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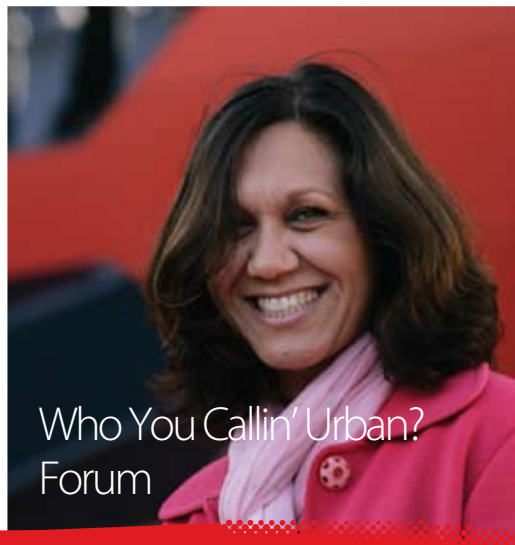
ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER news

FROM THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA

Going home to Kinchella

NAIDOC 50th Anniversary

Tayenebe



Who You Callin' Urban? Forum

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA CANBERRA

Contents

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander News

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Cover photos

Main: Vince Peters, Cec Bowden, Michael Walsh and Willie Lesley at Kinchella

Left: Caleb Juda at NAIDOC Week family day at the Museum, photo: Lannon Harley

Middle: Muriel Maynard, photo: Lucia Rossi, Arts Tasmania

Right: Anita Heiss at the Museum

Gallery photos (these pages)

Left: Rights exhibit in lower Gallery of First Australians

Middle: Fire tool exhibit in upper Gallery of First Australians

Right: Anbarra exhibit in upper Gallery of First Australians

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA

I would like to acknowledge the Ngambri and Ngunnawal peoples as traditional custodians of the lands upon which the National Museum is built.

There are always exciting things happening at the Museum. The celebration of NAIDOC Week's 50th anniversary and accompanied activities at the Museum this year was well received and enjoyed by visitors. There are also several exhibitions at various stages of delivery which explore the historical experiences of Indigenous Australians and give visitors a chance to see objects from the National Historical Collection not previously displayed. Some have never been shown in public before.

In March we opened *70% Urban* which explores the historical experiences of Indigenous Australians as they engage with the process of urbanisation. In November we will open the *Papunya Painting: Out of the Desert* exhibition highlighting the cultural, social and political values of these works and illustrating the historical inception of the Papunya Tula movement. In February 2008 the *Emily Kame Kngwarreye* exhibition opens in Tokyo, Japan. Emily's is the story of an extraordinary Australian whose history, culture and life is revealed though powerful and innovative images.

The Museum's Indigenous cadetship program is underway with the first three participants signed on. The program was developed in response to an important strategic issue highlighted by the Museum Consultative Forum in October 2006. You'll hear more about them and their experiences here at the Museum in the forthcoming issues.

I hope you enjoy reading about these and the other activities and events in this issue.

Craddock Morton

Photo: Dean McNicoll

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

Welcome. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this area, the Ngambri and Ngunnawal peoples, and others who are now part of our Indigenous Canberra community.

In the last issue, I outlined a number of initiatives that would help us get things moving at a faster and more sustainable pace in the Indigenous employment and awareness area. The response to the first ever Museum-wide cultural awareness training is going great guns. So far 70 staff from all levels have attended the program over the past 6 months. It's not a one-off and will, in one form or another, be embedded in the Museum culture to ensure a developing receptive environment for Indigenous people (staff and visitors).

After a lot of hard work by our Employee Relations and People Development Section, the Museum is really proud to report the appointment of three Indigenous cadets (Canberra is not an easy spot to attract blackfellas from other areas to). It is a great program enabling them to be supported while they complete their studies with on–the-job training for 12 weeks of each year. However Indigenous employment is an area we have to continue to be proactive in, as it is a small pool we are drawing from and natural attrition will always take its toll. On that point I would like to farewell George Taylor, a Yamatji man who has been at the Museum in both the Visitor Services and Repatriation areas for nearly 7 years. He has been a stalwart!

On the exhibition front, there are two major Indigenous shows coming up: one about early Papunya paintings opening 28 November at the Museum, and the other on Emily Kame Kngwarreye opening in Japan in February 2008.

Margo Neale
Adjunct Professor (History Program, ANU)

MESSAGE FROM THE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Hi, and welcome to this issue. On behalf of ATSIP I'd like to acknowledge the Ngambri and Ngunnawal peoples, both as the traditional owners of the Canberra region and as valued friends of the Museum.

Life for the ATSIP team continues to be busy. Behind every exhibition or event put on by the Museum lies long planning and effort. ATSIP staff are kept active researching, developing and reviewing content for exhibitions, publications, public programs, web-based products, and public enquiries. An important component of this research is community consultation, and the past 6 months have been characterised by special efforts to engage directly with individuals and communities in order to discuss project ideas and content. Such community consultation is an increasingly important part of Museum practice. The partnerships and stories of people's lives that have emerged from such consultation not only informs what the Museum delivers to the wider public but always has a personal impact on the curator, something we all recognise as a good thing.

As this issue will show, we've had some rewarding experiences. The repatriation program has benefited from advice regarding the care and return of restricted objects during visits by elders from Central Australian communities. We've been treated to impromptu displays of traditional bark-sandal making by Martu men and women. We had another successful annual NAIDOC Week in July. *70% Urban* continues to draw visitors, complemented by a successful forum, Who You Callin' Urban?. Work on the *Papunya Tula: Out of the Desert* exhibition nears completion for a November opening.

I hope you enjoy this issue. For more information about the work of the National Museum, don't forget to visit our website at www.nma.gov.au.

Dr Michael Pickering

Meet some of our **Mates**

Photo: Barbara Paulson

Ann Pengelly and Amoy Mallie

Danusha Cubillo

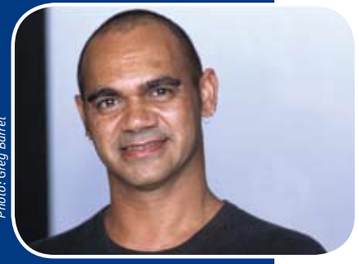


Photo: Greg Barret

David Page

Photo: Barbara Paulson

LaToya Hall

Photo: Barbara Paulson

Theresa Creed

›› **Amoy Mallie and Ann Pengelly** We're from Gladstone, Queensland, and came to Canberra to see the Museum. We like the layout and presentation of cultural knowledge and materials exhibited in the Gallery of First Australians. We particularly like the oral histories presented in the 'Identity' display. It's awesome to hear Indigenous people from all over Australia talking about who they are and where they're from. When you walk through the GFA you notice straightaway what a huge focus it has in this Museum. You get the feeling it's an important part of Australian history. In other museums I've visited the Aboriginal and Islander content always feels and appears 'tacked on', or at least not as important. Here in the National Museum of Australia it has significance and is presented respectfully and with regard to the diversity of Indigenous peoples.

The architecture is so dynamic. This Museum is artistically put together from the architecture to the displays. There is so much to see and experience, from the first time when we drove up and saw the orange 'loop'. We came back a second time and saw things we didn't see on the previous visit. You really do get a sense of people, place and nation as concepts and shared knowledge within the Australian experience. We walked away feeling very proud to be Australian.

›› **Danusha Cubillo** Hi! I'm a Larrakia woman from Darwin and have been living in Canberra for the past 14 years. I am currently working at the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) in the Legal Branch. I like to use textiles, as they are such a versatile product. A textile can be a piece of cloth or it can be transformed into something else like a dress, a shirt, shoes or trimming. Textiles and clothing share a common theme everyone can relate to and utilise in their everyday lives. Creating art and design in textiles is one way people can tangibly engage with art and creative expression. I enjoy visiting the Museum and seeing how ordinary found objects, picked up from the ground, are turned into something extraordinary — like baskets that were once blades of grass, or sculptures that were once deadwood. In the Torres Strait Islander exhibition examples can be seen of how these objects can make such functional artworks; how creative interpretation can transform raw materials like feathers into something completely different and beautiful as a *dhari*, and that in turn is used as a cultural symbol in textile designs.

