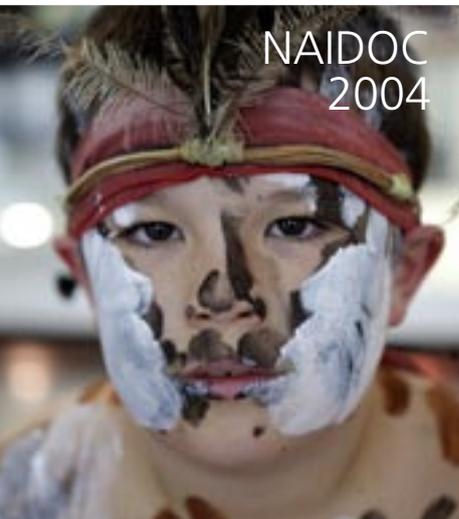


# ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

# news

FROM THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA



NAIDOC 2004



REFINED WHITE



MEET THE MATES



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## Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander news

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### Cover photos

**Main:** Ernabella girl, Kyla Windlass, visited the Museum in April. *Photo by George Serras.*

**Left Top:** NAIDOC 2004—Bevan Smith of Wiradjuri Echo. *Photo by Dragi Markovic.*

**Left Middle:** At the *Refined White* opening, Director Craddock Morton with one of his rugby heroes, former Canberra Raiders and Australian rugby league test captain Mal Meninga. *Photo by George Serras.*

**Left Bottom:** Jilpia Jones next to shields on display in Open Collections. *Photo by Dragi Markovic.*

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## MESSAGE FROM THE SENIOR CURATOR AND DIRECTOR OF THE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PROGRAM



Photos George Serras

I would like to acknowledge the Ngunnawal people, traditional custodians of this area, and to welcome you to the second edition of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander News* from the National Museum of Australia. We are thrilled with the variety of responses to our first edition. They have come in many forms: letters, emails, phone calls, word of mouth, offers of works, new Mates memberships, and requests for more newsletters, especially from state education departments around the country.

The first newsletter launched on the Museum's third birthday covered Indigenous programs across the Museum since opening, and this one covers a short period of four months from April to July 2004. And still there is a lot to cover! After this, our newsletters will be released biannually to coincide with two of the four issues of the *Friends* magazine. This way our readers can be introduced to the wonderful offerings of the *Friends*, and hopefully more Indigenous people will be able to avail themselves of the opportunity to have their say. Similarly members of *Friends* will learn more about things Indigenous, stimulated by the Museum's programs, and will have an opportunity to join the Mates program. We see this sharing process as one of the 'Pathways to Reconciliation' that Reconciliation Australia has adopted as their theme this year, and with whom we work collaboratively on an annual display in their beautiful exhibition space.

Last issue we introduced readers to the many staff who contribute to Indigenous programs across the Museum. In this issue we introduce you to some of our new Mates. They range across gender, age and race, from Indigenous people in remote and urban communities to emeritus professors and land councils. Our membership now includes performers, artists, academics, former prime ministers, politicians and Olympians.

New inclusions in the newsletter are a community section with comments, a children's activity, research collaborations, and our school program. In addition to our regular round up of new exhibition and collection news, we have special features on repatriation and the Indigenous Support Group.

I would like to welcome our new editor Roslyn Russell whose skills we share with the Museum's *Friends* magazine.

**Stay strong,  
Margo Neale**

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS IN BRIEF 2004

» *Representing Outlaws* conference held at the Museum, featuring sessions on Indigenous outlaws, artists and landscape, 5–7 February.

» Opening of *Stories from Australia* at Tandanya, Adelaide, 27 February.

» Visit by Women and Girls from the Ernabella community, April.

» Visit by Winifred Hilliard to work with ATSIP's David Kaus on the documentation of the Hilliard collection relating to Ernabella, April.



MESSAGE FROM  
THE DIRECTOR OF THE  
NATIONAL MUSEUM  
OF AUSTRALIA

A great part of my job is to attend the launch of projects involving our staff. These projects come from enormous hard work and I feel privileged to be part of the public face of so many Museum programs.

The work of ATSIP and the Indigenous programs across the Museum is especially extensive.

The First Australians Focus Gallery continues to show inspiring and topical exhibitions reflecting the diversity of Indigenous issues. This year, as part of the opening of the exhibition *Refined White*, I met distinguished guests including rugby great Mal Meninga. And that was a special thrill, given that I'm a season ticket holder for the Canberra Raiders and so a regular in the Mal Meninga Stand!

I also visited the exhibition *Pathways to Reconciliation: From the National Museum of Australia Collection* at the lakeside offices of Reconciliation Australia. I spoke with their staff, who were really delighted with the new stone tools pyramid installation. It is important for the Museum to be associated with such significant organisations as Reconciliation Australia, and to form partnerships with outside organisations.

The Mates of the First Australians Gallery program is about reaching out to Indigenous communities and interested groups. It is about promoting the Museum's Indigenous Programs and ATSIP staff activities. So I am delighted to hear that forty new Mates have become members since the release of the first issue of the newsletter.

The last four months have brought changes to the First Australians gallery. There is new Ernabella material on display, and in August we opened the new Victoria and Tasmanian modules in a great weekend of activities in Canberra involving those communities. The objects in these new displays are now part of our National Historical Collection, which we are working to enrich this year in many Indigenous and non-Indigenous areas.

Meanwhile the First Australians gallery, the largest of our five permanent exhibitions, remains one of the most popular, attracting a growing number of both local and international visitors.

**Craddock Morton**

# Professional Development Internship

In 2003 a successful Skills and Arts Development grant application through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board of the Australia Council gave me the opportunity to develop and extend my professional curatorial skills. I undertook a series of internships with the country's premier cultural institutions – the National Museum of Australia and the National Gallery of Australia – as well as providing assistance with the installation of initial displays at the Gab Titui Cultural Centre on Thursday Island.

