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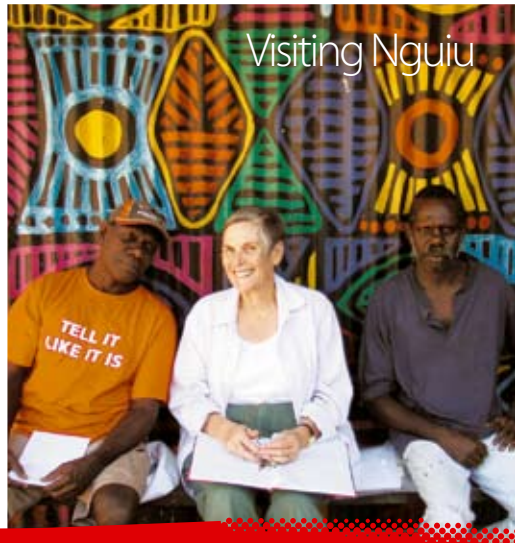
ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER news

FROM THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA

Kimberley Girl style comes to Canberra

Commissioned *dhari*

Coota' memorial



Visiting Nguiu

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA CANBERRA

Contents

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander News

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Cover photos

Main: Shulyn Hunter and Emily Jones, past winners of the Kimberley Girl competition, inside the *Goolarri: The Sounds of Broome* studio, photo: Dragi Markovic

Left: George Nona and *dhari* commissioned by the Museum, photo: Dean McNicoll

Middle: Lola Edwards and Cec Bowden at the Cootamundra Girls' Home memorial, photo: George Serras

Right: Connell Tipiloura and Cyril James Kerinaiua with Nancy Michaelis in Nguiu, photo courtesy Nancy Michaelis

Gallery photos (these pages)

Left: Shields from all over Australia on display in Open Collections, photo: Dean McNicoll

Middle: Baskets display illustrates diversity of Indigenous knowledge and techniques, photo: Dean McNicoll

Right: 'The Link–Up' and 'Forget Me Nots' displays illustrate some of the experiences of the Stolen Generations, photo: Dean McNicoll

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MESSAGE FROM THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA

Photo: George Serras

I am really pleased, in my role as Acting Director of the National Museum of Australia, to be able to make a contribution to this issue of the *Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander News*. I'd first like to acknowledge the Ngambri and Ngunnawal peoples as traditional custodians of the lands upon which the National Museum is built.

It will certainly be a busy year for the Museum. This year marks the 40th anniversary of the 1967 Referendum in which the constitution was changed to allow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to be included in the census, and the Australian Government to legislate for Indigenous people — a significant milestone and a turning point in Australian Indigenous affairs.

As part of the anniversary of this event the Museum will participate, over the next few months, in the Drawing Together Art Competition, initiated by the Australian Public Service Commission. The Museum has also developed and produced a display on the 1967 Referendum in the Gallery of First Australians.

In March 2007, the Museum opened the exhibition *70% Urban*. This exhibition will run until early 2008 and showcases works from the Museum's collection. It explores the history and experiences of Indigenous Australians as they engage with the process of urbanisation. It demonstrates the power of art in communicating an often ignored aspect of Indigenous history.

All this is just the tip of the iceberg. I hope you enjoy reading about some of the other activities and events the Museum is currently working on.

Suzy Nethercott-Watson

Open Collections

Photo: Dean McNicoll

MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL ADVISOR (INDIGENOUS) TO THE DIRECTOR, AND SENIOR CURATOR

Welcome to the seventh edition of the *Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander* magazine. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this area, the Ngambri and Ngunnawal peoples, and others who are now part of our Indigenous Canberra community.

After 12 months of operation, the Indigenous Employment Working Party has been reconvened by the Director as the Indigenous Employment Implementation Group (IEIG), which he now chairs. This enables its recommendations to be implemented at the executive level. Cultural awareness training for the whole Museum is the first thing to be put in place, thus going some way towards ensuring a receptive environment for other programs we are committed to. These include Indigenous cadetships, graduate placements, and an Indigenous employment coordinator in the Employee Relations and People Development section. We are exploring short-term contracts for remote community people to gain experience at the Museum so they can contribute to the industry and assist their own communities. The Museum is also forming alliances with Indigenous education units such as the Indigenous Knowledge Centre at Charles Darwin University and the Jabal Centre at the ANU.

We would like to see Indigenous people working across the Museum to provide Indigenous perspectives in areas as diverse as publishing, marketing, public programs, education, conservation and the more technical areas as well as the curatorial areas such as society and nation and the environment and people.

As mentioned briefly in the last issue, the Museum is producing a series of 18 education books for Rigby on Indigenous art, history and culture authored by senior Indigenous education officer Trish Albert. These will roll off the presses later this year. In the area of scholarship, there will be more focus on research into Indigenous histories with the establishment of our new research centre. More about this next time.

Margo Neale
Adjunct Professor (History Program, ANU)

Photo: George Serras

MESSAGE FROM THE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PROGRAM DIRECTOR

I'd like to acknowledge the Ngambri and Ngunnawal peoples, in recognition of their long history in Canberra and that the Museum is built on their traditional lands, and in continued appreciation of the important contribution they make to the Museum's cultural life.

There's a lot happening in this issue of the magazine. The ATSIP team has been extremely busy. We opened the exhibition *70% Urban* in March and full marks go to Andy, Barbara and Margo for their effort and commitment. Jay and Kipley have worked hard and fast on a display celebrating the 40th anniversary of the 1967 Referendum.

The Museum has acquired some new and interesting objects. The objects themselves are fascinating but just as important are the stories that come with them. It's one of the rewards of working in a museum to have the opportunity to consider the number of stories that any object can tell. Two articles by Christine Hansen provide examples of this — a boomerang, a finely produced item of material culture, becomes a commentary on an historical event and an aid to expanding the biography of Albert Namatjira. A 45 r.p.m. record becomes an iconic object in telling the story of Harold Blair. Nancy shows how a newspaper photograph can be used to tell so much more about the life, times and challenges of the boxer Dave Sands.

I must acknowledge the work of other Museum staff. Any exhibition, publication or conference is the result of the work of many contributors, from store managers, to conservators, to publishers, to hosts — even accountants. The efforts of these people are often unseen and unacknowledged but are essential to the successes of programs and events coordinated by the ATSIP team.

I hope you enjoy the stories in this issue of the GFA magazine.

