

New generation of Freedom Riders

February 2005 marked the 40th anniversary of the 1965 'Freedom Ride', led by Indigenous activist Dr Charles Perkins. To commemorate the anniversary, a group of 30 students, social justice advocates and young film-makers set off into regional NSW to take stock of how much has changed and to generate a new debate on Reconciliation in Australia.

The historic Freedom Ride of 1965 helped awaken mainstream Australia to the discrimination and injustice endured by Indigenous people in regional areas. Inspired by similar protests in the United States, the Australian Freedom Ride was part of a broader movement for civil rights for Indigenous people and helped create momentum for changes such as the 1967 referendum.

The 2005 Freedom Ride was a very different experience than the original, both inside and outside the bus. Where in 1965 there were only two Indigenous participants, half of the 2005 group was Indigenous. Where they were led by men, women were at the forefront of the 2005 ride. In 1965 racism and desegregation were high on the agenda, and the Freedom Riders faced opposition from white communities which famously escalated into violence in some towns. In 2005 the focus was on the Freedom Ride as a vehicle for Reconciliation.

The 2005 Freedom Ride visited over 13 communities in two weeks, including Dubbo, Walgett, Moree, Boggabilla, Toomelah and



Goondiwindi, Lismore, Kempsey and Taree. The bus returned to Redfern on Saturday 26 February. The Freedom Riders took eight video cameras and conducted interviews in the street, in community centres and in missions to find out how people felt race relations had changed and whether Aboriginal people were getting a fair go.

Much had changed since the original ride. In Wellington, the Freedom Riders were welcomed by the Mayor and by Aboriginal elders. In Bowraville, the local Aboriginal kids now learn their own language and in Moree the local council opened the pool to the Freedom Riders and local Indigenous children for free.

But while some things have changed, all too much remains to be done. Racism has not disappeared. Aboriginal people are still denied

entry to some shops. Leaving Walgett, the Freedom Riders came across a young Indigenous man who had been denied entry onto a bus for being late, while minutes later the bus driver allowed a non-Indigenous person to board. In some country towns you can still feel the tension; still see a black end of town and a white end of town. In many communities non-Indigenous people refused to speak to the Freedom Riders.

There was a sense that although much has changed since 1965, many of the gains of the past decades have stalled and in some cases are being eroded. Few people have an understanding of their rights or any faith in the willingness of mainstream politicians to stand up for Indigenous people or provide them with support to empower their communities.

ANTaR NSW President's Report



When I accepted nomination as president of ANTaR NSW at the December AGM, I knew that Claire Colyer would be a hard act to follow and I thank her for her work on the management committee over the past few years. Sally Fitzpatrick (vice president), Bob Makinson (secretary) and Hugh Southon are continuing on the committee, and we welcome new members John Telford (treasurer), Alison Aggarwal, Lara Kostakidis-Lianos and Melanie Schwarz. Thanks also to former treasurer Frennie Beytagh, Margaret Brennan, Kate Sullivan and Olga Havnen for their great work and support to the management committee.

The direction of Federal policy following the re-election of the Howard Government is disappointing but we were encouraged by Professor Larissa Behrendt at our AGM, reminding us that ANTaR and its resource materials are valued by Indigenous people and a strong ANTaR network is needed. I am committed to building and working with that network.

At our planning day in February, we mapped out our direction for 2005 in key areas of fund-raising, communications, networking and local groups. There has been a good response to a subscription reminder letter to those on our mailing list and membership is growing steadily.

This year, ANTaR NSW will continue to support those Indigenous people seeking justice through the Stolen Wages Campaign and we'll be working on the Health Rights Campaign at state level. The NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act is currently under review. Geoff Scott, New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council's Chief Operations Officer, addressed a committee dinner in January and ANTaR expects to make an input into the Review this year.

Anne Byrne
President, ANTaR NSW

Freedom Ride, continued from page 1

An overwhelming number of these stories were negative but at the same time there were many sources of inspiration and many places where Indigenous people and organisations were succeeding in fighting racism. In some communities non-Indigenous people were also involved in this struggle. Local Reconciliation Groups play a key role in engaging the non-Indigenous community in the Reconciliation process.

The journey of the 2005 Freedom Riders continues through plans for a range of projects and campaigns. The riders are meeting with the NSW Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in April and funding is being sought for a documentary to be completed by late 2005 and to develop the material collected into an educational resource for schools and communities.

Freedom Ride 2005 was an initiative of young people living in Redfern and was organised by ReconciliACTION – Australia's largest youth reconciliation network and the youth arm of ANTaR – with the support of the NSW Reconciliation Council.

For more information or to make a donation visit www.reconciliaction.org.au or contact Sylvie Ellsmore on 02 9219 0719. This story written by Sylvie Ellsmore, Kirsten Cheatham and Ben Spies-Butcher.

Freedom Ride volunteers needed

Four or five volunteers with stenographic or good typing skills are needed to help with transcribing the many hours of video and audio recordings made on the Freedom Ride trip. Transcription is necessary for producing this valuable material in film, audio and written forms and will also make it available to communities and support groups. If you can help contact Oliver at tangentfilms@tpg.com.au

Newcastle Aboriginal Support Group

The Newcastle Aboriginal Support Group was founded by Jack Doherty in 1980. Its purpose is to be alongside Aboriginal people in their struggle for justice and in raising public awareness.

We publish a newsletter *Wurreker* and hold bi-monthly meetings, usually in the Birabahn building or the Awabakal Co-operative at Wickham, or sometimes the Trades Hall. The meetings are on a wide variety of topics and issues. We maintain our relationship with the Co-operative and the surrounding Land Councils.

