

ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

news
FROM THE NATIONAL
MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA



NATIONAL
MUSEUM OF
AUSTRALIA
CANBERRA

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Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander News

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Main: Roslyn and Ron 2003, photo: Sharon Aldrick

Bottom left: Norman Shillingsworth – Didj Champ, photo: Lannon Harley

Bottom middle: Kimberly West of Goolarri Media Enterprises, photo: Jeremy Lucas

Bottom right: Ably Clarke the Blue Budgie 2002, photo: Mark Coffey

Gallery of First Australians photos (right)

Left: *Paipa* exhibition, photo: Dean McNicoll

Middle left: Frontier Conflict, photo: George Serras

Middle right: *Tooloyn Koortakay*, photo: George Serras

Right: Freize multimedia installation, photo: George Serras

Email: image@nma.gov.au

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



Photos: George Serras

I would like to acknowledge the Ngambri and Ngunnawal people of this area and other Indigenous people who have made Canberra their home. Welcome to the fourth issue of *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander News* from the National Museum of Australia.

Things are hopping in ATSIP with the recruitment of new staff; a new traineeship scheme; great success with significant acquisitions at recent auctions; the extraordinarily successful launch of two community-based exhibitions and an accompanying forum; great new partnerships; some wonderful new exhibitions in development including some thinking about a collection-based international exhibition and a staffing re-alignment. My new title is Principle Advisor to the Director, more about that in the next issue.

We once again introduce you to a selection of new Mates from the 40 or so who have joined our Mates program since the last issue. They come from such diverse areas as the performing arts, academia, visual arts and of course they include a community representative from the Walgett shire who have been the stars of one of our recent exhibitions.

We are working towards a community exhibit to be located in the First Australians Focus Gallery. It is a highly participatory experiential exhibit based on a recreation of the Broome-based Indigenous radio and television station, Goolarri Media Enterprises with which we have developed a close collaboration.

Other stories in this magazine include NAIDOC Week celebrations, exhibitions such as *Our Community: A Great Place to Be!* and *Pooaraar: The Great Forgetting*, the forum 'History Through a Lens' and visits from our Indigenous brothers and sisters from around the world. With images and stories we cover our attendance at the awesome Dreaming Festival in Woodford (Qld) and visits to Broome (WA). We have also been out and about, working with communities, running training sessions at Lake Mungo (NSW) and filming in Brisbane (Qld) and Perth (WA) for the *70% Urban* exhibition. Connection with communities through the Museum's repatriation program is also the subject of an important story.

Once again we look forward to your comments on the magazine and suggestions on what you would like to see more or less of.

Margo Neale



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS IN BRIEF



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA

Since the last issue, I have been to Darwin for the annual meeting of the Council of Australasian Museum Directors. This enabled me to visit Kakadu for the first time, see the amazing rock art at Ubirr and to experience a Guluyambi cultural cruise on the East Alligator River. I also attended the Telstra Art Awards at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory.

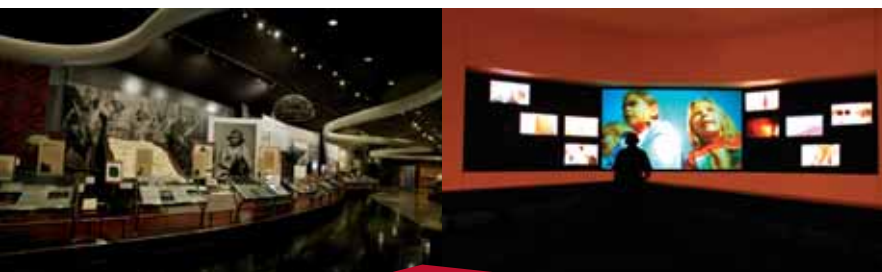
I was impressed with the work *Tjanpi Grass Toyota* which won the Telstra art award and the way it clearly demonstrates the process of continuing culture through the fusion of old traditions and new forms. The collection and display of material culture that shows the way Indigenous cultures evolve by incorporating new objects of significance, such as the Toyota, in the process of cultural maintenance, is of great interest to museums of the 21st century. We know that the use of Toyotas in communities, often purchased from the proceeds of paintings, give people who are removed from their personal dreaming sites the opportunity to visit and reconnect more regularly — thus the origin of the well-used term, 'Toyota Dreaming'. The woven large-scale Toyota with real Toyota bits embedded, is not only an exquisite example of traditional skills but is also a metaphor of how western material culture is proactively absorbed into Indigenous culture. Works like this are profound, paradoxical and pertinent.

While in Darwin I was lucky enough to bump into Mandawuy Yunupingu in the hotel lift. He had spoken very impressively the previous evening about the Garma Festival to be held in Arnhem Land next year and I told him that I thought it would be great if the Museum could be involved in the festival. We are now following this up, hopefully as a precursor to becoming more involved and supportive of an even wider range of Indigenous cultural activity in the communities. It's an important part of our outreach programs. Watch out for progress in this area in forthcoming issues and on our website.

Craddock Morton

- >> Margo Neale, Anna Edmundson and Barbara Paulson attended the Museums Australia conference 'Politics and Positioning' in Sydney. Whilst there they liaised with communities, acquiring research material for future Gallery of First Australians (GFA) exhibitions and collections development.
- >> David Kaus received a Staff Fellowship Award to research the history of breastplates. This research has resulted in a report and is being reviewed for publication and a future exhibition.
- >> James Warden presented a paper titled 'Aboriginal Australia in the European imagination' as part of the Museum's winter series of lunchtime seminars. He also presented a paper for the AIATSI seminar series titled 'Trials and Aboriginal history: Facts, evidence, proof'.
- >> Margo presented a paper titled 'Putting Raiwalla in the picture' at the 'History Through A Lens' forum. She also presented a paper 'Black Power from the site of the White: Jimmy Clements (King Billy) and John Noble (Marvellous) at Old Parliament House 1927'.
- >> Brian Robinson, curator from the Cairns Regional Gallery, worked in consultation with staff from all sections of the Museum for the development of a new exhibition in the Torres Strait Islander gallery.
- >> Dr David Lawrence from the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, ANU, visited the Museum to discuss the history of collecting and researching Torres Strait Islander material in overseas museums.
- >> Margo and Barbara visited Brisbane in June where Margo launched *Shoosh! The History of the Campfire Group*, a retrospective exhibition and book at the Institute of Museum Art. They also attended the successful Woodford Dreaming Festival. On their return to Brisbane, Margo and Barbara joined Jeremy Lucas and a film crew to spend two days filming content for a vox populi (voices of prominent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, activists and writers) for the Museum's forthcoming *70% Urban* exhibition.
- >> Margo conducted her annual cultural awareness tour program in July for international delegates from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
- >> Professor Vivien Johnson, who is currently a consultant curator to the Museum for the exhibition *Big Canvases: The Lost Chapter of the Papunya Tula Story*, gave an exhibition preview at a lunchtime seminar. *Buried Treasures: Big Papunya Tula Canvases from the Collections of the National Museum of Australia* was very well received as this collection has not been seen in public for 30 years.
- >> Katherine Henderson has joined ATSIP on a three-month, part-time internship. Katherine is working with Anna on the TSI exhibition *Dari a Krar: Headdresses and Masks of the Torres Strait*.
- >> Jen Wilson has been researching and assessing material in the large and diverse Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation collection which was donated to the Museum in 2000.
- >> Christine Hansen, a PhD student from the Australian Centre for Indigenous History, ANU, is undertaking research as part of an ARC Linkage Grant project in partnership with the Museum. She is working with the community in Eden, NSW, researching the role of material culture in contemporary Indigenous communities and community relationships with museums.
- >> Andy Greenslade is curating the new Seven Sisters display in the Gallery of First Australians. It will include recently acquired woven sheep's wool and emu feather armbands and human hair and emu feather headband by Ungakini Tjangala. These relate to the Seven Sister story performed at the Museum during Tracking Kultja: The National Indigenous Cultural Festival in 2001.
- >> Nancy Michaelis and David Kaus have selected material that reveals how the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collections came into the Museum, for the *Captivating and Curious* exhibition celebrating the National Museum of Australia's 25 years of collecting. It will be open to the public from 14 December 2005. Entry is free.