Dr Michael Pickering

Upper Gallery of First Australians

Lower Gallery of First Australians

Meet some of our **Mates**

Photo: Barbara Paulson

Larry Brandy

Photo: Dean McNicoll

Soozie Gillies

Photo: Barbara Paulson

Jenny Newell

Photo: George Serras

George Serras and Dragi Markovic

›› **Larry Brandy** Hi! I live in Canberra and for years have taught both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people about my Wiradjuri culture. I currently work at the Department of Family, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) as a Leader Support Officer. My role is to assist and support Indigenous people who participate in the Indigenous Community Leadership Program. The stone tools display is one of my favourites in the Gallery of First Australians because it features the work of Roy Barker. Roy makes stone tools in the old way using spinifex resin and kangaroo sinew. Some of the artefacts I use in my storytelling and cultural sharing workshops were made by Roy and I would love to see some of the younger generation — especially Koori kids — learn the old techniques of making and using these tools. About 15 years ago I worked with archaeologists for several years learning about artefacts and Aboriginal history. From this experience I became more knowledgeable about my culture and gained confidence in sharing my cultural knowledge with others. I like the way the GFA educates both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people about Indigenous cultures from all over Australia. This gallery demonstrates to me that there is acknowledgement of the value of Indigenous culture and knowledge, and it recognises just how intelligent Aboriginal people were in living in their own environment.

›› **Soozie Gillies** Hello! I'm Palawa mob from the north-west coast of Tasmania. I've lived in Canberra for the last 12 years and am currently the General Manager of Ngunnawal Aboriginal Corporation. I first saw the Museum site when they started building it. When it was finished in 2001 I thought 'What an interesting building' and I kept saying to myself 'I really should take a look'. I never thought it would have a great deal of significance to me as an Indigenous person as I always had that perception of museums as places where they keep our ancestors' remains locked up and studied for research. In about 2004, I eventually visited the Museum and saw the Tasmanian display in the Gallery of First Australians. I saw Aunties and friends I knew pictured on the wall, saw the objects and stories presented and I thought 'Wow! They actually acknowledge that we exist!' Historically, Tasmanian Kooris have struggled for recognition and for me personally to have representation of my mob in the National Museum of Australia acknowledging our people and culture in such a respectful way was a positive affirmation and a very emotional moment. It was a powerful experience for me, I am proud to be Tasmanian Aboriginal and I fully support the Museum's efforts to continue to give Indigenous communities and people the space, time and respect necessary to tell their stories.

›› **Jenny Newell** Hi, I've just arrived from the British Museum as a visiting curator. I'm here on a four month exchange with Ian Coates, of ATSIP. Ian is going to London to work on the British Museum's Australian collections and I am working on the National Museum of Australia's Polynesian collections, as well as contributing to an exhibition of Aboriginal art. It is lovely to be here — ATSIP is a great team — and I grew up in Canberra so I have been catching up with family and friends. Before moving to the United Kingdom five years ago I was studying history and doing a PhD in Tahitian Environmental History at the Australian National University. One of the most rewarding aspects of being at the British Museum has been the opportunity to meet and learn from people from all over the world, particularly from the communities who have, over time, created the stunning objects we work with. My time at the National Museum of Australia is a chance to continue that process.

›› **George Serras** I started working with the National Museum of Australia in 1999 and have been the Museum's senior photographer since 2003. The Museum offers a diversity of work that I haven't previously experienced in my career, ranging from photographing historic glass photographic plates from the Basedow collection to recording significant events such as visits by our Repatriation section to communities on Curtis Island, Queensland, and in Darwin. In 2000 I also visited the Torres Strait to photograph the Torres Strait Cultural Festival and, in 2003, travelled to Central Australia to document the moving and significant 75th Anniversary of the Coniston massacre. The aspects of my work that I love the most are our collections, the diversity of work and the opportunity to meet a variety of Indigenous visitors to the Museum.

›› **Dragi Markovic** I'm one of the Museum's photographers, having joined the Museum around three years ago. Much of my work involves photographing objects in our collection, recording events at the Museum and general public relations photography. One of my highlights was being asked to photograph the ceremony marking the return of remains found at Lake Mungo, New South Wales, to the local Indigenous community. I found the experience very moving. I really enjoy working at the Museum. The work is invariably urgent and I rarely know what's around the corner, but at the end of the day I always have some new experience to take away with me.

The 40th anniversary of the 1967 Referendum

Photo: Drago Markovic

The 1967 address book belonging to activist Jack Horner, listing some of the many people and organisations that supported the 'Yes' campaign

Forty years ago this May an overwhelming majority of Australians voted to change our constitution in a way that they believed would give Indigenous Australians a 'fairer go' in their own country. To mark this anniversary, the Museum developed and opened a display in the Gallery of First Australians in March.

The 1967 Referendum was the most popular referendum change ever. So what did it do? Ask most people about the referendum and they'll say 'Oh, that gave Aboriginal people the vote' or sometimes 'Oh, that made Aboriginal people citizens'.

Neither of those statements is true. All Indigenous people got the right to vote in federal elections in 1962 and all were already Australian citizens. Many of the remaining oppressive restrictions that Indigenous people lived under were state laws.

So what was the Referendum asking the voters to change?

There were two changes that were passed. One was that Aboriginal people should be officially counted in the census. (They were already being counted but the figures were subtracted from the total.) The other change was to allow the Australian Government to make special laws for Aboriginal people. The reason people had worked for this change was to make Aboriginal people a federal responsibility rather than a state one. They knew that under the rule of the states, Indigenous people had suffered terrible hardship and inequality and they believed the federal government would do a better job.

Although the government agreed to the changes and there wasn't a 'No' campaign, the government did very little to officially promote the 'Yes' case. The hard work was done primarily by a national lobby group— the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI). FCAATSI was an umbrella organisation which included unions, religious bodies, women's organisations and peace groups, and Indigenous and non-Indigenous people from all walks of life.

The Museum display includes an address book owned by one of the activists, Jack Horner, showing the diversity of people and organisations who worked with FCAATSI.

So why do we mark this anniversary? For people such as Chicka Dixon the 1967 Referendum was a most important event in Australia's Indigenous history:

For most Aborigines [the referendum] is basically and most importantly a matter of seeing white Australians finally, after 179 years, affirming at last that they believe we are human beings. (Chicka Dixon, 1997)

But others value it differently, seeing it as an event that appeared to achieve something but actually changed very little. It made Australia look better than it was.

If the referendum hadn't been passed, we would have been further advanced, because white Australia would not have fooled the world into thinking that something positive was being done. (Kevin Gilbert, 1992)

Certainly, whatever it really did, it became a mandate for change for succeeding governments, because they could turn to the referendum results and say 'The Australian people want a better deal for Aboriginal people'. The anniversary is a time to look at the world of 1967 and reflect on how things have changed, and not changed, for Indigenous Australia.