We have lobbied politicians at the local, state and federal level over many years on issues like Mabo, Wik, native title, the abolition of ATSIC, and changes to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. At election times we usually ask local candidates to address us on their Indigenous policy. We have always enjoyed the support of the state and federal members of parliament.

Our most successful single achievement was the *Coming-Together* on the Newcastle foreshore in 1993, welcomed by the Indigenous community and attended by several thousand non-Aboriginal people. The commitment signed there by so many was embraced by the Newcastle City Council under then Mayor John McNaughton. Subsequently the Council under Mayor Greg Heys strengthened this, and the advisory Guraki panel was formed. The Support Group was fully involved at every stage.

In 1992 we established the Jack Doherty scholarships, in memory of our founder, for Indigenous students at the University of Newcastle. Donations have been individual (three of them extremely generous), with only one from business (a law firm). Current funds

will allow these scholarships to run for another 5-6 years.

Sorry Day is observed each May 26th (the first was in Christ Church Cathedral), and we join in NAIDOC week. The Group has worked hard in support of Reconciliation at the state and federal level. Over many years we ran the Yamuloong project on Reconciliation themes in schools. We conducted an educational forum on the Treaty concept. Members like our sacred sites tours.

The Group's committed members are becoming older and fewer, free time being much harder for the young to come by than formerly. The present federal emphasis on assimilationist mainstreaming and the continuing manifestation of racist policies at all levels means our work remains a necessity.

Contact Newcastle Aboriginal Support Group via Rodney Knock, PO Box 79, Broadmeadow, NSW 2292 rlekknock@bigpond.com



Newcastle Mayor, Councillor Greg Heys and Aunty Iris Russell at the signing of Newcastle City Council's renewed commitment to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Newcastle on 14 April 1998. The Newcastle Aboriginal Support Group played a major role in the process.

Major review of NSW Land Rights Act

There is a lot at stake in the current government review of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act in NSW. The system was set up in 1983 with a strong compensatory element, recognising that land can have an economic as well as spiritual, social and cultural significance, and the Act is not premised solely on traditional ownership like some other legislation. The NSW Aboriginal Land Council (NSWALC) has accumulated an investment fund of \$550 million, earning interest that pays for land council operations across the state. Property worth at least \$800 million has been acquired and land councils are also significant rental housing providers to Aboriginal people. With over 20,000 members, land councils carry out political and advocacy functions and the state body, NSWALC, has been one of the most prominent elected Aboriginal organisations in the country.

The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Dr Andrew Refshauge announced a review of the land rights system in May 2004. This followed his dismissal of the NSWALC Board the previous November and appointment of Murray Chapman as Administrator. The review taskforce consists of Mr Chapman, Director-General of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) Jody Broun, and Registrar under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act, Steven Wright.

Proposals will be workshopped in consultation meetings, with legislation due some time in 2005. An issues paper on land dealings is being finalised for Cabinet endorsement and public release. Issues papers on governance and other matters will follow.

Restrictions already apply to land dealings like sales and mortgages, but media reports suggest that some unscrupulous developers have moved in on valuable properties, cultivating individuals at the expense of wider land council membership. Community assets can be squandered if legal protections are too easily evaded. On the other hand using the wealth of

the land council network to improve the lives of Aboriginal people in NSW is an obvious priority. The review will evaluate the benefits to Aboriginal people from land rights and whether better outcomes can be achieved.

Governance issues will also feature. There is a three-tier governing structure with NSWALC as the statewide body together with 121 local and 13 regional land councils. The role of regional bodies was diminished by amendments in 1990. Functions have been added to NSWALC over the years and, though often welcomed by the body itself at the time, the risk of overload is a concern. While some local land councils are successful, others lack necessary organisational capacity and many have struggled to meet their statutory obligations.

Financial management is another key issue. The Auditor General has raised various concerns that NSWALC says it has worked hard to remedy in recent months. A report commissioned by NSWALC also highlights the role land councils play in providing housing, with inadequate recognition from government. No doubt other issues will emerge in community consultations when they occur.

With the Minister signalling an 'overhaul' of one of Australia's most substantial land rights schemes, it is vital that ANTaR supporters stay informed. The recent abolition of elected Indigenous bodies by the Commonwealth Parliament shows how politically vulnerable even large institutions can be. We can support Aboriginal people as they protect hard-won gains and improve their governing institutions; by letting government know we are watching their processes and by insisting on transparency, full Indigenous participation and rational policy debate in the lead up to any legislative change.

More info: www.alc.org.au/news/alra
www.daa.nsw.gov.au/landandculture.

The Redfern-Waterloo plan

The NSW Government intends to revitalise the Redfern-Waterloo area through planning, redevelopment and urban renewal (see www.redfernwaterloo.nsw.gov.au).

Its Redfern-Waterloo Plan will be created by the new Minister for Redfern-Waterloo, Frank Sartor and will include redevelopment proposals and strategies on infrastructure, jobs and human services. The balance of human needs and corporate property/investment sector priorities is at stake; the latter want a new commercial hub close to the Sydney CBD as well as major residential redevelopment.

There is a clear threat to affordable housing in the area. On 11 March 2005 the *Financial Review* reported Property Council of Australia (NSW) executive director, Ken Morrison as saying, "There is no way that Redfern is going to be that commercial mini-centre with Aboriginal housing and the Block still in place. We need to sort that out before any private investors will be interested."

