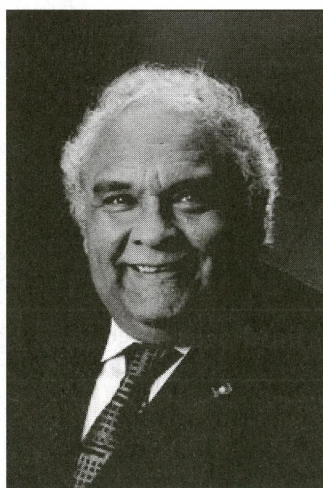


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A National Representative Body for Indigenous People?

Since the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission was abolished by the Howard Government in 2004, Australia's Indigenous people have lacked a national voice. On 27 August 2009, Tom Calma – chair of the committee for a new national representative body – presented the Commonwealth Government with a proposed model.



Steering Committee
Chair Tom Calma

The proposed body would address strategic issues in Indigenous policy at a national level. It will not be involved in

service delivery or allocating government funds. What it will do is monitor government service delivery and performance, give policy advice, and advocate for the interests of Indigenous people.

When presenting the proposal, Tom Calma said, 'We have taken the first step of laying the groundwork for a new partnership between the Australian Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples – one based on respect, equality and a shared journey.'

Who can be involved?

Membership of the National Representative Body is open to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over the age of 18.

Members may attend the Annual General Meeting, seek appointment to the Congress, and participate in the relevant chamber.

Membership of the body will prioritise gender balance. The elected National Executive will have a male and a female full-time co-chair, and six part time

members, three of each gender. Terms will be for four years.

How will it be managed?

The body will be a private company, legally independent of government. It will engage with government at Ministerial level and through the Council of Australian Governments. An annual National Congress will set national policies, priorities and make major decisions.

An ethics council will oversee merit selection and consider breaches of ethical standards.

What are the next steps for the body?

Government funding is sought for the establishment (continued page 2)

David Hunter 2009 Memorial Lecture

6:30 – 8:30pm
Tuesday, November 10

Australian Centre for
Christianity and Culture
15 Blackall St, Barton,
ACT

See p 6 for details

ANTaR ACT - 2009 Report

First of all a big big thank you goes out to all the volunteers, members and local organisations who have supported and collaborated with us over the past year. Thank you also to all the festival-goers out there who have visited our stall to buy children's books, badges or simply stopped to say hi and brighten our day.

We may be a small organisation, but I like to think we punch above our weight. At a local level I am proud that ANTaR ACT has been able to support grassroots events.

Highlights for us have been supporting the NAIDOC on the Peninsula and NAIDOC Family Day, the ReconciliACT Youth Conference at ANU, and the Sorry Day 2009 Memorial and Concert. You can read the feature article on this later in this

newsletter.

At a national level we have supported ANTaR to develop innovative campaigns and to get through what I'm sure everyone will agree has been a tough year financially. Our *Respect* campaign, in particular, captured the public's imagination and inspired thousands to sign a pledge promoting a new partnership between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians based on mutual respect.

We are always looking for ways to improve the way we engage with the local community to support the rights and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We're happy to hear feedback and suggestions, so feel free to email me

at antaract@apex.net.au, or come along to our monthly meetings. We have come a long way, we're willing to learn and we're in it for the long haul.

Cheers, Kristina Beck—
ANTaR ACT Coordinator



National Representative Body (continued)

phase and first five years of operation, declining from years six to ten as independent funding becomes available. An establishment Investment Fund will be created, for which deductible gift recipient status is sought. It is envisaged that ten years from now the body will be self-sufficient, self-determining and truly independent of government.

ANTaR national president Janet Hunt welcomed these steps to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people a voice again at the national level. "The model to be adopted must have legitimacy with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people themselves. I hope the consultations have brought forward a model which will have wide support"

- Michele Smith

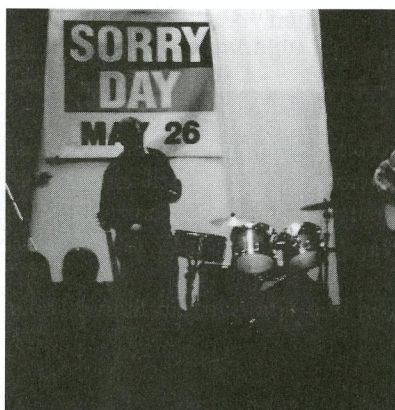
"The model to be adopted must have legitimacy with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people themselves" -

ANTaR National President Janet Hunt

2009 Highlights



Kristina and Chris at Sorry Day 09



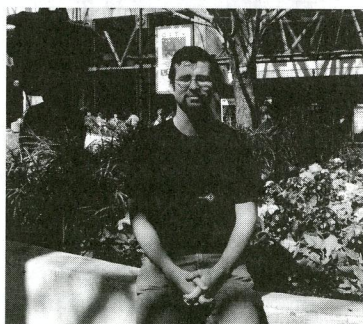
Franklin B Paverty at the Sorry Day concert.