›› **David Page**. Hi! I am a descendant of the Bundjalung nation, Munaldjali people of south-east Queensland and the Nunukul people of Stadbroke Island. I was raised in Brisbane and Beaudesert. I live and work in Sydney as the resident composer for Bangarra Dance Theatre and a freelance composer on other various music projects, including films and major events. I am also an actor and have performed in a number of theatre plays and films which have won international acclaim. I was honoured to be invited by Museum staff to have my story represented in the Gallery of First Australians, in 2008, as someone who has contributed to the artistic culture of Australia. As a black Australian, I am proud to have an opportunity to share my story with the nation. It is a rare opportunity for our mob, and other Australians, to see us (Aboriginal people) as ones who can and have survived disadvantage, achieved ambitions and continue to live out our dreams.

›› **LaToya Hall** Hi! I'm a young Wiradjuri woman born in Cowra, New South Wales. I have lived in Canberra for 18 years and am currently working at Aboriginal Hostels Limited Central Office. In July 2007, I visited the National Museum of Australia for the first time. I was extremely intrigued as I walked through the exhibitions in the Gallery of First Australians and *70% Urban*. My favourite display was the boab nuts by the Kimberley artist Jack Wherra. These particular nuts were used as a way of telling stories, each boab nut has a story carved into it which represents a significant social record of cross-cultural interrelations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people from the perspective of a known Aboriginal person.

›› **Theresa Creed** Hello, I'm a Kalkadoon/Pitta-Pitta woman living in Brisbane. I am a dancer/performer and was one of the first students to attend the Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Scheme (AISDS) when it began in early 1972. It later became know as NAISDA. I went into dance because it was a chance to express myself, my culture, my ideas about life and my experiences. As well as participating in research for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Program, I am also working on a one-woman musical titled *Eva Marabai Wawu*. The musical will tell the story of five Aboriginal women from different eras in our history and give a chance for all people in our communities to share and hear historical experiences from an Aboriginal woman's perspective.

Celebrating NAIDOC's 50th anniversary

Photo: Nancy Michealis

Judy Martin (Family History Unit, AIATSIS), Barbara Paulson (Curator, ATSIP), Pat Brady (Library Collection Manager, AIATSIS) and PJ Williams (Family History Unit, AIATSIS)

The National Museum of Australia commemorated the 50th anniversary of NAIDOC Week with a great program of events which included the exhibition, *Celebrating 50 Years of NAIDOC*. This exhibition was a joint project between the Museum and AIATSIS. It included a selection of historically significant posters from the AIATSIS library collection. The posters were produced by, and for, the National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee from 1967 to 2006.

Visitors to the Museum were able to see the evolution of art and slogans used over the last 50 years. A few visitors recalled the impact some of the posters made in their community such as *Cultural Revival is Survival* (1978), *White Australia has a Black History* (1987), *Bringing Them Home* (1998), *Gurindji, Mabo, Wik – Three Strikes for Justice* (1997) *and Treaty – Let's Get It Right* (2001). One visitor, Jenny MacNamara, was particularly moved to see these posters again. She said, 'It was because there was so much public debate going on and this was the visual element that accompanied those debates'.

The exhibition also gave an opportunity to tell NAIDOC's history and relate the contemporary significance of the week's celebrations. The origins of NAIDOC lay in the Aboriginal rights movement that began in the 1920s. It was the 'National Day of Mourning' protests on 26 January 1938, organised in opposition to Australia Day celebrations, which led to a national 'Day of Observance' run by the churches, called 'Aboriginal Sunday'. Held on the Sunday before Australia Day, Aboriginal Sunday was observed from 1940 to 1954. In 1955 the date shifted to the first Sunday in July and became known as 'National Aborigines Day'. These developments prompted the formation of the 'National Aborigines Day Observance Committee' (NADOC) in 1957, whose main goal was to promote awareness of Aboriginal people, their cultures and their plight. Today, NAIDOC Week has taken on a social significance beyond its acronym. It is a time to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, heritage and communities — and to focus national attention on social issues significant to the First Australians.

The posters promoting 'National Aborigines Day' and, later, NAIDOC Week began circulating in the late 1960s. They reflect many of the significant changes that have occurred in our recent social and political history, including the evolving relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. There are three most notable changes that occurred — the first in 1972, when the poster designs changed from being 'about' Aboriginal people to being 'by' Aboriginal people. The second, in 1987, was the introduction of the art competition where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists were invited to submit works to represent the theme to become the year's poster. The inaugural year's winner was *White Australia has a Black History* by Laurie Nilsen. The art competition was initiated by the committee of that time to promote and build on art and heritage practices within communities. Since then other nationally significant winners include Gloria Beckett from Brisbane, Danny Eastwood from Mount Druitt, and Ray Thomas from Melbourne.

Thirdly, 1988 was the first year that Torres Strait Islanders were mentioned on the posters and in promotion of 'National Aborigines Week'. The following year the title officially changed to 'NAIDOC Week' to include Torres Strait Islanders within the national celebrations of First Australian's cultures.

Barbara Paulson *Curator, ATSIP*

The audience surveys the exhibition up close

Photo: Lannon Harley

Photo: Lannon Harley

NAIDOC Week

Celebrations at the Museum

The theme for 2007 was '50 Years: Looking Forward, Looking Blak'.

The National Museum of Australia was the setting for a wide range of programs celebrating the 50th anniversary of NAIDOC Week this year. The action started on Friday with a public forum entitled Who You Callin' Urban? Exploring Indigenous identity and culture in urban environments the forum was held in conjunction with *70% Urban*, an exhibition exploring the growth of dynamic urban Indigenous cultures across Australia. It featured a range of eminent speakers including poet Sam Wagan Watson, writer Anita Heiss, and writer and theatre director Wesley Enoch. Most interesting was the genuine debate around the term 'urban' which has cultural, political and emotional connotations that sit uncomfortably with many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Margo Neale said 'This extraordinary talkfest between blackfellas just blew everyone away!' Margo suggested that those attending were 'witness to a historic moment in the debate about who we are today as blackfellas living in the city and who we are not.'

The forum was followed on Saturday with a high-energy family day featuring poetry reading, storytelling and a rich array of workshops and demonstrations hosted by well-known Indigenous artists including Gordon Syron and Lyndy Delian. Sam Wagan Watson provided visitors with a gutsy reading from his award-winning volume of poetry '*Of Muse, Meandering and Midnight*', mixed with a more gentle poetry reading from Jennifer Martinello. Children painted their faces with magpie totems, created their own boomerangs and had fun while expanding their knowledge of Australian Indigenous cultures. It was delightful to see the keen interest with over 2000 people attending the family day.

Bead making and demonstrations by Chella Goldwin

Demonstrations on how to use tools and weaponry by Larry Brandy

Photo: Lannon Harley

***Above:** The Didj Comp is on for young and old*

***Left:** The Competitors line up for the annual Digj comp. (back left to right) Jon Juda, Tony Brown, Warren Saunders, Peter Swain, Phillip Yubbagurri Brown (front left to right) Caleb Juda, Travis Mason, Bradley Mason*

Jennifer Martinello reads her poetry to the gathered crowd

The third annual Didjeridu Competition, on Sunday 8 July, was a huge hit attracting over 400 museum visitors. Organised by Phillip Yubbagurri Brown in association with Reconciliation International, players from around the region provided the large audience with a great performance of playing and dancing. However, it was the children who particularly captivated the audience with their wonderfully haunting sounds and confident performances. John Juda and his 8-year-old son Caleb, from the Tjungundji people of Cape York, were the winners of the Didjeridu Competition. Caleb loves the instrument. 'It's fun, I like the sound, I like the carvings on the didjeridu, I like the shape of it, I like pretty much everything about it,' he said. The event ended on a high note with a joint performance from the competitors — a didjeridu jam — with children in the audience enthusiastically joining in with clap sticks provided by Larry Brandy. If you enjoy the sounds of the didjeridu and would like to know more about these unique instruments, come along to the National Museum of Australia on the last Sunday of every month and join our guest performers as they play the didjeridu around the Museum.