Dr Jay Arthur *Curator, ATSIP*

Census collection, Ernabella Mission, 30 June 1966

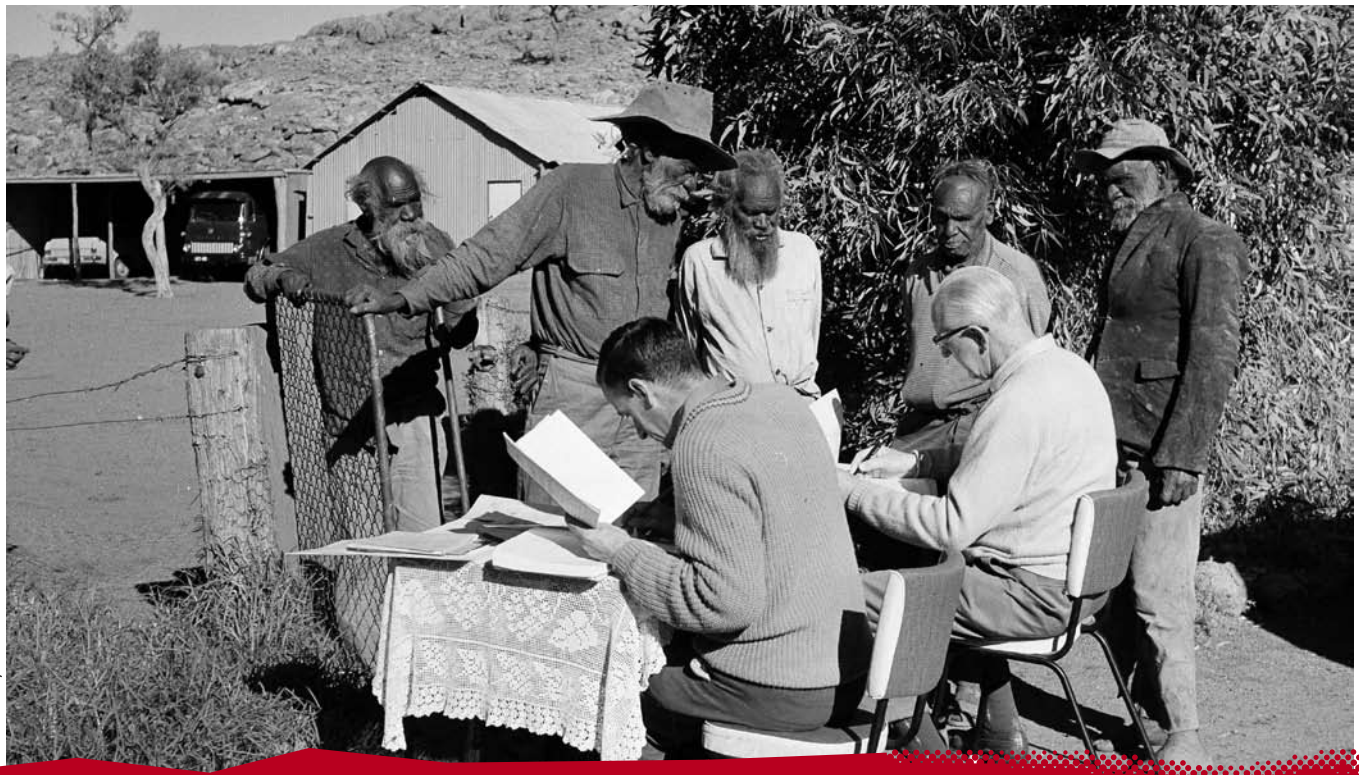
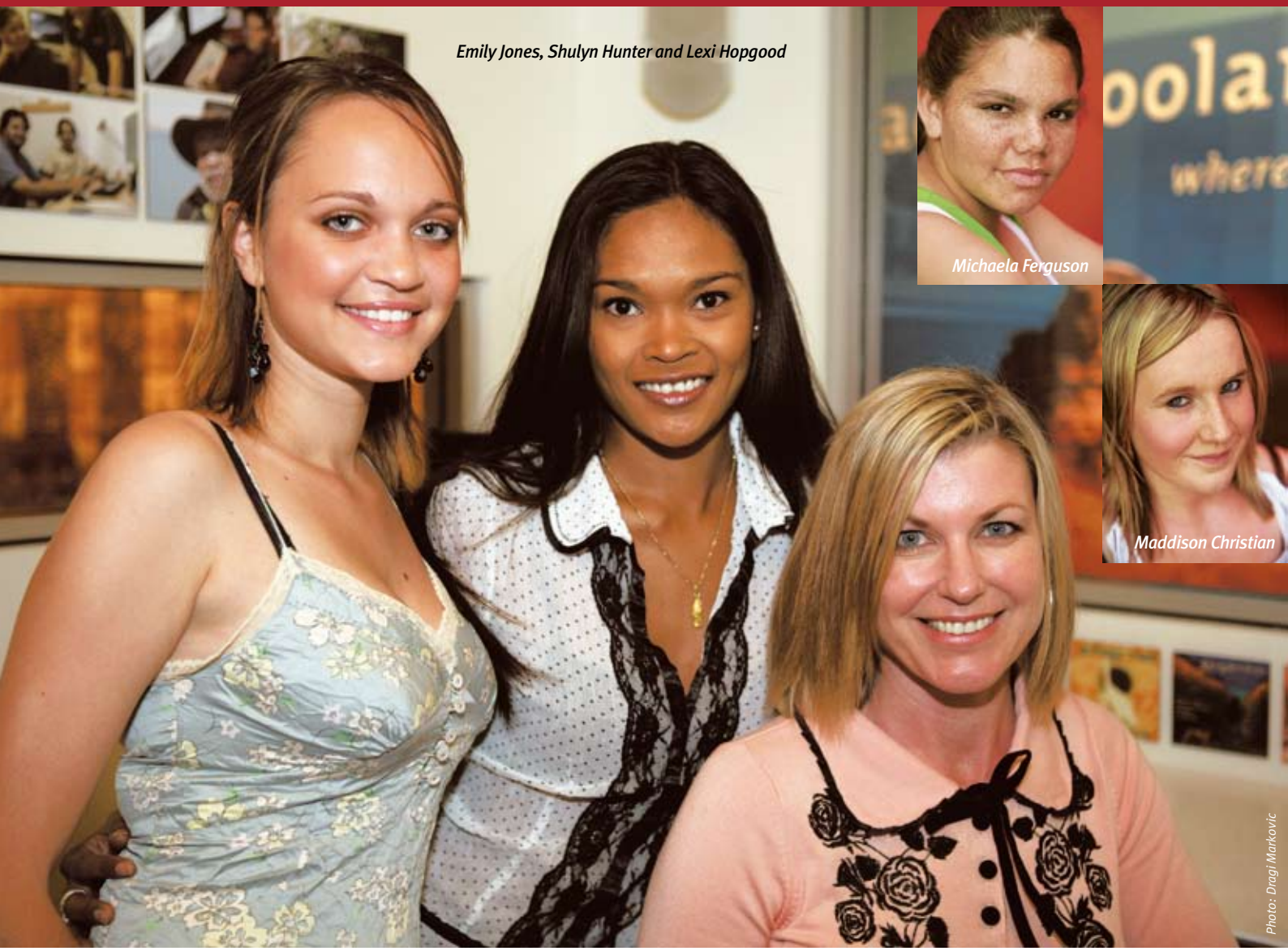