Some key Indigenous issues are:

- The future of The Block precinct, a main area of Aboriginal housing;
- Housing issues for Indigenous people elsewhere in the area;
- Ensuring Indigenous voices are heard effectively in public consultations;
- Ensuring Indigenous needs are met in the Plan.

The Government has started discussions with the Aboriginal Housing Company (www.ahc.org.au) which has its own plan for The Block, called The Pemulwuy Project. The AHC is not satisfied with discussions so far, and has appointed its own Pemulwuy Vision Task Force, chaired by Tom Uren (former Federal Minister responsible for some of the most innovative urban planning schemes of the 1970s) to provide an independent professional assessment.



*Entertaining the crowd outside Redfern Community Centre.
Pic courtesy Redfern CC*

People wishing to support the Indigenous community on the redevelopment should be aware that there are varied Aboriginal views about The Block's future. One way of generally supporting a strong continued Aboriginal presence on The Block, would be to write to the Premier, Minister Sartor and Minister Refshauge, urging them to ensure the inclusion of The Pemulwuy Project (with any AHC Taskforce amendments) as a lead option for all consultations with Aboriginal people about the future of The Block.

A new organisation, the Redfern Organisation of Aboriginal Unity, can be contacted at PO Box 1103 Strawberry Hills NSW 2012 or phone 8394 9666. The ROAU is made up of the Aboriginal Children's Service, Aboriginal Housing Company, Aboriginal Medical Service, Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council, Mudgin-Gal (Women's Service), Murrawina Ltd (Childcare), the Sydney Regional Aboriginal Corporation Legal Service, the Tribal Warrior Association, and Wyanga Aboriginal Aged Care.

A compilation of resource documents on the Redfern-Waterloo issue is available at www.antar.org.au (select 'Contact Us' and 'ANTaR NSW').

The 'new arrangements' in Indigenous affairs

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) was born with much hope and fanfare in March 1990. Although developed after extensive community consultation, the ATSIC Act that finally emerged from the Senate was heavily amended and a shadow of its original idea.

Fifteen years later, ATSIC's death throes were agonising and very public. In the end few were present to witness its demise. The combined votes of the Coalition and the ALP provided the legislative rubber stamp for what the Government had effectively already done without Senate approval and without the confidence of Indigenous people; the removal of Indigenous people and representation from Indigenous programs. It is what is known in the assimilation business as 'mainstreaming.'

Throughout this saga behaviour on both sides was unbecoming and unhelpful. While Minister Amanda Vanstone and ATSIC Chair Geoff Clark traded insults and fought legal battles, the real changes had already taken place.

Now all Indigenous programs and policy are in the hands of mainstream departments. There is no national elected Indigenous representation, no minister with sole responsibility for Indigenous Affairs and no discrete department dealing with Indigenous Affairs. There is much discussion of concepts such as 'whole of government', and 'flexibility' and 'partnerships', but little substance to any of these concepts at this stage.

One of the Howard Government's first acts in 1996 was to remove \$470 million from ATSIC's budget. Two years ago, the then Minister Ruddock separated the administrative programs from ATSIC into a new agency, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services (ATSIS), and in last year's budget all programs were removed from ATSIS to mainstream Government Departments, ignoring an extensive review that had just provided thorough recommendations as to how ATSIC could be restructured and work better.

The Government then moved immediately

to abolish the ATSIC Board, leaving the 35 ATSIC Regional Councils in place until 30 June this year, with skeleton staff and miniscule operating budgets, to assist the transition on the ground.

It would be an understatement to say that chaos has ruled since then. Many mainstream departments were unprepared for the transfer of staff, resources and programs. Many community organisations have had their funding delayed or interrupted. One of the many contradictions under the 'new arrangements' is in native title, where the Government is now directly involved in funding both opposing parties in a native title claim.

Under the new arrangements, the previous ATSIC regional offices have become Indigenous Coordination Centres (ICCs), housing staff from various departments to deal with programs such as housing, work for the dole, broadcasting etc. The ICCs are managing the transition and are the main Government contact points.

The lynch pin of the mainstreaming policy is shared responsibility agreements (SRAs), based on the concept of 'mutual obligation'. These ad hoc agreements take the place of co-ordinated policy and are modelled on the unevaluated 'whole of government' service delivery trials (these are also known as COAG [Council of Australian Government] trials).

SRAs have been variously described by respected Indigenous leaders, Patrick Dodson and Noel Pearson as "not sufficiently well-developed and funded", and by Professor Larissa Behrendt as "reactive and aimed at interventions rather than proactive and aimed at prevention."

No Minister or public servant has yet been able to give a clear outline of what SRAs actually are, however it has become clear from the evidence presented to the Senate Select Committee on the Administration of Indigenous Affairs and from Ministerial statements, that SRAs are ad hoc agreements that will be applied in an ad hoc way. This bodes badly for accountability and transparency of negotiations and outcomes and for the achievement of national benchmarks across all levels of government. There are no targets and no benchmarks, and so no accountability.



CDEP: The Indigenous work for the dole program

(continued from page 6)

After the ATSIC Regional Councils wind up on 30 June, bureaucrats will have total responsibility for all aspects of Indigenous programs. Some say this will now sheet responsibilities home and that underperforming departments and governments can no longer hide behind ATSIC – or as Democrats Senator Aden Ridgeway has said, “... they will not have ATSIC to kick around anymore.”