Nancy Michealis
Curator



Meet some of our mates



Mathew Poll



Sandy Collins and Jasmine Gulash



Don Lillyman



Frances Rings



Jennifer Wilson



Professor Vivien Johnson

>> Mathew Poll I am from the north coast of New South Wales. I grew up in Byron Bay and my family name is Watego. I have been interested in the arts since I was young and have worked in a number of galleries and museums including the Museum of Contemporary Art and Wollongong City Gallery. Last year I worked as an Indigenous arts facilitator on the award-winning Warali Wali public artwork project in Western Sydney. Currently I am working as the Artistic Director of Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Co-operative and am putting together an exciting collection of exhibitions of urban Aboriginal art for our 2006 exhibition program. Boomalli is at 55–59 Flood Street, Leichhardt in Sydney and is open from Tuesday to Friday. Everyone is welcome.

>> Sandy Collins and Jasmine Gulash A body language expert would probably say given I'm clutching Jasmine's hand and leaning into her that I've got some 'dependency' issues — and they'd be right! Jasmine is Company Manager and I'm Business Manager of Bangarra Dance Theatre. We spend a lot of time together discussing what's best for the company. I depend on Jasmine to give me the benefit of her cultural and artistic knowledge, which informs both the day-to-day business decisions, and long-term goals of Bangarra. We are a major performing Arts Company and arguably the most visible and well-known Indigenous company. We are often seen as 'all things to all people'. Jasmine's frankness and spot on 'gut feel' provides invaluable perspective in a minefield of issues that the Company faces from time to time. We aim to balance best business practices with cultural and artistic integrity so that the Company as a whole is never compromised and maintains a strong work ethic. Jasmine and I tend to hang out together and talk shop a lot, which others find a little daunting. Perhaps the best summation would be in the words of Rhimi Johnson Page backstage at the Opera House during *Boomerang*, 'Youse two are so corked up'.

>> Don Lillyman is a prominent member of the Walgett community and participates in many community activities such as the Tourist Association, the Crime Prevention Plan, of which he is chairperson, and the local Kamilaroi/Uraluri Language Program. Don is from a farming family that has been in the district for 100 years. His main focus is to promote the positives of living and working in the Walgett shire and to appreciate the rich social and environmental aspects of living in rural New South Wales. He expressed pride

in the positive and intimate representation of his community in the exhibition *Our Community: A Great Place To Be!*

>> Frances Rings Hiya all, I'm a Kokatha woman from South Australia. Well, this year has been one of changes for me. I decided to leave Bangarra Dance Theatre after 12 years working with them, firstly as a principal dancer and then later as a choreographer. I have some wonderful memories of my years with the Company including performing at the opening of the National Museum of Australia. I have recently conducted dance workshops with kids in western New South Wales. I'm presently in South Australia working with my sister Gina Rings and choreographer Leigh Warren on a work titled *Petroglyphs* to be performed at Tandanya Aboriginal Cultural Centre. Next, I'll be choreographing a work for students at the Queensland University of Technology. It's been a good thing to embrace change I've learnt more about myself as a performer/choreographer and how much I have to offer as an artist.

>> **New member of the Curatorial team** Jennifer Wilson Hi! I joined the Museum in May, as a Curator in ATSIP. Home for me is regional south-east Queensland, but I have spent the last three and a half years in Longreach as Curator of both the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame and Qantas Founders Outback Museum. I am enjoying working with the team and look forward to getting to know the staff and the fantastic collection better.

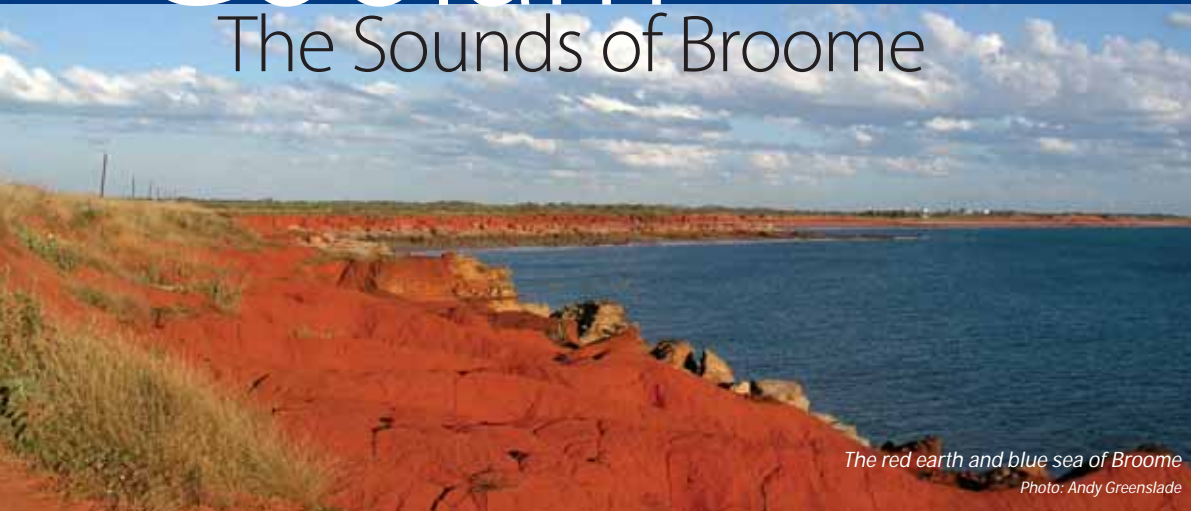
>> Professor Vivien Johnson Vivien Johnson is a Sydney writer and researcher who has been studying Western Desert art, especially Papunya Tula artists, for 25 years. Her work on Indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights has had wide social impact. She recently completed a five-year ARC Australian Professorial Fellowship at the Centre for Cross-Cultural Research ANU, and is currently the New South Global Professor in Indigenous Art and Culture at the College of Fine Arts UNSW. She is the Editor in Chief of the Dictionary of Australian Artists Online project, and the author of numerous books and articles on Indigenous art. Her most recent publication *Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri* (AGSA 2003), accompanied a national touring retrospective, which she curated. Vivien is currently working with the Museum researching and developing an exhibition based on paintings from the Museum's collection.

