

Goree

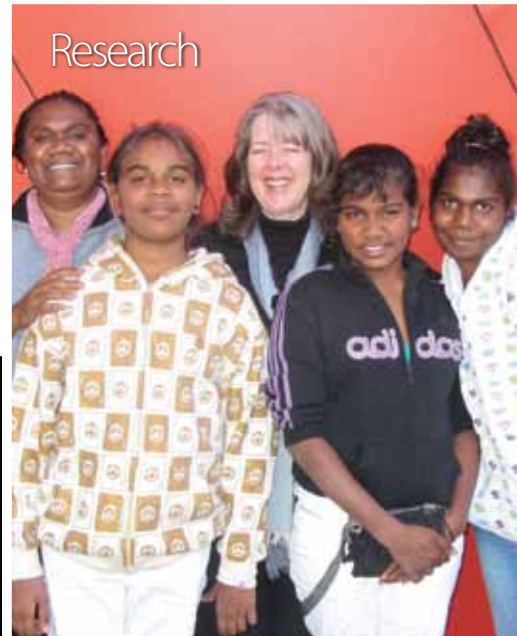
ABORIGINAL &
TORRES STRAIT
ISLANDER

news

FROM THE NATIONAL
MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA



Exhibitions



Research



Collections

**national
museum
australia**



Contents

-
- 2 Message from the Director of the National Museum of Australia
-
- 3 Indigenous Advisory Committee, by Benita Tunks
-
- 4 Greetings from the new Head of ATSIP
-
- 6 *Bipotaim*, by Thelma Savage and Pip McNaught
-
- 8 *Off the Walls*, by Andy Greenslade
-
- 10 Pintupi's 30th anniversary, by Peter Thorley
-
- 12 *Alive with the Dreaming!*, by Margo Neale
-
- 14 Reconnecting communities, by Ian Coates
-
- 15 Celebrating a shared history, by Lorna Schmider-Woodcock
-
- 16 Deaconess Kunmanara Hilliard, by David Kaus
-
- 17 Yijala visitors, by Andy Greenslade
-
- 18 A history mystery, by Deb Frederick
-
- 19 Open day 2012, by Heidi Prichard
-
- 20 Bart's boat, by Judith Hickson
-
- 21 *Nations within a Nation*, by Barbara Paulson
-
- 22 Collections stories:
– Johnny Cadell's stockwhip, by Rochelle Armstrong
– *Kamula Munu Anangu Kutjara*, by Rochelle Armstrong
– Shineberg Collection, by Barbara Paulson
– *Ballet* by Aileen Motton, by Barbara Paulson
-

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Edition editor Barbara Paulson

Copyeditor Justine Molony

Project manager Barbara Paulson

Design Giraffe Visual Communication Management Pty Ltd

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Cover photos **Main:** Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue at the opening of *Off the Walls*, standing in front of Lance Atkinson's painting *Bourke's Own Son*, 1995

Bottom left: Peter Yu, Chairman of the Museum's Indigenous Advisory Committee

Bottom middle: Roeburne visitors Sonya Wilson, Lily Togo, Andy Greenslade (ATSIP Curator), Ivy Wilson and Esther Daniel at the Museum

Bottom right: Lee Burgess inside *Landmarks*. Photo: Sandra Pilot

Email mates@nma.gov.au

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA



Welcome. On behalf of the National Museum of Australia, I would like to acknowledge the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples of the Australian Capital Territory on whose land our institution is located. I also acknowledge and thank Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities around the country for working with us to share their stories.

In 2012, the National Museum of Australia will undergo significant change. A renovation and expansion of our current café area in the Great Hall will create a waterfront dining experience for visitors and free up the Great Hall to become a Large Object Display zone. This will present us with the opportunity to display some of the larger items within the Museum's collections such as the 1936 Percival Gull monoplane and the 1925 Fowler Steam Road Locomotive. Our working theme for this zone is 'Travelling through Country', and the space will encourage visitors to journey through the objects, and then enter the galleries.

Concept development for the renovation and refreshment of the Gallery of First Australians is also underway. Although there have been many small changes in the Gallery, this is the first time that curators will be able to revisit the overall vision for the Gallery of First Australians since the Museum opened in 2001. We are excited about representing the contemporary experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians within the revamped galleries. The Museum has also been busy creating more opportunities for digital interface through our website. We have upgraded the website and are working to upload content from our exhibitions, research and collections for greater access by our national and international audience.

This year also sees a changing of the guard with the appointment of Alisa Duff as the new Head of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Program. Alisa takes over from Michael Pickering, who has moved to head up the new Curatorial and Research unit. I am delighted to welcome Alisa back to the National Museum again.

We're excited about these developments and the progress that the National Museum of Australia is making, and invite you to come with us on this journey.

Andrew Sayers AM



Dance ornament collected on Tudu, Torres Strait by AC Haddon, 1888

The National Museum's Indigenous Advisory Committee



(Left to right) Henrietta Marrie, Peter Yu, Irene Stainton, Jason Eades, Greg Lehmann, Alitja Rigney, Vic McGrath, Margo Neale (NMA) and Ian Coates (NMA). Not pictured, Alison Page, Gaye Sculthorpe, Russel Taylor and Charlie King



Bags for trading pituri, from western Queensland near Birdsville. The Aboriginal makers used both hair string and yarn from blankets distributed to Aboriginal people. British Museum Collection

During 2011, the Council of the National Museum of Australia took the important step of establishing an Indigenous Advisory Committee. Peter Yu chairs the Committee and is a member of the Museum's Council. Peter is a Yawuru man from Broome in Western Australia and is well known for his achievements during more than 35 years working to support the rights and interests of Aboriginal people in Broome, the Kimberley region and at the national level.

Committee members are not assumed to represent any particular region or organisation, they come from across Australia, and have a diversity of experience in museums, cultural heritage, and history. The other members of the Committee are Jason Eades from Victoria, Henrietta Marrie from Queensland, Russell Taylor from Australian Capital Territory, Alison Page from New South Wales, Dr Alitja Rigney from South Australia, Charlie King from Northern Territory, Greg Lehmann from Tasmania, Vic McGrath from the Torres Strait and Gaye Sculthorpe from Tasmania.

The Committee's primary role is to advise the Museum's Council about the collaboration that the Museum is currently undertaking with the British Museum. This research and exhibition collaboration is about reconnecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander objects that are held in the British Museum, and developing an exhibition based on this material.

In particular, the Committee is guiding the Museum about protocols in curating this subject matter, as well as the process of consultation and collaborative development of content with communities that are represented in the exhibition.

The Committee can also advise on other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues that are relevant to the Museum and it is already making an important impact on the work of the Museum. Beyond the collaboration with the British Museum, during 2011 the Committee influenced the Museum's position on the 'immunity from seizure' legislation that is currently being developed by the Commonwealth government. This legislation will affect all exhibitions and objects coming from international institutions into Australia.

Benita Tunks Content Project Manager

Greetings from the



Alisa Duff

Hello and welcome to *Goree*. I'm Alisa Duff and, as of August 2011, I am the new Head of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Program (ATSIP) here at the National Museum of Australia. This is my second time working at the Museum; in 2001, I worked on the Tracking Kultja Festival coordinating the performance program. Before coming back to the Museum, I program managed the *ACCELERATE*: Indigenous Australian Creative Leadership award at the British Council Australia in Sydney and was an Indigenous visiting research fellow with the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). My work background is in the arts and cultural sector, and I'm also a graduate of NAISDA Dance College. I look forward to contributing my knowledge and experience to future Museum initiatives.

I'm excited to be working here under the direction of Andrew Sayers and would also like to acknowledge and thank Michael Pickering and Margo Neale for their stewardship of ATSIP.

ATSIP is the largest of the curatorial programs in the Museum with a wide portfolio of duties ranging from exhibition development, collection research and assessments, and community access visits and consultations. ATSIP also contributes to discussions on contemporary issues and policy developments regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation and representation in the Museum and cultural industries. As part of our work for the Museum, ATSIP is regularly called on to provide expert lectures, research advice, sit on panels and take part in developing international projects and partnerships.

ATSIP delivered a hat trick at the end of 2011 opening three new exhibitions here at the Museum. First, in August, *Bipotaim: Stories from the Torres Strait* opened in the Torres Strait Gallery. Then, in September, *Off the Walls: Art from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Agencies 1967–2005* opened in the First Australians Focus Gallery. In November, we opened the ground-breaking exhibition *Inside: Life in Children's Homes and Institutions* in the Studio Gallery. You will hear more about these in later stories within *Goree*.

We also have four exhibitions that are currently touring around Australia. *Yalangbara: Art of the Djang'kawu*, which will be at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory in Darwin until July 2012, will then go on display at the Western Australian Museum in November 2012. This exhibition is definitely one to check out. Its popularity in Canberra saw the exhibition have an extra six weeks on display here at the National Museum. *Yiwarra Kuju: The Canning Stock Route* is currently open at the Australian Museum in Sydney until April 2012. While in Canberra, *Yiwarra Kuju* received the highest number of visitors recorded for a free, temporary exhibition. *From Little Things Big Things Grow: Fighting for Indigenous Rights 1920–1970* will be at its final venue — the Queensland Museum, Southbank — until 26 May 2012. *A Different Time: The Expedition Photographs of Herbert Basedow 1903–1928* will be showing at the South Australian Museum 11 May – 24 June 2012.