NAIDOC Week culminated in workshops where children enjoyed the experience of handling traditional Indigenous tools and discussing how cultures change, evolve and adapt with new influences. The children toured the *70% Urban* exhibition, which provided them with the artistic inspiration to create their own T-shirt.

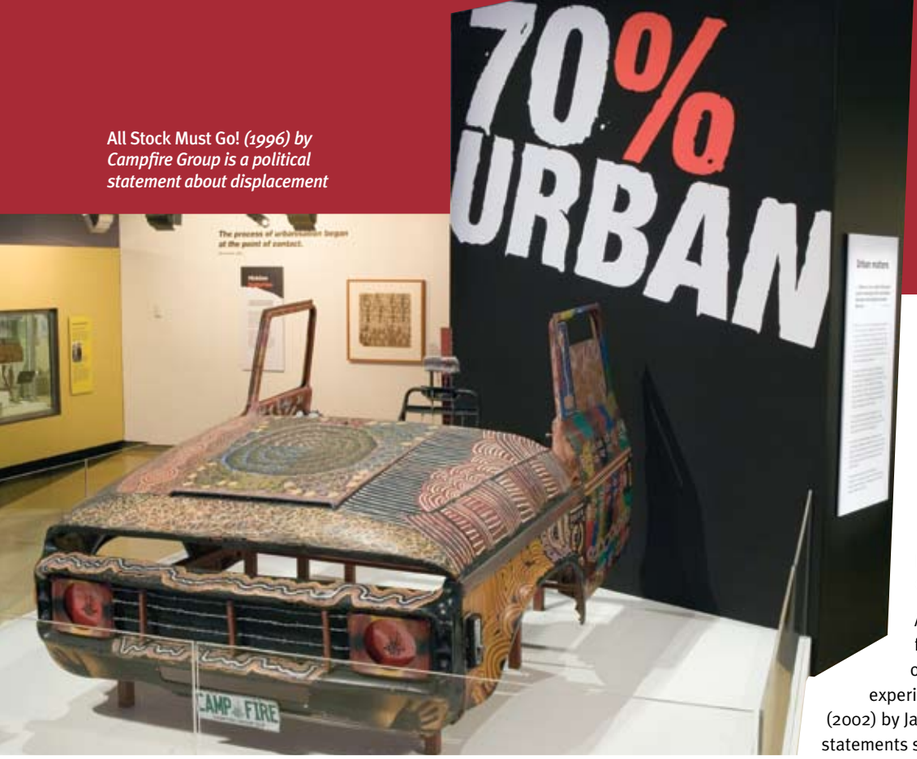
This year was another successful celebration of NAIDOC, and the National Museum of Australia is committed to continuing the celebration of the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people throughout the year.

Helena Bezzina
Senior Audience Development and Public Programs Coordinator

Children enjoyed having their face painted with magpie totems by Katrina Brown

Photo: Lannon Harley

Textile artist, Lyndy Delian, encouraged children to join in her silk-screen demonstrations



All Stock Must Go! ***(1996) by Campfire Group is a political statement about displacement***

'… there is a new urban Aboriginal culture emerging that remembers the past while looking towards the new.' Jack Davis, 1990

Through studying history we learn how we got to where we are today. Why we experience the world the way we do, and what social and historical factors play a part in creating and changing the cultural practices we express and experience in our daily lives. How did it come to be that 70 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people today live in urban environments? How is it that the mainstream stereotypes still insist on imagining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders living only in remote environments? When did defining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people according to the environments they live in become important and why? But most importantly, who gets to script these definitions?

The exhibition *70% Urban* offers an opportunity for visitors to gain awareness of the historical context of contemporary issues faced by Indigenous people, particularly those in urban areas. This is a national story with shared histories and experiences by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from all states represented. The exhibition explores and raises some important questions about identity, cultural expression and the evolution of cultural practices.

The exhibition largely consists of objects held in the National Historical Collection. Through these we are able to follow the storyline of the Indigenous historical experiences from first contact to present day, as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures changed, adapted and evolved along with the urbanisation of Australia. The objects themselves bear testimony to the innovative ways Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have used new and introduced technologies to continue to express identity, culture and their life experiences. 'They are the modern Dreamtime stories. These stories that we're painting now will become part of the Dreamtime in the not too distant future.' (Richard Bell, 2006).

All of the objects are interesting for different reasons. Some of the objects are comments on historical experiences such as *Summertime Blues* (2002) by James Simon, some are political statements such as *All Stock Must Go!* (1996) by Campfire Group and others are personal responses to the more difficult cultural/social issues experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, like those explored in A *Blanket Return* (2004) by Julie Gough. 'Seeing this you understand why Indigenous art is important, it's not aesthetics — it's the story! The history told in a visual way from the Indigenous perspective.' (Rachael Symington, Museum visitor 2007).

One of the important aspects of the exhibition is representation of the many diverse and passionate responses to the 'defining' of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as 'urban'. There are many definitions and social connotations attached to the word 'urban', as experienced by Indigenous people — some positive, most negative. How does a museum define a group of people with a term that is controversial to those it's supposed to represent? In the audiovisual *Who You Callin' Urban*? Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples represent themselves, their own opinions and responses to 'urban' definitions, what the term 'urban' means and why it is significant and often confrontational. Through this audiovisual you get an insight as to why some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples rebuff the term while others claim and celebrate it.

Barbara Paulson *Curator, ATSIP*

70% Urban is open until January 2008 in the Gallery of First Australians.
Free entry

T-shirts, posters, flags and badges designed and used as both protesting and promotional materials.

Who You Callin' Urban?

Those who attended the forum, *Who You Callin' Urban?* were treated to a truly rare and unexpected experience. Everyone agrees they felt they were witness to a historic moment in the debate about who we are today as blackfellas living in the city and who we are **not**. How and why we are different from our ancestors and brothers and sisters in regional and remote areas and why it matters to acknowledge the difference. Author Anita Heiss, whose paper was titled 'Concrete Kooris with Westfield dreaming', proudly announced that she does not wear ochres on her face, she wears Revlon cosmetics, she does not read the time by the sun but consults her Gucci watch — making the point that she does not feel any less Aboriginal as a consequence. Everyone agreed that the debate exhibited an extraordinary level of maturity and independent thinking, punctuated with liberal doses of passion, honesty, frankness, integrity, humour, and most importantly, goodwill. The latter ingredient is often lost when such a diversity of people speak from different sides of the arena with inflamed passion.

But this animated talkfest just blew everyone away. It took the debate about the simmering issue of identity and Aboriginality to a new level. It took it away from us being defined by others to self-definition, from measuring ourselves against what we have lost to what we achieved by a different course. As Wesley Enoch pointed out, 'If we keep looking backwards to a traditional past we are going to keep tripping over things we can't see in our future'. Whether you are from the north or south of the continent, the popular definition of being black is to be poor, drunk, violent and dysfunctional.

If you are from the south you are seen as further diminished by not having language, ceremony or land. And there are some 'helpful' white academics who have kindly delineated this for us, in case we forget. One speaker explained that she was told that there was no point studying Aboriginal culture south of a line that extended from Townsville to Perth, as it was only a study in the loss of culture. Another made reference to our very own Wallace's Line where in this context, species are divided along black and not-so-black lines. As artist Bronwyn Bancroft, whose paper was titled, 'Where the bloody hell am I?', wrote on a label accompanying her 1991 painting, 'You don't even look Aboriginal … for years we were punished for being too black and now we are being punished for not being black enough'.

The speakers came from diverse fields across arts and academia, including high-profile poets, writers, artists, curators, publishers and a theatre director. Discussions raised at Who You Callin' Urban? on Friday 6 July at the Museum continued into another conference, Black to Blak, convened by Djon Mundine at Campbelltown Regional Gallery that weekend. Many of the same speakers allowed the debate to be further amplified in front of a large and diverse Sydney audience. Our forum was often referenced, as it was in the Indigenous Lives (Biographies and Autobiographies) conference convened by Peter Read, Anna Haebich and Frances Peters-Little on the following Monday, 9 July, at the National Museum.

But you heard it first, live and kicking, here at the National Museum of Australia.