The Wiradjuri Echoes perform at NAIDOC family day

For more information on what we've done this year, visit our Facebook site: ACT ANTaR.

Volunteer Profile - Matt Fenwick



Matt Fenwick is our promotions and communications coordinator.

This includes editing the newsletter and looking after the website, which we're redesigning in the coming months.

Originally from the UK, Matt came to Canberra last year for love and for work. In his spare time, he likes being with his lovely wife, bikeriding, movies and music—pretty much anything except dixie jazz.

Matt joined ANTaR because he

sees Indigenous issues as the most important social justice challenge facing Australia. He wants to contribute to something important outside of work, and hopes to increase ANTaR's visibility, including on the web and out in the community.

If you would like to contact Matt with any comments, email him at matt_m_fenwick@yahoo.com.au

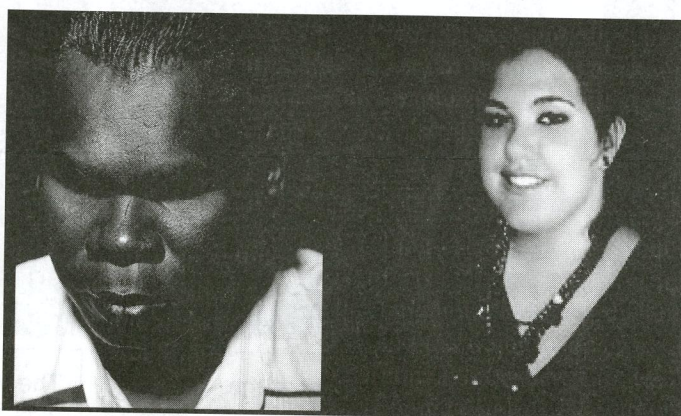
Singers and Songs

"Indigenous musicians are introducing new audiences to the beauty, colour and range of expression of their languages"

Language is special: it is what reveals the world to us and is often

Indigenous languages in Australia. Removing generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from

their languages – even if the meanings of the words must be read in translation.



Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu

Casey Donovan

felt to be at the heart of a culture. Different languages reveal different worlds. Mainstream Australia's unwillingness to explore these other worlds can close us off from what these other languages have to teach us, and how they can keep culture alive.

In Europe, in contrast, there is a more widely spread understanding of the specialness of language, and that people are richer, not poorer, for being able to traverse a number of language worlds.

Colonisation has had a devastating impact on

their families stopped many from learning their language and culture. Of approximately 250 Indigenous languages spoken in Australia at the time of colonisation, around 20 remain vibrant, with another 70 widely used.

But while English appears to have been an overwhelming winner, this situation is fiercely resisted. Throughout Australia, Indigenous people are cultivating, maintaining and revitalising their languages, through story, art and songs.

Here, I'd like to highlight four musical moments, which show how Indigenous musicians are introducing new audiences to the beauty, colour and range of expression of

Moment One

In 1983 the Papunya-based Warumpi Band released the song *Jailanguru Pakarnu* (Out from Gaol). It marks a watershed in Australian music, as the first rock song sung in an Indigenous Australian language (Luritja) to be released for a popular audience.

Moment Two

Jump forward to 1991, when Yothu Yindi's *Treaty* went to number 11 on the national charts. *Treaty* is an amazing musical hybrid, moving between Gumatj and English, and counterbalancing rock music with a djatpangarri. Djatpangarri is a singing and dancing style from Yirrkala dealing with everyday events that was popular from the 1930s to 1970s.

The djatpangarri in *Treaty* has a long history: it was created by Mandawuy Yunupingu's maternal great-grandmother's husband. *Treaty* encapsulates what the Yolŋu talk about as their desire to live in "two worlds", maintaining a vibrant sense of being Yolŋu, while also, just as equally, living and participating in the diverse life of a Western-

ised nation-state.

