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Goree

ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER news

FROM THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA

NAIDOC Week

Vaka Moana

Together Concert

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA CANBERRA

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Cover photos

Main: Brothablak, Martin Ballanggarry, Rachel Perkins and John Maynard at the *From Little Things Big Things Grow* exhibition opening and forum

Bottom left: Wayne Quilliam whose photographs featured as part of the *Sharing Our History* exhibition

Bottom middle: John Atafu (Exhibition Installation Officer, Auckland Museum) installing objects in *Vaka Moana*

Bottom right: Delmae Barton at the 'Together' concert held in the Museum Hall
Photo: Jennifer Nagy

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA

Welcome. I'd like to acknowledge the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples of the Australian Capital Territory as well as all the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples whose stories we present.

Earlier this year, in a speech to the Friends of the Museum, I outlined a possible vision for the Museum in the future. Central to this was the need for the Museum to continue its close engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in all areas of Museum business.

We also hope to see more collaborative projects raising the profile of Indigenous views of history in our exhibitions and collections development activities. Indigenous history, when combined with non-Indigenous history, provides a much richer understanding of Australian history. This will be of incalculable value to all Australians, and will provide a model for museums in other countries to follow.

We also envisage improvements in Indigenous recruitment and professional mentoring. As well as employing more Indigenous staff within the Museum itself, we hope to develop new employment terms and practices which are more attuned to Indigenous cultural imperatives. For example, I look forward to the day when we can happily accommodate our Indigenous employees working for us from within their own communities, rather than having to embrace the delights of living in Canberra.

Such an approach will enable us to work productively with those Indigenous people whose preference is to remain on, or return to, their communities and ensure their knowledge is transferred to the wider Australian population.

Craddock Morton

Inside *Vaka Moana*

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

Welcome to the 12th edition of this magazine, now in its sixth year of production. As is customary I would like to acknowledge the local Ngunnawal and Ngambri people of the area. After nearly a century of disrupturion and erasure, the Aboriginal histories of Canberra and region continue to surface and be acknowledged at all levels of private, corporate and government sectors in a way not previously seen. With this retrieval process, as with all such reclamations of Indigenous histories, there will be different positions taken as the sifting and sorting of the past continues within the Indigenous community. One such recent change in Canberra is the acknowledgement of other groups associated with the broader region, including the Walgalu, Wallabalooa and the Parjong referred to in a recent Welcome to Country at the Museum.

Our cultural diversity draft plan is currently available for final consultation. It aims at achieving a more comprehensive approach to building Indigenous employment and a retentive environment. After training in a number of other sections of the Museum one of our third-year cadets, Rebecca Richards, is working in the Office of the Principal Advisor to the Director. Visitor Services continues its great work in this area, adding a permanent recruitment process to their already impressive list of initiatives. The Museum currently has 13 Indigenous employees.

Margo Neale

MESSAGE FROM HEAD ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PROGRAM

Welcome to the latest news from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Program (ATSIP). I would like to open by acknowledging the Ngambri and Ngunnawal people of the Canberra region.

ATSIP continues to be busy. Adding to the launch of the 'Resistance' module earlier this year, we have recently opened a travelling exhibition entitled *From Little Things Big Things Grow*, which talks about the fight for Indigenous rights between 1920– 1970. This exhibition is complemented by a website that is already seeing high levels of use due to the richness of information it contains. Please check it out.

In June, the Museum received a secret/sacred object returned to Australia by the Seattle Art Museum. This was the first time that an American collecting institution had independently initiated the return of such an object. The return was prompted by the Seattle Art Museum identifying that it was inappropriate for such culturally important objects to be held by the institution. The return attracted a lot of media attention, both in Australia and America, and sends a positive message to the world about the repatriation of secret/sacred objects. Congratulations go to the Seattle Art Museum and its curator Dr Pam McClusky, for their foresight and initiative. The National Museum will now consult with custodians as the next stage in the object's repatriation.