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

The speakers

Anita Heiss and Wesley Enoch

Professor Peter Read, Stephen Hagan, Gordon Syron and Sam Wagan Watson

Richard Bell, Vernon Ah kee, Bronwyn Bancroft

Going back home

First stop the South West Rocks schoolhouse. Vince Peters being recorded by Jay Arthur

We set off from Sydney early on a Saturday in February, George Serras, the Museum photographer, was the driver, and his passengers were Cec Bowden, Vince Peters, Michael Walsh, Willie Leslie and myself.

We were off north, up past Kempsey, to a place on the banks of the Macleay River called Kinchela where, from 1924 to 1970, the Aborigines Welfare Board ran the Kinchela Aboriginal Boys' Training Home. It was here that Cec, Vince, Michael and Willie spent their teenage years. This was not their first trip back but this one was for the Museum. Through George's photographs and the stories I would record on the trip, what Kinchela was and all it stood for would be remembered and included as part of the national story, and not forgotten.

Kinchela was the place in New South Wales where older Aboriginal boys, taken from their families, were sent. The younger ones generally first went to Bomaderry Babies' Home till about the age of 10, although there were some younger boys sent directly to Kinchela.

Before heading to Kinchela the party first went to South West Rocks, near Kinchela, on the coast. The boys spent holidays here, camping in an old schoolhouse. South West Rocks was a special place for Kinchela boys — an escape from the institution. The men are planning to set up a small museum about Kinchela in the schoolhouse when the building is relocated. It's a part of the local area history that most people don't know much about.

Then to the Home. It's now an Aboriginal alcohol and drug rehabilitation centre, called Bennelong's Haven. The community there welcomed us, gave us lunch and then we went for a walk.

The four men went straight across to a giant fig tree that grows on the far side of the property. They commented that whenever former inmates of Kinchela come back that's where they always go first. The fig tree was a place where the staff generally didn't go so it was the boys' place, the only place away from the control of the institution. The photo of the four men was taken at the foot of this tree.

During the trip, stories were recorded of the time in Kinchela. There were some good memories — mostly of boxing, football, surf lifesaving and other sport. The Kinchela boys were respected everywhere in whatever sport they took part in. But Kinchela was a dark place, one that scarred many of its former inmates for life. And even more than that, it was part of a system that took many of the children of the New South Wales Aboriginal community and tried to teach them to forget their families, forget their culture, despise who they were. Boys were told nothing of their families. The men recalled, 'One boy ran away but then he turned round and ran back because he realised he didn't know where to go home — the only place he knew was Kinchela'.

Sometimes the system succeeded. Some Kinchela boys grew up and disappeared into the non-Aboriginal community. But many of them survived, not just as men but as *Aboriginal* men. Cec Bowden is an elder of the Sydney community and an artist; Willie Leslie is on the staff of Eora College in Sydney; Vince Peters is a member of the Sorry Day Committee; Michael Walsh works with Aboriginal youths in trouble with the law. Kinchela took much away but it failed to take away their identity and it bonded them together in a lifelong brotherhood of the 'Kinchela men'.

Dr Jay Arthur *Curator, ATSIP*

Willie Leslie at nearby Smithtown Hall, where he started his boxing career

Walking across to the fig tree at Kinchela

At the fig tree

Martu community members visit the Museum

Jakayu Biljabu demonstrates how the sandals are worn

In March, a group of Martu men and women, both elders and younger people, visited the Museum to look at collections of Martu material. The Martu people's country is in the Western Desert region of Western Australia. While in Canberra they also visited the National Film and Sound Archive, the National Library of Australia and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

Our visitors were shown through the exhibitions, which they enjoyed. The men also went out to the Museum's Mitchell site to discuss sacred objects with the Repatriation Unit's male staff. The Museum has a number of undocumented sacred objects known to be from Central Australia but without specific geographic or cultural location. When senior men from anywhere in Central Australia visit we ask if they will look at this material in the hope that they may recognise some of the objects. While the Museum does not hold any Martu sacred material, the men were able to tell us who we should talk to about the repatriation of some of these objects.

While at the storage area the men seemed to be just as impressed with the cars, traction engines and other vehicles as with what they saw in the exhibitions.

The only Martu material in the Museum's collection at the time of the visit comprised a boomerang, made at the 2006 National Folk Festival by Muuki Taylor, tools used to make the boomerang and a club also made by Muuki.

While at the Museum, Muuki and Jakayu Biljabu treated staff and Museum visitors to a very rare and special experience in the Hall — the making of traditional bark sandals. These sandals were donated to the Museum and will take pride of place in the National Historical Collection.

David Kaus *Senior Curator, ATSIP*

Martu visitors with Dr Michael Pickering, ATSIP Program Director. (left to right) Muuki Taylor, Pukina Morgan, N yari Morgan, Desmond Taylor, Gladies Bidu, Maiyka Chapman, N ola Taylor, Mike Pickering, Jakayu Biljabu. Kneeling is Morika Biljabu

Muuki Taylor making his sandal

Michael Pickering and Muuki Taylor after Muuki had presented the sandals, made by himself and Jakayu Biljabu, to the Museum

Jakayu Biljabu is filmed while making her sandal

Papunya Painting: Out of the Desert

28 November 2007 – 2 February 2008

Mark Henderson and Sharon Towns, conservators, are shown stretching Uta Uta Tjangala's canvas Yumari *in the Museum's conservation laboratory, August 2007*

Mark Henderson at work, August 2007

Photos: Andrew Sheargold

Papunya Painting: Out of the Desert, opening in November 2007 will present iconic works from the National Museum's Aboriginal Arts Board of the Australia Council collection. Aboriginal art from the central desert regions of Australia is already internationally famous for its aesthetic and financial value, however, this exhibition highlights the significance of the cultural, social and political values of these works. The Aboriginal Arts Board commissioned this collection of artworks in the 1970s and 1980s and it illustrates the historical inception of the Papunya Tula movement in 1971.

The Papunya settlement was strategically established in the Northern Territory's central desert to facilitate assimilation of culturally and linguistically diverse groups of Aboriginal people into white society. In the 1960s the Australian Government resettled the Pintupi, Warlpiri, Luritja, Arrernte and Anmatyerre peoples into this centralised Papunya community. They existed together in an uneasy alliance, ultimately triumphing by working together to build a progressive and very successful commercial art enterprise. Senior male elders, the traditional teachers and custodians of ceremonial knowledge, who at this point had been discouraged from cultural ceremonial practices, found a means of transmitting their knowledge to their people, and also to outside audiences.

These paintings, created in the early days of the movement, are much more than 'art' in the western sense of the word. They are explicit cultural maps that convey complex social and historical relationships to country, and to each other. The artists painted geographical sites and the exploits of ancestors. As they created these monumental artworks, they replicated the traditional performance of ceremony. They portrayed their cultural histories, the evidence of their connection to, and interdependence with, their land. In reality, the diaspora from traditional lands had initiated a self-determination movement empowering the artists with a certain degree of economic independence.

This exhibition illustrates the diversity of Central Australian Aboriginal cultures and the strong sense of identity and kinship, especially their law in relation to land. It reveals the role of art in the transmission of traditional knowledge through the continuity of culture and spirituality. It establishes the historic role of the Papunya Tula movement and its significance in the development of contemporary Aboriginal art and culture, including its international profile. It explores the diverse cross-cultural perceptions of Aboriginal authenticity, custodial rights and responsibilities.

The scale of the majority of the works presented a major challenge to the designers of the exhibition. To illustrate and reinforce the exhibition message, exhibition labels decode the iconography of the paintings, and the accompanying schematic diagrams detail the content, including the dreaming sites highlighted in area maps. The exhibition will be shown from 28 November 2007 until 2 February 2008 as part of the Museum's ongoing Collections Discovery program. Entry will be free to all visitors.

Nancy Michaelis *Curator, ATSIP*

Utopia to Tokyo

Emily exhibition opens internationally in February 2008

Next year, the exhibition *Utopia: The Genius of Emily Kame Kngwarreye*, opens in two of the most prestigious art museums in Japan — the National Museum of Art, Osaka (26 February), and the National Art Centre, Tokyo (28 May).