Moment Three

Recently, singer-songwriters like the Australian Idol-winning Casey Donovan are increasingly using song as a way of *relearning* and re-establishing a relationship with Indigenous languages (in her case, Gumbayngirr) – which they then share with others.

Moment Four

In 2008, Mandawuy Yunupingu's cousin, Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu, released his eponymous and highly-successful first album, which is sung almost entirely in Yolŋu Matha (in Gälpu, Gumatj, and Djamarpuynu).

The album is a melodious, captivating collection of songs about Yunupingu's homelands; family and ancestral relationships; and connections to the natural seasons, animals, and environment. *Gurrumul* takes listeners into hauntingly different language – and life – worlds, revealing in song another way of living and existing in geographical space to that of urban Australia.

These four musical moments reveal long-established and enduring efforts by Indigenous musicians to sing not only in English but to sing in their other languages – Indigenous Languages, Creoles, and Aboriginal English. The united voice of a group of older men which ends Kim Scott's first novel, *True Coun-*

try, interestingly reflects on such efforts

It states: "We gotta be moving, remembering, singing our place little bit new, little bit special, all the time." The musicians mentioned above – and scores more – are doing just that.

– Cherisse Lyons

More information

Patrick McConvell and Patrick Thieberger, "State of Indigenous Languages in Australia - 2001," (Canberra: Department of the Environment and Heritage, 2001). Brian Devlin, "Bilingual Education in the Northern Territory and the Continuing Debate over its Effectiveness and Value," (Paper presented to the AIATSIS Research Symposium, Canberra, June 26, 2009).

Sorry Day 2009

One of the highlights of the past year for ANTAR ACT was taking part in the Sorry Day memorial service and concert. On May 26, we gathered around a fire on the grounds of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture. We were all daubed with ochre and invited to add gum leaves to the fire for a smoking ceremony. Candles were lit as we remembered local heroes of the Reconciliation movement. Rev John showed sensitivity and compassion in leading the service.

There was a sausage sizzle to put food in our bellies ahead of the evening concert. Unfortunately the concert was held up by the Centre's

penetrating fire alarm, triggered by the smoky BBQ – an amusing but frustrating delay. But the concert was well worth the wait. We were treated to items by Roger Knox, Franklin B Paverty, Johnny Huckle and the Buddy Knox Blues Band, the latter fresh from their triumph as being named "Best New Talent" at the National Australian Blues Music Awards. Against a backdrop of colours from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island flags, the groups and individual singers belted out their numbers to the delight of the enthusiastic audience.

Sorry Day Committee Indigenous co-chair Helen Moran organised the event,

which was extremely well attended. ACT ANTAR gathered a good number of prizes for a door ticket raffle, so many in the audience went home happily endowed with vouchers, pamper packs and even an electric toothbrush!

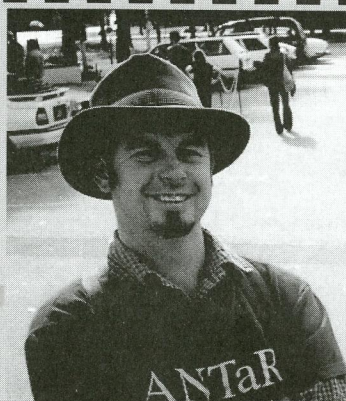
Thanks to all who participated.

- Jeanette Mathews



David Hunter Memorial Lecture 2009:

Stolen Wages



David Hunter was one of the founding members of ANTaR, and an enormously supportive and inspiring activist on Indigenous issues.

David was inspired by his Christian faith and membership of the Baptist community in Canberra. He tirelessly worked for reconciliation between non-indigenous and indigenous Australians, especially amongst the Baptist and broader church communities, but also in community groups such as ANTaR.

In October 2000 he was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, and he died in December 2003.

"To most Australians, the word 'slavery' conjures up images of Africans in chains, being taken across the Atlantic to work the cotton fields of the American deep south. We struggle to comprehend that slavery is also part of our own nation's history." - Gary Highland, former ANTaR national director.

In December 2007, nearly a century of universal financial exploitation of Aboriginal people by both employers and governments was finally laid bare. The Australian Senate, the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee handed down its Report into Stolen Wages in all states and territories, providing the missing context to much of the generational poverty that Aboriginal families endure today. For the first time in our history there was exposure at federal level of the extensive role played by Aboriginal workers in our national development.