Ngarrá Dancers (Marika family members) with Mawalan 2 Marika at the opening of *Yalangbara* at MAGNT



new Head of ATSIP

ATSIP is in the process of developing three major exhibitions. The *Warakurna History Paintings* will go on display in the First Australians Focus Gallery later this year. Secondly, *Old Masters* is an exciting exhibition which will reposition bark paintings from the 1930s–1990s as works of ‘art’ instead of ‘anthropology’, this will be on display in late 2013. The third major exhibition is the British Museum project. With the current working title of *Encounters*, this exhibition is being developed in collaboration with the British Museum in London and the Australian National University. *Encounters* will be on display in 2015. See Ian Coates’ article: ‘Reconnecting communities with collections’ on p. 14 of this issue of *Goree*.

It’s a pleasure to play a continuing role in supporting programs that develop skills and industry knowledge for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who are working in museums. In the past few months, we’ve hosted four interns including Thelma Savage from the Gab Titui Cultural Centre on Thursday Island in the Torres Strait. Thelma assisted in the setting up and display of the *Bipotaim* exhibition; Liz Tew from the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery was our first intern from Tasmania. She joined us and assisted with the setting up and display of *Off the Walls*. Thelma and Liz both completed their internships under ATSIP’s Indigenous Curators Mentorship program.

Rochelle Armstrong came to us through the Australian Public Service Graduate Program over the Christmas/New Year break and focused on collection research. Rochelle is from Victoria and currently in her final year of study at the University of Melbourne where she is completing a double major in History and Politics. Fanny Thomas joined us in February and is our first French intern. Fanny is currently undertaking postgraduate study at the University of Lille. Her area of interest is Aboriginal painting and she is assisting with the development of the *Warakurna History Paintings* exhibition.

ATSIP are continually working on new and innovative projects to showcase the richness and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and cultural material, both historic and contemporary. We develop programs, events and exhibitions to celebrate and acknowledge key historic dates, issues and stories that are shared by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. One such event, on which the Museum is collaborating with the ACT Torres Strait Islanders Corporation, is a commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the Mabo decision, to take place in June 2012. We are also working in collaboration with the National Gallery of Australia to deliver partner events for this year’s NAIDOC week.

Here at the Museum, something is always happening. We are more than a national cultural institution; we are a site for representation, discussion and celebration of all that is important to us as Australians. This year promises to be a big one for us at the Museum, with building refurbishments and extensions underway as well as continuing with the usual Museum programs, exhibitions and other initiatives. If you want to keep an eye on these or any upcoming event, then check the website for more information: www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/first_australians/home

Alisa Duff Head, ATSIP

Romatu Nawi & Korona Gela,
photograph by David Callow
As seen in *Bipotaim: Stories from the Torres Strait*



Fairfaxphotos

Bill Onus, Aboriginal Rights referendum march, Melbourne 1967. As seen in From Little Things Big Things Grow

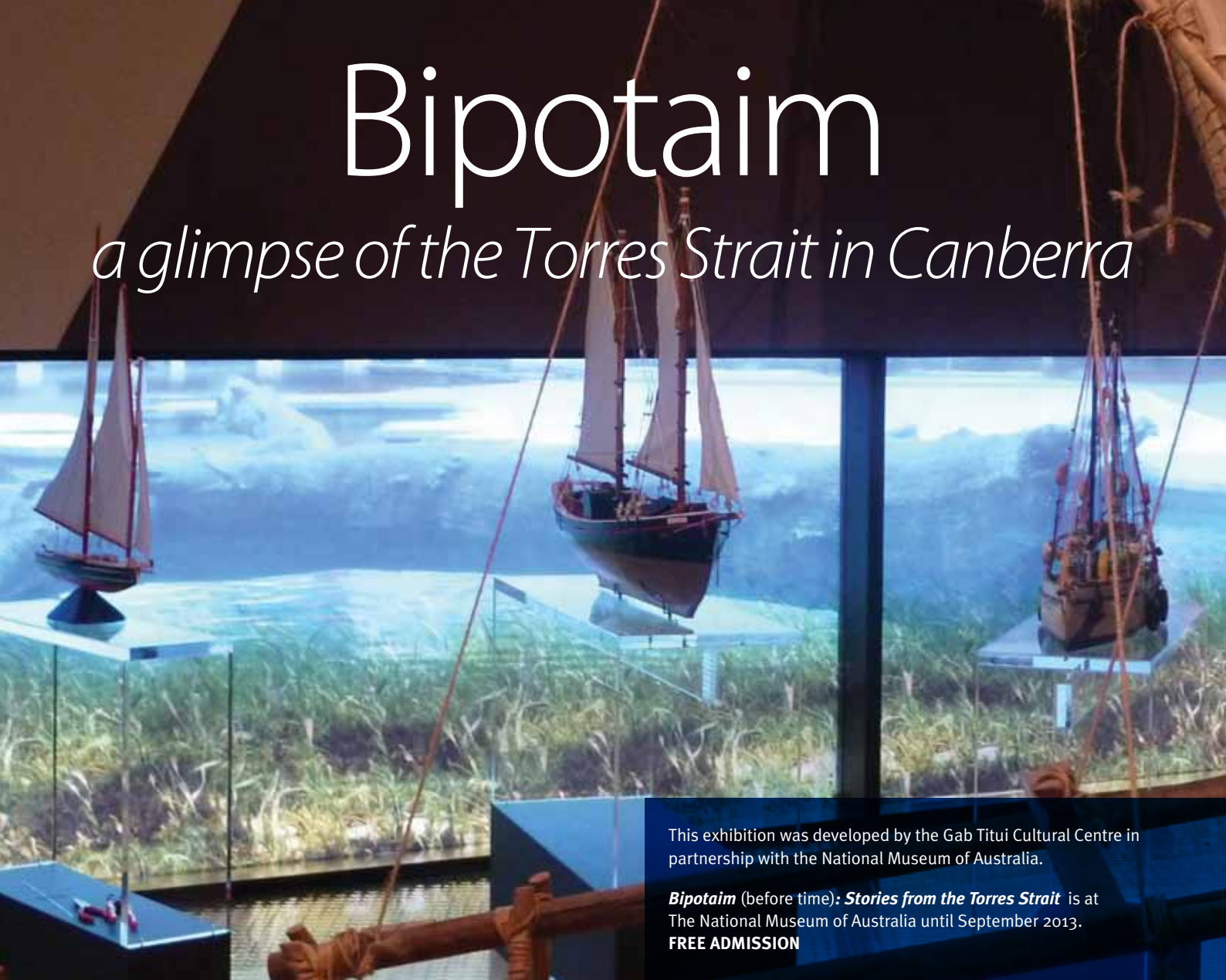


Herbert Baseclow

Whistle and Nellie, Western Australia, 1916. As seen in A Different Time

Bipotaim

a glimpse of the Torres Strait in Canberra



This exhibition was developed by the Gab Titui Cultural Centre in partnership with the National Museum of Australia.

Bipotaim (before time): ***Stories from the Torres Strait*** is at The National Museum of Australia until September 2013.
FREE ADMISSION

Last year I had the privilege of travelling to Canberra twice to do internships at the National Museum of Australia. My first trip consisted of a two-week program to work in various departments at the Museum, whilst the second trip was to help with the installation of the Museum's current exhibition *Bipotaim: Stories from the Torres Strait*.

Bipotaim is a collection of portraits by photographer David Callow, and stories and quotes from people from four communities in the Torres Strait, namely Masig, Saibai, St Pauls and Thursday Island. The stories are based on events before and after the 1967 referendum.

This exhibition was produced by Gab Titui Cultural Centre on Thursday Island and, as their representative and a Torres Strait Islander, I feel very fortunate to have been part of the National Museum's installation team. This experience has increased my knowledge and understanding of working in the cultural heritage industry and I look forward to applying my new skills in my position as the gallery officer at Gab Titui.

The Museum staff were very friendly and welcoming and happily answered all of my questions. I am very proud that *Bipotaim* has travelled, not only to our state capital, Brisbane, but also to our

nation's capital, Canberra. It is good to see that our stories are now being told not only in the Torres Strait but elsewhere as well. Putting this exhibition together was a way of bringing attention to the Torres Strait region and reminding people of the importance of cultural maintenance and preservation.

Growing up in the Kubin community on Moa Island, I learnt about cultural maintenance and preservation. I was taught to have respect for the elderly and to understand the importance of community. If people went out hunting or fishing, every family would be given a share of the food that they brought back. I believe our young people these days take a lot of things for granted. Before the referendum, our people were treated differently just because of the colour of their skin. *Bipotaim* records how people remember the past and their hopes for our people and our future; it is a way of recording our culture and knowledge.

I would like to congratulate the curator Pip McNaught and the exhibition team on this exhibition; it looks fantastic. A big thank you to the National Museum of Australia and Gab Titui Cultural Centre for giving me such a wonderful opportunity.