The exhibition has been described by Craddock Morton, the Director of the National Museum of Australia, as groundbreaking for the Museum, not only in scale and significance but also in content. Emily Kame Kngwarreye (about 1910–1996) was a senior Anmatyerre custodian and artist who lived and worked in relative isolation distant from the art world that sought her work. Hers is the story of an extraordinary Australian revealed through powerful and innovative images. She lived in a region called Utopia on the edge of the Simpson Desert, some 250 kilometres north-west of Alice Springs. Her dedication to the ancestor Alhalkere and the surrounding country that bore his name was expressed through a lifetime of ceremony, song, dance and painting. After decades of mark-making on the body and in the sand, her cultural narratives found expression in the batik medium from 1977 to 1988, followed by painting on canvas. She was an artist of few words, in English at least. But her paintings speak volumes. Over 3000 paintings on canvas executed over a period of 8 years, which is roughly one painting per day, are testimony to how much she had to say about her reason for being and also to her prodigious output and to her genius as a contemporary Australian artist. Her very first canvas *Emu Woman* caused instant excitement and heralded a profound departure from the so-called 'dot and circle' style of the male-dominated desert art movement. This painting was placed in the Holmes à Court collection and over the next 12 months she had solo exhibitions in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane followed by many other exhibitions both here and overseas. She was awarded an Australian Artists Creative Fellowship known as the 'Keating awards' in 1992, was posthumously an Australian representative in the Venice Biennale in 1997, and the subject of a national touring exhibition in 1998.

The exhibition content selection meeting held at the Museum with a delegation from Japan

Emily has been acclaimed by some as one of the major abstract painters of the twentieth century, belonging to a (Aboriginal) movement which Robert Hughes described in *Time* magazine, as 'the last great art movement of the twentieth century'. Yet while her work may appear visually as abstract art, it is rich in content, standing as title deeds to country and cultural continuity while portraying the life of the land, concepts of caring for country, history and law.

After the Museum accepted a ministerial invitation to deliver this exhibition in partnership with the Yomiuri Shimbun, the National Arts Center in Tokyo and the National Museum of Art in Osaka, a small and dedicated project unit was set up. This specialised team is responsible for directing and managing all aspects of the project from curatorial to crate/freight, protocols and publication content.

It is the largest Australian solo exhibition to go overseas with some 120 works from 45 national and overseas collections, valued at around $30 million. It will be shown in an area of 2000 square metres with up to 400 linear metres of wall space. In January 2008, two cargo planes will start the exhibition's journey to Japan, which will be captured on film by Ronin Films, who are making a documentary of the project over a 2–3 year period for national and international distribution.

The Tokyo venue, which specialises in blockbusters, such as the recent showing of Monet attracting some million visitors, proposes to co-bill Emily with Cézanne and Modigliani, thus cementing her international reputation.

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

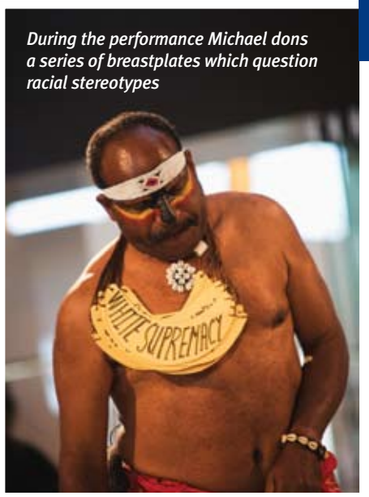
The project team: Margo Neale, Sonja Balaga, Benita Tunks and Abby Cooper

Photo: Barbara Pausion

Il iamb nai? Pombrol molga kundal al?/ Who is this person? Black or White?

Dr Michael Mel preparing for the performance

Anna Edmundson, Susan Cochrane, Michael Mel, Lisa Clout and Margo Neale after the performance



During the performance Michael dons a series of breastplates which question racial stereotypes

During the performance audience members are selected to be painted and dressed as Papuans — they are then given breastplates to wear which proclaim their inferior racial status

The Museum was pleased to host a recent performance by Papua New Guinea artist and scholar Dr Michael Mel during his visit to Canberra for the Art and Re-enactment conference at the Research School of Humanities, The Australian National University (5–7 June 2007).

The title of the performance was *Il iamb nai? Pombrol molga kundal al? or Who is this person? Black or White?* It questioned negative stereotypes of Papuan people typical during the colonial era, and emphasised the primary relationship of Papuan people to their ancestral heritage.

Caroline Turner, one of the conference organisers, has described Michael's work as 'one of the few bridges between Papua New Guinea and the world, helping us to understand the complex cultures of the island, their philosophical concepts and cultural practices'. She maintains:

By using Papuan methods of communication (music, song, dance, body painting and decoration) to act and speak for his communities and to challenge Western cultural dominance, Michael Mel both continues and develops Melanesian cultural forms and creates spaces of freedom for the new generations.[1]

Dr Susan Cochrane, Visiting Research Fellow, and Anna Edmundson, Senior Curator, spoke at the performance on the need for partnerships between Australian and Papuan museums, and Margo Neale was MC for the event. Lisa Clout from Public Programs stage-managed the event and also joined in the performance.

Dr Mel's performance was able to draw upon objects from the Museum's Pacific collections and involved staff and audience participation with great success. According to Dr Mel, 'Collections like those in the National Museum of Australia, especially from New Guinea, are silent witnesses to history and cultural survival. These objects should not be seen as "owned" by western museums but rather "shared"'.

The Museum is hoping to host further visits by Dr Mel, both as a performance artist and in his role as Head of the Expressive Arts and Religious Education Department at the University of Goroka, Papua New Guinea. With the proposed opening of a new University Museum at Goroka, there are increased opportunities for ongoing cultural exchanges.

Anna Edmundson *Senior Curator, ATSIP*

1 Caroline Turner, *10 Years Prince Claus Fund 1996–2006*. Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development, Netherlands, 2006, p.132.

Tayenebe

Demonstrating weaving techniques

Tayenebe, a Tasmanian Aboriginal word meaning 'exchange', is the name of an exciting project fostering creative and professional development opportunities for Tasmanian Aboriginal weavers and an emerging curator. As Project Officer for Arts Tasmania, Lola Greeno developed an idea for a project that would support Tasmanian women in regenerating weaving practices and knowledge of traditional plants within their community. Lynne Uptin, (the then) Director of Arts Tasmania, visited the National Museum of Australia in late 2004 to invite us to participate by developing an exhibition and providing curatorial mentoring. After 18 months of consultation and meetings, a partnership between the Tasmanian Aboriginal weavers, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG), Arts Tasmania and the National Museum of Australia was formalised. We are working together to support the community regenerate their weaving traditions and to develop an exhibition and catalogue that will tour to the mainland.

The first weaving workshop held at Murrayfield on Bruny Island in May 2006 was attended by eight women, who surveyed the land to identify and collect plants and practise the weaving stitches. TMAG's Curator Tony Brown brought the museum's collection of historic baskets to the workshop so the women could see them and uncover the knowledge they contained. The women's excitement for the project exploded at the first workshop — they have sustained a strong momentum and gather more and more participants as their journey progresses.

Other workshops hosted by Arts Tasmania with financial support from the Australia Council have been held at Bicheno on the east coast in November 2006, Launceston in February 2007 and Flinders Island in May 2007. Holding workshops in different locations across Tasmania not only provides an opportunity for different people to attend, but for plants to be identified and collected across the state during different seasons. During the workshops, the women share knowledge, gather materials, survey sites, conduct experiments, weave with different fibres and talk (a lot!). Each participant keeps a diary and the workshops are photographed by Lucia Rossi.

The Tayenebe Steering Committee meets during the weaving workshop to discuss the project. Members include Lola Greeno (Arts Tasmania), Andrew Rozefelds (TMAG), Colleen Mundy and Vicki West (weavers), Amanda Reynolds (National Museum of Australia) and an open place for elders. The weaving workshops have been really successful in generating creative development opportunities, and we are now focusing our attention on developing the exhibition, catalogue and the curatorial mentorship program.