About this year's presenter

A passionate advocate for justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, Dr Ros Kidd has worked to alert the wider community to abuses of labour and personal finances as a national issue.

Ros's investigation of government files in Queensland in the early 1990s confirmed the repeated claims from the Aboriginal community that their money was missing from private savings accounts. They also expressed resentment that entitlements such as pensions and inheritances disappeared under Queensland government controls of personal finances that continued into the early 1970s.

Ros's fight for justice on this matter extended into the national arena, culminating in the 2007 Senate Inquiry. She has analysed national and international law to argue that the Queensland Government breached its legal duty as trustee in losing and misusing private Aboriginal monies. Such a finding would have implications for government liability around Australia. It would force governments to provide

proper reparations to those whose money they lost, and recognise Aboriginal workers as essential participants in our national history.

Ros will speak about her continuing role in the Stolen Wages campaign.



Dr Ros Kidd

2009 Memorial Lecture

"Stolen Wages"

Presented by Dr Ros Kidd

6:30 – 8:30pm

Tuesday 10th of November 2009
Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture

15 Blackall St, Barton, ACT

More information: 6288 0679

Reviews and Previews

Bran Nue Dae

Bran Nue Dae premiered at the Melbourne International Film Festival in August 2009 and won the audience award for best feature. Directed by Rachel Perkins, the film stars Ernie Dingo, Geoffrey Rush, Missy Higgins and Rocky McKenzie.

Set in the 1960s this film, based upon the 1990s musical play by Jimmy Chi, is about Willie (Rocky McKenzie) a young Broome boy who is sent to mission school in Perth. Willie runs away from the mission school in Perth to get back home to Broome and his journey, and traveling companions, are the story. Along the way he meets up with Uncle Tadpole (Ernie Dingo) whose charm and worldliness contrasts with Willie's shy naivety.

This story was semi-autobiographical for Jimmy Chi and Stephen Albert who starred as Uncle Tadpole in the original stage production. It has an edge, both historical and contemporary. The hopes of parents, and society, for a better future for Aboriginal children - achieved through education - are

contrasted with the psychological pain of separation from family and country, overlayed by assimilation and racism.

Those of us who remember the humour and joy of the play, along with the wonderful music from Broome, are looking forward to its adaptation to the big screen. General release will be January 2009.

- Chris Bourke



The cast of Bran Nue Dae

Stone Bros

Richard J. Frankland's hilarious new comedy *Stone Bros.* is the first full-length Indigenous comedy to hit Australian cinema.

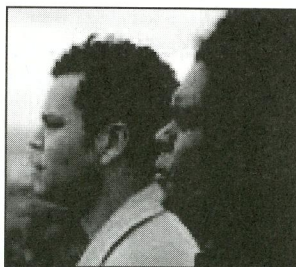
The film follows Eddie (Luke Carroll) and Charlie (Leon Burchill) on a road trip from Perth to Kalgoorlie. On a lonely highway, the boys pick up what Charlie mistakes for a "hot chick" only to find they are landed with Vinnie, a self-obsessed Italian stallion, who claims to have been marooned in the desert by his heavy metal band. Soon after they are joined by Eddie and Charlie's drag queen cousin Regina who dreams of making it big on "that Koori Idol show".

What ensues is a riotous trip through outback Australia as the foursome encounter a host of eccentric characters, attend a literally explosive wedding ceremony, conspire to hold up an outback museum and are pursued by a vicious demon dog.

In Richard Frankland's own words, "One of the objectives with *Stone Bros.* is to do what Bill Cosby and Richard Prior did for African-Americans in the 1950s, 60s and 70s - we want to open the door for us to be able to laugh at ourselves and with each other."

Stone Bros. combines a touching story about the unpredictabilities of friendship and family with a road trip you'll never forget and opened nationally on September 24 in selected cinemas.

- Kristina Beck



Luke Carroll and Leon Burchill

ANTaR:

"...perhaps the most significant national community-based organisation for reconciliation and Indigenous rights in Australia."

Social Justice Commissioner, Tom Calma

Join a campaign, inform yourself, donate, subscribe to the newslist, get involved!

www.antar.org.au/ACT

ANTaR is working locally and nationally on a range of indigenous issues.

One printed newsletter is sent a year, with regular updates sent via email. To subscribe, please email us with your name and email address.

If you're moving, please email us so we can update your details.

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