Unfortunately in this process, extensive bureaucratic and cultural experience in Indigenous program and service delivery is being lost, as many former ATSIC and ATSI staff are being straitjacketed into their new departments rather than encouraged to bring their ATSIC experience to the job. Decades of expertise and administrative culture developed successively through the federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA), the Aboriginal Development Corporation (ADC) and then ATSIC is being discarded. There is no evidence to support Government statements that the process of mainstreaming is a genuine ‘bottom up’ approach.

The early signs are worrying and bode badly for the future of Indigenous self-determination.

The Government calls it a quiet revolution; ANTaR fears it is assimilation by stealth.

For Government information on the new arrangements: www.oipc.gov.au/About_OIPC/new_arrangements/default.asp.

For information from the Senate Committee: www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/indigenousaffairs_ctte/index.htm.

CDEP - the Community Development Employment Projects scheme - is the first former ATSIC program to be fundamentally altered under the Federal Government's new mainstreaming policy.

CDEP involves 37,000 participants through 240 organisations nationally, and about 30 CDEPs are already operating as Indigenous Employment Centres. It accounts for over one-quarter of Indigenous employment.

A Government discussion paper, *Building on Success*, outlines CDEP's eventual absorption into the mainstream Job Network. While, theoretically, there are more resources available to organisations within this program, there are also more restrictions on what are deemed to be successful outcomes.

CDEP has fulfilled a vital role, and has been especially valuable in remote communities where there is no job market and CDEP-funded workers perform many essential tasks to keep communities running -- tasks that in non-Indigenous communities would be seen as obligations for local and state governments.

It is unclear at this stage how the cultural role of existing CDEP programs (such as support of art and craft, broadcasting, music and other activities) would be recognised in the Job Network model.

The risk is that CDEP-funded programs of long-term value may become bargaining chips in Shared Responsibility Agreements. Changes to CDEP are expected to be implemented in the new financial year.

See the Government's CDEP discussion paper at: www.workplace.gov.au/WP/Content/Files/ES/JN/JN1/CDEP_discussion_paper.pdf

CDEP background paper by the ANU's Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research: www.anu.edu.au/caepr/Publications/DP/2005_DP271.pdf

Coming events

April

9 Saturday Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award Exhibition. Till 12 June, official opening Fri 15 April by Col Markham. Wollongong City Gallery. Contact: 4227 7111.

May

15 Sunday Parramatta Walk for Reconciliation. 2pm, Bourke Street entrance to Lake Parramatta, next to kiosk. Contact: Lyn Leerson lynlew@optusnet.com.au. Reconciliation for Western Sydney.

15 Sunday Northern Sydney Reconciliation Groups Picnic Day. Clifton Gardens. BYO food - includes option for half hour cruise on the Tribal Warrior - \$20/person - bookings essential. Contact: Malcolm McClintock 9456 1460. Harbour to Hawkesbury Reconciliation Group.

21 Saturday Reconciliation - Ready or Not? art exhibition. BlueScope Steel Gallery, Wollongong till 31 July. Contact: Kate Fitzgerald 4284 4446, or John Monteleone (Gallery) 4228 7500. Wollongong City Gallery, Sandon Point Aboriginal Tent Embassy (SPATE) and North Illawarra Reconciliation and Treaty Group.

24 Tuesday Ephemera, Reconciliation Monologues till 4 June. NIDA Studio, Anzac Parade, Kensington. A multimedia performance event exploring Aboriginality and reconciliation created by Eora Centre for Visual and Performing Arts theatre students. Tues 24-Sat 28 May and Tues 31 May-Sat 4 June, 8pm with extra 2pm Sat shows. \$25/\$15 conc. Contact: 9217 4882.

24 Tuesday till 12 June **Message Sticks Festival of contemporary Australian Indigenous culture.** Sydney Opera House. Further details from: messagesticks@sydneyoperahouse.com.

25 Wednesday National Day of Healing (Sorry Day). 10am Parliament House, Canberra. Speakers include Aden Ridgeway and Mike de Gagne (Canadian Aboriginal Healing Foundation) Details: www.journeyofhealing.com.

25 Wednesday Soul Sisters art exhibition opening 6pm. Chrissie Cotter Gallery, off Mallett Street, Camperdown. Works by Elaine Russell and Denise Barry. Women's Reconciliation Network activities in this space during the following week. Contact: Elaine Telford 9560 9876 telford@zeta.org.au.

17 Sunday 1816 Appin Massacre Memorial Ceremony. Cataract Dam Picnic Area, 12 noon-2 pm. BYO lunch to share. Contacts: Muriel 9605 4540, Sister Kerry 9603 6854. Winga Myamly Reconciliation Group (Minto) with support of NSW Reconciliation Council.

26 Thursday NSW Sorry Day/Journey of Healing commemorations, 2pm-5pm, First Fleet Park, Circular Quay West. From 6pm at the Museum of Contemporary Art. More information through Reconnet and other networks as available. NSW Sorry Day Committee.

26 Thursday Are we Bringing Them Home in 2005? Conference, ACT Legislative Assembly Reception Room, Canberra. Includes launch of latest Community Progress Report of local action on the Bringing Them Home recommendations. Details: www.journeyofhealing.com

26 Thursday Guringai Festival launch. A celebration of Aboriginal culture and heritage across northern Sydney involving ten local councils and many community groups. Check participating Council websites or www.warringah.nsw.gov.au for program. Contact: Karen Gardner 9942 2672.

26 Thursday National Day of Healing event, Tempe High School, Unwins Bridge Rd, Tempe, 7.30pm. Featuring Frances Bodkin, bush tucker and art works by local school students. Contact Peter Dixon 02 9558 5762 petergdixon@bigpond.com. Marrickville Residents for Reconciliation.