Thelma Savage Gallery Officer, Gab Titui Cultural Centre



Intern Thelma Savage and Curator Pip McNaught putting the final touches



Torres Strait Mayor Pedro Stephen & Director Andrew Sayers



Ngunnawal Elder Agnes Shea welcoming everyone to her Country



Curator Pip McNaught, Photographer David Callow, Mayor Pedro Stephen, Head of ATSIP Alisa Duff

Bipotaim: The curator's view

An exhibition is made up of so many components, people, decisions, discussions, threads — and that's not forgetting the research, objects, images, words and labels.

A curator teases out the various themes that jostle for attention. Gradually, things find (or are found) their place within the scheme. The objects fit and all is settled — then something begins to niggle, it's just not quite right. Some objects are removed, or replaced. Gradually things begin to flow, the objects and themes come together. Now we have the final object list.

Objects now start the journey from storage to display. All have the conservatorial eye fixed on them. *Mmmmm — not sure you can use that one, it's been on display a lot ...* The curatorial heart sinks a little. *Well, OK we'll test it ...* Good news it can go on display — or, bad news, is there an alternative? Slowly the objects are marshalled together, given the tick and sent to the holding shelves.

Next — the labels. *Aaaah, the words ... There is a limit? Surely not ... how many? Six folders of fascinating, absorbing, remarkable research and you want me to not exceed how many words? A 50-word limit? A curator's lot is a sorry one ... Oh, all right, I'll see what I can do.* Words are gradually whittled down. Off the text goes to the wordsmiths; back it comes, still TOO LONG. *Sigh*, start again.

We also need to update the map. No problem: source a map, send details to copyright, pay the fees, make the map Museum audience friendly, send it to be printed and place it in the desired location. Too easy — you would think. The best map of the little surveyed Torres Strait was not editable. 'No change, no way, never' was the reply that we got when requesting permission to make changes. We explained that we would be adding information to the map

— the names of islands — and it was not going to be used for navigation but for exhibition purposes only. On display behind glass in the museum ... 'No changes, no way, never'.

Start again. Persuade a good friend, design magician, with tiny window in schedule to produce a beautiful map, with curatorial requirements, at super speed and printed large. But wait ... there's more! First the old map had to be taken off the glass. Would it be able to be removed? No guarantee. Would the glass be reusable? No guarantee. In this case all went well but for a few scary moments of possible scratched or broken glass.

Exhibition installation day arrives and the dim old Torres Strait Islander gallery is filled with light and colour — tropical dresses and shirts, sea grass, dugongs, shiny pearl shells and diving gear. David Callow's beautiful portraits of Torres Strait Islanders resonate with quotes underneath; strong and poignant words. Within the gallery we can hear the voices of the Torres Strait coming from the figures appearing on the big screen.

All ready for the opening.

As always, it was great working with the staff of the Gab Titui Cultural Centre. Having Thelma Savage on site in Canberra to consult on installing the exhibition made it a much speedier process. Now there is a little bit of the warmth and colour of the Torres Strait Islands at the National Museum of Australia in the heart of Canberra.

Pip McNaught Curator, ATSIP

Off the Walls is on the walls!



Dr Alitja Rigney and Paul House
in the audience at the opening

When National Museum of Australia Council member Peter Yu and Museum Director Andrew Sayers stepped up to the lectern to open *Off the Walls: Art from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Agencies 1967–2005*, they welcomed two special guests who we were delighted could attend: Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue and Mr Barry Dexter.

Barry Dexter is not a household name in the same sense that Lowitja O'Donoghue is, but he played an integral role in collecting the fine body of works that are featured in *Off the Walls*. Barry was one of the three members of the Council for Aboriginal Affairs (CAA), formed in 1967, along with Professor WEH Stanner and Dr 'Nugget' Coombs. The council members took the approach that only works by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists should hang in the offices of the CAA as a statement of solidarity with the people for whom they worked. That collection grew to adorn the walls of every federal Aboriginal affairs agency across the country including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC). When the government decided to close ATSIC, it also decided that the Museum would be the guardian of the collection of over 2000 pieces.

Peter Yu had the pleasure of announcing a 'first' with this exhibition. This is the first time that the Museum has called on all visitors — real

or virtual — to contribute to the knowledge about and understanding of a collection by sending information to the curator via the quick link on the Museum's exhibition and collection website. Get onto the site, view the collection and see whether you know something about a painting, or other item, on the walls or in one of the recreated 'offices' that represent the four decades of collecting. Then tell us. On the exhibition webpage there is a 'Can you help?' section. Click on the link and share what you know about these amazing objects.

At the opening, our guest of honour, Lowitja, did just that. There is one particular drawing in the exhibition that is very special to her and she was able to give us some of the background on how it came into the collection. The drawing is a portrait, and all of you will have seen it. Open your wallet and check out a \$50 note. On it you'll find a portrait of Aboriginal preacher, inventor and writer, David Unaipon. The drawing was made after Lowitja suggested to the Reserve Bank of Australia that Unaipon would be the perfect choice to be pictured on the note. In thanks, the Bank presented the original drawing to her. Lowitja had a great fondness for the picture, due in part to her friendship with Unaipon. The drawing will stay with the collection but, as a surprise at the opening, the Museum was able to present a facsimile of the drawing to Lowitja to hang in her home. The original hangs in the exhibition, on the walls of the 1990s 'office'.



Visitors enjoying the artworks



Ngambri man Paul House checks out the display of artefacts in the 1980's 'office'



Director Andrew Sayers welcomes guests. Behind him is the 1970s era 'office'



Lowitja O'Donoghue talking to the press

Guests at the opening explored four of these 'offices' — one for each of the four decades during which the collection was gathered. In the 1970s office space, hang artworks collected in that era — two early boards painted at Papunya, watercolours from Hermannsburg and a woollen hooked rug made in the craft room at Ernabella and probably collected by the Aboriginal Arts Board. Younger visitors to the exhibition have marvelled at the contraption on the desk — a typewriter — and been unable to resist tapping on the keys.

In the 1980s 'office', an old Macintosh computer, cleverly retrofitted by Museum technicians, screens images of protests that were held throughout the decade. A poster shows the handing back of Uluru to the traditional owners — an artwork that is clearly more than just art. The selection of artworks in these office spaces is suggestive of the parallel social and political history of the time. The grand masonite 'bark' painting by Narritjin Maymuru, hanging above the desk, was painted at the Australian National University in the years following the famous Gove Peninsula land rights case (1963) in the Northern Territory.

Noticeboards in the 'offices' are covered with newspaper cuttings and photos of events from the relevant era, ending with the front-page headline from the *Koori Mail*, 'Buried', referring to the final announcement of the closing of ATSIIC.

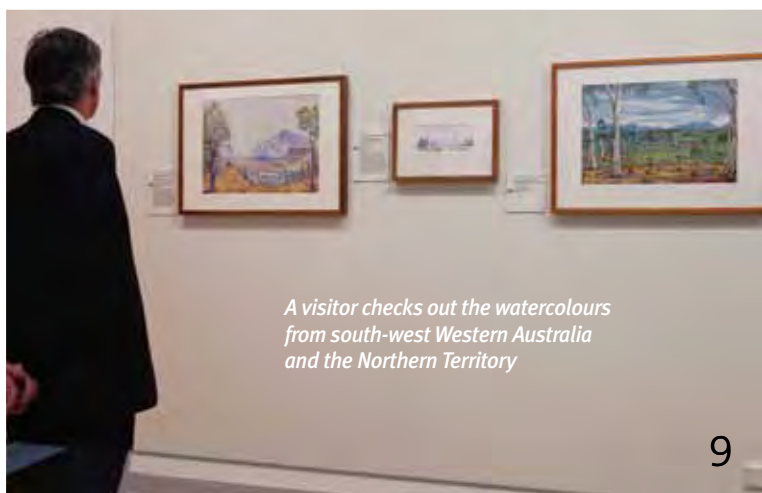
Guests at the opening didn't just see the politics of the time, they were also able to glimpse the range and variety in the collection and to see some beautiful artworks, from all over Australia — including watercolours by descendants of the child artists of Carrolup in south-west Western Australia and from Hermannsburg, some of the early prints made by people in remote communities as well as acrylic and bark paintings, carvings, artefacts, fabrics and more ... so much more. Go online and see for yourself!

Andy Greenslade Curator, ATSIIP



Lowitja talks to the curator, Andy Greenslade, in the 2000 era 'office'

Off the Walls: Art from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Agencies is open at the National Museum until 10 June 2012 and on the Museum website indefinitely.



A visitor checks out the watercolours from south-west Western Australia and the Northern Territory



The year is 1981. A group of Pintupi men are gathered on the outskirts of Papunya community, west of Alice Springs. Fred Myers, an American anthropologist, records the scene:

‘... an older Aboriginal man wearing a frayed suit jacket and the locally popular knitted cap sits cross-legged on the desert ground next to a ten-by-twelve-foot stretched canvas, brush in hand. Wuta Wuta Tjangala chats animatedly with the men who are helping him paint his work ... There is a good deal of talk about moving west ... Papunya is not Pintupi country. While Wuta Wuta is completing his masterpiece, *Yumari* 1981, tense meetings are taking place between the Pintupi and other residents. When the Pintupi meet with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs representatives to discuss their desire to split off from the rest of Papunya and move out west, they do so at this painting place.’