Projects and tasks I undertook while on placement within each institution primarily focused on the management, planning and navigation of collection databases, and the implementation of Indigenous-based exhibitions and displays utilising each institution's vast collection of traditional and contemporary Indigenous material culture. This gave me the chance to delve into specific Indigenous collections of Torres Strait material culture, in the hope of creating open dialogue and ideas for the ongoing collecting of this material for future exhibitions.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the challenges that have arisen out of the various projects I have undertaken. I would like to acknowledge the support from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board of the Australia Council; Louise Doyle, Director, Cairns Regional Gallery; Margo Neale, Senior Curator and Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Program; staff at the National Museum of Australia; Brenda Croft, Senior Curator, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art; staff at the National Gallery of Australia for their time and dedication towards my practice; Leilani Bin Juda, Arts and Cultural Development Officer and Mike Fordham, General Manager, Torres Strait Regional Authority.

**Brian Robinson, Curator, Cairns Regional Gallery**



George Serras

*Karen Peterson, Brian Robinson and Mark Henderson with a shark dance mask from The Drums of Mer Dance Group collection.*

- » Opening of the Gab Titui Cultural Centre, Thursday Island, attended by Museum representatives, 16 April.
- » Ernabella module changeover featuring new textiles and a new highlighted artist, Nyukana 'Daisy' Baker, May.
- » Opening of the exhibition *Pathways to Reconciliation: From the National Museum of Australia Collection* at Reconciliation Australia, featuring a stone tools pyramid, May.
- » Sorry Day (Journey of Healing) workshops held at the Museum, May.
- » Visit by Margo Smith Boles, curator of the Kluge-Ruhe Collection

of Australian Aboriginal Art and her Museum Studies students from the University of Virginia, May.

- » NAIDOC Week, featuring singer and songwriter Jimmy Little and writer Pilawuk among other guests, 4–11 July.
- » Opening of the new Victoria module *Tooloyin Koortakay* (squaring skins for rugs) and the new Tasmania module *We're Here*, on Monday 9 August, International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples.
- » Release of the book *Ernabella Batiks* which explores the Hilliard Collection of the National Museum of Australia by ATSIP's David Kaus, September.

# Meet some of our **Mates**



Bob McMullan, MP

» **Bob McMullan**, MP is Shadow Minister for two portfolios, Finance and Small Business. Previously he held the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander portfolio for two years. He was present at the launch of the Mates program during NAIDOC Week 2003. 'It was an honour to join such distinguished company as one of the Mates of the First Australians. There is nothing in public life more satisfying than being able to make a tiny contribution to the recognition of the proper place of the original Australians in our contemporary society as well as the recognition of their place in the history of the continent. That is why I joined.'



Jason Glanville

» **Jason Glanville** is a Wiradjuri man from Cootamundra in NSW. He is the Policy and Programs Director for Reconciliation Australia. Jason wanted to be photographed next to the 'Fighting for Rights' module in First Australians. 'This section is important because of the fundamental issue it represents. Incarceration rates continue to increase and people have to know about it.' Jason says he joined Mates 'because First Australians is one way of keeping important issues in people's minds.' Jason explained that Reconciliation Australia wants to 'raise awareness about Indigenous Australians, about our shared past and the need to build stronger relationships within communities today.'



Emeritus Professor John Mulvaney & Jean Mulvaney

» **Emeritus Professor John Mulvaney** has had a long association with First Australians. He was Chairman of the Committee on the Gallery of Aboriginal Australia, part of the Pigott Enquiry in 1975. The published findings of this enquiry, the Pigott Report, led to the *National Museum of Australia Act 1980*. A well-known archaeologist and academic, he wrote *The Prehistory of Australia* which was revised in 1999 in association with Dr Jo Kamminga. 'I became a Mate because I believe the Aboriginal contribution to the past of Australia is of global significance. As a member of the Pigott Enquiry, I have maintained an interest in the success of First Australians.'



Frances Peters-Little

» **Jean Mulvaney** calls herself 'a prehistorian by marriage'. She has a long and close connection to Aboriginal people, starting with the Broome community. In 1949, when in charge of the local hospital, Jean garnered a lot of support from the Aboriginal girls who taught her about protocols in dealing with Aboriginal people. Jean says that she is 'A true blue "mate" from way back. First Australians is the best part of the Museum and is where we take our visitors.'



Jilpia Jones

» **Frances Peters-Little** is a Kamilaroi/Uralarai woman and Research Fellow at the ANU. Before coming to Canberra, Frances was a film-maker for the ABC. She is noted for her award-winning film, *Tent Embassy*, part of the *True Stories* series; and the international documentary co-production, the *Storytellers of the Pacific* series. She is working on her second book, the official biography of her father, Jimmy Little, to be published by ABC Books. 'There are so many reasons why I feel privileged to be a Mate of the NMA. However, if I had to choose one over the others, I have never been so moved and inspired by any Aboriginal collection as the one that I have seen in the First Australians gallery. It is an entirely positive and comprehensive exhibition that reminds me of how resilient my people have always been.' Frances is pictured beside Jimmy Little's coat in the 'Livin' Life Makin' Do' music module.

» **Jilpia Nappaljari Jones** is a Walmadjari woman born in the Great Sandy Desert. A member of the Stolen Generation, she writes: 'All these things I remember from my childhood, the old people dancing to the sound of voices and clap sticks. I can smell the campfire with its pungent smells and the stars sinking low. While sleep overtakes me by the sound of the corroboree. I remember a Mother with a difference. But like a tree I was torn apart from its roots. Like a tree, I held firm and grew and grew in another place. Now like a tree I reach for the sky and give shade and light. But I remember these things of my childhood.' Jilpia became a Mate because she believes 'that this is the way ahead, to educate non-Indigenous Australians. This will give us reconciliation — understanding all cultures.'