Photo: Winifred Hilliard

Kimberley Girl style comes to Canberra



Emily Jones, Shulyn Hunter and Lexi Hopgood

Michaela Ferguson

Maddison Christian

Photo: Dragi Markovic

Who would connect modelling, beauty and personal development with the Museum's recently opened exhibition *Goolarri: The Sounds of Broome?*

Well, 17 teenagers who spent the day at the Museum's 'Kimberley Girl' workshop in October 2006 would. These girls from Canberra and Queanbeyan had a taste of the sort of preparation that many young women from the Kimberley experience when they enter 'Kimberley Girl', a competition that has been run by Indigenous corporation Goolarri Media Enterprises since 2004.

Beyond the bright lights and pizazz of the competition, more serious matters come into play. The competition aims to build confidence and self-esteem that will flow into all areas of the lives of the competitors, not least their future career development. The benefits of entering the competition include gaining a huge sense of achievement and the opportunity to become a role model for other young women in the community.

Despite some of the heats for the 2006 competition taking place on the same weekend as our workshop, Kimberley Girls Shulyn Hunter, inaugural winner, and Emily Jones, winner in 2005, still managed to take time out from attending the competition to come to Canberra. That's no mean feat with travel time of about 10 hours, including the red-eye flight from Perth! They brought with them all the charm, intelligence and style that won them the titles. Lexi Hopgood, a mentor and trainer in deportment, grooming and professional development, came to assist Emily and Shulyn present the program


Connie Brown


Amanda Jones


Corrine Sharman


Tayla Nixon


Kathryn Nixon


Caitlyn Leon


Kimberley Harwood


Tyler Malone


Rebecca Alvarez


Chantel Obah


Gemma Swain


Rachelle Kelly


Tiffany Newton


Lucy Swain


Shantelle Hoolihan

Portraits: Lannon Harley

to our local audience. Our teenagers learned from this experienced trio that small changes can make big differences — in appearance, how the world perceives you and most importantly how you feel about yourself.

One small part of the day focused on how to make an impact when entering a room, whether in a formal situation such as an interview or in an informal social situation. The girls were videoed at particular points in the workshop so they could watch themselves perform and see just what impact they make. Add to all this the hands-on cosmetic demonstrations, individual colour matching, hairstyle sampling and a glamour shoot with local photographer Lannon Harley, and you have a full-on day!

Congratulations to all the young women who took part in the Kimberley Girl workshop in Canberra. In the words of Goolarri, they can 'stand tall and proud knowing they have made a difference'.

Andy Greenslade *Curator, ATSIP* and
Mikki Goode *Public Programs Officer*

Here is what some of the participants had to say:

It was very constructive. Kimberley Harwood

It helped me focus on myself and taught me that I can be anything I want.
Connie Brown

It was fun and I learned about posture and stuff like that. Maddison Christian

It helped me with my posture. Lucy Swain

It helped for personal and professional reasons. Shantelle Hoolihan

Garma gets it!

Museum-in-a-Case travels to Arnhem Land

Photos: Dean McNicoll

On site at the Garma Festival

Inside the Museum marquee

Photos: Benita Tunks

In August 2005, Craddock Morton fortuitously found himself closeted in a lift with Mandawuy Yunupingu, former Yothu Yindi lead singer and now chair of the Yothu Yindi Foundation. This fleeting encounter in Darwin led to the beginnings of the Museum's exciting long-term engagement with the Foundation. By August 2006, the Museum had a significant presence at the Foundation's annual Garma Festival in Arnhem Land. In a Museum marquee we ran workshops on how the Museum delivers education programs, presented a paper at the key symposium, set up an exhibition of artworks from previous Garma festivals and coordinated this year's printmaking project in collaboration with Canberra's Megalo Access Arts.

We also worked intensely with artists and communities, documenting their stories and taking some 1600 photos. We have been asked to curate and manage a proposed national touring exhibition of these prints and others from previous years which will co-badge us with the Yothu Yindi Foundation until 2012.

But the jewel in the crown was the *Museum-in-a-Case,* a travelling exhibition and education kit that was launched and trialled at the Garma Festival. After extensive interest from schools and students, and following further consultation with community representatives, it will be making its maiden voyage to schools on Groote Eylandt. It will then be handballed from school to school across the Top End. The kit is a low maintenance, low-cost, ongoing and self-generating outreach program. Based on the possum skin cloak exhibit 'Tooloyn Koortakay' in the Gallery of First Australians, the case offers a rare opportunity to share southern Koori knowledge and culture with people in the heartlands of Yolngu culture. An Indigenous project that shares Indigenous culture and knowledge with other Indigenous cultures around Australia is something very special.

The Museum marquee was one of the most popular sites at the Garma Festival. As word spread throughout the camp, participants flocked to the possum skin workshops, modelled on those run by the initiators of the possum skin project.*

Relationships forged at Garma with representatives of some 20 other Indigenous communities will provide opportunities for future collaborations and increased access to the Museum's offerings.

* The three Koori women who initiated the possum skin project on which the Museum exhibit is based, Lee Darroch, Treahna Hamm and Vicki Couzens, conduct workshops across the country on making possum skin cloaks. Give them a call on (03) 51566726 or 0417 160 413 or email leedarrock@optusnet.com.au

Margo Neale *Principal Advisor (Indigenous) to the Director, and Senior Curator*

The Tiwi children and the Aboriginal Arts Board Collection Staff Fellowship project

The National Museum of Australia holds a unique collection of children's art collected by the Aboriginal Arts Board in 1975 and 1976 when the Board sponsored a national project to collect Aboriginal children's drawings and stories for an Aboriginal children's history book. Children in 40 Aboriginal schools nationwide produced 3383 drawings and essays, all of which were considered for inclusion in the proposed new history book, *The Aboriginal Children's History of Australia*, which was launched in Adelaide by Rigby Limited in 1977. The book encouraged pride in their cultural heritage and gave a personalised version of their history. The drawings gathered for this publication were included with the Aboriginal Arts Board Collection when it was transferred to the National Museum on 6 April 1990.