This now-famous painting by Wuta Wuta (Uta Uta) Tjangala is held by the National Museum of Australia. While the central subject of the canvas is Wuta Wuta’s Dreaming ancestor Tjuntamurtu, another story lies behind the painting. Wuta Wuta was also alluding to the politics surrounding the Pintupi’s preparations for returning to their country after the passing of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act of 1976*. Within three months of completing *Yumari*, Wuta Wuta’s desire was realised when the Pintupi moved to Kintore in September 1981.



Thirty years on, in October 2011, the Pintupi people celebrated the anniversary of this momentous event and reflected on the journey that had brought them to where they are today. Held over three days, the anniversary brought many Pintupi from Kintore and surrounding communities together with politicians, doctors, teachers, linguists, nurses, administrators and other outsiders who have had a shared history with them. Among the guests were Jeremy Long, who worked as a patrol officer and was the first white person contacted by many Pintupi in the late 1950s and 1960s, Fred Myers, linguist Ken Hansen, Northern Territory politician Malarndirri McCarthy and Federal Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth Peter Garrett.



Below: Kintore kids
painting up for ceremony

Below: Community leader Monica
Robinson speaking at the anniversary

Below: Screening of Ian Dunlop's 1974
Yayayi footage as edited for presentation
by the Museum



The anniversary took place at Kintore on a typically hot October weekend. The event began with a gathering at the old hand pump, the original site where people lived when they arrived in 1981. Old and young then formed a procession back to the community where a stage had been erected for nightly presentations. Over the course of three days, the community and guests were treated to film screenings and performances by children's choirs, Aboriginal songwriter Shellie Morris, Neil Murray (former Warumpi Band guitarist and Kintore schoolteacher) and the Kintore gospel and rock and roll bands. The school screened a video presentation of the history of the Pintupi's return to Country which was narrated in English and Pintupi and based on a story by Marlene Nampitjinpa. Women and men artists from the community, including some of the early Papunya painters, commemorated the event with the production of a large mural on a wall adjoining the basketball courts.

The National Museum took part in the anniversary through the screening of a version of Ian Dunlop's 1974 footage from Yayayi. The material was prepared by the Museum for the *Papunya Painting: Out of the Desert* exhibition that was held in 2007. The move to Yayayi in



Left: Yumari 1981 by Wuta Wuta Tjangala

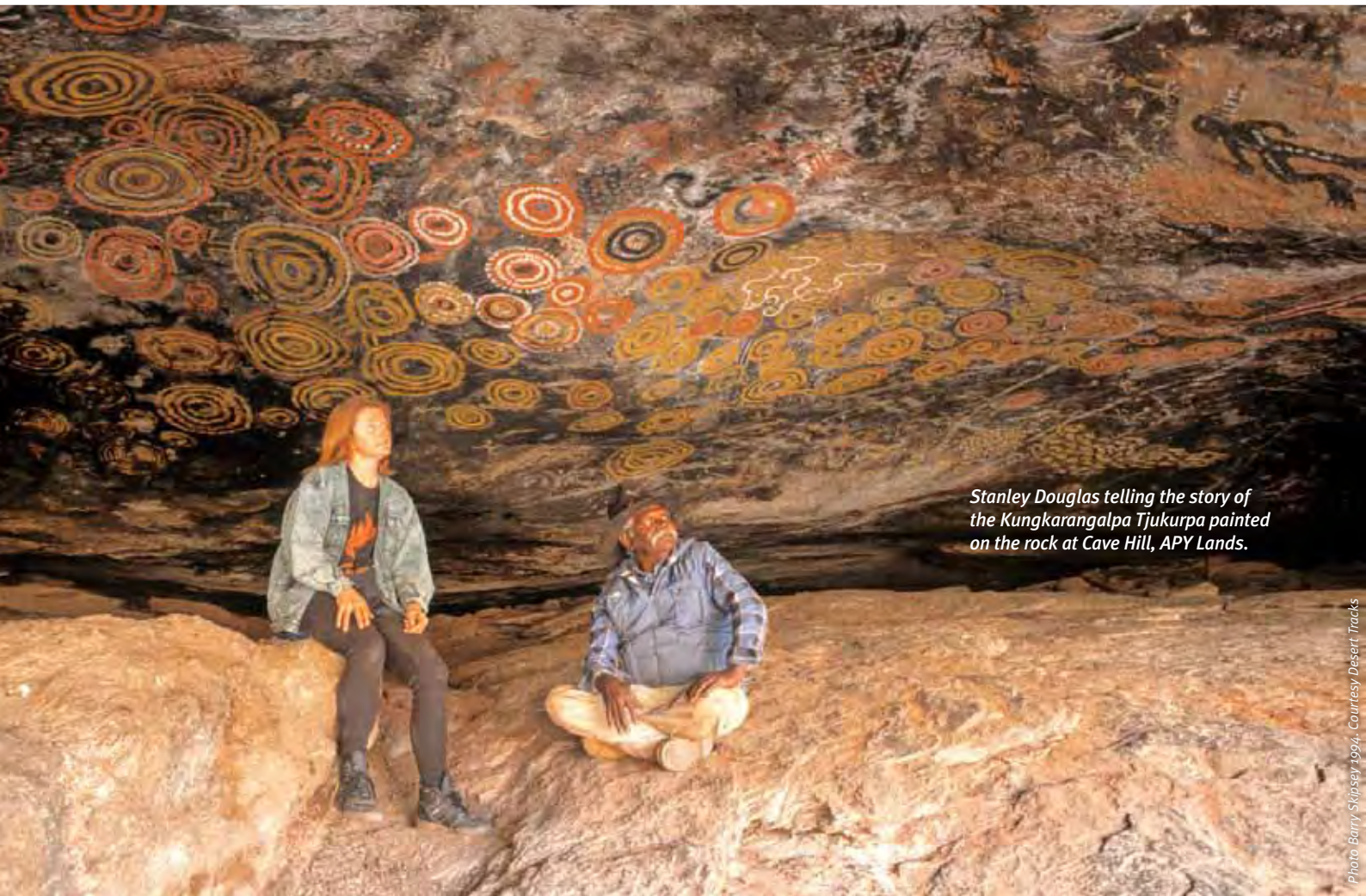
1973, 30 kilometres west of Papunya, was one of the first attempts to establish a separate Pintupi community, under a new Commonwealth policy of 'self-determination'. This was an important precursor to the Pintupi's eventual move back to their homelands in 1981.

The Museum has been working with the Pintupi communities on heritage projects since 2007 and was honoured to be associated with this event. The mood of the occasion was buoyant. The theme 'Proud to be Pintupi' sums up what many Pintupi see as the essence of their community and this is backed up by their history.

At various turns, they have demonstrated a resolve to control their own destiny, often going out on a limb to make things happen. The success of the anniversary was another example of this determination, being organised and admirably led by community leaders Monica Robinson, Lindsay Corby, Irene Nangala, Ronnie Tjampitjinpa, Yuyuya Nampitjinpa and Joe Young. It was an occasion for the sharing of stories and memories between generations and the celebration of a remarkable history.

Alive with the Dreaming

Songlines of the Western Desert



Stanley Douglas telling the story of the Kungkarangalpa Tjukurpa painted on the rock at Cave Hill, APY Lands.

Photo: Barry Skipsy 1994. Courtesy: Desert Tracks

Anangu Elder, Mr Miller, leaned across a table and in hushed but weighty tones said to the assembled representatives from the Australian National University and the National Museum of Australia, gathered in Canberra last year, ‘... you mob gotta help us ... those songlines they bin all broken up now ... you can help us put ’im all back together again’. This was an entreaty that Diana James, an anthropologist resident in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) lands for some 30 years, had heard in many different ways, until the ‘old ladies’ put the hard word on her in 1994 when she was working for them as manager of Desert Tracks, a cross-cultural tourism enterprise at Angatja in South Australia.

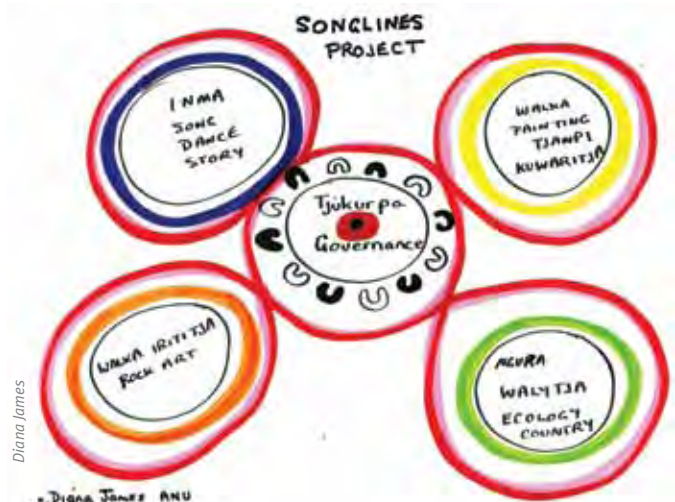
After about a decade and a half the moons lined up, as they say, bringing together the right combination of knowledge holders from the Western and Aboriginal knowledge systems. With Diana as project coordinator, the group received a generous grant from the Australian Research Council. With further backing from other supporters and sponsors, this epic project is on track to finally realise the Elders’ dreams. The project title was inspired by the words of Pitjantjatjara elder Nganyinytja, ‘Kulilaya, ngura milmilpatjara; Tjukurpa alatjitu! (Listen, this land is sacred; Alive with the Dreaming!)’