We hope the Tayenebe exhibition will travel across Australia so everyone can share the story of a group of amazing women, experience the beauty of Tasmanian Aboriginal woven materials in person, and encounter the unique plants and landscapes from the scenic southern state.

Amanda Jane Reynolds *Curator, Australian Society and Culture*

All photos: Lucia Rossi, courtesy Arts Tasmania

Lola Greeno visits the N ational Museum to update everyone on the Tayenebe project

Photo: Barbara Paulson

Muriel Maynard on the east coast of Tasmania

White Flag Iris

Brendan Kassman, Steve Cutting, Esmeralda Stephenson, The Hon. Mal Brough MP and Danielle Lede

Learning journey

Indigenous Rights forum

This year witnessed a first — a trio of Northern Territory students undertaking a journey — the learning journey, investigating the evolution of Indigenous rights since the 1967 Referendum. The conclusion was to be a showdown between the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, the Hon Mal Brough, MP, and the Territory threesome. Like many unlearned in this area, I was of the opinion that Indigenous Australians had 'too many' rights, and if anything needed less. I was quickly proved wrong.

We, that is Danielle, Esmeralda and I, were given a set of facts to look over for anything that stood out. In that set of notes, we learned that one's wage depended on the colour of their skin. We knew that Indigenous Australians did not always have citizenship; however we were naive to the fact that under the Australian Constitution, they were classed as 'Flora and Fauna'.

As the weeks went on, we discovered a great deal in regard to Indigenous issues. Through the interviews, we met some extraordinary people, each with a different story to tell. Some made us laugh (Thomas the 'Playboy') and others touched our hearts. No matter who we interviewed in the learning journey, there was always an impression left in our hearts.

Gunbalanya (Oenpelli) was sensational. To kick the footy with the students and watch them in class was a privilege. It also emphasised how much urban Australia takes for granted. Canberra was also an eye-opener for us. Parliament House was incredible and question time was a feature I bragged about for weeks. We learned so much through Talkback Classroom, and would like to express my warm thanks to everyone involved. It was truly an unforgettable experience and I firmly believe that it 'gives a voice to the voteless'.

Brendon Kassman *Year 12 Casuarina Senior College, Northern Territory*

I was fortunate enough to be selected into the Talkback Classroom program for 2007. I knew the experience was very rare, and was determined to make the most of the fantastic opportunity. As it was my first trip to Canberra, I was excited to take in the sights and finally be able to explore the magnificent Parliament House. However, I received much greater things than I had anticipated. The team visited sites relevant to the theme of the 1967 Referendum which enabled Aboriginals to share the same rights as non-Aboriginals, including the right to vote. During this visit, we interviewed some great characters, ranging from people at the Tent Embassy outside Old Parliament House to the curators at the National Museum of Australia. Everyone played a vital role in helping to collect information and offer an insight into our final task of interviewing Indigenous Affairs Minister, the Hon Mal Brough, MP.

Back home in the Northern Territory the team took a short plane ride to the small rural community of Gunbalanya (Oenpelli). It was amazing to be able to put pictures to words and really see the situation in the community. The final interview process was exciting, rewarding and nerve-racking, knowing that all the hard work the team had put in was going to pay off. The interview with Mal Brough went smoothly and was even better than what I had imagined; the studio, lights, audience and cameras all added to the experience. Talkback Classroom allowed me to gain an insight into the world of media, and more importantly learn in depth about the history of Indigenous affairs, something rarely taught in many classrooms.

Danielle Lede *Year 12 Casuarina Senior College, Northern Territory*

Handing back to my relatives a piece of our history

Being part of the repatriation process as a Museum project officer and as a community member is a strange yet unique situation. I was excited during my research for this project, and at the time when I was able to hand over these remains to my relatives I felt really honoured.

There is a lot of detective work involved in repatriation. When the outcomes were directly related to me and my people I felt a greater sense of the emotional depth experienced by others who go through the processes of having their ancestors returned.

It was by luck that I came across the initial information about a lock of hair that belonged to one of the tribesmen from New Norcia Mission. This hair sample was taken from him in 1862 and was one of many others held in the Edinburgh collection when it arrived at the Museum for our team to begin the repatriation process. I was researching the documentation for ancestral remains for North Queensland when I noticed there was a reference to a place called Victoria Plains, which is where my family was sent in 1873. My family was one of the first placed at New Norcia Mission on the Victoria Plains of Western Australia at that time.

The initial label was brief and when I connected it with records from the Edinburgh collection I found the name of the man whose lock of hair was now in storage here at the Museum. It was William Monop. After further investigation and research I could confidently say this hair sample belonged to him and that he was part of the New Norcia community, and was possibly an ancestor of some of the local people still living there today.

I contacted the local community via Bwuradjen Yuat Aboriginal Corporation at New Norcia and began the negotiations for the return of the remains to the community. The return occurred at New Norcia on 19 November 2006. The glass jar containing the hair is now on display at the Mission's museum with the approval of the community.

George Taylor *Assistant Curator, Repatriation*

The display at New Norcia Mission Museum

George relaying the journey of these remains

George speaking to the people gathered at the handover ceremony at New Norcia

George handing over the remains to community representative Gus Ryder

ATSIP NEWS

A special breastplate

David Kaus photographing the Victorian Exploration Expedition breastplate
Photo: David Hallam

Most readers would have heard about the breastplate, presented to Aboriginal people who assisted the explorers Burke, Wills and King, that was to be auctioned earlier in 2007. It was later declared an Aboriginal object and withdrawn from sale. A process is currently being undertaken to determine its legal ownership, which in turn will inform its ultimate disposition. Museum conservator David Hallam and I examined the breastplate in March, prior to it being removed from sale. If the Museum was going to bid for such an important object we needed to be as sure as we could that it was what it was claimed to be. Our examination did not raise any doubts and further research turned up interesting information including the identity of the engraver, Xavier Arnoldi. In August, David Hallam and I presented a joint paper on the breastplate to the Burke and Wills Historical Society conference at Birdsville.

David Kaus
Senior Curator, ATSIP

One of three breastplates presented to Aboriginal people for assistance provided to Burke, Wills and King
Photo: David Kaus

Barbara Nicholson with her father's boomerang *Photo: Barbara Paulson*

Continuing the Link-Up story

In May, Nancy Michaelis and I went to Melbourne to address the annual meeting of the national forum of Link-Up coordinators. The aim was to tell the coordinators about the National Museum and its role in telling and remembering stories of Indigenous Australia. We also talked about the importance of continuing to tell the story of Link-Up in the Museum and emphasised that the Museum needs personal stories and objects that belong to them to be able tell stories effectively. This means the Museum will be calling on Link-Ups around Australia in the future to help us tell the story of removed children.

Dr Jay Arthur
Curator, ATSIP

Uncle Bill guides the tour around Framlingham with stories of what it was like in the 1930–40s when he worked in the bushlands and on the pastoral leases in the area *Photo: Barbara Paulson*

Walking with Uncle Bill Edwards

A favourite aspect of my job is talking to people and listing to their personal and family histories and discussing ways to represent their stories in the Museum. In September, I toured around Framlingham and listened to Uncle Bill Edwards and his daughters Kaye and Therese as they shared their histories with me. I am working with Uncle Bill on further developing the 'Mission hut' into something that can capture the imagination of visitors, giving them an insight into the practicalities of what day-to-day living was like in such a hut on Framlingham Aboriginal Reserve during the 1930–40s. The Mission hut is one of the interactive exhibits in the Gallery of First Australians. Inside the hut visitors can listen to an audio of Uncle Bill and Aunty Kathlene as they share their experience. The hut is a half-scale model of the one they lived in when they were first married and we are planning to include objects which would have been used during this period, as well as photos supplied from the family.

Barbara Paulson
Curator, ATSIP

Stories from the 1967 Referendum

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the 1967 Referendum. To celebrate this important moment the Museum hosted *Stories from the 1967 Referendum*, on 26 May, to a packed house. It was fantastic to have an audience which included a large group of current and former activists. The afternoon kicked off with a sneak preview screening of Frances Peters-Little's 2007 documentary, *Vote 'Yes' For Aborigines*. It set the mood for a reflective discussion by the four panellists, Dr Kaye Price, Dr Barrie Pittock, Linda McBride-Yuke (representing her father Lambert McBride) and the Hon Tom Roper. We were also fortunate to have Dr Jackie Huggins and Professor Peter Read facilitate the event.