Plans for the immediate future include providing training opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander curators working in community art centres and museums. We hope to facilitate young curators to come to Canberra to see how the Museum does its job and to learn useful skills. We also hope to arrange for Museum staff to visit communities and provide on-the-spot expertise and training. More on this in future issues.

Thanks to all our supporters. I hope you enjoy this issue.

Dr Michael Pickering

Exhibition opening of *From Little Things Big Things Grow*

'Together' concert

Meet some of our **Mates**

Cressida Fforde

>> **Dr Cressida Fforde** I am a 'mate' and delighted to have been accepted as one of this year's visiting fellows at the Museum. The Visiting Fellowships program encourages research relating to the Museum's collections and programs. My research is titled 'The search for Yagan' (an overview can be seen on the Museum's website). The story of Yagan is part of the 'Resistance' module in the Gallery of First Australians. I was part of the research team, along with Noongar elder Ken Colbung and archaeologist Peter Ucko, that successfully repatriated the remains of Yagan in 1997 from the United Kingdom. With over 15 years experience as a heritage consultant working for Indigenous communities in Australia, New Zealand and America on numerous museum and community heritage projects, my experience led to authoring the book *Collecting the Dead: Archaeology and the Reburial Issue* (2004). The book focuses on issues surrounding repatriation and the underling relationship between Indigenous peoples and those who focus on them for scientific and academic enquiry. I am currently working at AIATSIS and have recently co-ordinated the 2009 AIATSIS National Indigenous Studies Conference: Perspectives on Urban Life: Connections and Reconnections held from 29 September to 1 October 2009.

Danny Morseu

>> **Danny Morseu** Hi! I'm Danny Morseu. I'm originally from Thursday Island and now work in Canberra at Centrelink's national office. The Museum has recently acquired my collection — which represents my international basketball career from 1976 to 2004. I'm glad this collection will be held in the National Museum of Australia because I know it will be there for generations to come. Years from now when people tell the story about the rise in popularity of basketball to become a national sport in Australia they will have these objects and be able to share my story about representing Australia in international arenas, including the 1980 and 1984 Olympics and the 1983 Commonwealth Games.

When I visited the Museum and walked into the Torres Strait Islander gallery it made me proud to see how our cultures are being presented. The Dhari a Krar exhibit is a real celebration of one cultural practice — masks and headdresses. But important to me was hearing the sound of the waddup (drums) as I entered the space and walking around it brought back memories and feelings of family, community and home.

Photo: Andy Greenslade

Evelyn Whitelaw

>> **Evelyn Whitelaw** Hi, my name is Evelyn Whitelaw and I am working as an intern with ATSIP. I am doing my placement with the Museum as part of my Master of Liberal Arts (Museum and Collection Specialisation) with the Australian National University. While at the ANU I have developed a strong background in Australian social history and have recently completed a written piece about collecting Indigenous cultural material and practices of repatriation in museums. My internship with ATSIP is my first experience of working in a museum and it has been very exciting!

I have recently assessed an offer of four beanies from the 2008 Alice Springs Beanie Festival that has been made to the Museum. I've really enjoyed researching the history of the Beanie Festival and learning about its social and economic importance for the Alice Springs region. One of the best parts of my research was speaking with Adi Dunlop, the founder of the festival, and hearing her speak about it with such enthusiasm. I am really enjoying working with ATSIP and feel honoured to have been able to go to the Museum's repository to look at and handle objects in the Museum's collection that aren't on display to the public. By being actively involved at the Museum I have been able to gain new perspectives on Indigenous material cultures and histories, as well as a better understanding of museum practices surrounding Indigenous objects.