26 Thursday Manly Warringah Pittwater events for Day of Healing and Journey of Healing. Contact: Ingrid Storm 9971 0148. Aboriginal Support Group Manly Warringah Pittwater.

26 Thursday Day of Healing Stolen Generations commemoration ceremony, 5pm Riverside Park, Kempsey. Contact: Christine Latta 6563 1440. Kempsey Macleay Women for Reconciliation.

26 Thursday Reconciliation Week Gathering. Byron Bay Community Centre. Welcome to country at 11 am, speakers and activities till 3pm. Bush tucker lunch 12.30 pm. Contact: Bronwyn bronwynnjan@smartchat.net.au. Sisters for Reconciliation (NSW Northern Rivers).

May continued

27 Friday Rec X Showcase – TogetheReconciliation. Launch 1pm, Sydney Opera House, Exhibition Hall till 12 June. Art exhibition open to all NSW public school students includes: paintings, photographs, sculpture, and stories, plus short films from Malabar Public School, Tregear PS, Barrenjoey High School and Kingsgrove HS. Tues-Sat 11am-8pm, Sun 12noon-5pm.

27 Friday Reconciliation Week till Fri 3 June

27 Friday Children's Voices for Reconciliation. Hornsby Mall, 10.45am–2.30pm. Welcome by Darug elder Edna Watson; performances by local school groups and visiting Aboriginal performance groups; Stolen Generations' tribute; and guest speaker, Aden Ridgeway. Contact: Helen White 9484 1043. Hornsby Area Residents for Reconciliation.

June

2 Thursday Children's Voices for Reconciliation. Lane Cove Plaza, 10.30 am-12 noon. Performance by Alexandria Park Community School plus all local schools. Contact: Kerrie McKenzie 9428 1197, kerriemckenzie@bigpond.com. Lane Cove Residents for Reconciliation and Lane Cove Municipal Council.

11 Saturday Myall Creek Massacre Annual Service of Remembrance. 10am-12noon Myall Creek Hall (25 km north of Bingara, 45 km south-west from Inverell), followed by lunch and activities through to 3pm. All welcome. Contact: Paulette Smith 67624626.

15 Wednesday Forum: Black Law, White Law. 7.30-9.30pm Dougherty Centre, 7 Victor St, Chatswood. Entry free. Features Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal

28 Saturday 8th Annual Chifley Walk for Reconciliation Dawson Mall, Mt Druitt. From 11am for traditional welcome, smoking ceremony and entertainment. Walk: 2pm to 4pm. Contact: Roger Price MP's office 9625 4344 or Holy Family Centre, Emerton 9628 7272. Australians for Reconciliation Committee Chifley.

29 Sunday Freedom Ride 2005 Preview Screening. Coles Theatre, Powerhouse Museum, Ultimo, 1.30-3.30 pm. Free with museum entry. A preview of the documentary of this year's re-enactment of the 1965 Freedom Ride. Details: <http://www.reconciliation.org.au/>

lawyers. Contact: Kerrie McKenzie 9428 1197, kerriemckenzie@bigpond.com. Northern Sydney Regional Reconciliation Network and Metro Land Council.

25 Saturday Deadly Nearly-NAIDOC Blues performances, Lane Cove Plaza. Featuring Marlene Cummins' Blues Experience. 11am-1pm. Contact: Kerrie McKenzie 9428 1197. Lane Cove Residents for Reconciliation and Lane Cove Municipal Council.

27 Monday Indigenous Art exhibition. 9am-5pm daily till 1 July. Hornsby TAFE Gallery, Pacific Highway, Hornsby. All proceeds to artists. Contacts: Dorothy Babb 94822994 dbabb@bigpond.net.au, Marilyn Hillery 9476 2959 phillery@tpg.com.au Hornsby Area Residents for Reconciliation.

July

3-10 NAIDOC Week

3 Sunday Children's Reconciliation Art Exhibition till 23 July. Lane Cove Library, 139a Longueville Road, Lane Cove. All local schools participating. Contact: Kerrie McKenzie 9428 1197. Lane Cove Residents for Reconciliation.

5 Tuesday Public meeting: Aboriginal Heritage – what has changed? 7.30 to 9.30pm, Lane Cove Community Centre, 164 Longueville Rd, Lane Cove.

Speaker: David Watts, Aboriginal Heritage Sites Manager. Contact: Kerrie McKenzie 9428 1197. Lane Cove Residents for Reconciliation.

9 Saturday Freedom Ride Video Screening. Strathfield Library, cnr Rochester and Abbotsford Rds, Homebush. 1 - 3.30 pm. Includes videos from both Freedom Rides; 1965 and 2005. Free. Contact: Margaret Brennan 9719-8773. ANTaR Lowe.

Stolen Wages: next steps are critical

On 15 December 2004, the Aboriginal Trust Fund Repayment Scheme Panel delivered its Report on the return of wages and social benefits paid into the Aboriginal Trust Funds and never repaid during the period 1900 to 1968. The New South Wales Government has accepted all the Panel's recommendations, and established a five-year Scheme to be administered from the NSW Premier's Department.

The then Minister for Community Services, Carmel Tebbutt, has committed the Government to full repayment with no funding cap. This is a comparatively better position than in Queensland, where a Labor government capped repayments regardless of the amount owed, with indemnification of the State from further claims.