» **Fabri Blacklock** is a Biripi/Ngarabal woman from New South Wales. She has spent 'five happy years' at the Powerhouse Museum as a curator in the Koori History and Culture section. Fabri is a real fan of the First Australians gallery. 'There's one thing blackfellas like to see and that is photos of other blackfellas! There are lots of different and personal stories in First Australians. It's about what blackfellas are doing today. It's also about promoting new understandings of Indigenous culture and working against stereotypes presented in the media.' Fabri thinks the Open Collections space, where visitors see a selection of the collection objects in storage conditions, is a great idea.

» **David Ritter** is a Visiting Fellow in Law at the University of Western Australia and Principal Legal Officer of the Yamatji Marlpa Land and Sea Council, the Native title representative body for the Pilbara, Murchison and Gascoyne regions of Western Australia. 'I first visited the National Museum on the weekend when it opened and like so many other Australians I danced in the torrential rain to Midnight Oil. I decided to join the Friends of the Museum and the Mates of the splendid First Australians gallery. I try to drop in to the Museum whenever I am in Canberra. Belonging to Friends and Mates is a way of showing my personal support for what seems to be the Museum's commitment to a nuanced and complicated idea of Australian nationhood.'

» **Pilbara Native Title Service** is part of the Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation. 'We are the Native title representative body working to progress the Native title interests of Aboriginal people in the Pilbara region in northern Western Australia. We have joined the Mates of the First Australians gallery as we would like to support this innovative Indigenous museum space and assist in developing the relationship between communities in the Pilbara and this national institution.'

**Pen Roberts, ATSIP**



David Ritter

John Knight



From left, Steve Miller, Alison Page, James Wilson-Miller, Fabri Blacklock and Keith Munro.

Fabri Blacklock

Marinco Kojanowski, Reproduced courtesy of the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney



George Taylor in action at the Indigenous Support Group in May.

George Serras

# Indigenous Support Group

OCTOBER 2004 WILL MARK THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA'S INDIGENOUS SUPPORT GROUP (ISG).

The ISG is an informal gathering of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Museum staff who come together to discuss a variety of topics, themes and issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultures.

The group meets once a month in the Friends Lounge at the National Museum. The inaugural meeting took place in October 2003.

Originally the ISG was established to provide Indigenous hosts with moral support and value-added information. The focus has broadened to include, among other things, guided tours, multimedia presentations, didgeridu demos, bush tucker themes, exhibition updates and guest speaker presentations. It is a chance for all Museum staff to join in and exchange ideas and experiences. It's also a great opportunity for other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders people working at the National Museum to meet.

I, along with two other Indigenous hosts, Sue Emmerson and George Taylor, first suggested the establishment of a support group in 2003. We believed it would be very helpful for ourselves and others and envisaged a support group that would be relaxing, entertaining and informative.

This need first arose from repeated experiences with some visitors to the Museum who expressed very poor and unfair opinions of Aboriginal people, and of the Aboriginal content within the Museum. We later discovered that other hosts had had similar experiences. Furthermore, we found that most comments seemed to come from Anglo-Australian visitors.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to please everyone who visits the Museum, although we do try. It is unreasonable and unacceptable for people to express their prejudices openly and publicly in an offensive, aggressive or unfeeling manner.

The ISG is well supported by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Program section (ATSIP). As interest and awareness of the support group grows, attendance by Museum staff also grows. One goal of the ISG is that every staff member at the National Museum of Australia will have attended a support group meeting once before our first anniversary.

**Lee Burgess, Visitor Host**

# Ernabella

THE MUSEUM'S RICH HOLDINGS OF ERNABELLA MATERIAL ARE FEATURED IN A NEW BOOK—AND IN A NEW DISPLAY IN THE FIRST AUSTRALIANS GALLERY.



George Serras

## About the Collection

Ernabella is a small community located at the eastern end of the picturesque Musgrave Ranges in the far north-west of South Australia.

It has a population of about 400 Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara speakers and has been run by its own elected Indigenous council since 1974, when the community took over local government from the Presbyterian mission which had begun the permanent settlement. The community has most facilities, including a school, store, church, service station, clinic, aged care respite centre, water treatment works and an art centre. The art centre is an important community facility, and over the last 55 years the artists, particularly women, have created for themselves a well-deserved worldwide reputation for their high quality work.

**RIGHT:** David Kaus with Winifred Hilliard working on the documentation of the Hilliard collection.

**LEFT:** Clockwise from top; Nyukana (Daisy) Baker, 1960's, hand-painted scarf; Tjinkuma Wells, painting on card; Angkuna Kulyuru, 1951, child's drawing; artist unknown, wool scarf; Nyukana (Daisy) Baker, hand-painted wall-hanging; Alison (Milyika) Carroll, screen-printed wall-hanging; artist unknown, floor rug.

The National Museum is fortunate to have the strongest representation of Ernabella art and craft in a public collection. There are many beautiful examples of work for which Ernabella is renowned — especially batiks, paintings, hand-painted hessian wall-hangings and woollen floor rugs. The Museum's wonderful collection is mainly due to the efforts of one person, Deaconess Winifred Hilliard. She was craft adviser (this position is now called coordinator) at Ernabella from 1954 until her retirement in 1986. During her 32 years and afterwards at Ernabella, Win assembled a significant collection of Ernabella art and craft that she donated to the Museum. This incredible collection also includes material that helps tell the history of Ernabella itself — such things as children's drawings and biblical writings translated into Pitjantjatjara.

Ernabella was originally a sheep station. In 1937 the station's lease was transferred to the Presbyterian Church to create a mission. It was this mission's philosophy not to force Christianity on the Indigenous people, at the same time respecting their traditions, and the use of their languages. The mission worked to facilitate the adoption of those non-Indigenous practices and material goods that Anangu (the Pitjantjatjara word for people) chose to incorporate into their own culture. In line with this, some of the earliest art and craft items produced focused on spinning sheep fleece using traditional weaving spindles.

One of the most spectacular art forms produced at Ernabella is batik-decorated cloth. Artists at Ernabella were the first Indigenous artists in Australia to try their hand at batik. It is a good medium to use in remote communities because the technology it requires is simple. From humble beginnings in 1971 batik at Ernabella flourished, and its artists are represented in collections around the world.