Photo: Barbara Paulson

Veronica Perrurle Dobson

>> **Veronica Perrurle Dobson** I am a traditional owner at Ltyentye Apurte (Santa Theresa), 80 kilometres south-east of Alice Springs, and a respected senior Arrernte woman. I'm the eldest grandchild of Eastern Arrernte elder Alamparinja, a highly regarded, senior man whose responsibilities included the Ntwerle Homelands as well as cultural law and business. Alamparinja was a direct descendant of an early totemic ancestor from the Ntwerle Homelands and I remember an early bush lifestyle which was based on traditional Arrernte arrangements. For many years I have been an educator of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people working with the Institute of Aboriginal Development developing and teaching the first Eastern Arrernte curriculum taught in high schools as well as professional translation in legal and consultative situations, and cross-cultural awareness training for new health, education and government staff before they go out into the remote communities. I have also authored and co-authored several books with subjects including botanical, entomological, linguistic and cultural protocols and am an authority on the insects, plants and plant uses — including healing — of the Eastern Arrernte ranges. I recently visited the Museum to share some of my knowledge and talk about some of the events and programs at Ltyentye Apurte.

Ngurra Kuju Walyja

(One Country, One People)

The Canning Stock Route Project exhibition

Emerging curators with the collection, June 2008

Image Ross Swanborough

Kartiya cannot live in my country in the desert, they cannot find water and food. It is the same when I go to town. I get lost! I think about my country all of the time. I like to paint the desert, it makes me think about my parents. I paint my country, the waterholes and I give the name for the water, in the places where we used to walk. Painting brings my country up closer, true, it brings it closer to me.

Mona Chuguna, Mangkaja Arts, 2009

The spectacular art, country, culture and a chorus of artists' voices from across Western Australia's western desert region is being woven together into a new travelling exhibition. Laced across this region is a dynamic network of Aboriginal art centres and community organisations. These centres are collaborating with the Canning Stock Route Project and the National Museum of Australia to produce this exhibition and associated publications, multimedia suite and public programs in readiness to launch in 2010.

The Canning Stock Route Project exhibition *Ngurra Kuju Walyja (One Country, One People)** is for all audiences to see, listen and immerse themselves into the power, resilience and grace of western desert people and Country. In development since 2006 and brokered by FORM, a Perth-based not-for-profit arts and cultural organisation, the exhibition is founded on an alliance with nine community art centres encircling the stock route, including Mangkaja Arts (Fitzroy Crossing), Yulparija Artists (Bidyadanga), Tjukurba Gallery (Wiluna), Ngurra Artists (Wangkajunga), Paruku Indigenous Protected Area (Mulan), Warlayirti Artists (Balgo), Martumili Artists (Jigalong, Punmu, Parngurr, Kunawarritji), Papunya Tula (Kiwirrikurra) and Kayili Artists (Patjarr).

A core driver of the project was to facilitate the return of artists to their Country, to produce a body of work in the artist's choice of a variety of creative mediums and to ensure that copies of all material be provided to the nine art centres following the exhibition's launch. In 2007–08 a significant collection of artworks and a cultural repository was established. Over 120 oral histories, hundreds of hours of film footage and thousands of photographs have been collated, providing a 'time capsule' for the personal stories representing nine different language groups and showcasing contemporary community life.

Stories dominate our perceptions and create our place in the world. Our personal and collective history is a story, and the more stories that are told and remembered, the richer our history becomes. The Canning Stock Route Project started off as an arts and cultural project that investigated and built on the connections between some of Australia's leading artists, who — while they are family to each other — live across an extraordinary and large landscape of our continent. But as soon as we began mapping the connections, determining the right people to talk to and be advised by, it became clear that the project would grow and grow. So many people want to tell their stories, their history.

Martumili artists Rosie Williams, Dulcie Gibbs and Muni Rita Simpson painting Kil Kil, *Well 36, August 2007*

Image Tim Acker

Through the project's program of returning information to the art centres, the artists' families will be able to learn more about individual and collective stories spanning the desert. The Museum, in recognising the community reach of the project, acquired the Canning Stock Route collection in late 2008, and is also assisting the FORM team to construct the public outcomes and educational platforms required for the many stories to be told. The magic of collaboration is the glue of the Canning Stock Route Project and exhibition. The project's curatorial model is collective, combining Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal professionals in a way that shares knowledge and experience. All members of the team contribute in a multitude of ways, each person bringing their knowledge of particular artists and regions and a diverse set of skills, experiences and qualifications. Importantly, the project and the exhibition's architecture could not have grown without the offer of sharing; people, communities and enterprises of the western desert are so willing to engage with all audiences, with trademark positivity, incredible insight and humour.