Goolarri

The Sounds of Broome

Cameramen 'Edo' Hine and Clinton Ferstl at work during coverage of the Saturday 'footie' matches in Broome.

Photo: Jeremy Lucas



The red earth and blue sea of Broome
Photo: Andy Greenslade



In March this year, Senior Curator Anna Edmundson and I travelled to Broome to meet members of the Goolarri organisation. We took with us the Museum's Production Manager, Jeremy Lucas, to investigate the practicalities of documenting in film the growth of Goolarri, and in particular, the radio station. Goolarri were wonderful hosts and discussions were soon under way with Dot West and Kevin Fong about how we could work collaboratively to create an exhibition about Goolarri that also gives a broader view of the Broome region.

The Broome region in Western Australia is a major cultural hub for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Broome is a thriving community, a melting pot of cultures from Australia, the Torres Strait, Asia and Europe, which has produced a number of well-known musicians, recording artists and actors as well as the Stompem Ground Festival.

One of the most distinctive sounds of Broome is that of Radio Goolarri which first went to air in 1991. Ali Torres, Bobby Bowles and Arnhem Hunter made the first broadcast from the ABC studios, with a program of just 55 minutes on air. The program was well received. Until that time the region was only serviced by the ABC. Little local news was heard on the radio — at least none of the good news stories from the area.

Pallas Masina and Robert Lee during filming in the radio studio with 'Edo' Hine behind the camera and Clinton Ferstl on sound.

Photo: Jeremy Lucas



From this first program a regular weekly slot developed and the local Indigenous community could at last hear its own music on the radio. For a town that has produced so many talented musicians this was a great development. As Chairperson of Goolarri Media Enterprises, Stephen 'Baamba' Albert, says, 'music is our bedrock in so many ways'.

Radio Goolarri began to grow and soon licences were won to broadcast radio and television independently to the Broome area. Goolarri Media Enterprises was formed to manage both the radio and television — GTV35. Today the organisation is something of a media empire, with its own licensed television and radio services, production house and recording studio. It offers training in film, television and radio, a recording studio for local musicians, and support for Indigenous people in all areas of the media. The organisation produces a vast range of programs, from local language and cultural knowledge stories to the latest in community affairs.

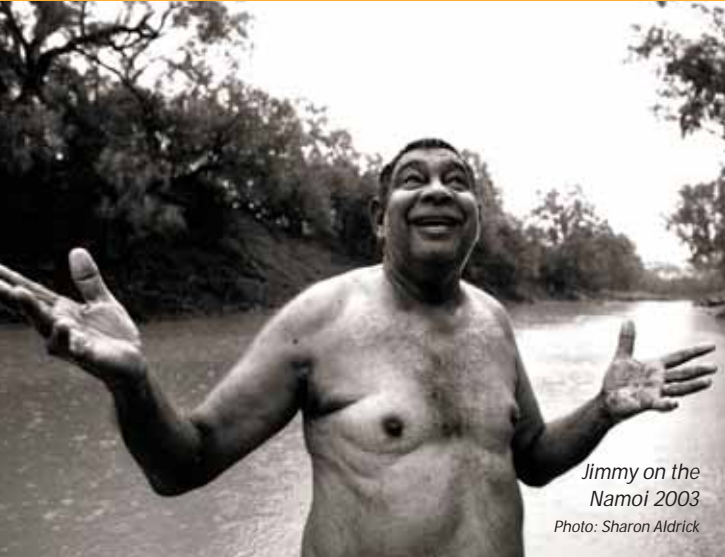
Goolarri radio encapsulates Broome life in microcosm by catering to the demands of the large multicultural community. Although Goolarri's primary business is getting Indigenous talent out into the mainstream, it also encompasses the needs and interests of the non-Indigenous community and acts as a bridge between the two.

One of the challenges that faces a community-based organisation is the problem of succession and of maintaining the creative energy. New blood is needed to keep the zeal or, as Kevin Fong, Managing Director, describes it, 'the hunger for airtime'. Goolarri has ensured that the first years of hope and achievement can develop into a mature organisation with well laid strategies for sustainability. One strategy successfully implemented was Goolarri becoming a registered training body with its first year of graduates safely through training. It can now provide quality staff with the skills required for future development. Goolarri has big plans for the future, but perhaps more of those in a later article.

The Goolarri module will open in early 2006.

Andy Greenslade
Curator

The Opening of *Our Community: A Great Place To Be!* and *Pooaraar: The Great Forgetting*



Jimmy on the
Namoi 2003
Photo: Sharon Aldrick



Gordon Hing, Deb Walford, Shirley Hing and Aunty Florence
Photo: George Serras



Richard Lake and Vic Beale
Photo: George Serras

At 10.00am on Thursday 30 June the Hall filled with an unusual collection of people in anticipation of the launch of two exhibitions — *Our Community: A Great Place To Be!* and *Pooaraar: The Great Forgetting*. In addition to our loyal and enthusiastic regulars from other cultural institutions around Canberra, there was Red Beard and Dragi Panich; opal miners from Lightning Ridge; Don Lillyman, a member of a pastoral family who have been a part of the Walgett shire for 100 years; Aunty Thelma Thorne, Walgett's famed doll collector and Aunty Florence Kennedy, Walgett's local historian. There was much added excitement and reminiscing as some Canberra residents of Chinese heritage were reunited with Walgett people they knew from their days in the shire. Elders Vic Beale and Richard Lake warmed the audience with their Walgett song, 'Where two rivers meet', which they performed to loud applause. Geoff Page, well-known Canberra poet, caught up with Rena Estik, the 92-year-old 'great' friend of Pooaraar (Bevan Hayward), who had flown from Perth especially for the occasion. Other members of the late Pooaraar's family, resident in Canberra, also attended what clearly felt like a big family reunion. Few exhibition events achieve such a great sense of belonging.

The front rows of the audience were occupied by the Walgett shire mob ensuring a very engaging and participatory launch. As intended, they clearly saw this as their show. There were yells of support, clapping, tears, laughter and lots of head nodding as each and every speaker and performer touched a nerve. James Henry played the soundtrack from the film *Our Community* at the beginning of the official proceedings and closed the launch with some of his own original songs dedicated to Walgett, family and community.