To celebrate the beauty and significance of the Ernabella batiks, we published a small book of the batiks in Winifred Hilliard's collection in July. Of the 100 batiks in the collection, 84 are published in full colour. For cultural reasons we are not able to publish photographs of the remaining 16 batiks, as they were produced by artists who are now deceased and their names cannot currently be used publicly, nor can their works be shown. As well as featuring the batiks themselves, the book places batik production at Ernabella in its social and historical framework.

**David Kaus, ATSIP**



Dragi Markovic



Visitors look at the new Ernabella display which opened in May.

## New Ernabella Display in First Australians

This exhibition draws on the rich holdings of material from Ernabella dating from the early 1930s.

We were fortunate to receive some very important gifts of numerous objects, notably from Deaconess Winifred Hilliard who supervised the craft room for 32 years. These collections chart the development of Ernabella since white pastoralists settled there, the beginning of the arts centre in 1948 — at that time called Ernabella and Fregon Arts Inc. — through to the current thriving art centre, which continues to donate important objects. These donations help us to keep the collection up-to-date.

In order to maintain the good condition of the objects, there have been a number of changes to the display since it was first installed. In June a further change took place, with 25 new objects on show. This new selection includes not only some of the sumptuous batik fabric for which Ernabella is rightly famous, but also some of the most recently acquired objects — from *Tracking Kultja: The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Festival of 2001* and two ceramic vases, the first two pieces to have been produced at Ernabella.

One of these vases, designed by Nyukana ‘Daisy’ Baker, shows a beautiful fusion of batik and ceramic techniques, where the slip is applied with the tjanting, a tool designed for applying hot wax to cloth to create the wax-resist design before the cloth is dyed.

Daisy’s work appears in almost every state collection and in a number of overseas collections. Her work is represented by a group of eight of her objects on show, one of which is a stunning, detailed batik wrap-over skirt in rich browns and whites. Her mastery of a huge range of techniques such as batik, screen printing, rug making, carving and pokerwork, painting, seed necklace making and ceramics has earned her a place as one of Ernabella’s foremost artists.

Close to Daisy’s objects in the exhibition is a sculpture of a goanna made from dried spinifex grasses and raffia. Its features are highlighted in coloured raffia. This new technique of making sculpture using basket-weaving techniques evolved spontaneously,

and is one of the most engaging developments in recent years. Three of these sculptures have come into the collection.

An interesting group of objects at the beginning of the exhibition indicates the early change in practices in the community that occurred with colonisation and the change of land use brought about by the introduction of sheep to the area. These include a traditional spindle that would have been used for spinning human hair string, but which is wound with spun sheep wool. With this are samples of raw fleece, some spun undyed wool, a sample of plied and dyed wool and a scarf — the finished object in the chain of processes.

**Andy Greenslade, ATSIP**

**BELOW LEFT:** From fleece to object: fleece; traditional spindle; spun wool fibre; plied and dyed wool; and checked wool scarf. **BELOW RIGHT:** The first ceramic piece from Ernabella Arts Inc. using the “lost wax” batik technique to apply decoration to terracotta white slipped vase form. Artist Nyukuna (Daisy) Baker.



Dragi Markovic



Dragi Markovic

# EXHIBITIONS



At the Refined White opening, Director Craddock Morton with one of his rugby heroes, former Canberra Raiders and Australian rugby league test captain Mal Meninga

## Refined white

A travelling exhibition, *Refined White*, explores 140 years of South Sea Islander history using historic photographs and personal mementos. About 62,000 people from the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and other New Hebrides islands were transported to Queensland between 1863 and 1904 to provide cheap labour for sugar plantations.

While it pulls no punches, this

exhibition is balanced, informative and positive. On one hand it graphically depicts stories of coercion, deception, blackbirding, labour contracts, exploitation and fear of the escalating Islander population which prompted legislation in 1901 leading to the White Australia Policy. On the other, it celebrates survival, pride in identity and reclamation of heritage. It is an attempt to finish unfinished business and to heal past injustices.

It is a remarkable gesture of acknowledgment and commitment to reconciliation, that the industry responsible for the exploitation should be the one to bring the deeds to light. The exhibition, developed by the Australian Sugar Industry Museum at Innisfail, has toured to 13 venues over three years, and is supported by the Queensland Government's Multicultural Affairs and Centenary of Federation as well as the Commonwealth's Centenary of Federation and Visions Australia programs.

The exhibition was opened by former Canberra Raiders and Australian rugby league test captain, Mal Meninga,

himself an Australian South Sea Islander. He spoke about his South Sea Islander heritage and said the Federal Government's recognition in 1994 of Islanders as a distinct ethnic group with its own history and culture was a positive step for the community.

*Refined White* builds on the Museum's spirit of inclusiveness and diversity, telling the story of all Australians. It also demonstrates our commitment to dealing with the hard issues; of not shying away from the controversial in the interest of educating our audiences; and of enabling visitors to engage with a rich and shared history. Its location within the First Australians gallery demonstrates an interest in sharing our space with other marginalised groups to which we have strong links. Not surprisingly, some 50 per cent of the 20,000 identified Islanders are also of Aboriginal descent

*Refined White* continues the series of quality temporary exhibitions which have been displayed in the First Australians Focus Gallery.

**Margo Neale, ATSIP and Carly Jia, Exhibitions**

George Serras



Kaurua elder Josie Agius welcomes the people and exhibition to her country.

*Stories from Australia* was presented by the National Aboriginal Cultural Institute, Tandanya, in partnership with the National Museum of Australia, with the generous support of the Australia Council, Arts SA, Adelaide City Council, and the Adelaide Bank 2004 Festival of Arts.

## Stories at Tandanya

Tandanya was buzzing with colour, performance and people sharing stories at the opening of our exhibition *Stories from Australia: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples during the Adelaide Bank 2004 Festival of the Arts in South Australia*.