Drawings from the collection are periodically featured within the Museum's exhibition and publication programs, and consultation with the artists during the production phase is invited. However, a history of the collection and a biography of the artists have not always been accessible. Each community within this national coverage requires an individual case study. As part of my Staff Fellowship research I organised to work with the artists, who are now adults, at Nguiu on Bathurst Island to discuss with them their cultural environment at the time the book was published, in order to understand their pictorial language. The idea of this research is to gather information from the artists about their work to add to existing documentation, particularly sanctioned and omitted biographies. This will enhance exhibition and publication potential to include online access to this valuable collection.

Museum photographers Dragi Markovic and Dean McNicoll have digitised the 514 works by the Tiwi artists and I included the digital reproductions in my interviews with the artists. I met with 67 former

Photo: Courtesy Nancy Michaelis

Connell Tipiloura and Cyril James Kerinaiua with Nancy Michaelis, at Tiwi Designs Nguiu, 10 May 2006

pupils of St Therese's Girls' and Francis Xavier's Boys' Mission schools in Nguiu, to determine if the artists could recall the circumstances surrounding this book — many of them couldn't. The interviews were focused on the artwork, the Tiwi children's culture and the mission school experience. Although the majority of artists could not recall creating the drawings, they instantly recognised the content of the pictures they had drawn 30 years ago. They willingly offered a retrospective appraisal of their artwork, and where they saw themselves in relation to this artwork — a most rewarding component of the research.

This research established dialogue between the Museum and the Tiwi community, and highlighted the value of a personalised case study project. The Bathurst Island collection represents childhood in Tiwi society in the 1970s. Their cultural identity is integral to the artist's being and is inherent in their art.

Nancy Michaelis *Curator, ATSIP*

George Nona visits the Museum

In February this year we had a visit from Torres Strait Islander artist George Nona who was in Canberra to host a series of *dhari*-making workshops for the Beizam Koedal Corporation. George came to the Museum to meet the ATSIP team and to deliver a *dhari* which was commissioned last year for the exhibit, 'Dhari a Krar: Headdresses and Masks from the Torres Strait'.

Over the next few years we will be putting a number of new artworks on display as part of a regular series of object changeovers in the 'Dhari a Krar' exhibit. This year four new works go on display and in 2008 we will be changing over 10 more. These regular changes allow us to 'refresh' the exhibition and to highlight new artworks and artists.

This year's changeover will see one of George Nona's turtle shell masks on display. George was raised on Badu Island in the Western Torres Strait. He is a skilled mask and headdress maker and was commissioned in 2006 by the National Museum to make two *Krar* turtle shell masks and a *Dhari*

Anna Edmundson, George Nona and Carly Jia at the handover of the commissioned *dhari*

Photo: Dean McNicoll

headdress. He uses only traditional materials and techniques and is very conscious of the spiritual as well as the artistic elements that go into making traditional masks and headdresses.

Over the next few years ATSIP is hoping to meet with more emerging Torres Strait Islander artists and to continue acquiring TSI art and material heritage for our collections.

Anna Edmundson *Senior Curator, ATSIP*

The Cootamundra Girls' Home memorials

I came back 2 years ago in 2004. Soon as I hit that road I cried ... I cried for all my sisters and all those ladies. That was the first time I came back. It meant a lot to me. I never use to cry before — but I do now — I let it all out when I came back.

Frances Ryan at the opening of the memorials, Cootamundra, 2006

Frances Ryan unveiling the well memorial

Photos: George Serras

They all came to commemorate the memorial and their shared history

Out the front of Cootamundra Aboriginal Girls' Training Home was an old well with a wooden cover. It was on that well-cover that girls from the Home used to sit, because from there they could see down the drive to the front gate. They were waiting for their families to come up the drive to take them home.

Nearly 40 years after the Home closed down, the old well is gone. But when a group of women from the former Home decided to raise a memorial to the girls from the Home it was the well that came to mind.

In October 2006 a group of former residents, their families and friends gathered at Bimbadeen Christian College, which now occupies the site of the Home. They were there to open two memorials on the site. One was a granite replica of the old well, and the other a large boulder, with a photograph of the girls at the old well engraved on its face. In a moving ceremony, former Cootamundra girls Nada Ward and Frances Ryan cut the ribbons to open the boulder memorial and the wellhead memorial. Many at the ceremony wept — for the families who lost their daughters, for the children taken away, and especially for those who never found their way home.

The 'Coota girls' raised the memorials as testimonies to their experience in that place, so that future generations will not be able to forget the many Aboriginal girls who were taken from their families and their culture and brought to the Home. The Aboriginal colours on the memorial celebrate the return of many of these girls to their culture and the defeat of the government policy that tried to deprive these children of their heritage.

Dr Jay Arthur *Curator, ATSIP*

The view down the drive — with the two memorials

Lola Edwards, one of the main organisers of the event and a former inmate of the Home, with Cec Bowden at the boulder memorial. Cec is a former inmate of Kinchela Boys' Home, the infamous 'twin' of the Cootamundra Home

Conserving *70% Urban*

Some exhibition objects provide unique conservation challenges in preparing them for display.

Photos: Dragi Markovic

***Fish 'n' Chips*, 1997, Campfire Group**

The *70% Urban* exhibition includes a variety of objects and materials from works on paper and canvas to sculptures, some of which include an interesting array of materials. Many objects were easily prepared for exhibition, requiring a basic visible check of their condition, a photograph and recording of information. Other collection objects required more particular attention.

The installation *Fish 'n' Chips* created by the Campfire Group includes a takeaway shop bain-marie and various components made of wood and decorated using glue and real breadcrumbs to look like calamari rings and battered fish. The objects that included breadcrumbs had clearly provided a very tasty meal for insects so, after freezing the objects to kill the bugs, a further two days were spent brush vacuuming away any insects and residue. Also a part of the installation were tins of food with labels different from the actual contents — applied by the artists. The tins of food needed to be emptied because, over time, food within cans can cause extensive corrosion leading to bigger problems. This was discussed with the artists beforehand. Treatment of the bain-marie was a big job. It was cleaned and the small areas of corrosion were stabilised in only two days because of the team effort of fellow conservators working together to make this onerous task a breeze. The team included Peter Bucke, Ian Cramer, Ainslie Greiner and me.