Aunty Agnes Shea, a local Ngunnawal Elder welcomed everyone. As MC for the day, I spoke about the significance of community, what it looks like, and how it is a lifesaver for many Aboriginal families. Aunty Agnes and I spoke of how Aboriginal people have a very strong connection to community because when we are removed from our land, ties with the past and our history, we risk it being lost forever. As we tried to resist the protection acts that demanded assimilation aimed at taking away our language, our custom and our children, we had to live on the run. When you live on the run you lose things. But for those who could stick together, they could keep the connections alive. Aunty Agnes took this opportunity to specially acknowledge the Museum, the Indigenous programs in particular, for working so closely with so many communities. She told how the Museum

can educate people about tough issues through human stories and experiences in a way few other places can.

Professor Larissa Behrendt a Uralarai/Kamilaroi woman spoke of her personal journey of finding her way back to her people in the Walgett shire after her grandmother was 'taken' decades earlier. New connections were made when some elders in the audience remembered the story of her family and made the links.

Geoff Page, author of the book *The Great Forgetting*, spoke about Pooaraar as an artist and a friend and the collaborative process of this interracial literary and artistic project.

Amid all the excitement Senator Gary Humphries officially launched the exhibitions stating, 'this museum is the place to gain insight into the Australian experience. The exhibitions capture the passion people feel for their communities in a way you wouldn't know about unless you lived there'.

Margo Neale
Director and Senior Curator



James Henry Photo: George Serras

Pooaraar The Great Forgetting

NAIDOC Week 2005 saw the launch of the exhibition, *Pooaraar: The Great Forgetting* in the Gallery of First Australians at the Museum. The exhibition was a collaborative project between the Museum, Canberra poet Geoff Page and Noongar artist Pooaraar (Bevan Hayward). Sadly, Pooaraar passed away before the completion of the project but his memory and his art were honoured at the opening. It was attended by a number of the artist's friends and colleagues including special guests Geoff Page and Rena Estik. The exhibition was opened by Senator for the ACT, Gary Humphries. Geoff Page also spoke eloquently about his work on *The Great Forgetting* publication and his relationship with Pooaraar.

The exhibition featured 22 striking pen-and-wash drawings by Pooaraar. These works were originally commissioned to illustrate the poetry of Geoff Page for the book *The Great Forgetting*, co-published in 1996 by Aboriginal Studies Press and the National Museum of Australia. All 45 of those sketches are now in the Museum's collection.

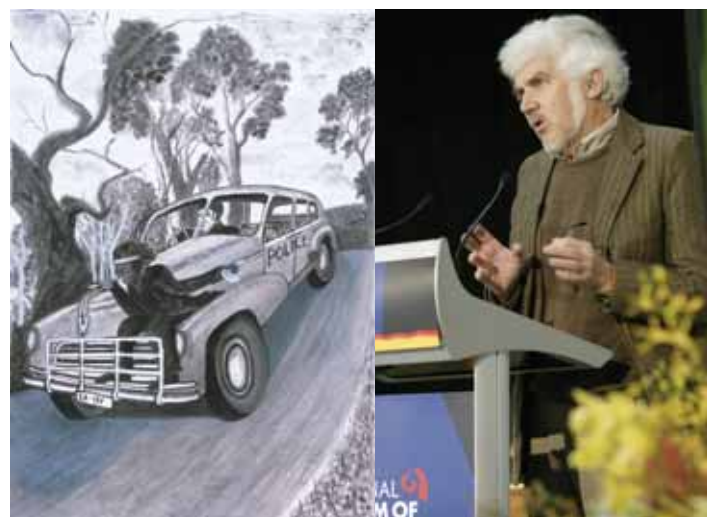
The exhibition reflects upon some major themes resulting from over 200 years of interaction between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Australia. Its themes include frontier conflict, land rights, mission impact, and the Aboriginal art movement — told through the poetry of Geoff Page and the imagery of Pooaraar. It is a stimulating and thought-provoking exhibition which will appeal to anyone interested in Australian Indigenous history and culture. The exhibition will tour nationally in 2006 to selected venues.

Anna Edmundson
Senior Curator

Top: From left to right — Rae Estik, Anna Edmundson, Geoff Page
Seated: Rena Estik viewing the exhibition.

Left: Jimmy James, pen and wash sketch, *Pooaraar* (Bevan Hayward), 1994. [Jimmy James (Mitamirri), was a famous black tracker who worked closely with the South Australian Police. After he retired from tracking, he worked with schools in the 1980s teaching tracking, cultural lore and sharing his stories.]

Right: Geoff Page speaking at the launch of *Pooaraar: The Great Forgetting*.



Photos: George Serras

Our Community: A Great Place To Be!

Gabrielle Hyslop and Senator Gary Humphries tour the exhibitions

Photo: George Serras



(back) Aunty Faye, Crystal (front) Aunty Thelma, Andrew, Allan, Gordon, Deb, Shirley, Aunty Florence and Don

Photo: George Serras

'You have to be tough to live in a town like Walgett.' Sharon Aldrick

The walls of the Gallery of First Australians were populated by an extraordinary array of 55 photographs depicting people from the Walgett shire in north-west New South Wales, their lifestyle, their country and their celebration of community. While one may think there is nothing unusual about an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander program celebrating community when 'community' is the keystone of the program — in this case there is. The community being celebrated is one that has been portrayed by the media for decades as one of the most socially dysfunctional and racially divisive one in Australia.

This view is reinforced when visitors to the town see the heavily barred windows in the main street and a welcome to Walgett sign that reminds you that 'you are under 24-hour heavy surveillance'. Walgett was the birthplace of the Aboriginal civil rights movement coming to public attention with the Freedom rides which staged the first of a number of protests against discrimination in Walgett on 16 February 1965.

However, you see none of that in this exhibition! Instead you see a compelling counter view. A view that only those who live there can give you. It is about a community choosing to define itself in terms of people regardless of cultural background and how residents are united by mutual pride and a deep commitment to their place and to each other.

Heartening images draw you in with their profound humanity and joy of life. It is the extraordinary in the ordinary that entices the viewer. While the images are organised around themes that are common to all communities — family, women, livelihood, social life and country — the overarching theme of Aboriginal culture in multicultural rural Australia is a subject one rarely hears about. There is the intimate and engaging portrait of Ron, an old white miner from Lightning Ridge and Roslyn his Aboriginal companion of 25 years. His crinkled, white, smiling face stands in stark contrast to her glistening and jovial black face. This large close-up image personalises the concept of reconciliation with an immediacy and poignancy not achievable with the standard linked black and white hands image normally used. In addition, there are images of life in the shearing shed, at the rodeo, in the pub, at the debutante ball and in their homes.