The NSW repayments will be converted to present-day values, allowing for inflation and interest, but will not include compensation for 'lost opportunity cost' (for example to buy a home or pay for education). In New South Wales, subsequent court action for compensation is not ruled out as in Queensland.

Ms Tebbutt also noted the considerable problems resulting from inadequate record keeping and promised that a "sensible, flexible test ... will give due weight to oral evidence".

The Report recommends an as yet undefined level of practical support to claimants to prepare their claims and for emotional support and counseling.

Whilst the Panel's most recent advice on the calculation of fair value is substantially included in the Report, details of earlier work on conversion rates and projections have not yet been made public.

The present Report estimates that, in the first three years, the Government could be liable for repayments of up to \$15 million.

The Government acknowledges the need for speed, as many claimants are elderly, yet as we go to press it is not clear what progress has been made. A statement detailing the Scheme's method of operation is expected in April. How the community is to be consulted about the model is not yet clear.

While the Panel showed sensitivity to the complexity of claims, evidence, and the difficulties faced by claimants, it could not solve all the likely problems. Some key questions still need to be resolved (see box).

For the scheme to succeed, it is imperative that it be seen as fair, and that in calculating and making repayments the Government is not seen to be limiting its exposure. It is also essential that a path remains open to provide reparations for 'opportunity costs'. The challenge for Premier Bob Carr is to achieve this while fulfilling his own commitment to resolve the matter quickly and with maximum community consultation and support for claimants.

Information for claimants: ATFRS Information Line 1800 765 889 or www.atfrs.nsw.gov.au.

The ATFRS Report and Information Sheet: www.atfrs.nsw.gov.au/publications.htm.

The Public Interest Advocacy Centre's submission to the ATFRS Panel: www.piac.asn.au/publications/pubs/stolenwage_20040922.html.

ANTaR NSW submission: www.antar.org.au (select 'Contact Us' and 'ANTaR NSW').

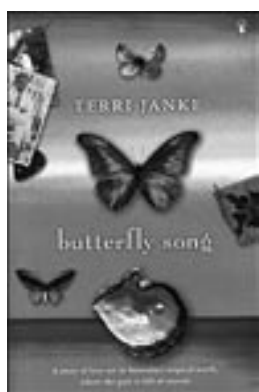
Key questions

- What levels of support will be provided to claimants, heirs and families, and who will provide them? Will it include counseling, case management and advocacy? A tribunal process will avoid an adversarial approach but could still be intimidating and distressing for many.
- What progress has been made in negotiating with the Australian Tax Office to ensure that these entitlements, so long withheld, will be exempt from tax?
- What progress has been made in processing claims to date? Are evidence thresholds working?
- When will the Government make a public call for the return of misappropriated or misplaced files and records, and an amnesty for those holding them? Will anything be done about the maladministration of Trust monies?
- What arrangements are in place to protect the privacy of claimants and third parties? Is the Repayment Scheme going to rely on Government officers to undertake record searches? Will DAA and State Archives be resourced and given staff to speed up searches?
- How will the Scheme avoid conflict in determining beneficiaries to deceased estates? How does the proposed model allow for kinship relationships?
- What progress has been made in community-oriented advertising and notification of the Scheme and its support structures?

NEW BOOKS

***Butterfly Song* by Terri Janke**

Sydney-based lawyer, Terri Janke is well known as one of Australia's foremost experts on Indigenous intellectual property and cultural protocols. She has recently released her first novel, *Butterfly Song*,



which ranges in time and place from Thursday Island in the 1940s to Sydney, Cairns and Canberra in the 1990s. It is narrated by a fictional character, Tarena Shaw, about to graduate from law school and unsure of her place as a black lawyer in a white

legal system. Drawn to Thursday Island, the home of her grandparents, Tarena is persuaded by her family to take on her first case, to retrieve a family heirloom.

See review and launch speech by Anita Heiss: www.abc.net.au/message/blackarts/review/s1301087.htm

Penguin Books, 2005 RRP \$22.95

***Seeking racial justice - an insider's memoir of the movement for Aboriginal advancement, 1938 - 1978* by Jack Horner**

Jack Horner's involvement in the movement for Indigenous rights dates from 1957, and most of this book addresses the decade leading up to the 1967 referendum. In her foreword, Jackie Huggins describes how Horner "takes us through the maze of assimilation and integration debates, and how non-Aboriginal people had to rethink [their] stance".

Given the cyclical nature of much government Indigenous policy over the last century, such a review is timely. It is also a lesson in how non-government organisations, like FCAATSI of those days, could sometimes set the national agenda in fundamental ways – something we are searching for today.

Aboriginal Studies Press/AIATSIS, 2004.



NEW CD

***Changes*: Emma Donovan**

Gumbaynggirr woman, Emma Donovan, will be known to many as one of the original members of Stiff Gins, and as a part of the Aboriginal musical family, the Donovans - many of whom feature on this CD on the track, *Sunshine*. She has now struck out on her own with *Changes*, a showcase of her outstanding vocal and musical talents. From the catchy *Not Even a Breeze* through to the richness and tradition of *Feathers*, Emma Donovan's beautiful voice and the accompanying easy instrumentation provide a cruisy soundtrack.

Changes was independently financed and produced and is available through Koori Radio in Sydney ph 02 9564 5090.



Petrol sniffing: community-led programs work best

ANTaR recently hosted a Sydney briefing by health workers from Central Australia on the huge problem of petrol sniffing in the region.

Petrol sniffing causes physical and mental health problems with chronic users becoming permanently incapacitated. Most sniffers are teenagers in towns and remote communities where jobs, recreational facilities and life opportunities are lacking.