Carly Davenport Project Manager and Co-Curator, FORM

* *Ngurra Kuju Walyja: One Country, One People* [working title understood by the majority of language groups and broadly expresses participants].

NAIDOC on the

Photo: Kerstin Styche, AIATSIS

Johnny Huckle performing with audience participation

Photo: Kerstin Styche, AIATSIS

The Wiradjuri Echo dancers entertained the crowds on the AIATSIS forecourt

Over 2000 people had a great time celebrating NAIDOC on the Peninsula 2009 — a collaborative effort between the National Museum of Australia and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). With the theme of Honouring our Elders, Nurturing our Youth, NAIDOC celebrated local Indigenous art and culture.

There were many activities on the AIATSIS forecourt including live music, entertainment, children's activities and over 30 market stalls featuring local Indigenous arts and crafts. In the Hall at the Museum there were art and craft activities, singing, story-telling and dancing. Local artists Jennifer Martinello and Lyndy Delian worked with families and children to paint their country, while others created masks inspired by the Dhari a Krar exhibit in the Torres Strait Islander gallery.

On stage, Larry Brandy interacted with a lively crowd, telling stories, singing and dancing. He was followed by Duncan Smith and Wiradjuri Echo who danced up a storm singing songs, playing the didjeridu and sharing their culture with the audience. Duncan said during the performance that 'NAIDOC's a very special time for Indigenous people. And it makes me proud as an Aboriginal man when you see non-Indigenous kids and Indigenous kids, parents, adults dancing together and enjoying Indigenous culture. Don't you think that's just awesome? That's the direction Australia needs to go in, walk together, learn from one another and enjoy one another's culture and education and law. It's a very, very important thing to us'.

In the afternoon the annual didjeridu competition kicked off with competitors from Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, the youngest competitor being only 5 years old. The competition was presented by Phillip Yubbagurri Brown of Corroboree College in collaboration with the Museum. Prizes were awarded in the following categories:

Best young players: Zachary Howell (5 years old) and Pajali
Best solo performer: Peter Swain
Most unique didj playing and artwork: Duncan Ott.

(from left) Michael Weir (MC Wizz) and Adam Shipp (MC Battle) perform hip-hop at N AIDOC on the Peninsula 2009 on the AIATSIS main stage. When he's not performing, Adam is an audio technician from the AIATSIS Audiovisual Archive

Photo: Kerstin Styche, AIATSIS

Peninsula 2009

Larry Brandy story-telling through dance

Local Indigenous artist Jennifer Martiniello shows Emma Davidson some glasswork at the Kemarre Arts stall

On display during NAIDOC Week was a photographic exhibition called *Sharing Our History, Sharing Our Future*, celebrating cultural sharing and story-telling practices of First Australians and of the Museum. The photographs were taken by Wayne Quilliam, George Serras and Lannon Harley. The exhibition had two parts, the first comprised, 'Gathering at Festivals', images by Wayne Quilliam documenting First Australians participating at various cultural festivals held in regional and remote communities in northern Australia during 2008. The second part, 'At the Museum', included images by the Museum's photographers George Serras and Lannon Harley. Their images capture First Australians engaged in story-telling and other cultural expressions of the Museum.

During NAIDOC Week, the Museum conducted an in-gallery workshop for children in the Gallery of First Australians. As part of the workshop, facilitated by local artist Jennifer Martinello, the children created wonderful lino prints inspired by objects on display in the gallery.

Also during the week, staff from the Indigenous Culture and Content section of the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) participated in three tours of the Museum's Open Collections, introducing them to part of the Museum's significant Indigenous collection. It also provided a rich learning experience they can take back to their workplace. Open Collections is a part of the Gallery of First Australians that gives visitors a special behind-the-scenes glimpse of more than 2000 objects from the National Museum of Australia's Indigenous collections.