Two other installations requiring particular conservation preparation in readiness for display were *All Stock Must Go!,* also created by the Campfire Group, and the *Sorry Wall Fragmentation* by Pamela Croft and Cheryl Moodai Robinson. *All Stock Must Go!* includes a number of parts from an old Dodge truck which had been painted using acrylic paints and ochres, on top of which were various layers of dirt. It was decided to remove the overall layer of uniform grey dirt which is common to large objects kept in a variety of storage conditions over long periods. This was a time-consuming project made much easier by working with my fellow conservator Peter Bucke and the use of microfibre cloths rinsed in water.

Various other objects, including works on paper and textiles, are being prepared by paper conservators David Parker and Sarah Murray, textile conservator Carmela Mollica and contractor Victoria Gill. The main tasks with these materials are the framing of works on paper and the preparation of mannequins for a number of protest T-shirts and fashion garments. The main purpose is to ensure that each object is not going to deteriorate while on display and that it remains in good condition to be kept in the National Historical Collection for future generations.

Mark Henderson *Conservator*

The *70% Urban* exhibition explores the growth of a dynamic urban Indigenous culture across Australia. It is on show in the Gallery of First Australians from 29 March 2007 to 31 January 2008. Free entry.

Peter Bucke and Mark Henderson with the bain-marie

Photo: Andy Greenslade

ATSIP NEWS

Lee Burgess leading the tour
Photo: Tom George

Indigenous Plant Use Trail

In October 2006 I led a group of mostly Museum staff on a guided tour of the 'Indigenous Plant Use Trail' at the Australian National Botanic Gardens in Canberra. We examined many types of plants used by Indigenous peoples for thousands of years, not only for food or bush tucker but also medicines, tools, weapons, shelter and ceremonies. One prominent plant we looked at, growing beside the trail, was the Queensland bottle tree (*Brachychiton rupestris*). It has many uses: water was obtained from the trunk and roots, the bark was used for making string nets and the seeds and young roots were roasted and eaten. I also presented a short talk on 'Indigenous Plant Uses' for the Friends of the Botanic Gardens during NAIDOC Week in 2006. The trail is well signposted and winds its way through diverse vegetation types, from dry eucalyptus forest to a cool, moist rainforest gully.

Lee Burgess
Visitor Services Host

Research students utilise the Museum

Recent visitors to the Museum include Christine Hansen (Australian National University) and Dennis O'Brien (Adelaide University) — two postgraduate students whose research examines museums and their relationships with Indigenous communities. Christine's research explores ways Indigenous people and communities engage with objects held in museum collections. Dennis's research critiques the way museums represent Indigenous people, focusing on the issues of identity and stereotypes. Both Christine and Dennis visited the National Museum of Australia to utilise resources and met with the ATSIP team to discuss aspects of their research. It was wonderful to meet them and talk about subjects that will inform ATSIP's future activities.

Barbara Paulson
Curator, ATSIP

Christine Hansen, Dennis O'Brien and Barbara Paulson *Photo: Lee Burgess*

Ian Coates, Danielle Price and Georgina Symes read the menu from the Didjeridoo Restaurant
Photo: George Serras

Didjeridoo Restaurant collection

Late last year Danielle Price and her daughter Georgina Symes visited the Museum to look at Aboriginal artefacts from the Northern Territory that Danielle's father, Richard Collins, had collected during the 1960s. Richard Collins acquired the collection while working as a pilot for Ansett Airlines. He then displayed the collection on the walls of his Didjeridoo Restaurant, which was a popular dining and music venue in Melbourne during the 1960s and early 1970s. Bark paintings, a dugout canoe, spears, didjeridus and other artefacts were mounted on the ti-tree covered walls of the restaurant. It also included a large Indigenous-themed diorama by Vernon Jones. Restaurant patrons were also able to buy a range of Aboriginal artefacts. Danielle was able to tell us about the history of the restaurant, and how her father came to acquire the collection. It was a great opportunity to record more about the history of this important collection, and an opportunity to learn more about the variety of settings in which Indigenous artefacts have been displayed.

Dr Ian Coates
Senior Curator, ATSIP

Director Craddock Morton signs off on the Emily Kame Kngwarreye exhibition at the Australian Embassy in Tokyo, with the Ambassador from the culture department of Yomiuri Shimbun

Photo: courtesy Australian Embassy, Tokyo

International exhibition goes to Japan in 2008

The National Museum of Australia is currently curating and coordinating an epic exhibition of artworks by Emily Kame Kngwarreye. Professor Tatehata, Japan's most eminent curator, critic and academic, has been keen to introduce Emily to Japan since he first saw her national touring retrospective in 1998. It is the story of an extraordinary Australian, a senior Anmatyerre woman and ceremonial leader. She told her story of connection to country through paintings that transcend cultures, time, disciplines and any attempts to define and confine her. It is a national project with international significance for the National Museum of Australia.

Margo Neale
Principal Advisor (Indigenous) to the Director, and Senior Curator

Question: How many Australian Indigenous artefacts are in the British Museum? Answer: 6000! (give or take a few)

I am a Senior Curator in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Program at the National Museum of Australia and, from March to June 2007, will have the opportunity to study some of the Australian Indigenous collections held by the British Museum in London. Many European museums hold collections of Australian Indigenous material, but the British Museum has one of the largest collections. Most of these items were collected in the 1800s and early 1900s and many of them have had no systematic research undertaken on them. Both the British Museum and the National Museum of Australia are now keen to find out more about these collections and their history. While in England I will also get a chance to look at some of the smaller collections of Indigenous artefacts in other United Kingdom museums.

Dr Ian Coates
Senior Curator, ATSIP

Ian Coates and Jenny Newell

Photo: Barbara Paulson

Jay Daley, Elma Pearsall and Warren Daley

Photo: Kipley Nink

Pudman trip

In November I accompanied historian Ann Jackson-Nakano and Warren and Jay Daley, descendants of families from the Pudman reserve, to the site of the old reserve and the old Pudman school, north of Yass, New South Wales. Warren says it was the first time he and Jay had been there, and he enjoyed going back to his mum's country and knowing where his family is from. After Pudman we visited elder Elma Pearsall, in Boorowa, for afternoon tea and to hear some stories about living at Pudman. This trip was to explore the potential for including stories about Pudman in the Museum.