Jimmy Little is seen dipping in the waters of the Namoi River, bare chested with arms outstretched and sporting the biggest smile as he looks upward taking in the precious drops of water.

The exhibition includes three short films. *Our Community* is a superb film produced by Frances Peters-Little and directed by Sean Kennedy. Many of those depicted in the exhibition relay their candidly refreshing views about why they love living where they live. There is a rap video with young Walgett kids performing their own material and relating their own views of life in their community. *Claire's Tobacco Tin* is a moving and personal story of a woman called Claire Simpson. This film traces the story of black/white contact in the area as told by her granddaughter Frances Peters-Little after the discovery of Claire's tobacco tin from a former campsite.

The images by photographers Sharon Aldrick, Ron Black and Juno Gemes were immediately animated when a busload of the main characters from Walgett shire descended on Canberra for the launch. It was truly a family/community event which ran over two days. They stole the show at every turn: the grand opening; the community workshop which they led; the forum 'History Through a Lens' and the reception in their honour in which the Aunties plied Museum staff with johnnie cakes and emu egg cake, and guitar playing songster James Henry had everyone singing along.

Being able to have their community showcased at the National Museum of Australia with the ongoing associated programs, including a future tour of the exhibition, was a huge boost to their resolve. They expressed bucket loads of gratitude in many ways over the few days with tears, hugs, words and gifts, with one man saying that the experience at the Museum was the highlight of his life. Mind you, our gratitude towards the 'Walgett mob', as they became known, was reciprocal.

Margo Neale
Director and Senior Curator

This exhibition is one outcome of a project that started in 1998 when Frances Peters-Little, then Visiting Research Fellow of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies in Canberra, undertook a 12-month study on the concept of 'what constitutes a community?'

History Through a Lens

UNSETTLING HISTORIES: VISUAL MODES OF HISTORICAL PRACTICE

It is customary for the ATSIP team to follow the opening of community-based exhibitions with community-led workshops. The forum was based on the premise that the photographic record is a visual mode of historical practice which is underrated in Australian historiography. It also focused on how the historic archive created by non-Indigenous photographers has become a powerful political and cultural tool for use by Indigenous people in our struggle for reclaiming rights, reaffirming relationships and correcting historical erasures. As Aunty Agnes Shea said:

photos are strongly linked to community and culture. Photographs are like people, they hold our memories, they are ways of seeing our history.

As I said:

Traditionally, people kept objects that tell them who they are and where they belong in special sites and keeping places. For us urban mob our keeping places are in our homes, in biscuit tins, shoe boxes and albums, and now on museum walls. Aboriginal people are crazy about family photos and use them all the time to strengthen kinship ties and to reconnect with the past.

The day was structured around four panels which interspersed community sessions such as 'Focusing on community' featuring the exhibiting photographers and film-makers associated with the session 'Community voices'. This session featured Walgett shire people including the deadly strong black woman, Debra Walford, the go-ahead new mayor-administrator Hugh Percy, the university lecturer turned opal miner, Dragi Panich and the older Aunties — Thelma Thorne and Faye Sands. They all spoke from the heart with such sureness and commitment about what constituted a community. Even more impressive was that they had no speaking notes or powerpoint presentations, rather they just responded to the occasion, to the audience and to each other with a level of genuineness and direct honesty not normally typical or possible in such forums. They spoke about race relations, local issues, the level of care people have for each other and the pragmatic approach to life embodied in the statement 'that we have absolutely nothing but we have everything'. What they had most of all was their overpowering pride in their place and their unswerving commitment to overturning the town's reputation caused by decades of continual bad press.

Our academic panels were ably led by colleagues from our partner institution, the Australian National University (ANU) Professor Adam Shoemaker, Dr Melinda Hinkson, Professor Ann McGrath and Frances Peters-Little. Papers were presented by academics representing ANU, Melbourne University, Charles Darwin University and Monash University. Presenters included Dr Catherine De Lorenzo — 'Community photography and activism: Engaging with Redfern'; Dr Catherine Summerhayes — 'David MacDougall's Link-Up Diary: A cultural performance of "exposure" as new history'; Dr Jane Lydon — 'Revisions: Current Koori uses of colonial photography'; Professor Heather Goodall — "'Karoo": Communities reclaiming historical and anthropological photos'; Professor Nicolas Peterson — 'The Yolngu community as photographed by Donald Thomson, 1935–1942'; Dr Leonarda Kovacic — 'The emotive power of the visual'; Dr Silvia Kleinert — 'Metro marriage: Reading assimilation "against the grain"'.

The 'History Through a Lens' forum was acclaimed as a highly textured day with an extraordinary level of interaction between the audience and panels, and between academic and community views. Unlike your usual panel of three to five people, the Walgett shire community panels had up to 13 people 'telling it how it is'. These panels were interspersed with academic panels which in combination gave a three-dimensional view of the topic — with grounding and relevance.

Margo Neale
Director and Senior Curator

Our Community: A Great Place to Be! was a collaboration between the National Museum of Australia and the Australian Centre for Indigenous History (ACIH) at ANU. It was also part of one of the two Australia Research Council (ARC) grants the Museum has with the ACIH entitled 'Unsettling history: Indigenous modes of historic discourse' — in other words 'how black fellas tell history outside the written text'. Frances Peters-Little, Margo Neale and Ann McGrath are partners in this research project.