The Open Collections display was created to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples easy access to a range of the Museum's Indigenous objects from different parts of Australia. Many people from Indigenous communities visit this space, where they often find material from their Country. The Open Collections' inspection room allows people to look at objects up close. The sheer number of objects in the space, with their ongoing connections to individuals and communities, perhaps goes some way to explaining what visitors have described as the 'power of the space'.

NAIDOC Week is special to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to the wider Australian communities who have an opportunity to share, engage and enjoy the diversity of Indigenous cultural expressions — both contemporary and historical.

Benita Tunks *Senior Coordinator, Public Programs*

Duncan Smith leading a dance line

Sharing Our History, Sharing Our Future

Lannon and George in the studio

Sharing Our History, *Sharing Our Future*, part of the Museum's NAIDOC Week program, was an exhibition of images that visually document First Australians sharing their stories, cultures, and experiences as captured by Museum photographers George Serras and Lannon Harley and commercial photographer Wayne Quilliam.

The first part, subtitled 'Gathering at Festivals' comprised 20 images by Wayne Quilliam, an internationally renowned Koori photographer. The photographs are of First Australians participating at various cultural festivals and gatherings held in communities around Australia, such as the Garma Festival (Northern Territory) and the Tareer Festival (Victoria) during 2006–08. Quilliam's images offer a great insight into contemporary Indigenous experience as participants celebrate ongoing cultural practices within their communities and as individuals.

Wayne Quilliam in front of display

Photo: Lannon Harley

What's important is the preparation and discussions which take a long time to negotiate and everything done is a process that allows friend and family to be a part of the performance. **Wayne Quilliam, 2009**

These images illustrated beautifully how cultural practices are dynamic in nature, and how they progress and adapt with contemporary times and influences. The symbolism and knowledge that is invested in performances and the ephemeral nature of these expressions of culture at events and gatherings is one of the reasons they are recorded in photographs nowadays. Once the event has ended that moment will never occur again and the energy produced will dissipate.

Photo: Wayne Quilliam

The image needs to convey the value of the subject matter to the social history of our nation. **George Serras, 2009**

The second part of *Sharing Our History, Sharing Our Future* exhibition subtitled 'At the Museum' comprised 20 images sourced from the Museum's own photography department, also taken during the 2006–08 period. Photographers George Serras and Lannon Harley, through these images, document the variety of activities the Museum participates in, including:

- events, people and the internal processes of the Museum as it engages with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' material culture
- the diverse ways of recording and representing histories including the collecting of oral histories and objects
- the exhibitions and public forums which invite and inform audiences
- outreach programs where individuals and community engage with the Museum in collecting and representing their history, heritage and culture.

Photo: Wayne Quilliam

We need to capture modern history, visually document contemporary events and issues for our future. **Lannon Harley, 2009**

Sharing Our History, Sharing Our Future gave the audience greater social context to cultural festivals and gatherings, and events at the Museum. All three photographers visually document First Australians and the diversity of ways they celebrate their cultures and relate knowledge with each other and the wider non-Indigenous communities. It opened up a window into the contemporary lives of First Australians and how they continue cultural practice and pass knowledge along to the next generation — which is the shared aim of the Museum.

Barbara Paulson, *Curator, ATSIP*

Photo: George Serras

Photo: George Serras

Photo: Lannon Harley

Photo: Lannon Harley

Sites of Memory

Mandy Doherty, Andrew Smith, Amareswar Galla and Benita Tunks presenting 'Reconciliation Place', Canberra, a site of diverse public installations representing people and their stories about reconciliation across Australia

Photo: Barbara Paulson

We all share memories of special places that are important to us. Such places can include sacred and historic sites, places of birth and death, and even places that we disagree about. These sites of memory help us to define ourselves. But what is memory, how is it important to us, and why is it so often contested?

On Friday 28 August, a gathering of people at the National Museum of Australia discussed these questions at a day-long forum called Sites of Memory. The Museum, and Acton Peninsula upon which it is built, is itself a site of memory, so it seemed a fitting place to hold the forum.

Memory studies are an emerging cross-disciplinary field of research. Scientists might look at memory one way, and historians in another, but getting people together from different fields to look at the issue in a broader way can reveal new angles. At Sites of Memory we brought together representatives from sciences, arts, humanities and government.

