WALK-OFF

Shorten said the adage “a fair day’s wage” was still not the case. “It is long overdue to have a discussion about equal wages in this country. That is long overdue.”

He recalled Lingiari’s words in 1975 that “we are all mates now”, but said “you can’t be mates, you can’t be fair dinkum, until you have true equality”.

Scullion praised the elders in attendance for their role in the walk-off and subsequent fight for land rights, and noted those who had not lived to see the anniversary.

He said the next step of land rights had to include better communication and less bureaucracy for traditional owners seeking to create economic development with their land.

His speech was interrupted by a crowd of protesters who turned their back on the minister and held a banner which read “no justice, just us”.

A statement from the group said they were descendants of the Gurindji stockmen and families, angry at the response of federal and NT governments to Don Dale abuses.

A march to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Wave Hill walk-off crosses a bridge over the Victoria River at Kalkarindji in the Northern Territory. Photograph: Helen Davidson for the Guardian

Scullion acknowledged their action, and said he didn’t believe they meant any disrespect to the traditional owners who had invited the delegates and dignitaries to the event.

His comment prompted cries of “shame” from the crowd and others, including union delegates, also stood. Scullion continued his speech over chanting, until an organiser stepped in and asked the protesters to “show respect to the old people here”, and the crowd dispersed.

Indigenous leader and newly elected Labor senator Pat Dodson thanked Scullion for his address and urged meaningful bipartisan discussions.

“We’ll be looking at him [in parliament] and saying, OK comrade, are you fair dinkum about working for justice for the Aboriginal people, or are you just full of you-know-what?” Dodson said. “We’ve got to get down to real discussions and real outcomes for the people.”

The Freedom Day festival continues over the weekend, with cultural activities and events and live music.

*Helen Davidson  
The Guardian  
Friday 19 August 2016*





**Monday Sep 12**  
7.30pm to 9pm

**ASG-MWP Information Night**  
**Uncle Wes Marne – the greatest story teller**  
At age 93, Uncle Wes is sharing his stories – one of his grandfather's dreaming, of bitterness and love, and of his life as an *Elder* living in Mt Druit.  
Mona Vale Memorial Hall, 1606 Pittwater Rd, Mona Vale.



**Sep 24 – Oct 9**

**Narrabeen Spring Celebration comes alive**  
More information [www.narrabeenlagoon.org.au](http://www.narrabeenlagoon.org.au)

**Sunday Oct 2**  
noon till 6pm

**Aboriginal Artefacts**  
A special exhibition of artefacts that are rarely seen on public display.  
A free event and an educational and fun afternoon.  
– All welcome. See page 4 for details.  
This is part of the Friends of Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment Spring Festival. More information [www.narrabeenlagoon.org.au](http://www.narrabeenlagoon.org.au)

**Monday Oct 10**  
7.30pm start

**ASG-MWP Business Meeting**  
All ASG members welcome  
Mona Vale Memorial Hall, 1606 Pittwater Rd, Mona Vale.



**Monday Nov 14**  
7.30pm to 9pm

**ASG-MWP Information Night**  
**Natalie Cromb:**  
**Why a Treaty is so Vital**  
Treaty would recognise the sovereignty of First Nations People over their land and enshrine the right of self-determination. Natalie has a law and history degrees and has worked for ten years as a full-time paralegal.  
See page 7 for more background information.  
Mona Vale Memorial Hall, 1606 Pittwater Rd, Mona Vale.



**Monday Dec 12**  
7.30pm start

**ASG-MWP End of 2016 Get-Together**  
All welcome. More information as time gets closer.  
Mona Vale Memorial Hall, 1606 Pittwater Rd, Mona Vale.

**ASG-MWP would like to thank Dee Why RSL, Pittwater RSL, Forestville RSL, and Avalon Beach RSL for their continued support in 2015**



## An Invitation to join us

**Aboriginal Support Group  
Manly Warringah Pittwater**

Founded 1979

Membership is \$25 per year

**(02) 9982 1425**

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. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Editors or members of the ASG.  
Please email articles where possible to [the.elimatta@gmail.com](mailto: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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