Photos: Dragi Markovic



Sean Kennedy



Community panel

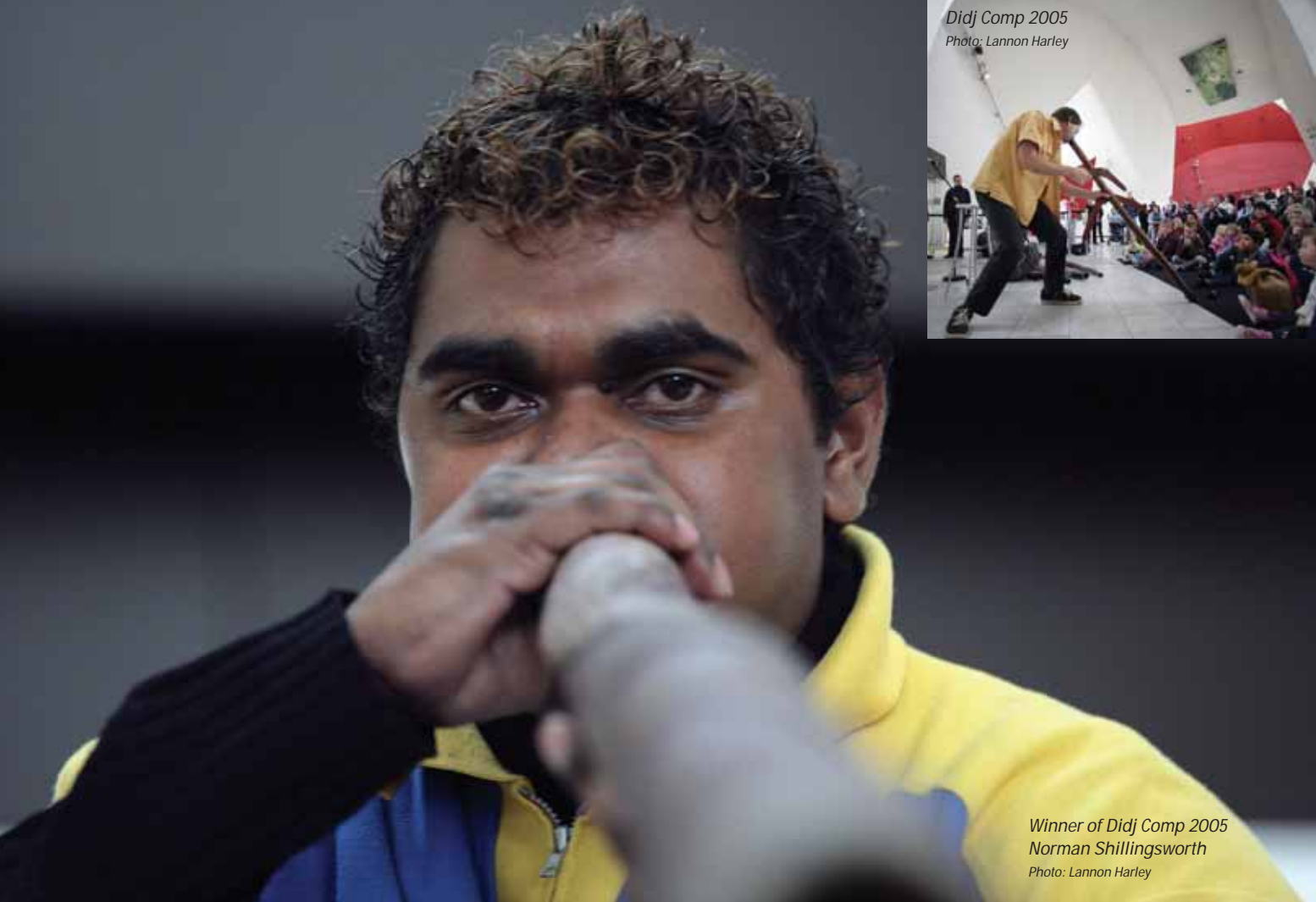


Heather Goodall



Frances Peters-Little

NAIDOC 2005



Didj Comp 2005
Photo: Lannon Harley



Winner of Didj Comp 2005
Norman Shillingsworth
Photo: Lannon Harley

Sing the Desert



Shane Howard and Warren H Williams share their story through song.
Photo: Lannon Harley

'Out here nothing changes, not in a hurry anyway' Goanna

This forum, facilitated by ABC broadcaster Vincent Plush, was the final in a series linked to the exhibition *Extremes: Survival in the Great Deserts of the Southern Hemisphere*. It was also the last event in the Museum's celebration of NAIDOC Week.

Warren H Williams, an Arrernte man from Hermannsburg, spoke and sang about his love for his desert country. Shane Howard, of the legendary band Goanna, described a journey to Uluru where

Arts and crafts workshop

Photo: Dean McNicoll



Music workshop with Johnny Huckle

Photo: Dean McNicoll



Interactive storytelling with Phillip Yubbagurri Brown

Photo: George Serras



This year's NAIDOC program was jointly celebrated at Acton by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and the Museum. The week's program was held in conjunction with the Museum's new exhibition *Our Community: A Great Place to Be!* which explored the cultural and social diversity of communities in north-west New South Wales and celebrated the Aboriginal cultures of western New South Wales.

The program had a strong family focus and featured musicians, storytellers and performers from western New South Wales and beyond. Children painted emu callers and danced to the music of Wiradjuri-Wongaibon woman Helen Moran during her 'booked-

out' workshops. Phillip Yubbagurri Brown, Paul Hodosi and Norman Shillingsworth entertained a capacity crowd with music, dance and storytelling. Wiradjuri Echo performed in the Hall of the Museum to a large audience and Johnny Huckle entertained families at the weekend.

A highlight of the week was an open day on Acton Peninsula where visitors were able to enjoy family activities with Katrina Solberg and Kewwi and Friends at the Museum as well as a range of programs at AIATSIS including access tours and emu and kangaroo sausage tastings.

Other highlights included the second Indigenous short film festival that featured special guest Nathan Ramsay who co-wrote

and starred in *Prejudice* and the screening of award-winning films *Yellow Fella*, *The Djarn Djarns* and *Green Bush*.

The music of Arrernte man Warren H Williams and the sound of didjeridus were a feature on the last day of NAIDOC Week when the first annual ACT didjeridu competition was held. The competition was the idea of 'Corroboree Man' Phillip Yubbagurri Brown who donated the cash prize and trophy. The winner, by popular applause, was Norman Shillingsworth from Brewarrina.

Overall a very successful week with booked out workshops, performances and family activities. We can't wait until next year!

Denise Fowler
Public Programs Coordinator

the surroundings and his experiences with the local Pitjanjatjara people inspired him to write 'Solid Rock' — one of the great popular songs of the 1980s. On a classical note, composer Andrew Schultz and librettist Gordon K Williams played excerpts from their moving cantata 'Journey to Horseshoe Bend', featuring the women's choir from Hermannsburg singing in Arrernte. The cantata tells the story of Pastor Carl Strehlow's final journey through the Finke River in 1922 as seen through the eyes of Pastor Strehlow's 14-year-old son, the famous TGH Strehlow.

Denise Fowler
Public Programs Coordinator

Photo: Lannon Harley



ATSIP NEWS

All articles by Barbara Paulson unless otherwise stated.



Pekka Aikio, Mick Dodson, Margo Neale, Eddie Watkins and Jan Keskitalo

Photo: Dean McNicoll

Saami representatives visit Gallery of First Australians

The Gallery of First Australians (GFA) hosted an information session for the National Centre for Indigenous Studies 'Dialogue Series' which focused on land management and sustainable living. Mr Aikio and Mr Keskitalo were Professor Mick Dodson's special guests and were invited to the ANU and CSIRO workshop and the Museum because of their experiences in Saami sustainable resource management practices. The Saami people live traditionally across four countries — Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia — in what is now called a 'sustainable' way. Through the gallery tour, guests gained insights into the diversity of Australian Indigenous culture and the sociopolitical positioning between Indigenous people and government in Australia and discussed comparative experiences. Both Mr Aikio and Mr Keskitalo were pleased to see references to Saami in a GFA display which refers to other Indigenous nations around the world.