The exhibition, featuring cultural artefacts, picturesque landscapes and snapshots of history from different communities around Australia, was originally developed for the Guangzhou Museum of Art, China.

As several communities featured in both the festival and the exhibition, Festival Director Stephen Page and Tandanya Director Franchesca Cubillo were excited by the synergies between the two and invited the Museum to participate.

One of the most exciting and rewarding aspects of opening *Stories* at Tandanya was exchanging knowledge and skills and developing new friendships. Congratulations to all involved — it was a fantastic team effort!

**Amanda Reynolds, ATSIP**



**TOP:** Ngarrindjeri artist and Tandanya staff member John Packham with his children Kirsty, Colin (front left) and Jacob and Dr Doreen Kartinyeri.

**ABOVE:** Exhibition designer Peter Tonkin with co-curator Amanda Reynolds.

# 2004

**An exhibition of material from the Museum's collection has been on display for a second year at the offices of Reconciliation Australia, as part of the Museum's outreach program. This year's theme is 'Pathways to Reconciliation'.**

The striking window art by the latest recipient of the NAIDOC 2004 Aboriginal Artist of the year award for Canberra and district, Helen S Tiernan, attracts visitors to the shopfront of Reconciliation Australia. The exhibition is effectively a window into the Museum's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collection.



## Pathways to Reconciliation:

### From the National Museum of Australia Collection

Exquisite contemporary ceramics and glass work by Indigenous artists, including Thancoupie, together with a new stone tool pyramid installation, are on display in this exhibition. The stone tools installation highlights the master tool making skills of Australia's Aboriginal people, who achieved two world firsts with stone technology: the earliest ground-edge cutting edges are to be found in Australia; and Aboriginal people were the first to grind seed.

Aboriginal people understood the properties of different types of stone. They created 'tool kits', which were in some cases traded thousands of miles from their original source. The displayed stone tools from many regions of Australia include ground-edge hatchet heads, hammer stones, cores and grinding stones that could well be thousands of years old. The stone tool pyramid was installed by local Canberra company Liquid Design.

Co-curated by Margo Neale, Cameron Wood and Pen Roberts, this exhibition is a continuing development between the National Museum and Reconciliation Australia for the promotion of reconciliation.

More examples from the Museum's collection of 100,000 stone artefacts can be seen in the First Australians gallery.

**Cameron Wood and Pen Roberts, ATSIP**

**TOP:** Museum and Reconciliation Australia (RA) staff celebrating the opening of Pathways to Reconciliation, from left: Pen Roberts, George Taylor, Nancy Michaelis, Lee Burgess, Margo Neale, Craddock Morton, RA's Claire Tedeschi, Sharon Melnic, RA's Deborah Mitchell and RA's Edna Swift. Thancoupie's pots are in the foreground.

**RIGHT TOP:** Claire Tedeschi, Craddock Morton and Margo Neale beside the new stone tool pyramid installation.

**RIGHT MIDDLE:** Window art by Indigenous artist Helen S Tiernan.

**RIGHT:** Ernabella visitors, from left Roschelle Minutjukur, Petrina Windlass, Gina Tjitayi, and Jodie Riley illuminated by the Kimberley Points exhibit in the Stone Tools section in the First Australians gallery.



Photos George Serras



4–11 July 2004

# NAIDOC WEEK

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA CELEBRATED INDIGENOUS FILM-MAKERS, WRITERS, STORYTELLERS AND PERFORMERS DURING NAIDOC WEEK 2004.

NAIDOC Week is always a busy and popular time at the Museum, as visitors enjoy the opportunity to dance, paint, wobble, listen to a story or a lecture, watch a film, or discover something they haven't seen before on a behind-the-scenes tour.

To launch NAIDOC Week at the Museum one of Australia's National Living Treasures, Jimmy Little, talked with journalist and actor Rhoda Roberts about his remarkable musical career.

Throughout the week families and children were entertained by storytellers from Ngunnawal, Wiradjuri, Ngangiwumeri/ Ngangikurrungurr and Kabi Kabi country. Storytellers included Larry Brandy, Phillip Brown and Pilawuk. Shades of Brindle performed the Wombat Wobble show with a presentation that included storytelling, music and dancing for all the family.

Other performers included Oka with their traditional rhythms and electronic beats, as well as the Wiradjuri Echo dancers.

A special guest was writer in residence and Ngangiwumeri/

Ngangikurrungurr woman, Pilawuk White. Pilawuk shared her Dreaming stories from her country, Malfiyin/Peppimenarti along the Moyle River, south-west of Darwin in the Northern Territory, and conducted storytelling and writing workshops.

Throughout the week a variety of Indigenous films were also shown, ranging from the animated *Dreaming Series*, to *Yolgnu Boy* and *Whale Rider*. An Indigenous short film festival was also held, which showcased an array of Indigenous short film-makers including Rachel Perkins, Ivan Sen and Tracey Moffatt.

National Museum of Australia curator David Kaus led behind-the-scenes tours of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collection of objects not currently on display, and Michael Pickering, the Repatriation Director, shared stories about Indigenous repatriation at a public lecture.

**Denise Fowler and Mikki Goode, Public Programs**



*Bevan Smith of Wiradjuri Echo.*

Photos Dragi Markovic

# Repatriation at the Museum

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA HAS A LONG HISTORY OF FACILITATING THE RETURN OF ANCESTRAL REMAINS TO ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE.



*Wiradjuri man Larry Brandy tells one of his spell binding stories.*



*The Museum's Sue Emmerson with a customer at the boomerang painting workshop.*



*Ngangiwumeri/Ngangikurrungurr woman and writer Pilawuk with her son Niwili during her story writing workshop.*



*Facing Culture.*



*Dragi Markovic*

*The Repatriation Team from left: David Kaus, George Taylor, Sarah Robertson, Mike Pickering and Lee Burgess.*

In 2001 the Museum's success in this area was given added impetus with the formal establishment of a Repatriation Program Unit to manage the return of ancestral remains and sacred objects.