Kipley Nink
Assistant Curator, ATSIP

(left to right) Jackie Huggins, Peter Read, Kaye Price, Barrie Pittock, Linda McBride-Yuke and Tom Roper looking at a photograph of Lambert and May McBride *Photo: Lannon Harley*

From Public Programs to Water Resource

I was a Public Programs Officer with the National Museum from 1999 to 2007 and co-coordinated NAIDOC Week activities and the Indigenous Film Festivals as well as a diversity of children's programs during this time. One of the best things about working in Public Programs was meeting a variety of people, particularly the storytellers and performers such as Boori Pryor, Pilawuk, Elaine Russell, Roy and June Barker, Duncan Smith and many others. Storytellers and artists entertain and inspire visitors and staff with their stories, characters and knowledge. I learnt a great deal about the differences in the cultural practices from working with artists from diverse cultures. After over 7 years, I decided it was time for a change and am now a Communications Officer for the National Land and Water Resource Audit.

Denise Fowler
Public Programs Coordinator,

Denise Fowler and Daina Harvey at the 'Farewell/ Good luck' luncheon *Photo: Barbara Paulson*

(left to right) Sadie Singer, Alison Carroll, Winifred Hilliard, Iwana Ken, Tjanyangka Robin and Kanakiya Tjanayari *Photo: Catherine Alexander*

Artists from Central Australia visit the Museum

Visitors from the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara lands visited Canberra in July to attend a number of their wonderful exhibitions and events, notably *Skin to Skin*, held at Tuggeranong Arts Centre. While here they made time to come to the Museum to see the new Ernabella exhibit and to sing along with a recording of the Ernabella choir. Visitors who were in the Gallery of First Australians at the time got quite a treat!

Andy Greenslade
Curator, ATSIP

Deborah and friends in the stall at AIATSIS Festival Day *Photo: Barbara Paulson*

NAIDOC Princess represents at AIATSIS Festival Day

Education's program officer Deborah Frederick was NAIDOC Princess in 1985. During NAIDOC this year she represented the Museum with a stall at the AIATSIS Festival Day at Acton where — while wearing her winner's sash with pride — she engaged with visitors sharing information about objects, cultural material and programs available in the Museum, she even gave out 'show bags'. Inside the stall visitors had an opportunity to feel possum skins, play some Torres Strait Islander musical instruments and touch artefacts. Overall it was a wonderful day made better by the fact that Deborah and her helpers were also in prime position to see and hear some of the musicians, such as Emma Donovan and Koolism, performing on stage.

Barbara Paulson
Curator, ATSIP

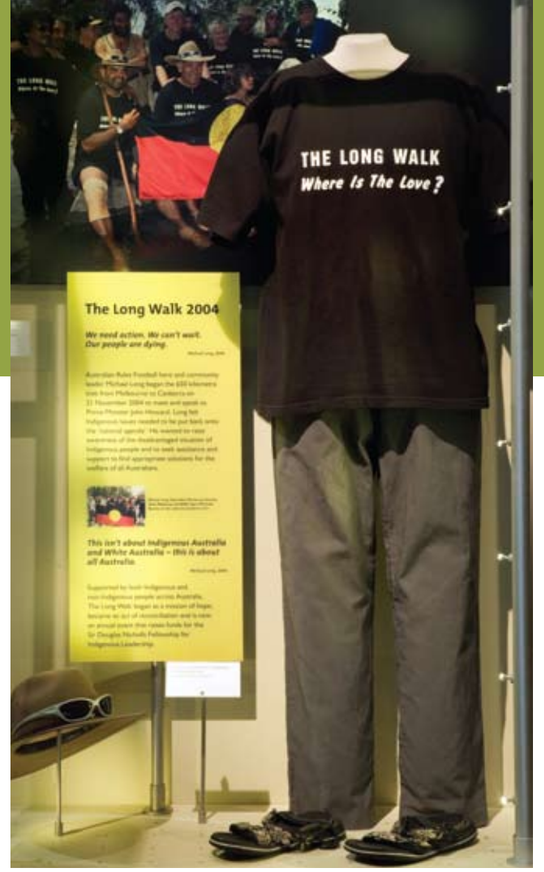
The Long Walk 2004

On 21 November 2004, Australian Rules football legend and community leader Michael Long began a 650-kilometre trek from Melbourne to Canberra to meet and speak to Prime Minister John Howard in the hope of putting Indigenous issues back on the national agenda. Supported by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people across Australia, The Long Walk began as a mission of hope, became an act of reconciliation and is now an annual event that raises funds for the Sir Douglas Nicholls Fellowship for Indigenous Leadership.

Long wanted to raise awareness of the disadvantaged situation of Indigenous people and to seek assistance and support to find appropriate solutions for the welfare of all Australians. After returning from yet another funeral and, sickened by the continuing senseless loss of life among Indigenous peoples and communities in Australia, Long decided that something had to be done and he resolved to meet with Prime Minister John Howard to discuss his concerns, even if he had to walk all the way to Canberra to do it. 'We need action. We can't wait. Our people are dying.' (Long, 2004).

Thus began a historic walk demonstrating how local leadership can capture national attention. Ordinary Australians rallied to demonstrate their support and encouragement and to let the government know that voters were also interested in, and concerned with, the health and welfare of Indigenous people. 'I was, and continue to be overwhelmed and humbled by the support I received from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. It showed me Australians do not want to be divided by race and culture and will work together when given the chance.' (Long, 2005).

The Long Walk officially came to an end on Thursday 2 December 2004 as the walkers arrived in Canberra and were joined by thousands of supporters as they made their way to Commonwealth Park, where they were officially welcomed into Country by local Ngunnawal elders and the press. On Friday 3 December Michael, accompanied by Paul Briggs (The Long Walk coordinator and Yorta Yorta elder), as well as fellow walkers John Cusack, Alan Thorpe, John Paul Janke, Gareth Wills, and prominent Aboriginal leaders Pat and Mick Dodson, walked into the prime minister's office to share his story and his concerns.



The Long Walk 2004 as displayed in the Gallery of First Australians

In remembrance of the event Long has kindly donated his Long Walk 2004 outfit to the Museum, which is currently on display in the Gallery of First Australians. The socks and sandals are reminder of the blisters he and his fellow walkers suffered through to make the historic journey. 'I suppose we want to be a part of the future and the vision and we've got to stand up and be counted but want also to be included.' (Long, 2004). Michael Long, like Vincent Lingiari before him, proved that one man willing to travel the distance to share his story can make a difference.

Barbara Paulson
Curator, ATSIP

Patrya Kay from Conservation and Isa Menzies from Registration install the display

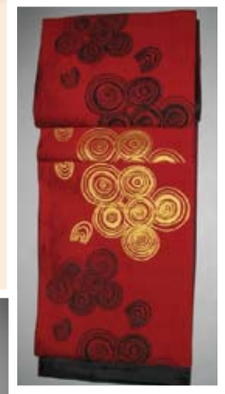
Patrya Kay and Isa Menzies prepare the objects for installation

Photos: Barbara Paulson

The Kanberri Dreaming collection

Top and skirt (2003) by Danusha Cubillo

Kimono **Dancing at the waterhole** ***(2001) by Lyndy Delian***



Obi –red and Obi on cushion by Lyndy Delian

The Kanberri Dreaming collection consists of a group of screen-printed textiles and four paintings purchased by the Museum, following the *Kanberri Dreaming* exhibition in 2003. The collection consists of 25 objects by four artists.