Put simply, the project will track particular songlines across the vast Western Desert: ecologically, archaeologically, visually and by performance. There are four teams, which are multigenerational, multidisciplinary and multicultural. One could add multidirectional and multisensory, with the researchers having to get their heads around concepts that challenge standard ways of doing business. These include delving into deep time for evidence of human, as well as ancestral activity, and relating these findings to the constellations in the night sky. Time measured in linear chronologies will be conflated with narratives in circular or spiral time, song cycles or seasonal patterns; and Country will be mapped in song, and choreographed on canvas. ‘Painting the song of the land is only possible for people who hear music when they see Country’.¹

The project will focus on the journeys of two ancestors: Ngintaka or Perentie (Lizard) and Kungkarangalpa (Seven Sisters), which relate to the Orion constellation and the Pleiades star cluster. Their journeys connect the people and their land, the animals that they hunt, the foods they gather, the life-giving waterholes, their related languages and kinship structures. These songlines travel a region of 486,000 square kilometres in the remote tri-state cross-border area



Seven Sisters Songline,
by Josephine Mick,
Pipalyatjara, 1994



Diana James

Diagram of Songlines project structure

of Western Australia, South Australia and Northern Territory with an estimated population of 8000 people.

At the invitation of relevant Western Desert peoples, we will work collaboratively and cross-culturally to record and translate the many layers of ‘open’ (non-secret) knowledge embodied in the Tjukurpa songlines which will be explored in multiple ways: through the performing arts of story, song and dance; the graphic language of ancient rock art and contemporary visual arts; the transitions of cultural and ecological practice profiled in archaeological digs; the kinship of people to each other and Country; and the management of cultural and natural heritage.

The songlines that map the continent are of iconic significance in the national heritage of Australia. Aboriginal people have always been ingenious in keeping culture alive through the creative use of introduced media and technologies, which otherwise can, and in some cases do, threaten cultural practice. The maintenance of culture is synonymous with survival. Thus, this living library of song and dance will enter the Western archive through innovative multimedia exhibitions, books, films and research databases to stimulate both intergenerational and intercultural understandings of the songlines. Pitjantjatjara law-woman and artist, Inawinytji, says, ‘As Aboriginal people, we always take our culture with us. When we travel to the city to show our paintings we always dance and sing inma. Our culture and art is not separate, it is all one.’²

The songlines project aims to increase the recognition and understanding of complex pathways of Aboriginal spiritual, ecological, economic, cultural and ontological knowledge; it foreshadows a radically new approach to the sharing of Aboriginal and Western knowledge in understanding and managing our cultural and natural environments. Our research will also investigate Tjukurpa as a system of governance and knowledge organisation and, in doing so, explore alternative ways of thinking, planning and practising sustainable management of places and our natural and cultural heritage. Our interest centres not only on what is known, but how it is known, why it is known and how it is organised. This represents a significant departure from an emphasis on simply collecting and recording ethnographic material and the display of stories (traditionally undertaken by art galleries, museums and universities). This project aims to resonate with the interconnectivity and continuity that characterises Aboriginal ways of thinking and being.

My and the Museum’s involvement in the project is in the visual and curatorial components, which will result in an exhibition of the Ngintaka at the South Australian Museum in 2013 and planning

for another exhibition the *Kungkarangalpa – Seven Sisters* at the National Museum in 2015/2016. In addition to this, I have a particular interest in forging a new collaborative model for engagement between cultural institutions and communities in which the communities, rather than the institutions, initiate the project and a council of Elders forms the central governance structure. The Elders’ council is more than a consultative or reference group, a model with which we are more familiar; instead, it is established by the Elders according to their status as traditional knowledge holders.

Unlike much research into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage, which is often entirely governed by institutions, the model of the Elders’ council is central to the governance structure of the project. While it is they who say who can go where, with whom and when, the process is not simply about consultation and seeking permission; importantly, it is they who direct the research process. Researchers from cultural institutions serve the needs of the senior custodians/owners and not the other way around. In this regard, the model is comparable in some ways to anthropological research into Native Title. We, the researchers from institutions, can provide the logistics and facilitate the project with the skills and resources at our disposal. But, training, mentoring and capacity building is a two way street, it is not the big jug to little mug dispensation of supposedly higher order, Western expertise in knowledge management. After all, Aboriginal knowledge systems persist, providing continuity to the world’s longest continuing culture, in the face of colonial interventions.

This research project will be the first attempt to map an entire songline since Charles Mountford mapped the Winbaraku Songline in the 1940s.

Margo Neale *Principal Indigenous Advisor and Senior Curator*

This project is an investigative collaboration between the Martu, Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara peoples, the Australian National University and the National Museum of Australia.
View website <http://ippa.anu.edu.au/songlines-western-desert> or Google ANU Songlines.

1 D James, *Painting the Song: Kaltiti Artists of the Sanddune Country*, McCulloch & McCulloch, Australian Art Books, Melbourne, 2009, p. 11.
2 James, p. 6.

Reconnecting communities with collections: *a National Museum of Australia — British Museum collaboration*

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collection that is held in the British Museum is one of the most important holdings of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander material in the world. Since 2007, curators from the National Museum of Australia and the British Museum have been working together to research and make available information about the collection. Despite its significance, little is known about the diversity of material that is in the British Museum's collection and the histories behind its formation. Through the joint work of the National Museum and the British Museum, this is changing.

The collection has been assembled over 240 years, beginning with material collected at Botany Bay in 1770, during James Cook's first Pacific voyage. In addition to rare and precious objects, it includes photographs and artworks as well as correspondence detailing interactions between collectors and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout Australia, during various periods over the 240 years. The collection has particular strengths in rare early nineteenth-century material, which has little representation in Australian museums, and reflects the multiplicity of British and Australian imperial, colonial and scientific interests.

The collection is accessible online via the British Museum's website at www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database.aspx. This database is continually being updated with photographs and further information about individual objects that are being progressively added. The National Museum and the British Museum are working towards displaying highlights from the collection in a forthcoming exhibition, to be opened both in Australia and England.

The exhibition will include some of the most significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander objects from the British Museum's Australian collections. This exhibition will be the first time the majority of this material has been publicly displayed.

The development of this project offers a unique opportunity to reconnect these objects with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of the regions and communities where they originated. We are working with relevant Elders and holders of cultural knowledge to record their perspectives on the key objects. This work is documenting stories and perspectives which will feature in the exhibition, alongside the historical narrative derived from archival records.

The exhibition will highlight both the historical encounters between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and British explorers and settlers, from which these objects have come; and the reconnections between contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultural heritage, occurring as part of developing the exhibition.

Displaying the British Museum's early material with related highlights from the National Museum's collections and with



Benita Tunks

Ian Coates and Lissant Bolton (Keeper, Department of Africa, Oceania and the Americas, British Museum) discussing the research and exhibition collaboration, London, December 2012



Dance ornament collected from Tutu, Torres Strait by AC Haddon, 1888

contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander narratives will also enable the earlier objects to be viewed through an historical rather than an ethnographic lens.

The National Museum and the British Museum are working with the Australian National University to undertake a major research project entitled 'Engaging objects: Indigenous communities, museum collections and the representation of Indigenous histories'. The Australian Research Council is supporting this four-year project.

A key part of the 'Engaging objects' project is supporting a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander fellows. Each of these fellows will have direct access to the collections in the British Museum. They will respond to elements in the collection through the production of new works, either in written or visual form, which reflect on the meaning and significance of individual objects. Their work will generate and exchange information about the historical and contemporary significance of the material. Some of the tangible reflections produced by the fellows will also be used in the exhibition.

Ian Coates Senior Curator, ATSIP

Celebrating a shared history



Departing for Germany the Adelaide Delegation (l-r): Verna Koolmatire, Nelson Varcoe, Dr Alitja Rigney and Dr Rob Amery

For 12 days in August, 2011, Dr Alitja Rigney, a member of the National Museum's Indigenous Advisory Committee, accompanied by Verna Koolmatire, a language teacher and member of the Raukkan Community Council, Nelson Varcoe, a musician and songwriter and Dr Rob Amery, a linguist at the University of Adelaide, visited Germany. They followed the 170-year-old footsteps of Clamor Wilhelm Schürmann (1815–1893). Invited by the Leipzig Mission Society to help celebrate their 175th anniversary in Dresden, the group took the opportunity to trace the life of a missionary who rendered enormous services to the current generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders by recording the languages of the original inhabitants of the area where Adelaide is now located. Kurna is the main language of the Adelaide region. The journey was also an opportunity to connect with Schürmann's descendants.