The Museum's holdings of human remains and sacred objects started with the transfer of the former Australian Institute of Anatomy collections in 1985. The Museum is also assisting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission in repatriating human remains from Edinburgh University, as well as the Foundation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Action, providing temporary storage for human remains and objects returned from the Horniman Museum, the Manchester Museum, and the Royal College of Surgeons, London.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services has recently sought the Museum's assistance in storing and repatriating remains and objects from the USA and Sweden.

Between 2001 and 2004 the Repatriation Unit has returned the remains of over 550 individuals to Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory, South Australia, New South Wales, Western Australia and Victoria. It has also returned 308 secret/sacred objects to communities of the Pilbara and Kimberley in Western Australia. This was part of a larger transfer, coordinated and managed by the Museum's Repatriation Unit, of 846 secret/sacred objects and 42 sets of human remains from several other Australian museums.

The care and management of such ancestral remains and secret/sacred objects are governed by the Museum's *Policy on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Human Remains* and *Policy on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Secret/Sacred and Private Material*.

The Repatriation Unit has been supported by funding from the Museum, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services, and the return of Indigenous Cultural Property Program — an initiative of the Cultural Ministers Council, and administered by the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts.

**Mike Pickering,**  
Repatriation Program Director

THE MUSEUM'S ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PROGRAM (ATSIP) STAFF OFTEN RECEIVE REQUESTS TO CONDUCT PERSONAL TOURS OF THE GALLERY. HERE IS A SNAPSHOT OF SOME OF THE TOURS GIVEN BY ATSIP AND INDIGENOUS MUSEUM STAFF IN 2004.



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Sharon Melnic

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# Visitors to First

## President of Lombardy Region, 3 March

A delegation of Italian business and industry representatives led by the Hon. Roberto Formigoni, President of the Lombardy Region, recently visited Canberra.

The group was keen to visit educational and cultural organisations. 'Culture,' said President Formigoni, 'represents the best way to strengthen the cooperation between our countries, which are both multicultural, tolerant of diversity and at the same time, strongly attached to their traditions.'

'Aboriginal culture is the world's oldest and most continuous living culture', said President Formigoni, 'There is something that we have lost and the Aboriginal people have preserved during the centuries: love and respect for nature and sensitivity for environmental issues. And I believe that this may be an important opportunity for us to learn from the Aboriginal people how to cultivate the values of common responsibility and mutual respect.'

'The First Australians gallery takes visitors on a real journey through space and time and I would like to congratulate the Director and staff of the Museum. I would also like to thank everybody for welcoming the Lombardy Region delegation in such a warm way.' The delegation's tour of First Australians was hosted by George Taylor and David Kaus.

## University of Virginia students, 12 May

As part of our 'Since Time Immemorial' display we currently have the painting *Karrku* (inside the cave) 1996 by Paddy Jupurrula Nelson, on loan from the Kluge-Ruhe Collection of Australian Aboriginal Art, University of Virginia. The collection curator, Margaret Smith Boles, and students from the University of Virginia visited the Museum in May. The nine students were touring institutions in Australia as part of a course called 'Exploring Indigenous Australia'.

Margaret Smith Boles was full of praises for the gallery and ATSIP staff. 'The visit to First Australians gallery with Dr John Mulvaney was one of the best tours of our trip to Australia. Highlights of the exhibit included the artefacts representing many different regions and cultures and the videotaped images and narratives that added so much to our understanding of Indigenous Australians. And, of course, we were pleased to see a work from the Kluge-Ruhe Collection on loan to the Museum for an extended period. Thanks so much to the Museum staff, and particularly Nancy Michaelis, for inviting us to afternoon tea and treats in the Friends Members Lounge and making our visit so special.'

Professor John Mulvaney hosted their tour of the First Australians gallery.

## Ernabella Women and Girls, 9 April

In addition to their appearance at the Canberra Folk Festival, a group of Ernabella women and girls performed in the Museum grounds during Easter. This was the girls' first touring trip and appearance at the Museum. Dance is an example of how the Ernabella women pass on cultural traditions to the next generation.

It was a bright, clear, sunny day as the women sang and the girls danced. Their performance was fresh and the girls were obviously enjoying themselves. The group also painted the faces of children in the audience.

The visitors took time to look at the Ernabella display in The First Australians gallery. Among the group of visiting women were artists such as Nungalka Stanley whose work appears in the Museum collection.

## Imam, 4 May

Ata-ul-Mujib Rashid, the Imam of the Ahmadiyya Mosque in Wimbledon, visited the National Museum of Australia on 4 May with a view to gaining an understanding of Australia's Indigenous peoples.

Imam Rashid represents a peaceful movement in Islam that claims 200 million adherents in 176 countries around the world. His community has set up schools and

Photos George Serras



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1) President of the Lombardy region, Roberto Formigoni gazes at the 53–59,000 year old piece of ochre on display.

2) After their tour, the University of Virginia students have afternoon tea in the Friends Lounge with John Mulvaney.

3) From left, Jodie Riley, artist Nungalka Stanley and Petrina Windlass pictured beside the Ernabella display in April.

4) The girls from Ernabella perform in the Museum grounds. From left, Ancina Windlass, Sharolynne Buzzacott, Jodie Riley, Tanya Edwards, Roschelle Minutjukur, Petrina Windlass, Yilpi Tjangala.

# Australians



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hospitals throughout Africa, and during his Australian visit he asked to meet people who could inform him about the life and history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

On 4 May he was shown around the First Australians gallery by host George Taylor and he also talked to other Museum staff.

At the end of his visit, Imam Rashid told members of the Canberra Ahmadiyya community how moved he had been by the experience at the National Museum.

## Coraki group, 7 June

Visitors from Coraki participated in the June AIATSIS ‘Keeping Your History Alive’ workshop organised by Jaky Troy, Director

of the New South Wales Aboriginal Languages Research and Resource Centre, an avid supporter of First Australians. ATSIIP’s David Kaus took them on a tour of the Museum’s Ethnostore at Mitchell and Margo Neale took them through the First Australians gallery with a discussion group after.