Jim (Boza) Williams is a Ngunnawal elder and artist who draws on distinct cultural forms to construct contemporary political critiques. The two paintings in this collection, *Birth of the Bogong Moths* and *Kicked Out of Parliament*, both draw on his trademark symbol — the bogong moth — to articulate his identity and history as a Ngunnawal man. Helen S Teirnan's paintings, likewise, express both contemporary and historical narratives through her use of photorealist images that 'make hidden histories visible'. Of her work she says, 'I use familiar patterns from a domestic past as a medium to interrogate, challenge and expose the many contradictions that lie below society's surface'. The bulk of the collection, however, is a group of textiles by artists Danusha Cubillo and Lyndy Delian. The 21 articles primarily explore the relationship between the classical form of the kimono and Indigenous motifs. The formal structure of the kimono and obi provide a canvas that reflects the similarly classical concerns of the decorative Indigenous designs.

Demonstrating the ways in which access to new ideas, technologies and materials allow for a range of expression, the works provide a cross-sectional view of the diversity of interpretation within the wider Indigenous art community in the capital region. They also show the concerns of contemporary Aboriginal people in a dynamic and accessible range of cultural productions. The collection directly challenges the perceived lack of authenticity in the culture of urban Aboriginal people, showcasing instead the diverse and innovative ways identity and connection to traditions are maintained.

Christine Hansen
Curator, ATSIP

If You Love Me, Love Me Safely

Marrynula Mununggurr painted this striking and unusual bark in 2000. She uses a traditional medium to tell a very modern story of AIDS and its prevention. It was commissioned by the Northern Territory Department of Health and Community Services, which was working in collaboration with the Northern Territory AIDS and Hepatitis Council, to raise awareness of the issues associated with AIDS. The bark came to the Museum after it was auctioned to raise funds for running health awareness and support workshops on the Tiwi Islands.

Mununggurr first painted on this theme in the early 1990s. Her first version of *Love Me Safely* was exhibited in the National Gallery of Australia's exhibition *Don't Leave Me This Way — Art in the Age of AIDS*, the landmark exhibition that reflected the devastation caused by the AIDS epidemic. AIDS and hepatitis were becoming an issue within some of the Aboriginal communities. Using this familiar medium was a good way to develop the understanding of the importance of basic changes to behaviour to prevent the spread of AIDS and Mununggurr's painting clearly identifies the 'safe way' and the 'sad way'. She shows a 'sorry camp' flanked by happier images of healthy families living with young children in idyllic situations. She also includes images of the 'long grassers' about whom there has been much discussion in recent months. Her main thrust is that of the title — if you love me, love me safely.

Working at Buku-larrnggay Mulka at Yirrkala Arts on the Gove Peninsula, Mununggurr is an accomplished painter and printmaker, with many exhibitions to her credit. She is primarily a printmaker and her unique and wonderfully readable style derives from this medium.

Andy Greenslade
Curator, ATSIP

The Joe McGinness collection

Joe McGinness tuckerbox and wharfie's hook

The Joe McGinness collection comprises a wharfie's hook and a tuckerbox. Joe McGinness (1914–2003) was a significant Aboriginal Australian who fought for Indigenous rights throughout his life. He was the son of Alyandabu of the Kungarakany people of the Northern Territory, and Stephen McGinness, an Irish immigrant who worked as a ganger on the North Australia Railway.

The wharfie's hook was used by McGinness in the 1950s and 1960s whilst working on the Cairns wharves in Queensland. In the 1950s the wharf industry was one of the few industries to accept Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander labour. As President of the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI) from 1961 to 1977, he put to good use the political skills he had acquired on the wharves. McGinness used the tuckerbox on trips around northern Queensland and the Northern Territory in the 1960s and 1970s. It symbolises his struggle and personal commitment to welfare and political activism on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians which he and many others of his generation carried out. The inclusion of the McGinness wharfie's hook and tuckerbox in the National Historical Collection honours his memory and the role he played as well as strengthening the Museum's collection of Indigenous civil rights material.

Kipley Nink
Assistant Curator, ATSIP

Namatjira's woomera
a gift of thanks

This beautifully painted woomera (spear-thrower) was produced by Albert Namatjira in 1939. Commissioned by Pastor FW Albrecht, the Superintendent of the Hermannsburg Mission at the time, it was made as a gift for a benefactor of the mission and a prominent Lutheran figure of the day, Mr Ernst Materne. Materne had visited the mission during the early 1930s and was so appalled at conditions the Aborigines were living under that he undertook to send truckloads of food from Adelaide.

It was during this era that Pastor Albrecht began encouraging Aboriginal residents of the mission to manufacture items for sale to the tourist trade, with the aim of injecting cash into the impoverished economy. Having picked up skills in his work as a ringer, station hand and blacksmith, Namatjira began to make mulga plaques and other artefacts decorated with pokerwork and later with painted images as part of this scheme.

In 1939 Namatjira's style was still developing — although he had already had his first solo exhibition in Melbourne, he had not yet reached the peak of his fame — yet the themes that were to be the subject of his life's work are evident in both the construction and decoration of the object; the spinifex resin handle and kangaroo tendon binding which also demonstrate his more traditional craft skills come together with the painted decoration to combine both traditional Arrende and western aesthetics. It is this combination that provides an insight into not only the artist's emerging skill at the time but his lifelong interest in depicting his country, the Central Australian landscape.

Materne's family, who held the spear-thrower until its purchase by the Museum in 2002, clearly recognised it as a treasure, evidenced by its exquisite care for nearly 70 years.

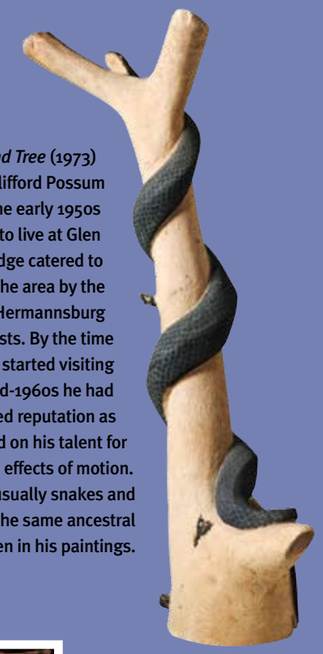
The woomera can be seen in the *70% Urban* exhibition which is open until January 2008 in the Gallery of First Australians. Entry is free.

Christine Hansen
Curator, ATSIP

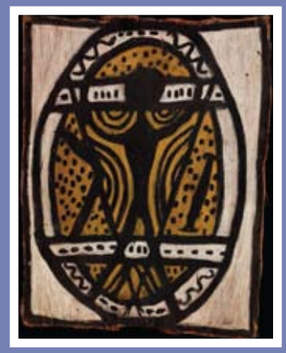
Some recent acquisitions …

Dr Ian Coates *Senior Curator, ATSIP*

›› *There Only Crime Was; Born Aborignal* (2007) painting by Cecil Bowden. This object relates to Bowden's story of the stolen generations, expressing both his identity and experience as a removed Aboriginal child under the stolen generations policies.



›› *Snake and Tree* (1973) carving by Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri. In the early 1950s Tjapaltjarri went to live at Glen Helen. The lodge catered to tourists drawn to the area by the landscapes of the Hermannsburg watercolourists. By the time Tjapaltjarri started visiting Papunya in the mid-1960s he had a well-established reputation as a carver, based on his talent for capturing lifelike effects of motion. His subjects — usually snakes and lizards — were the same ancestral beings later seen in his paintings.



›› *Untitled* (1966) bark painting by Thancoupie. Thancoupie's work explores the legendary characters from Thanaquith Dreaming, recording cultural information and preserving Thanaquith legends, history and continuity for future generations. The symbolism, both of the motifs representing legends and of the spherical forms characteristic of Thancoupie's work, represent the circle, wholeness, and the universal symbols of fire, warmth, love, woman and, most importantly, unity.

Next issue highlights

- The *Papunya Painting: Out of the Desert* exhibition opening
- The *Emily Kame Kngwareye* exhibition opening
- Day of Mourning 70th anniversary events
- more objects from our National Historical Collection
- updates on new and continuing projects.

Meet some more of our Mates in the next issue due out in April 2008.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Flags and Badges are included in the 70% Urban *exhibition*

Summertime Blues *by James Simon, 1996*

Samuel Savage's dharis *on display at the entrance to the Torres Strait Islander Gallery*

Photo: Dean McNicoll

Exhibition celebrating the 67' Referendum anniversary

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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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