The keynote speaker was Professor Amar Galla, a museums expert from the University of Queensland. Amar gave us an international perspective on how important sites are being managed in new and inclusive ways.

In the first session, 'What is a memory?', psychologist Dr Judith Slee gave us a scientist's view of the how our memories can sometimes be misleading. Our own Dr Mike Pickering talked about the importance of scale in defining and understanding the stories of places. Then Professor Paul Pickering (no relation), from the ANU Humanities Research Centre, discussed 'cultural amnesia' and the politics of memory. From this session we learned that memories can be fallible, contested and manipulated — however they are also central to our cultural stories of place.

The second session, 'Memorials and sacred sites', introduced ways in which land and spirit are inseparable. Dr Peter Stanley from the Museum's Centre for Historical Research (CHR) told the moving story of a grieving father's quest to find the exact spot where his son was killed in a First World War battle. Associate Professor Claire Smith, president of the World Archaeological Congress, talked about her time with the Barunga community in the Northern Territory, and their powerful spiritual connection with Country.

The final session was 'Layers of significance: local sites'. We started with a conversation about Canberra's Reconciliation Place, between Andrew Smith of the National Capital Authority, Benita Tunks of Liquid Creative Projects, and Mandy Doherty from the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Reconciliation Place is a national symbol of reconciliation that is located in a contrived setting, yet it has come about through real people with important stories to tell.

Paul House, a Ngambri traditional owner, then shared his own family history in the Canberra region, reminding us that the land we were sitting on has been a site of memory for thousands of years. It was then interesting to hear Anne Faris from the CHR talk about the same site through other eyes, focusing on the old Royal Canberra Hospital and its associated buildings. Finally I shared some stories about the Museum itself, and the spirits that are said to walk the site: powerful reminders of the history of the building and collections.

The day was an exploration of memory and places, with the focus changing from big international sites to the very room we were sitting in. It was great to hear from people with such varied backgrounds. There were some emotional moments, a lot of stories to share, a few laughs and even a few chills. Keep an eye out on the Museum's audio on demand website (www.nma.gov.au/audio), where we will be publishing the talks from the day.

Leanne Dempsey, *Coordinator, Audience Development and Public Programs*

Anne Faris, Benita Tunks, Peter Stanley, Clair Smith, Amareswar Galla, Paul House. Leanne Dempsey and Margo Neale

Photo: Barbara Paulson

Telling hard stories — and celebrating courage

From Little Things Big Things Grow: Fighting for Indigenous Rights 1920-1970

Well there it is, I've made my stand.
I am saying this, for good or bad, it's there.
What I feel is what I've got in front of me.

Charles Perkins, on writing his first placard on the Freedom Ride, Walgett, New South Wales, 1965

'Making a stand' is what a group of Australians did — fighting together, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to try and change an Australia where Indigenous Australians did not have the same rights as everybody else. Some of these fighters are well-known people such as Bill Onus, Charles Perkins and Pastor Doug Nicholls. Others are unknown or forgotten, but they all dedicated their lives to the cause. Their stories and the discrimination and racism that fired their determination to change the way things were is told in the Museum's latest exhibition, *From Little Things Big Things Grow: Fighting for Indigenous Rights 1920–1970*.

What were they fighting for? To right a situation many older people can remember — where Indigenous people could not move freely around their own country, could not always live where they chose, were not paid the same wages as everybody else, might not be served in a café, could not sit where they wanted in a cinema, could not enter an RSL Club even if they were returned servicemen, had to apply for a 'dog tag' if they wanted to enjoy the same human rights as everybody else — and so it went on. Australia's first people were second-class citizens in their own country.

All this history is painfully familiar to Indigenous people — and sadly some of it isn't history at all, but the way it still is. But to many non-Indigenous people, and perhaps even to some younger Indigenous people, these are new and shocking truths.