Sarra family and friends enjoying the festival (Back) Ezra, Grace, Joan Alberts, Chris, Talia (front) Marcellus and Margo Neale

Photo: Barbara Paulson

The Dreaming Festival

Margo Neale and Barbara Paulson, representing the Museum, attended the inaugural Dreaming Festival held at Woodford this year. It was a passionate celebration of national and international Indigenous cultures. The showcase of diverse cultural stories, materials and expressions in traditional, contemporary and fusion styles ignited the imagination of the estimated 5000 who attended. The three-day program attracted some of the best Indigenous talent in dance, theatre, literature, music, visual arts and comedy. It was a credit to the Queensland Folk Festival and Artistic Director Rhoda Roberts to pull off, in such a short time, a cross-cultural, multi-generational festival program, that was engaging and enjoyable on many levels. The Dungidau people, traditional owners of the area, had a strong presence throughout the three days, and were proud to support the festival. One Dungidau elder stated 'the spiritual positivity and joy in the air is so strong that everybody who comes can't help but be embraced by it'.



Vivien Watson, Sue Emmerson & Linda Puckett

Photo: George Serras

Fond farewell to Sue Emmerson

Sue Emmerson started work with the National Museum of Australia as a Visitor Services Host in 2001. She was a positive contributor to the team and provided an Aboriginal perspective to visitors and her Host colleagues. As an artist, Sue used her musical and painting skills in the education and support of the Host team. She would often take on extra duties with the Museum's Public Programs section, working with a broad range of visitors many of whom were Indigenous children. A Badjitala descendant with South Sea Islander heritage, Sue hails from the Hervey Bay region of Queensland. Sue was an original member of the Hosts Indigenous Support and Interest Group and encouraged participation in the group by all Museum staff. Sue is currently on 12 months' leave from the Museum to reconnect with her spiritual and cultural heritage. The Visitor Services team would like to thank Sue for her contribution over the last four years and wish her well on her journey.

Alison Manders
Hosts Team Leader



Duncan Smith plays for royal guests Crown Prince Frederik and Crown Princess Mary of Denmark.

Photo: George Serras

Crown Prince Frederik and Crown Princess Mary of Denmark visit the Museum

The Danish Royal Crown Prince Frederik and Crown Princess Mary visited the Museum on 9 March 2005. Public and staff lined the walkway from early morn to secure the best position. The couple were very friendly and took the time to meet and greet everyone and receive flowers from some of the children in the crowd before embarking on an extensive tour of the Museum. They spent a significant amount of time in the Gallery of First Australians guided by Margo Neale and Amanda Reynolds. There was also a special didjeridu performance by Duncan Smith of Wiradjuri Echo.



Photo: Katrina

National Day of Healing

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Program team participated in the Australian National University's (ANU) National Day of Healing (previously called the Sorry Day ceremony) program of events on Thursday 26 May 2005. The day began with a gathering at *NGARAKIA: Shrine for the lost Koori* and participants trekked a path through ANU to various points for a smoking ceremony, conducted by Ngunnawal elder Matilda House, a tree planting ceremony, poetry readings by Dennis Foley and Bruce Clayton Brown. The day was emotive and filled with various expressions of grief, empathy and prayers of healing. There was acknowledgement for those who have suffered injustices as well as promotion of respect and appreciation between Australia's first peoples and the wider community towards a positive future. The day's program ended with a barbeque and live music by the James Henry Band.



Peter Christophersen and Sandra McGregor tour the Gallery of First Australians

Photo: George Serras

Visitors from Kakadu

Peter Christophersen and Sandra McGregor live in Kakadu and practice traditional fire management techniques. They are pictured in front of the *Burning Kakadu* (2000) image by Mark Lang in the Gallery of First Australian's display, Indigenous Tools.

Both Peter and Sandra attended the ANU and CSIRO Indigenous engagement workshop organised by the National Centre for Indigenous Studies. The workshop, held at CSIRO in Canberra, focused on discussions of diverse Indigenous experiences in resource management in Australia and overseas. Part of this workshop involved a special tour of the Gallery of First Australians.



Photo: Trish Albert

Youth visit from Country NSW

A group of Aboriginal youths from Bourke, Narromine and Lake Cargelligo visited Canberra for a few days at the end of July. The group participated in an Indigenous education program at the Museum. At the beginning of the program, students handled artefacts before working in groups in the Gallery of First Australians. Once in the gallery, they photographed and recorded information about each of their chosen objects, then returned to an education room to create a large poster of their experiences.

Michael Brown, Centacare supervisor said, 'The group's trip was made possible by the Centrecare's "Dream the Pathways" project supported by AMP. The visit to Canberra was to enable youth from rural areas access to services and educational opportunities, to broaden their social skills and gain an awareness of future career options. The program provided by the Indigenous Education Officer kept the students on their toes

throughout the entire morning. The boys loved taking photos in the gallery and everyone put in a big effort to make creative posters at the end. We loved the program's interactivity and variety. It really suited the students and I believe they got a great deal out of the program'.

Trish Albert
Senior Indigenous Education Officer

Repatriation Unit

METROPOLITAN LAND COUNCIL (SYDNEY)

The Repatriation unit consults with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over ancestral remains and sacred artefacts in its care. Acting under their instruction, the Museum returns items to traditional custodians or continues to house items on their behalf. During 2004, remains were returned to a number of communities including Sydney's Metropolitan Land Council. As with other returns, this one occurred at the conclusion of a process which identified the correct custodians and followed a request by them to have the remains returned for burial. In October 2004, representatives from the council visited the Museum's Repatriation unit to collect the remains. They were then taken back to Sydney where they were kept with other local remains until they could be reburied. The council held a commemoration ceremony for the handover and reburial of the remains in March of this year, which took place at Sydney Harbour National Park at North Head, and staff from the Museum's Repatriation unit were invited to attend. We were taken by the Land Council's boat *Tribal Warrior* from Pyrmont to North Head. Afterwards, we were invited to be present at the reburial which was a special privilege for all of us.

David Kaus
Curator

Chicka Madden, Adam Madden and Allen Madden.

Photo: David Kaus



PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY



Photo: Dragi Markovic

Repatriation team Sarah Robertson, Mike Pickering, Susan Whitby

Among the staff of the Museum's Repatriation unit are two physical anthropologists, Sarah Robertson and Susan Whitby. The term 'physical anthropologist' conjures images of people in white coats holding skulls and calipers. Times have changed, however, and the new 21st-century physical anthropologist is required to have a strong understanding of the ethics and protocols of repatriation.

The work of the Repatriation unit is bound by Museum policy and professional ethics. No research is carried out on provenanced remains without community approval nor is information on remains provided to external agencies. The Museum does not do any research or testing of remains which may cause deterioration but does offer to put communities in contact with suitable specialists if particular information is requested.

Physical anthropology makes two very important contributions to repatriation. Firstly, it assists with the provenancing of remains and secondly it provides communities with information about their ancestors' lives.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people want remains returned to their country. Unfortunately, when ancestral remains were collected in the past, accurate records of where they came from were not always kept. There are a number of ways in which physical anthropologists can assist with identifying the remains' provenance.