They thoroughly enjoyed seeing the exhibits in the Ethnostore and learning about the care needed to conserve artefacts. For them, the Museum tour was a highlight in the three days of a highly valuable workshop which focused on developing skills for conserving artefacts, and undertaking photographic and audio documentation of language and culture.

**Pen Roberts, ATSIIP**

5) The Imam (third from left) and his party with tour host George Taylor in the Torres Strait Islander gallery.

6) David Kaus on the right shows visitors from Coraki, near Lismore, the diversity of the ATSIIP collection. From left, Delma Cavanough, Kirby Barker, Simone Barker and Tein McDonald. George Taylor looks on.

# NMA Collaborates



Fellow collaborators: from left Ann McGrath, Margo Neale and Frances Peters-Little.

Margo Neale

COLLABORATION WITH UNIVERSITIES AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IS A CORNERSTONE OF OUR SCHOLARLY RESEARCH PROGRAM AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA. THE RESEARCH PROJECTS DIRECTLY INVOLVING ATSIP ARE:

### **Unsettling Histories: Australian Indigenous modes of historical practice — a research project with the Australian Centre for Indigenous History (ACIH)**

This three-year project funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC) is granted to Professor Ann McGrath and Frances Peters-Little from the ACIH and Margo Neale from the NMA. It has direct relevance to our program as it explores the different ways in which Indigenous people record and tell history, which include the intangible — oral and visual history, performance and ceremony. As the title suggests, we aim to unsettle current understandings of what constitutes Australian historiography, a field that has been shaped almost exclusively by 'settler' or coloniser perspectives. Outcomes of the research will include a photographic exhibition touring to remote communities, a monograph, exchanging history meetings in communities, as well as ABC TV Media and CD-ROM content.

### **Yale University collaboration**

We hosted the conference *Narrating Frontier Families: In Australia and North America* with the Australian Centre for Indigenous History (ACIH). The Museum's Public Programs also made a substantial contribution. It is a topic of great interest to us in the First Australians gallery where families and stories are key elements, and where our exhibition on Frontier Conflict itself was the subject of a high profile and controversial conference in 2001. We are interested in expanding our study of the frontier by taking a fresh approach to the broader concept of life on the frontier. We went beyond the usual discussion of frontier violence to other aspects of life — the domestic, families, relationships, intermarriage, co-existence, and acts of cooperation as well as conflict. The conference included five scholars from Yale University, including the Deputy Director of the Howard Lamar Centre for the Comparative

Study of Frontiers and Borders — a link we hope to develop. Distinguished speakers included Native American academics such as Professor Clara Sue Kidwell and Indigenous and non-Indigenous speakers from the ACIH, ANU and NMA. The conference was part of a rich program of public lectures, postgraduate workshops, and a study tour to Darwin in collaboration with Charles Darwin University.

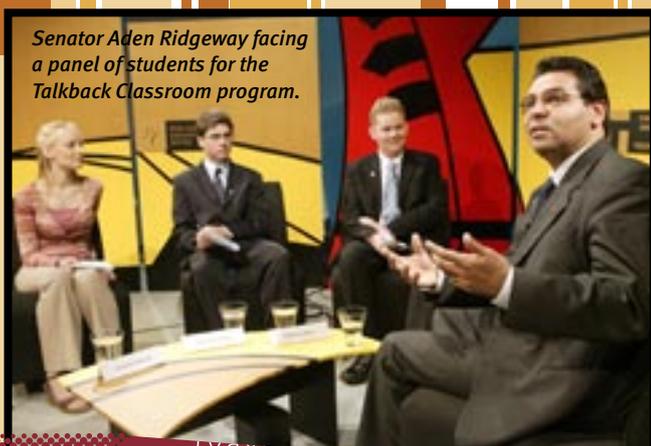
### **Collaborating for Indigenous Rights with Monash University**

This three-year research project, also funded by the ARC, is a large collaboration between Monash University, the NMA, National Library of Australia, State Library of Victoria and the National Archives of Australia. It traces the collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people for the rights of Indigenous Australians since 1958. The expected outcomes are an exhibition, workshops and a publication.

### **Art and Human Rights with the Humanities Research Centre at ANU**

This is the second three-year grant awarded by the ARC to this project. It will continue to develop an interdisciplinary model to research, record and develop the relationship between art and human rights, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. The first project was considered to be very successful, with an international conference, *Witnessing to Silence*, across three national institutions (NMA, NGA and ANU), and a series of multi-sited exhibitions and performances across Canberra. This time we will explore human rights issues through the work of artists in countries such as Australia, the Philippines, India, Japan and the Pacific. The collaborators include a human rights lawyer from London University, senior curator and director of ATSIP (NMA), a cultural theorist from the University of Canberra, an art historian from ANU, and an academic/artist from Griffith University in Queensland.

**Margo Neale, ATSIP**



## SCHOOLS PROGRAMS

The Museum's Schools Programs offer a number of Indigenous Programs for school students. We have included an insert listing these programs with this issue of the newsletter. There is a kids' colouring-in activity on the back of the sheet. A recent guest to Talkback Classroom at the Museum was Australian Democrat Senator Aden Ridgeway. Talkback Classroom is a popular monthly forum for senior school students broadcast on ABC Radio Australia-wide. It allows students the opportunity to engage members of Parliament and other public figures in discussions on issues of importance to young people.

George Serris

YESTERDAY  
TOMORROW

The Edmund Joel Dicks collection 1930–1940 includes two unique examples of naturalistic art associated with portrait sculpture produced in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The plaster bust of Truganini (1803–1876) and the low-relief plaque sculpture of William Lanney (1834–1869) are retrospective representations. Truganini and William Lanney lived during the 1800s at the time of the Black War, the official campaign of terror inflicted on the Indigenous people of Tasmania between about 1804 and 1830. They were courageous survivors of this conflict, and at the time of their deaths they were each erroneously considered to be the last man and woman of their race.