Departing Adelaide and arriving in Frankfurt, Alitja and her companions first visited the town of Schleddehausen, the birthplace of Schürmann. Here, the local historian Paul Walter treated the group and the descendants of Schürmann to a tour of the old town and church where Schürmann had been baptised. Later, the group visited the local Schelenburg castle and the Ellernhof farmstead. Schürmann renounced his inherited claim to the farmstead to join the missions. In the evening, the group was invited to a public information evening in a restaurant in Osnabrück at which linguists discussed the diversity of the nearly 600 Aboriginal languages and the marked differences in language that could occur between neighbouring communities. The information session was followed by the gift of the Aboriginal flag to the descendants of Schürmann and a performance by Nelson Varcoe on the didgeridoo.

The next day the group travelled to Halle and was given a tour of the Francke Foundations' archive which houses the complete

Leipzig Mission Society archive, including the diaries and letters of four South Australian missionaries, Schürmann included. Productive visits were made to Berlin, where the group met with linguists, politicians and representatives of various missions and to Leipzig, where they toured the permanent Australian exhibit at the Grassi Museum of Ethnology.

The delegation visited for 2 days of the anniversary celebrations were held in Dresden. During this time, the group visited the Museum of Dresden and was able to view the artefacts of their ancestors that had been collected by the missionaries in 1838, and discuss cultural issues about presentation of these artefacts in future museum displays.

Each location provided insights into the life of the man who in 1838, with his fellow missionary Christian Gottlieb Tiechelmann, was sent to Adelaide to evangelise the local Aboriginal people while rendering Christian services to the workers on the mission. Although the mission was not a success, it was because of Schürmann's keenness to preserve the local language that he was able to create dictionaries that contained 3500 keywords. These dictionaries ultimately led Rob Amery and the local Adelaide people to revive the Kurna language. Modern words have been added to the lexicon, such as refrigerator and computer, and the language is now being taught and used at the Kurna Plains School. It was at Kurna Plains School that Alitja served as the first Aboriginal school principal in South Australia.

The two-week trip to Germany provided many opportunities to reflect on the life of Schürmann and the important role that he played in the revival of the Kurna language. Most importantly, the establishment of cultural dialogue and friendships among the delegation and their German partners will see the return of the delegation to Germany in the future.

Lorna Schmider-Woodcock *Indigenous Cadet*

Deaconess Kunmanara Hilliard*, MBE OAM (1921-2012)



Ernabella Arts building 1994



Hilliard at Ernabella in 1994

The National Museum is fortunate to be the beneficiary of the greater portion of the unique collection of Deaconess Kunmanara Hilliard, made during her years at Ernabella. Not only is there a wide range of art and craft items produced by the talented artists at Ernabella, there is much in the collection relating to the history of Ernabella itself, including photographs, films and documents. With the death of Kunmanara in January 2012, the National Museum lost a true friend, great supporter and a distinguished Australian who worked with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Kunmanara is best known for her role as craft adviser/arts coordinator at Ernabella, located in the picturesque Musgrave Ranges in north-western South Australia, between 1954 and 1986.

Kunmanara clearly had a sense of history and this may be one reason behind her collecting such a broad range of material. She wrote several papers and one highly regarded book, *The People in Between* (1968), and was writing another at the time of her death. Kunmanara was always generous with her time and knowledge and would always assist people who contacted her to draw on her knowledge.

Before her deaconess training at the Presbyterian Church's Rolland House Deaconess and Missionary Training College in Melbourne, between 1948 and 1950, Kunmanara had a varied career. Her schooling was followed by two years training in art and craft at Presbyterian Ladies College and 18 months as an assistant in the college's Geography Department. In 1941 she moved to the Munitions Department Drawing Office as a draughtsperson before joining the Women's Royal Australian Air Force (WRAAF) in 1944, where she trained as an instrument repairer. In late 1945 she ran a short course in Melbourne teaching craft to service people, providing them with occupation until their discharge. In between her WRAAF service and deaconess training, Kunmanara worked at the Trans Australia Airlines drawing office. After completing her deaconess training, she worked with disadvantaged people in Carlton, Melbourne, until 1952 when she was posted to the newly built St David's at North Albury. Kunmanara was sent there to assist

the minister, based at Albury. In effect, this meant doing pretty much everything, from running the Sunday school to delivering sermons.

Kunmanara had hoped, following in the footsteps of a favourite aunt, to serve as a missionary in Korea. Instead, the Presbyterian Church asked her to go to Ernabella, to take over the running of the craftroom there. She had little experience of Aboriginal people and a very short handover period. It was Kunmanara's policy that she was there to assist the women, and that any decisions regarding the art and craft were to be made by them. It was the Church's policy that the art and craft should pay its own way. This was a time when some of the Ernabella craftroom products were difficult to sell and those that were sold could only be bought for a pittance. There were times when Kunmanara found trying to keep the books balanced tough going. However, she was a strong woman, practical in keeping the craftroom running and forthright in standing up for the artists and the wider Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara community. She would ease the pressure of her position by travelling overseas, usually on her own. Either for work or pleasure, the only continent Kunmanara did not visit was Antarctica.

Her relationship with Ernabella and Ernabella's artists, many of whom were close friends, did not end with her retirement in 1986. She returned several times, notably for the 60th anniversary of Ernabella Arts in 2008, and often met with people when they came 'down south'.

Kunmanara Hilliard will be remembered for her enduring legacy a body of written and visual work that speaks particularly of the development and growth of art and craft at an Aboriginal centre significant for its place in Australian art and craft history. She also leaves an irreplaceable collection that is central to the telling of this story. This is a legacy that will endure forever and is appropriately part of the national collection.

David Kaus *Curator, ATSIP*

* In accordance with Indigenous cultural protocol at Ernabella, I have not used Deaconess Hilliard's first name, nor her 'skin' name, which was given to her shortly after she arrived at Ernabella in 1954.

Yijala visitors get more than they bargained for

Sonya Wilson, Deb Myers, Ivy Wilson, Esther Daniel and Lily Togo with Andrew Sayers (Director of National Museum)



Last year, a group of visitors to the Museum got more than they bargained for one Saturday morning when they found themselves chatting to one of our friendly hosts. Although he was wearing the uniform, he was uncommonly well informed for his first day as a host. Not surprising really, when they found out that the host was our Director, Andrew Sayers, meeting the public and getting the feel of what it's like to be 'on the floor' as a Visitor Services Host.

The visitors, from Roebourne, Western Australia, were in Canberra for a series of workshops, training and generally getting the best out of the city while they were here. Their project leader was Debra Myers, who I knew formerly as the art advisor at Ernabella Arts. I was happy to meet her and the group and to hear about their current digital project, 'Yijala Yala'. Debra and Sonya Wilson, the leading community member of the group, told us what they thought about their visit.

Debra Myers states:

In September, four participants from the *Yijala Yala* Project based in Roebourne, WA visited Canberra to attend the AIATSIS Conference, *Young and Old: Connecting Generations*, and to meet some of the people they'll be working with as part of the project's cultural exchange program and touring theatre show, which will be in Canberra in 2013. *Yijala Yala* is a long term, multi arts project developed by Big hART and the community focused on cultural heritage conservation and skilling up young people to work in cultural tourism and management. Sonya is doing arts administration training with Big hART and Esther, Lilly and Ivy are a part of the leadership and digital media workshops, learning skills in communication, networking, photography and filmmaking.

While in Canberra, the group visited Parliament House, the National Film and Sound Archive, researched information about Roebourne at the AIATSIS audio visual archive, attended a performance of *Namatjira* at the Canberra Theatre, participated in a watercolour painting workshop with members of the *Namatjira* family and visited the National Museum of Australia's Gallery of First Australians with Andy Greenslade, one of the Museum's curators in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Program. The girls especially loved making an announcement in the Goolarri Radio recording studio and Sonya enjoyed looking at the artefacts and hearing the recording of the Ernabella Choir.

In Sonya's words: 'I enjoyed going places before the conference, like to Parliament House, seeing the Museum, the gallery, [the National Film & Sound] archive and the watercolour workshop. My favourite one was the Museum. We had this lovely lady by the name of Andy who gave us a tour of the Museum. We got to see artefacts, story-telling, and heard the choir of the lovely ladies from Ernabella and all other kinds of things. We even had lunch there. There was nothing about Canberra I did not like!'

The Museum regularly receives visitors from Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities across Australia, and we also organise access visits to our collection storage areas so that people can visit objects representing their families and their cultures. For more information about collection visits please see the Museum website www.nma.gov.au.

Andy Greenslade *Curator, ATSIIP*

A history mystery

A journey to Lake Mungo National Park

In September 2011, I travelled to Lake Mungo National Park in south-western New South Wales with another Museum staff member Dave Arnold and a film crew to shoot some film footage for the Education Section's latest Australian History Mysteries curriculum resource case study. Because ancient Australia features in the new national history curriculum, we decided to create a 'history mystery' about the famous discoveries of Aboriginal remains at Lake Mungo. The discoveries at Lake Mungo form such an important part of our understanding of how Aboriginal people lived in Australia more than 40,000 years ago.