Kipley Nink
Assistant Curator, ATSIP

Kipley Nink, Warren Daley and Jay Daley

Photo: Ann Jackson-Nakano

The Museum at Cook's landing site, for a big re-think! Margo Neale, Peter Read, Michelle Hetherington and Ian Coates

Photo: National Museum of Australia

National Think Tank at Botany

On 30 January 2007, I participated in a National Think Tank at Kurnell Peninsula on Botany Bay, the site of Captain Cook's first landing in Australia, to discuss different ways of interpreting the history of the site from contemporary perspectives, including the experience of Indigenous people and multicultural groups. The Merrima Design group who designed our 'Dhari a Krar: Headressess and Masks' exhibit are also working on this project. In combination with others like Len Collard from Western Australia, we presented a formidable Indigenous presence. There was a great mix of perspectives with some 30 leading anthropologists, archaeologists, cultural theorists, historians, community heritage specialists and rangers constructively and passionately contributing.

Margo Neale
Principal Advisor (Indigenous) to the Director, and Senior Curator

Dave Sands

Australian and British Empire Middleweight Boxing Champion

Dave Sands

Photo: National Museum of Australia

In October 1949 the famous boxer Dave Sands launched a ship in Newcastle upon Tyne in the United Kingdom and an unknown photographer captured Dave enjoying a drink in a pub with dockyard workers and miners. At that time, Aboriginal people were prohibited access to alcohol by Australian State legislation dating back to 1838, allegedly to protect them from its devastating effects. These laws were not abolished until the 1960s. This photograph illustrates the social acceptance of Indigenous sportsmen internationally, during a time where such a relationship was prohibited by law in Australia. It also acknowledges international popularity and respect for Dave Sand's talent and success as a boxer in the international arena.

Dave Sands was born on 24 February 1926 at Burnt Bridge, of the Dunghutti people, traditional owners of the coastal Macleay Valley area of New South Wales. He was described as a quiet unassuming man, his unscathed face testimony to his brilliant technique in the toughest of all sports, pugilism. He and his six brothers fought professionally and they were known internationally as 'The Fighting Sands'. Dave was considered the best, his success attributed to his 'front foot aggression and unique fistic genius'. Between 1946 and 1952 he won the Australian middleweight, light heavyweight and heavyweight titles, the British Empire middleweight championship in 1949, and the Australasian light heavyweight title in 1952. He won 97 of his 110 bouts.

Dave died in a road accident on 11 August 1952. Boxing historian Ray Mitchell wrote at his death: ***World boxing has lost a great fighter: Australian boxing has lost its mainstay; society has lost a gentleman.***

In the two years before his death, he was voted the most popular sportsman in Australia. His reputation as a professional sportsman both in and out of the ring still honours him as an everlasting Australian symbol of sporting integrity.

Nancy Michaelis
Curator, ATSIP

Harold Blair 45 r.p.m. record

Photos: National Museum of Australia

Harold Blair (1924–1976) was born at Cherbourg Reserve. Raised at Purga Mission by the Salvation Army staff, he worked on their dairy farm until he was sent to the cane fields in the Childers area as a young man. While still a boy at the mission, he often entertained visitors by mimicking famous singers of the day, and in the cane fields he quickly became a favourite, entertaining his colleagues as they worked. It was here that a trade union organiser heard him and realised that Harold had a magnificent voice. Determined to help, he arranged an introduction to Australia's most renowned singer of the day, Marjorie Lawrence. With her help Harold was accepted into the Melba Conservatorium of Music in Melbourne where he worked hard to improve on his minimal mission education to learn foreign languages and master the fundamentals of music.

Encouraged by Todd Duncan, the Black American baritone, Harold travelled to New York where he studied at the Juilliard School of Music. While singing in the choir at a church in Harlem (and sweeping its floors afterwards for cash), Harold had an opportunity to reflect on his life in Australia. He told his son Warren that 'being in Harlem ... [he] saw people of colour doing everything ... he'd never been in an environment where he'd seen black people in control of things'. On his arrival home he was determined to become involved in Indigenous causes. One of his great successes was the Aboriginal Children's Holiday Project he founded, which provided vacations in Melbourne for 3000 children from Queensland mission stations.

In 1967 Harold returned to music, becoming a secondary school choirmaster and music teacher in the Victorian Education Department. At the official opening of the Sydney Opera House in 1973, he performed the role of Mundit in the Aboriginal opera *Dalgerie*. He was awarded an Officer in the Order of Australia in 1976.

This 45 r.p.m. recording of 'The Holy City', 'How great Thou art' and 'I'll walk with God' was recorded in late 1963.

Christine Hansen
Curator, ATSIP

Albert Namatjira's *Waterpipe Boomerang*

Waterpipe Boomerang ***on display in the 70% Urban exhibition***

This boomerang decorated by Albert Namatjira commemorates the laying of the Hermannsburg water pipe in 1934, the result of a campaign run by two Melbourne sisters, Una and Violet Teague. In July 1933 Una and her half-sister, the renowned painter Violet Teague, embarked on an eight-week camping trip that took them from Victoria to Hermannsburg Mission in Central Australia. On arriving at the mission they were shocked to see the effects of a succession of severe droughts, so harsh that the lack of fresh water threatened the future of the settlement. Throughout their desert stay, a young Albert Namatjira acted as guide and assistant to the two women, taking them to local sites of interest such as the lush groves of Palm Valley and travelling with them on camping trips out from the mission. The sisters, who had a longstanding involvement with charitable and patriotic causes, were deeply moved by the plight of the drought-stricken community and returned to Melbourne determined to raise the funds needed to build a water pipeline. In September 1933, Violet mounted an exhibition of her desert watercolour sketchbooks in Melbourne and in 1934 she called on her famous artist friends including Hans Heysen, Rex Batterbee and Arthur Streeton, among others, to launch a major fundraising art show. The exhibition was a huge success and the *Argus* reported that over £1800 was raised. Violet and Una worked closely with Pastor Albrecht to organise delivery of the pipeline materials from Melbourne and as a result, the 7-kilometre channel brought life-saving water from Kaporilja Springs to the community at Hermannsburg.