Dragi Markovic

William Lanney by Edmund Joel Dicks. Low-relief sculpture.

**William Lanney** was, as a child, one of the last Tasmanian Aborigines to be captured and sent to Flinders Island. He was a pupil at the Orphan School in Hobart between 1847 and 1851 and, as a young man, a whale spotter of great expertise serving on the Hobart based whaling ship Aladdin, and the whaler Runnymede. When the Duke of Edinburgh visited Hobart in 1868, Lanney was introduced as the 'King of Tasmanians'. He contracted cholera on a whaling trip and died shortly after at Oyster Cove in 1869.

*The bust and the plaque depict the prevailing attitudes of Europeans to the Aboriginal people of Tasmania in the nineteenth century.*

# Collection News 2004

**Truganini was a vibrant, beautiful and courageous woman**, the daughter of Mangerner, an Elder of the Bruny Island people, and a heroine of her people. Throughout her life, she witnessed their unrelenting destruction by murder and disease. In 1826, Lieutenant George Arthur, the Governor of Tasmania, ordered the capture of Aboriginal leaders in a bid to confine them as a group to the offshore islands. George Robinson, a former builder and lay preacher, was appointed by Governor Arthur in 1829 to administer provisions and solicit the cooperation of the Aboriginal people at the newly established settlement of 500 acres at Missionary Bay on Bruny Island. The settlement failed, and Robinson embarked on an eight-month expedition through Tasmania to bring together the remaining Aboriginal people, ostensibly to protect them from further European persecution. Truganini and her husband Woorradly accompanied Robinson on this mission in a bid to save those of their people who had survived the guerrilla war. By 1835, most of the Aboriginal people left in the vicinity moved to Wybalenna settlement on Flinders Island, almost 50 kilometres away. Robinson wanted to christianise the survivors and teach them European farming techniques, but the venture failed as many died of malnutrition and introduced diseases. In 1847 Truganini and the remaining few people from Flinders Island were relocated in an abandoned settlement in Oyster Cove on the Tasmanian mainland. This site was vacated because it did not meet convict health standards and most of the Aboriginal people died. In 1873, Truganini was the last survivor at Oyster Bay. She died in Hobart in 1876.



Dragi Markovic

Truganini by Edmund Joel Dicks. Plaster Bust.

Nancy Michaelis, ATSIP

## Other important acquisitions include:

» **John Johnson's artwork *The Last Wave* 2003, which reflects the artist's own prison experience and the issue of incarceration.**  
 » Lino print, *Kaiwalogal*, purchased during the Gab Titui Cultural Centre opening, Thursday Island.  
 » **A small group of Kimberley artefacts from the 1960s including shields and hafted spearheads, donated by Bruce Wright.**

» **A palm-leaf container from north-eastern New South Wales, Yarrowarra Aboriginal Corporation.** » A small group of stone implements from the eastern Kimberley, collected by Roger Hobbs when he was conducting a geophysical survey there in the 1970s.  
 » **A collection of 14 glass lantern slides depicting various subjects dealing with**

**Aboriginal cultures. These were probably used by WR Harper during his talks on Aboriginal cultures to the Committee of the Royal Anthropological Society of Australasia, of which he was a member between at least 1902 and 1907.** » A Bardi raft made in the 1980s by Roy Wigin (Wiggan Bahgai) from the One Arm Point community near Cape L'Esveque, WA.

## Coming up 2004/2005

### Urban Focus – April 2005

An exhibition which focuses on the development of material culture in the urbanised regions of Indigenous Australia. It explores influences, adaptations, and use of new technologies and cross-cultural collaborations.

### Changeovers in the Museum's galleries, 2004–2005

New material will be introduced in several existing modules in First Australians including Ngunnawal, Fishing and Contested Frontiers. All changes continue to be developed in consultation with local communities.

### Collections Story, 2004–2005

Highlighting the lives and methods of some of the collectors who have contributed to the Museum's collections, this exhibit replaces the current exhibit 'Images of Cooperation'.

### Wik Commission

A large project to commission new work from the Wik people of Aurukun is being planned to meet increasing demands on our current collection.

Entries and dates are subject to change.

\* All exhibitions are free unless otherwise stated.

**Correction:** Jack Wherra did not produce his incised boab nuts during his prison term as stated in the March 2004 issue. The nuts were carved by Wherra between 1964 and 1966 at Mowanjum as a commission.



## Next Issue

Curator Amanda Reynolds will introduce readers to the new Tasmania and Victoria modules in the First Australians gallery and talk about the opening weekend of activities and talks.

**Meet some more of our Mates ...** March/April

**RIGHT:** Kelp armour 2003, by Vicki West, bull kelp (seaweed), synthetic thread. **LEFT:** Drawing shows the possum skin cloak collected in 1853 from Maiden's Punt (Echuca).



## Mates of the First Australians Gallery

has been established in response to widespread interest from Indigenous communities and supporters of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander program.

### Our aim is threefold. We seek to:

- strengthen our connections with communities and supporters
- gain support and advice on collections, exhibition development and other programs
- encourage endorsement of the Museum throughout the community.

(See enclosed nomination form to join today for FREE.)

### Benefits

As a 'Mate of the First Australians Gallery' you are entitled to a special offer from the larger group, **Friends of the National Museum of Australia**. Join now and get three months FREE. Contact the **Friends** on (02) 6208 5048, or email [friends@nma.gov.au](mailto:friends@nma.gov.au). Make sure you mention 'Mates Rates'. Other benefits for the Mates of the First Australians Gallery are currently being negotiated.



View of entry to the Torres Strait Islander gallery in the lower level of the First Australians gallery.

**NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA**  
C A N B E R R A

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**Website:** [www.nma.gov.au](http://www.nma.gov.au)

**Opening hours:** 9.00am to 5.00pm daily (except Christmas Day)

The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander News from the National Museum of Australia* can be downloaded from our website [www.nma.gov.au](http://www.nma.gov.au)

If you do not wish to receive future newsletters please let us know.