Below: Raj Nagi with his painting of Anthony Martin Fernando (above)

The exhibition curators Karolina Kilian and Jay Arthur guide historian and contributor John Maynard though the exhibition

Professor John Maynard next to the image of his grandfather

Banner made by Bill Onus for the Australian Aborigines League, about 1940s

At the same time as telling the hard truths, we are uncovering stories of courage. How many people know that there was an Aboriginal protester in London in the 1920s? He would stand outside Australia House, in a coat sewn with toy skeletons, protesting against the treatment of his people by the Australian Government. His name was Anthony Martin Fernando. There is an imagined portrait of him in the exhibition, painted by a Sikh Australian, Raj Nagi, who was so inspired by the courage of this lonely, dedicated man he painted his portrait and gave it to the Museum so more Australians would know the story.

Because it's a protest story, many visitors will be looking for the red, black and yellow on T-shirts and badges — and they won't find any! This exhibition is of a time before the Aboriginal flag — and before T-shirts. Instead of a T-shirt, we have on display a pair of white gloves belonging to the famous activist Faith Bandler. In those days, protest was often about 'frocking up' and speaking at meetings or with politicians — and looking respectable was part of the way of getting a message across.

This exhibition tells hard stories — but in the end it gives a message of hope. The message is that ordinary people of courage and goodwill can change things. We don't need to accept the way things are. And in telling our stories we've been able to celebrate some 'ordinary heroes' who changed Australia.

There are still some people ... who believe that their new life came by the grace of God. I tell them about the dedicated people who worked for years to bring about those changes. Evelyn Scott 1989

Jay Arthur, *Curator*

The exhibition is open to the public at the National Museum until March 2010. This is a travelling exhibition — to find out if it is coming near you, check out the Museum's website www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions.

Lester Bostock watching himself on AV telling stories of discrimination

Jack Horner looking at the display representing his story/contribution to the civil rights movement

Rachel Perkins officially opened the exhibition

Brothablak performed one of his signature rap song

'Together' concert brings two world premieres to the Museum

Elena Kats-Chernin, William Barton and Delmae Barton perform 'The Gathering'

Photo: Jennifer Nagy

The Canberra International Music Festival

billed this memorable event as 'a reconciliation concert to express regret and bring us together'. It also tested the Museum's facilities to their limit by combining a fully staged orchestral concert with a spectacular light show in the Hall. Celebrity performers and attendees on the night included composers Elena Kats-Chernin and Peter Sculthorpe, didjeridu player William Barton and Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, Peter Garrett.

An above-capacity crowd was in place to experience an evening of sombre beauty, culminating in the world premiere of the Museum's own commissioned work 'Garden of Dreams' by Elena Kats-Chernin. A shorter work by William Barton, 'The Gathering' (commissioned by philanthropist Prue Neidorf) also premiered during the concert.

The reconciliation theme of the evening was reflected in the combination of European and Indigenous musical styles, a crossover which William Barton has very much made his own, as well as the quietly reflective mood of the works by Purcell and Handel. Delmae Barton (the mother of William Barton) also set the mood with her 'Keening the space', a wordless vocal lament which began the evening.

However it was the major Kats-Chernin commission that the audience was really waiting for — the new work that would express the composer's complex response to the National Museum's themes and collections. And they were not disappointed; it was various, beautiful, exciting, tuneful and rich.

'Garden of Dreams', named for the Garden of Australian Dreams at the centre of the Museum, has six movements in all. Two are purely musical but four have specific connections with the Museum. 'Love Token' is based on one of the convict message coins that delighted the composer, and the music suggests the brisk metallic tapping of a coin being engraved. 'Kimberley Points' has a smooth and flowing style expressive of the glass of which the spear points are made, and also the water in which they were used to spear fish. 'Industrial Blues' is a homage to the Museum's quirky and eccentric architectural style. The final movement, 'Evolving', which featured William Barton playing the didjeridu and also singing, reflects the composer's view 'that we are in the middle of history unfolding, with all the ups and downs, and with much hope for a tolerant peaceful future'.

Canberra International Music Festival technicians recorded the concert and the Museum hopes soon to receive the digital master, which it will be able to adapt for non-commercial purposes such as playing at Museum events or on the website.