Lake Mungo is located in the Willandra Lakes region of south-eastern Australia, not far from Mildura in Victoria. Lake Mungo is 26 kilometres long and 11 kilometres wide and is just one of a group of lakes in the region that helped to sustain groups of Aboriginal people who camped and fished along the shores, tens of thousands of years ago. Even today, traditional custodians still have links to Country and family ties to this now dried-up lake and world heritage area. They are actively involved in the management of the park, which is now a thriving adventure destination for tourists. Lake Mungo is famous for its lunettes on the fringe of an ancient shoreline. In geology, a lunette is a wind-formed, crescent-shaped dune. In the 1850s, Mungo was part of the extensive Gol Gol Station and the lunettes at Lake Mungo are colloquially known as 'the Great Walls of China' in reference to the Chinese who worked at Gol Gol Station in the 1860s.

The three Aboriginal language groups of the area are the Paakantji, Ngiyampaa and Mutthi Mutthi. The Elders from each of these groups share knowledge of Country and work together as a team. By their work, they demonstrate dedication, passion and love for their 'country'. The friendships and respect of the Elders extends to the scientists, archaeologists and anthropologists who also work at Lake Mungo, and to others including farmers and the larger community of Mildura.

The Elders warmth and generosity of spirit was captured on film when Marie, Lottie and Patrick and Warren, Ricky, and Kenny — who work at Lake Mungo — participated in our 'history mystery' project. It was also great to meet geomorphologist, Jim Bowler, who famously discovered the remains of Mungo Lady and Mungo Man in the 1960s.

Watching, listening, learning and filming the material on Lake Mungo will result in a very important educational resource to be shared with students and teachers in schools around Australia who, like me, can begin to appreciate the mysteries of Lake Mungo.

Deb Frederick Indigenous Education Officer



The film crew



Famous lunettes



(l-r) Ricky, Marie, Deb Frederick, Lottie, and Warren



Open Day 2011



The sun shone brightly, the objects were all neatly displayed with signage, the concrete had been swept and activities were laid out for children. The Museum was ready to throw open the gates to Open Day 2011.

So much work goes into an Open Day — it seems flinging open the gates is the easy part! Most of the Museum works together to make events like this happen: Registration, Conservation, Curatorial and us, in Public Programs and Marketing, and also Publishing, Visitor Services and Volunteers, Facilities and Security, the Shop, Friends of NMA ... the list goes on. We all put a huge effort into making the day interesting and family friendly.

Choosing what to put on show is the hardest part. How do we pick those objects out of the millions that we have in the collection? Sometimes the decision is easy: if a large object (such as a car or tractor) is stored in a location that is accessible to visitors, then we leave it where it is. In the Objects and Paper and Textiles labs, however, there was more flexibility to choose items specifically for viewing by the visitors on Open Day. The whole idea is that the public can see how and where the Museum stores and conserves the objects in the collection that aren't on display. If you want to see an exhibition, come to visit us at Acton Peninsula!

The Objects Lab displayed a selection of the barks and paintings representing Walmajarri, Ganalbingu, Kartujarra and Rirratjingu

language groups. In Unit 3, the Playschool windows made a welcome return, much to the delight of children and their parents, and the giant kewpie doll from the closing ceremony of the Sydney 2000 Summer Olympics kept an eye on everyone. Objects from the Museum's Aboriginal Stone Tool collection, which comprises over 95,000 items, were displayed in their storage boxes and the Saw Doctor's Wagon drew crowds who were fascinated by the trinkets glued to or dangling from every surface.

Outside, large objects were crouched on the concrete, ready to show off for admiring crowds. The ABC-TV outside broadcast van entertained people as they walked past, and particularly fascinated children who saw themselves on television, often for the first time, on a tiny black and white screen. The 'Peace Bus' encouraged children to contribute to a giant chalk drawing, while the float designed by Bundjalung artist Bronwyn Bancroft as part of the Journey of a Nation — The Federation Parade, in 2001, raised questions about its purpose and design.

It was a great day — an opportunity for people to see how the Museum keeps its collection, to visit familiar objects and to chat to staff who love what they do. Next time we have an Open Day, we'd love to see you. But, don't wait until then, come and see us soon on the peninsula.

Heidi Pritchard Assistant Manager Public Programs



Bart's boat

Bart Sansbury's white, blue and brown cabin cruiser, which the Museum acquired in 1993, may seem an unlikely addition to the National Historical Collection. However, like all Museum objects, Bart's weathered fishing vessel and protest banner provide us with visible evidence by which we can discover, and give new life and meaning to, the stories that lie behind them.

This story begins around 1846 when pastoralists settled the ancestral homelands of the Narungga people of Yorke Peninsula in South Australia. Following the discovery of copper in 1880, and the subsequent establishment of large copper mines on the peninsula at Moonta and Wallaroo, the population of settlers swelled. In contrast, the Narungga, whose original population was estimated to be around 500, succumbed to disease, poverty and conflict with settlers and declined to around a hundred people. By 1900, only a handful of full-descent Narungga people remained.¹

Established as an Aboriginal mission in 1867 by Moravian missionary, W Julius Kuhn, in an area abundant in shellfish, game and freshwater soaks, Point Pearce (Bookooyana) became, and remains, a sanctuary for Narungga people. According to Narungga Elders, Point Pearce, controlled by Aboriginal people since 1972, has been fundamental to the survival of their people and their culture.

Narungga man Bart Sansbury was born in 1948 at Wallaroo and spent 18 years as a foster child before being conscripted into the Australian army for three years of service, which included a tour of duty in Vietnam. On his return to Australia, Bart spent several years travelling around the country. In the early 1970s, when Aboriginal people were asking for sovereignty, land rights and self-determination, Bart joined in protest with others at the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra. Returning to Point Pearce in 1974, Bart spent the next 15 years working on Point Pearce Station and fishing in local waters, usually sharing his big catches, especially abalone, with the Point

Pearce community. For Bart, fishing became his life and he used and developed his skills, which had been handed down from his father and from countless generations of fathers to sons.

Although the traditional lands and fishing grounds of Narungga people are located on and around the Yorke Peninsula, there are currently no exemptions for traditional fisheries under fisheries legislation in South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania. Under the South Australian *Fisheries Act, 1971*, Aboriginal people are subject to the ordinary restrictions on numbers and size of fish caught, as well as catching methods, and require a permit to catch fish for sale. In the 1980s, commercial fishing license fees ranged from \$20,000 to \$50,000 and fishing without a license incurred fines of at least \$5000, or a jail sentence. Jailed for fishing without a license and for catching 'too many fish', and unable to pay the cost of the fine, Bart beached his boat permanently in protest and later spent many years working voluntarily with Aboriginal organisations in South Australia.

With the assistance of members of the Point Pearce community, Doreen Kartinyeri, Kerry Kerwingie Giles and Tom Adams, Bart painted a protest banner bearing the slogan 'Point Pearce has no fishing rights for their waters!' which was featured with his boat in the exhibition *Nyoongah Nunga Yura Koorie* at the Tandanya National Aboriginal Cultural Institute, Adelaide, in 1991. Through his painting, Bart's fishing boat has become a powerful symbol of protest for the rights of Narungga people to fish in their traditional waters without a license. As a way of thinking about and understanding the past, Bart's boat and banner also allow us to glimpse deeper histories of dispossession and survival.

Judith Hickson *Assistant Curator, Collections Development Unit*

¹ R Amery, 'It's ours to keep and call our own: reclamation of the Nunga languages in the Adelaide region, South Australia', *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, vol. 113, 1995, 63–82.



'Nations within a Nation'

– the Centenary of Federation float



The float with views of the seating positions

Detail from the design patterned over the float



The 'Nations within a Nation' float was part of the opening sequence of the Journey of a Nation — The Federation Parade, that was held in Sydney on 1 January 2001. The float, designed by Bronwyn Bancroft, was a celebration of Koori culture. Bancroft, a nationally recognised artist

Bancroft was inspired by an Oodgeroo Noonuccal (Kath Walker) story — 'The beginning of life'. In the design painted onto the float, and the very shape of the float itself, are references to the Rainbow Serpent and his creative power as well as representations of the themes of hope, the importance of families and cooperating with nature. With Noonuccal's story and her own established visual language Bancroft uses this opportunity to share and promote her Bundjalung heritage. Bancroft states: 'the spiritual element of your work is what you carry through the lives of other people. And so, for me, the people that I'm descended from, they enable me to speak these stories ...'

and Bundjalung woman, designed the float to be bright, colourful and vibrating with life.

In Sydney in 1901, there was no Aboriginal presence in the Commonwealth Celebration Great Inaugural Procession, which was held as part of the inaugural Federation celebrations. In a bid to readdress this 'absence' The Centenary of Federation Committee invited the local Koori community to participate in the Journey of a Nation — The Federation Parade in 2001. It became one of the first national public events acknowledging Aboriginal peoples as the First Australians. Bancroft says 'My argument to the other Aboriginal people about being involved was that it was better to have a presence after 200 years of colonisation than not to be there at all'. Inclusion of the float in the parade and participation by the local Koori community was also significant because it reflected a change in the attitude of Aboriginal people towards increasing their visibility within mainstream events for political purposes.