Though many places have banned ordinary petrol it is still available in the region allowing petrol running to petrol-free communities.

Jean Brown and Karissa Preuss spoke of the Mt Theo outstation program and the Jaru Pirijirdi Warlpiri youth program which cure young sniffers through counseling, culture, bush trips, youth forums and leadership programs.

Leo Abbott, from the Abbott Family Rehabilitation Program, described their family-run program which has been going since 1964. They are currently based at Ilamurte outstation where sniffers learn general cattle station work with support and counseling provided. All of these programs achieve their remarkable success on small amounts of funding.

In a major development, fuel company BP has developed OPAL, a no-sniff form of petrol. This could be rolled out across the entire Central Australian region, effectively eliminating the sniffing problem at its source but production changeover costs are significant and Government support is needed.

More info on petrol sniffing: www.hreoc.gov.au/social_justice/sjreport03/data/chap4.html



ANTaR national report

2005 has been a busy year for the National Office. The year kicked off with the production of a submission to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), which met in Geneva in early March to consider Australia's record on eliminating racial discrimination. ANTaR also contributed to a joint submission by a coalition of 30 NGOs to CERD (see article page 13).

In early February we gave evidence to the Senate Select Committee on the Administration of Indigenous Affairs at its Sydney hearings. The Committee's report was released in March and is available at www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/indigenousaffairs_ctte/report/final/index.htm.

The National Office has also continued to develop the Indigenous health rights campaign, hosting a public seminar in Sydney on 12 March by a group from Central Australia involved in Indigenous outstation programs on petrol sniffing. ANTaR has also jointly-convened a new NGO working group to develop education and advocacy initiatives in Indigenous health. ANTaR's health campaign is now being assisted by volunteer Sue Storry, who will be working one day a week in the National Office.

ANTaR has also continued to participate with Reconciliation Australia on the planning for a National Reconciliation Workshop in Canberra on May 30-31. Further details of the Workshop will be available on the RA website www.reconciliation.org.au.

It is important that grassroots concerns about obstacles to reconciliation and strategies to improve outcomes are registered at this workshop. We encourage you to send your comments and ideas to sylvie.ellsmore@daa.nsw.gov.au.

David Cooper
National Director

Left: Barry Abbott with two participants in the Abbott Family Rehabilitation Program at Ilamurte outstation, with ANTaR National Director, David Cooper.

Australia in front of UN race committee

The United Nations Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) meets regularly to consider progress by governments on eliminating racial discrimination. This year it was the Australian Government's turn to appear before the Committee.

In early March, CERD members considered reports from the Australian Government as well as a number of reports from non-government organisations working in the area. ANTaR's submission raised concerns in the areas of reconciliation and Indigenous Affairs such as the abolition of ATSIC and with it elected national Indigenous representation; the extent of Indigenous disadvantage, especially in health; and the stalling of progress on national reconciliation.

In its concluding remarks on Australia, the Committee expressed serious concerns about the abolition of ATSIC; lack of progress in native title; the continuing over-representation of Indigenous peoples in prisons; and the extreme inequities between Indigenous peoples and others in the areas of employment, housing, health, education and income. The Committee requested the government provide more information about its progress in some of these areas within 1 year, rather than the normal reporting time of 3 years.

CERD also called on the Australian Government to work towards meaningful reconciliation and to properly address the issues of the Stolen Generation.

ANTaR calls on the Australian Government to genuinely consult and seek the participation of Australian Indigenous peoples and their organisations on how they will respond to the Committee's concerns and requests for further information.

For information on the latest CERD round: <http://homepage.mac.com/les.malezer/cerinfo/FileSharing34.html>

ANTaR mourns one of its finest activists

ANTaR members across NSW extend our deepest sympathies to the family of Charlie Pahlman of Canberra who drowned on 19 January while on holiday in Samoa.

A longstanding worker for international justice and equity and for water-rights in developing countries, Charlie inspired hundreds of people around the world with his inexhaustible commitment to social justice. From August 1997 he was a central participant in the campaign for Native Title and Indigenous rights and remained at the heart of activism at many levels in ANTaR.

His contributions ranged from organising rallies and Seas of Hands in Canberra, Sorry Day activities, maintaining supporter networks, organising and facilitating workshops, and as recently as last December, helping organise the Canberra reception for Michael Long at the end of his 'Long Walk'. Charlie also served on ANTaR's national committee.

His vision, experience, and ability to build links across issues and communities were without equal. We will miss his boundless energy, humour, intelligence, and the clarity he brought to even the most difficult issues.

www.charlie.pahlman.com



People's Health Movement Australia

On 21 March, ANTaR attended the launch of the NSW Chapter of the People's Health Movement Australia (PHM Oz), by Prof Marie Bashir, Governor of NSW.

PHM is a growing coalition of people's organisations, civil society organisations, NGOs, social activists, health professionals, and researchers whose aim is to re-establish health and equitable development as top priorities in local, national and international policy-making with comprehensive primary health care as the key strategy.

Affiliates of PHM, including ANTaR, endorse the People's Charter for Health that arose out of the inaugural People's Health Assembly in 2000. The Charter is the most widely endorsed consensus document on health since the Declaration of Alma Ata in 1978.

At the launch, Aunty Ali Golding gave a stirring welcome to country and Canada's Ron Labonte gave an analysis of globalisation. Other speakers included Fran Baum, Commissioner with the newly formed World Health Organisation's Commission on the Social Determinants of Health, and David Legge who spoke of the successes that solidarity movements in health have achieved through global links and grassroots actions.