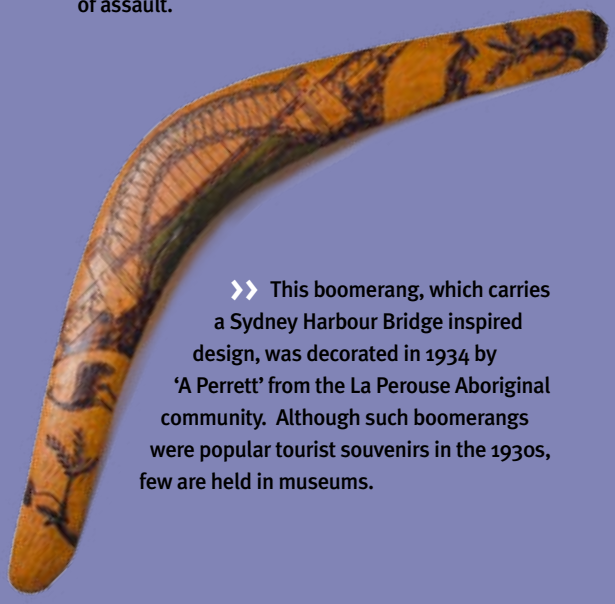
Albert Namatjira, having picked up skills in his work as a ringer, station hand and blacksmith, had been decorating mulga plaques and boomerangs with pokerwork designs burnt with heated fencing wire. To commemorate the opening of the pipeline he designed this boomerang depicting the laying of the water pipe.

Christine Hansen
Curator, ATSIP

Some recent acquisitions …

Dr Ian Coates *Senior Curator, ATSIP*

›› In *Big Boss with Whip,* Borroloola-based artist Nancy McDinny interprets her family's mistreatment on the Eva Downs station in 1955. This is an important event in Northern Territory legal history, with the station owners eventually convicted of assault.



›› This boomerang, which carries a Sydney Harbour Bridge inspired design, was decorated in 1934 by 'A Perrett' from the La Perouse Aboriginal community. Although such boomerangs were popular tourist souvenirs in the 1930s, few are held in museums.

›› Women and girls from the La Perouse Aboriginal community have been making shellwork artefacts since the late nineteenth century. These baby shoes, made for sale to tourists, date from about the 1940s.

Photos: George Serras

Next issue highlights

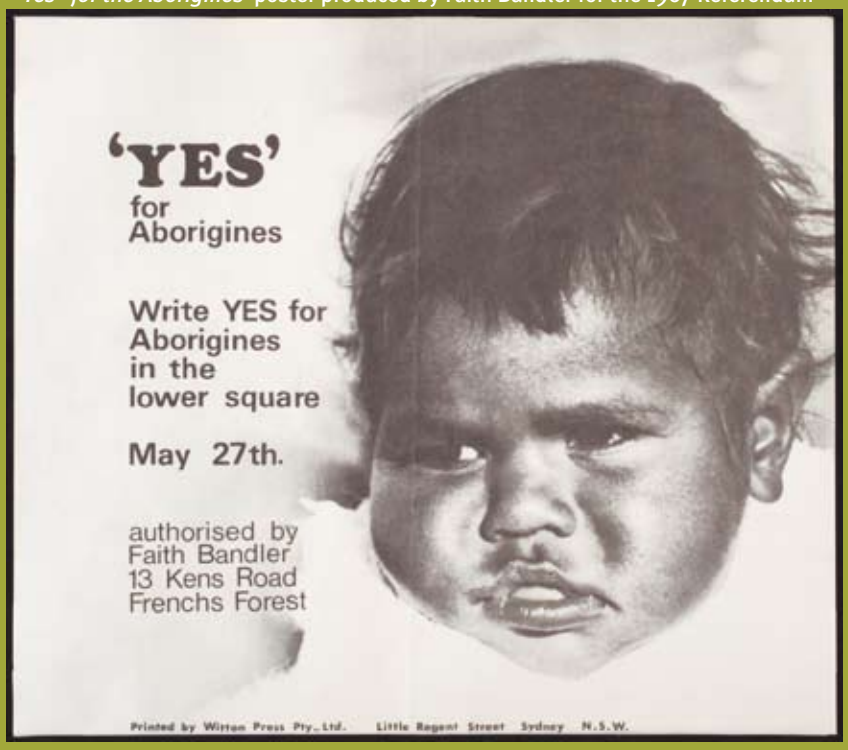
- *70% Urban* exhibition
- The 'Plenty Stories' project
- 'Who you callin urban?' forum
- NAIDOC celebrations at the Museum
- The winners of the Didj Comp 2007
- More objects from our National Historical Collection
- Updates on new and continuing projects.

... and meet some more of our Mates in Volume 4 issue 2 in October 2007

Photos: George Serras

Three views of The Card Game that Ended Badly, *engraved boab nut by Jack Wherra, about 1963*

'"Yes" for the Aborigines' poster produced by Faith Bandler for the 1967 Referendum



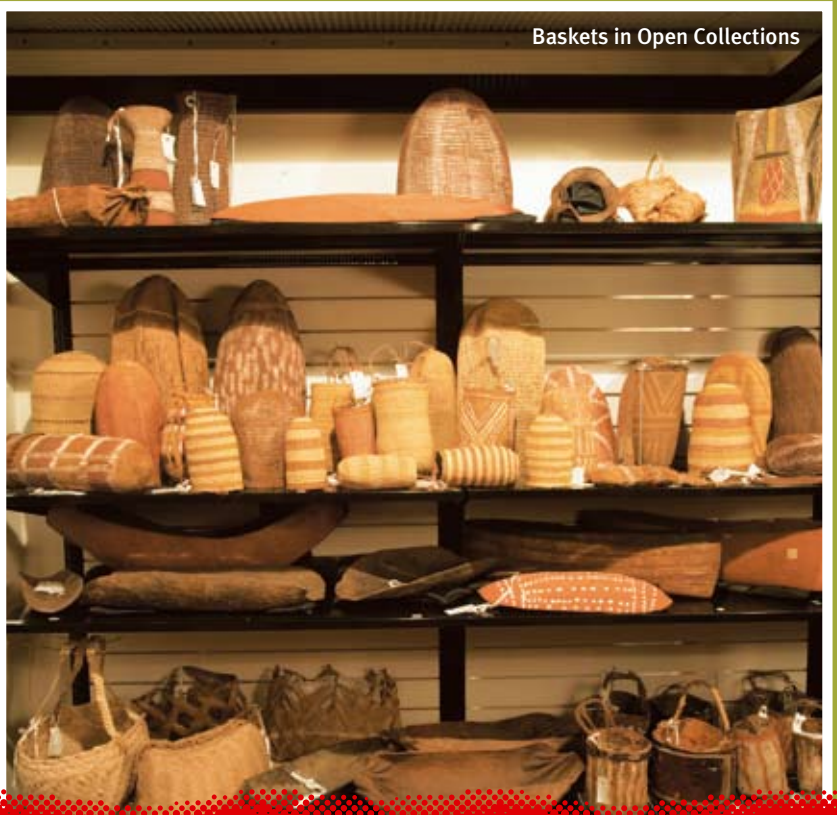


Photo: Dean McNicoll

Photo: Dean McNicoll

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The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander News from the National Museum of Australia* can be downloaded from our website www.nma.gov.au

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