On the day of the parade, the float carried the Murrawadeen Goodjarga performing arts ensemble that was made up of Koori secondary students. The costumes of the participants were similar in design to the float. The presentation also included banners naming the different language groups of the New South Wales region and, importantly, those language groups which may cross over the state borders 'which were drawn up at Federation without consideration or discussion with the Aboriginal people who were here'. During the parade, the banners were carried by Marri Djanaba students and the Aboriginal Dance Theatre Redfern.

The Museum acquired the 'Nations within a Nation' float in 2001, shortly after the parade was held. The acquisition is an example of innovation in and celebration of contemporary Aboriginal culture at an historic event.

Barbara Paulson *Curator, ATSIP*

Johnny Cadell's stockwhip



In 2005, the Museum purchased a stockwhip that was crafted by Johnny Cadell. Born in 1920, under the shade of a coolabah tree near Adelaide River, Northern Territory, Johnny Cadell went on to live a remarkable life, during which he undertook a number of interesting jobs such as being an actor, horse breaker, rodeo rider, leather plaiter and stockman.

Orphaned at a young age, Johnny spent part of his childhood working on stations near Arnhem Land until a fall from a horse left him with a broken collarbone. After this accident, he was sent to be educated at an orphanage in Darwin. As a teenager, he was sent with several other boys to Pine Creek to be fostered out as workers to local stations. At 24, he went to work in Adelaide training polo ponies, among other duties, for Reginald Murray — better known as RM — Williams. While working for RM, Johnny discovered the famous brumby Curio, who is still remembered as one of the best buckjumpers in Australian history; in the right circles, he is as famous as Phar Lap.

At this time, Johnny was also building a reputation as one of the best riders on the rodeo circuit, winning a number of Australian and state titles in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Perhaps his best-remembered victory occurred in 1951, when he won the title at Marrabel Rodeo. He achieved this only nine days after an operation to remove his appendix and he rode with just a 'rubber bandage' around his waist holding his wounds together. In 1957, his fame as a horseman led the producers of *Robbery Under Arms* to seek him out to play Warrigal, the Aboriginal sidekick to Peter Finch's Captain Starlight. Publicity for the film took Johnny to London and, on his return, he appeared in the Australian television show *Whiplash* with Peter Graves.

Johnny's gift with horses led him to become a trainer at the famed Police Greys (South Australian mounted police) at Thebarton Police Barracks in Adelaide. He retired from the force with distinction and moved to the Yorke Peninsula. He continued to teach and demonstrate his skills in leatherwork, particularly in Adelaide and on various Aboriginal missions around Yorke Peninsula, until his death in 1993. Johnny's skill with leather was as remarkable as his skill with horses; the stockwhip in the Museum's collection is a prime example of his abilities. This whip, made from kangaroo leather, has a weave that is intricate and the work of a remarkable craftsman and an Australian legend.

Rochelle Armstrong Intern, ATSIP

Kamula Munu Anangu Kutjara



Early last year the Museum purchased two impressive and quirky camel sculptures. The camel sculptures, titled *Kamula Maru munu Anangu Kutju* (Black Camel with Rider) and *Kamula Munu Anangu Kutjara* (Camel with Two Riders) were created collaboratively by Dianne Ungukalpi Golding, Jean Burke and Kanytjupai Armstrong. Dianne sculpted both camels and Jean created the three riders while Kanytjupai crocheted the saddles and swags and made the leather leads. The artists used raffia, minarri (greybeard) grass, wool and leather to make the sculptures and the result is two colourful and striking works.

Both sculptures were first put on display at the Outstation Gallery in Darwin during the opening of *Warakurna History Paintings* exhibition. A painting by Dianne and six of Jean's works were also in the exhibition. The museum is now lucky enough to own both the paintings and the sculptures.

The three artists are also a part of Tjanpi Desert Weavers, a non-profit organisation that is run by the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Women's Council. The organisation assists women in over 28 remote communities across Western Australia, Northern Territory and South Australia to sell their fibre art, which includes baskets, sculptures and seed jewellery that is made from a combination of native desert grasses, seeds and feathers, commercially bought raffia (sometimes dyed with native plants), and string and wool. The Museum owns other works by the artists who are involved in this organisation, including a number of wonderful baskets.

Rochelle Armstrong Intern, ATSIP

Shineberg collection

Donation from the Motton family



Dianne Shineberg offered this material to the Museum as a donation. It was generated from a class oral history project that was completed in 1985, while Shineberg was a teacher at Woorabinda State School. Like most state schools in Aboriginal communities, the majority of students are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and this collection documents a ‘mission’ experience at Woorabinda from the perspective of year 8 students at the school in 1985. It presents the oral histories of their Elders who they invited into the classroom to share their stories and be recorded. This collection is significant as it represents an aspect of the social changes that occurred in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural groups in Queensland — in this instance Woorabinda — after the Queensland Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the *Sale of Opium Act* (1897) was superseded by the Commonwealth’s self-determination policy (1972). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were no longer forced to suppress their cultural practices or the use of languages, nor were they restricted from transferring cultural knowledge from one generation to the next.

The material in this collection includes two audio cassette tapes. The first tape ‘Woorabinda men remember’ and the second tape ‘Woorabinda women remember’ include question–answer interviews which focus on what living in Woorabinda was like during the 1940s and 1950s. The information recorded relates to food, hunting, bush medicine, housing, social rules (such as dating and curfews), type of work performed and where elders were living before being relocated to Woorabinda. There are diagrams and drawings of plants and geographical maps alongside the handwritten transcripts.

This collection illustrates the dynamics and impacts of very important social changes, and the adaption by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to those changes. The content of the collection exemplifies the type of social changes that occurred at the community level, particularly during the 1980s. The existence of the collection itself is an important example of the formal inclusion of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural material and knowledge in the education curriculum in state schools. What makes this collection so important is that it represents ‘the invitation into the classroom’ of Elders to share their stories and cultural knowledge. As a community, Woorabinda saw the involvement of Elders in the education system, and the inclusion of more local cultural knowledge within the school curriculums, as a reversal of the cultural suppression practiced on the mission since its establishment in 1926. Aunty Margie Kemp said, ‘It was a step towards acknowledging the importance of our cultural knowledge, especially in educational systems that educate our children.’¹

Barbara Paulson Curator, ATSIP



Ballet 1951, by Aileen Motton, was a donation from the Motton family to the National Museum. Motton created the work *Ballet* at Weipa Mission school, especially for Queensland’s *Sunday Mail* children’s art competition. Between 1943 and 1984, the competition was a Queensland tradition and an important event in the state’s education calendar. For the duration of the competition, a selection of entries, including those by the finalists, were printed in the newspaper. This competition promoted the schools as much as it was a ‘good news story’ for readers.

Motton was a 13-year-old student at Weipa Mission school when she painted *Ballet*. It represents a dance experience from her perspective; the work shows the dynamic movement and placement of performers and audience within a landscape. The title suggests the influence of the missionaries and the introduction of European cultural ideas into Motton’s world. The work itself depicts figures wearing grass skirts and dance props, which suggests a more traditional Tjungundji type of dance rather than that of Western-style ballet. As a 13-year-old Aboriginal girl, living on a mission under the constraints of ‘the Act’ (*Aborigines Preservation and Protection Act* and the *Torres Strait Islanders Act, 1939*), Motton would not have had access or permission to travel to places that would showcase ballet. However, the mission school would have had books and images that illustrated what a ballet was.

The missionary and teacher Mrs Margaret Wynne brought *Ballet* from Weipa to Brisbane in 1951. It was common practice for schools from across the state to submit works on behalf of their students. A photo and biography of the student and a caption explaining the work is still attached to the matting framing the painting along with the *Sunday Mail* completion stickers.

Barbara Paulson Curator, ATSIP

¹ Aunty Margie Kemp in conversation with Barbara Paulson, 2008.

Next issue highlights ...

- See more highlights from *Off the Walls*
- Learn more about the upcoming *Old Masters: Bark Paintings* exhibition
- Learn more about the upcoming *Warakurna History Paintings* exhibition
- Hear about new acquisitions and the stories that they represent
- See more objects from our National Historical Collection
- Updates on other new and continuing projects.

Next issue due out in November 2012.



Cricket ball used by Eddie Gilbert to bowl out Sir Donald Bradman, 6 November 1931

Papunya Tula flags flying proudly in celebration of 30th anniversary of Kintore



Peter Thorley

Roasting wild pangkurna seeds for snacks during the Kintore anniversary



Peter Thorley

hello

The National Museum of Australia is a place that celebrates our peoples and our culture of storytelling. It is a place where we can explore our relationships to each other, the places we live in, and the objects representing our cultures and events in our past.

The Museum is the place where we come together to share stories of our unique and culturally diverse nation, to be part of a national conversation.

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Our story.



National Museum of Australia
Lawson Crescent
Acton Peninsula
Canberra ACT 2600
Open 9 am – 5 pm every day
(except Christmas Day)

Contact us
Phone 1800 026 132 or
email mates@nma.gov.au

www.nma.gov.au

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