Sometimes the provenance was written on the remains, which was a common Museum practice of the 1800s and 1900s. Much of this writing has faded but with different coloured lights such as ultraviolet, sometimes the writing can be seen again. If there are no paper records and no writing on the remains, physical anthropologists try other methods. The different appearances of Indigenous populations across Australia are reflected on their remains which are compared and measured to try and determine their provenance.

The physical anthropologists at the Museum are asked to write plain language reports for communities. In these reports we explain how we determine the age, sex and health of an individual and how long ago they might have lived. The goal of these reports is to give back an individual identity to ancestral remains, and to help current community members know more about, and relate to, their ancestors. This information can be very important for some communities as it can affect burial practices.

A challenge that the Museum has faced in the repatriation of overseas remains is in cases where individuals have been mixed up. Sometimes as many as eight individuals from different locations have been stored together. By comparing the size, colour, preservation, pathologies and details of bones, we have had tremendous success in reuniting remains. This process is called individuation. Sometimes remains are too fragmented to be reunited, or only one or two bones have survived. Nonetheless, even a single bone is treated as an individual, respecting the individual's dignity.

Communities are becoming more comfortable with the fact that the skills of physical anthropologists can be used to their benefit — as a resource to assist in the repatriation of their ancestors.

Susan Whitby
Physical Anthropologist

Collection Stories

Photo: Mark Coffey



ALBY'S RIDE FOR RECONCILIATION

Glittering colour has recently entered the displays in the Gallery of First Australians. A helmet and two cycling outfits, one made entirely of bright blue-sequined material, have been generously loaned to the Museum by their owner and wearer, Alby Clarke.

Albert (Alby) Clarke was born and raised at Framlingham Aboriginal Settlement. He is a Gunditjmara Elder in the Warrnambool community and developed a love of cycling in his teenage years. In 2001, he became the first Aboriginal rider to complete the Melbourne to Warrnambool Classic Bike Race, and was inspired to take on a greater challenge.

In 2002, at the age of 67, Alby completed a 3300-kilometre bicycle ride from Perth to Warrnambool, Victoria, to promote both reconciliation amongst Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, and the benefits of fitness. To assist Alby with his aim, seamstress Sue Thomas created an attention-grabbing, blue-sequined ensemble for the ride. Alby dyed his hair blue to match and the support crew affectionately called him the 'Blue Budgie'. Photographer Mark Coffey even captured Alby standing in a field of canola, otherwise known as 'budgie food', near Gawler in South Australia.

Alby's story received enthusiastic community and media support, and he stopped to meet and greet as many people as possible during his journey. Photographs from the colourful ride were developed into the photographic exhibition, *A Ride with Alby*, shown at the Warrnambool Art Gallery in November 2002 as a 'thank you' to the community.

This story is a new display in the Gallery of First Australians. Alby will soon be preparing for another possible ride, this time from Warrnambool to Darwin.

Jennifer Wilson
Curator

Photo: George Serrras



GOVERNOR DAVEY'S 1816 PROCLAMATION OH, NO IT'S NOT!

This poster was acquired recently by the Museum. Curiously, it is not what it says it is and — to our surprise — it is not what we originally thought it to be. Let me explain ...

The poster dates from the mid-1860s when thousands were printed on card as a souvenir of Tasmania. The image was copied directly from handpainted slender wooden boards produced in 1829 by the government surveyor of Van Diemen's Land, George Frankland. He was distressed at the unfolding disaster of the frontier encounter and sought to find a way to communicate with Tasmanian Aboriginal people about friendship, reciprocity and justice amid the erupting violence of the 'Black Wars'. Governor Arthur endorsed the exercise and an unknown number of boards were produced to be distributed to small bands of people and nailed to trees in an attempt to stay the killing. The Proclamation Boards, like all other strategies, failed.

Later, during renovations to Government House in Hobart, one of the original boards was found beneath the floorboards, prompting the production of the lithographic poster as a souvenir for the Tasmanian stall at the Intercolonial Exhibition in Melbourne of 1866 and the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1867. The pidgin caption and the erroneous heading were added with clearly no historical sense as 'Mad Tom' Davey was an earlier Governor with no connection to these events.

The poster is a valuable historical curiosity for many reasons including its rarity — only eight original boards are known to remain. On closer examination by conservation staff at the Museum, an anomaly has been noticed. This poster is not printed on card but on calendared (heavily rolled) fabric. It may also be handpainted rather than a lithograph. These two facts make the poster unique. Indeed, it may be the prototype of the poster. So, not only is it not what it says it is, but it is not what we thought it was. It is something much better and requires much more historical work.

The image itself remains evocative.

James Warden
Curator

Other Important Acquisitions...



Photo: Dragi Markovic

Decorated turtle shell painted about 1977 by a collective of artists from Mornington Island. It has been decorated with 13 totemic animals significant to the Lardil people. The shell was donated to the Museum by Blair Gardner under the 2005 Cultural Gifts program.

- >> Medal awarded to Major James Winniett Nunn
- >> 19th-century basket from Lake Alexandria, South Australia
- >> Bicornial basket from north-eastern Queensland
- >> Mayngu Dhoeri pearl shell headdress by Audi Gibuma of Boigu Island
- >> Beizam hammerhead headdress by Ken Thaiday Snr
- >> Ceremonial headdress from Alice Springs area
- >> Painting titled *Medicine Story* (1971) by Uta Uta Tjangala
- >> Fish net (about 1975) by Anchor Galumba from Arnhem Land
- >> Carpet snake carving by Billy Stockman Tjapalljarri
- >> Snake carving about 1973 by Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri
- >> Shield by Albert Woodlands of La Perouse, New South Wales
- >> Aboriginal breastplate (1834) for Billy Lambert
- >> Aboriginal breastplate (1870) for Milly of the Burunji people
- >> Lithograph of Governor Arthur's proclamation board
- >> Spear tip, spear thrower and club from Kalgoorlie

David Kaus
Curator



Charley York Chief of Bullangamang breastplate

Next Issue

Highlights from the launch of the Goolarri: Sounds of Broome module. A sneak peek at *Dari a Krar*, the new Torres Strait Islander exhibition. More about the breastplates and other objects in our collection. Updates on new and continuing projects such as *Big Canvases: The Lost Chapter of the Papunya Tula Story* exhibition. A report on CAAMA's 25th Birthday. Margo's research project 'Indigenous Ways of Telling History' and David's Lake Mungo workshops.

Meet some more of our Mates ... March–April 2006

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



A view from inside the Torres Strait Islander gallery.



Ken Thaiday's headdress.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA CANBERRA

National Museum of Australia

GPO Box 1901, Canberra ACT 2601 Australia

Telephone: (02) 6208 5000 or 1800 026 132

Fax: (02) 6208 5398

Email: Mates@nma.gov.au

Website: 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

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