At the post-launch workshop guests were asked to identify areas of concern Australia's delegates should take to the People's Health Assembly 2 to be held in Ecuador in July 2005; particularly for social determinants, access to services and issues related to specific groups, such as refugees and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

For more information: www.phmovement.org.

Vale Bob Bellear

NSW lost a great Indigenous leader when Judge Robert Bellear died on 15 March aged 60. After growing up in poverty and leaving school early to support his family, Bob Bellear was one of the first Aboriginal students to study at the University of New South Wales Law Faculty in 1971 after a stint in the navy. He was involved in the Aboriginal Tent Embassy and in establishing many of the early Aboriginal organisations in Redfern.

He was Counsel Assisting the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, he received an honorary doctorate of laws from Macquarie University, and in 1996 was appointed Australia's first Aboriginal judge.

Bob Bellear was a trailblazer, a role model, a fighter and advocate for Aboriginal people

everywhere. His family have requested donations be made in his memory to the Bob Bellear Diabetes Clinic at the Aboriginal Medical Service, PO Box 1174, Strawberry Hills 2012.



ANTaR NSW Membership application / renewal

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name _____

Address _____

Suburb _____

State _____

Postcode _____

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AH () _____

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Please tick one of the options below

☐ **INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP**

I enclose an annual membership subscription of:

- ☐ \$20 full rate
☐ \$10 concession/unwaged
☐ \$___ additional donation

☐ **ORGANISATION MEMBERSHIP**

I enclose an annual membership subscription of:

- ☐ \$40 small organisations (e.g. local reconciliation groups)
☐ \$100 large organisations (e.g. State-wide bodies)
☐ \$___ additional donation

Both types of membership are annual, and run from one Annual General Meeting to the next. Members must be financial to vote at General Meetings. If you are unsure of your membership status, please call the office.

☐ **CHEQUE / MONEY ORDER** payable to 'NSW ANTaR Inc.'

Thank you for your support for NSW ANTaR !

☐ **CREDIT CARD**

☐ Visa ☐ Bankcard ☐ Mastercard ☐ Amex

Card No. _____ / _____ / _____ / _____

Expiry ____ / ____ Signature _____

Are you a member of a local Reconciliation Group? YES / NO

If yes, which one? _____

If no, would you like to contact your local group? YES / NO

Are you interested in being an ANTaR volunteer? YES / NO

Special skills or contacts that may help ANTaR? _____

Return form to: NSW ANTaR Inc., PO Box 1176, Rozelle NSW 2039 Fax: 02 9555 6991 Tel: 02 9555 6138

See Australia with Fred Hollows

The Fred Hollows Foundation is launching its latest 'See the World Challenge', including an opportunity to see first hand The Foundation's work with remote Jawoyn communities in the Katherine region of the Northern Territory, close to Kakadu National Park.

ANTaR is proud to endorse this program. It is a way that individuals can raise funds to support The Fred Hollows Foundation and, at the same time, earn a trip to one of the regions where The Foundation

works. About half of the funds raised go direct to The Foundation's programs.

The 'See Australia challenge' is a great way to give your support to help improve nutrition in remote communities, to see how Indigenous people can take control of their programs with the right kind of help, as well as see some of the Northern Territory's most spectacular scenery. If you register for this program as an ANTaR supporter, a small portion of your fundraising (10%) will go to help ANTaR's work as well.

For more information about the 'See Australia Challenge', contact Nicola Bailey at The

Fred Hollows Foundation, (02) 8471 1900 or www.hollows.org/content/TextOnly.aspx?s=47.

Information about The Fred Hollows Foundation's work with Indigenous people is at www.hollows.org/content/CountryHome.aspx?s=14.



Pic of Brently Plummer courtesy of David Hancock/Skyscans

Indigenous rights on the map in Europe

Hi ANTaR readers! For those of you who were reading this newsletter in 2002, you may remember an article about ENIAR, the European Network for Indigenous Australian Rights. At that time few people in Oz seemed to be aware of ENIAR's existence, despite our having grown from ANTaR UK.

Things have certainly changed – now people have not only heard of us but heap on the praise, especially for our website (www.eniar.org), and its coverage of European-based events and organisations. Please check it out, and send us your feedback as well as keeping us up to date with campaigns running in Australia that you feel may have an international appeal.



Storytelling from Yorta Yorta man, Francis Firebrand, at the ENIAR Christmas party in London. Pic: Justin Buckland

Late last year, two London based Aussies, Nancy and Julian, inspired by ANTaR's Healing Hands campaign, decided to raise awareness in the UK of the health crisis facing Indigenous Australians. By December they had held their first event, an 'Aussie Orphans Christmas Party', attended by about 100 people, who were invited to sign ANTaR's Healing Hands Health Rights Statement.

ENIAR is planning its first UK-based 'Sorry Day' event this year. ANTaR folks and friends are very welcome. If you are in the UK at that time, and would like to lend a hand or attend the event please contact Sue Darling on sdarling521@hotmail.com.

Article by Sue Storry, a volunteer with, and liaison between, ANTaR and ENIAR sues@antar.org.au.

Health rights campaign

ANTaR is looking for new members to join the Health Rights working group. If you have specific or related skills in this area, an interest in Indigenous health rights at state or national level, and a few hours to spare, please call Hilary on 02 9555 6138.

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Volunteers to assist with researching, writing, production and distribution of future issues are welcome. Donations to help us cover costs are also very welcome!