Why did the Museum commission the work? In the words of the Director, Craddock Morton, 'Music has always been an integral part of the experience of living in Australia, and the National Museum reflects that in our collection featuring music and musicians'.

It is also probable that 'Garden of Dreams' will now be taken up and performed by orchestras in Australia and internationally, wherever the works of Elena Kats-Chernin have a following, thus taking the National Museum's name and reputation into new and various places.

Susan Tonkin, *Assistant Manager, Audience Development and Public Programs*

After the concert: William Barton, Gabrielle Hyslop, Peter Garrett, Elena Kats-Chernin, Roland Peelman, Prue N eidorf, Craddock Morton, Delmae Barton, Peter Sculthorpe.

Photo: Jennifer Nagy

Dare to lead

Dare to Lead is an Australian government funded national project with a focus on improving educational outcomes for Indigenous students. It is managed by Principals Australia and provides quality professional development activities and resources. Dare to Lead works as a network of support for school leaders. It encourages schools to work effectively with current programs and to initiate new models of activity. One of the goals of the project is to achieve sustainable change and improved outcomes for Indigenous students.

The project began in 2000 when 184 principals from around Australia attended a two-day forum where a commitment was made by the peak principal associations to work together to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In 2001 additional forums were held around the country.

Since 2001 the project has gone through three additional phases:

2003– 2005: Taking it On. During this initial phase the tasks were to build awareness and enthusiasm for the project, establish networks of communication and build the coalition.

2005–2008: Making the Difference. This phase focused on strategic action at the local level with the goal of greater improvements in literacy performance in year 5 and greater completion rates of recognised year 12 courses.

2009–2012: Partnerships Build Success. In this phase, the project will draw on cooperative efforts to create sustained, systematic change and improved outcomes.

The Museum's Trish Albert and Deborah Frederick attended the Dare to Lead conference in Adelaide in June 2009. The one-day event featured keynote speakers, panel sessions, and workshops delivered by schools and institutions that demonstrate best practice. Dare to Lead has formed partnerships with educational bodies from all over Australia. Professional education associations and community organisations are an integral part of the project's work.

The most fundamental partnerships have been with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators, leaders and community members. Ten high-profile Indigenous educators sit on the Dare to Lead National Steering Committee, while other eminent figures are ambassadors and patrons of the project. This year Duncan Smith from the Wiradjuri Echo dance troop of Canberra is one of those ambassadors.

Trish and Deb set up a stall to promote the **First Australians: Plenty Stories** series of 18 books, written by Trish Albert. **First Australians: Plenty Stories** is a collaboration between the National Museum of Australia and Pearson Australia to provide primary classrooms with a comprehensive resource to enable teachers to approach the teaching of Indigenous culture and issues with confidence.

Trish presented an audiovisual display to a large group of people from all around Australia. The presentation was very well received with great applause, and interest was demonstrated by the large number of conference participants who visited the Museum's education stall.

Deb's sales finesse, aplomb and cheekiness were informative and enjoyed by all teachers and principals when she got down to business. Not one person got past the Museum stall without handouts of great resources and information about the Museum, and what the Education Section can offer school students during a visit.

Deborah Frederick, *Education Officer*, and
Lyn Beasley, Manager, *School Visits, Education*

Photo: Deb Fredrick

Anthony Williams and Duncan Smith

Trish Albert engaging teachers with the Plenty Stories books

Deborah Frederick and Graeme Aitken

Trish Albert engaging leaders with the Plenty Stories books project

Katitiya palya nyinangu yirrirti: Their teeth were good then

Above: Willy Nakumpala identified himself as the tallest child, standing at rear. This is consistent with his age, around 11 or 12, at the time. British Dental Journal. *1948*

Left: John Heath on right. Willy Nakumpala identified the man on the left as Tjaliwara Tjakamarra. British Dental Journal, *1948*

Willy Nakumpala Tjungarrayi, whose impression was taken by Heath in 1946 at Haasts Bluff and again in 1947, shown here at Papunya in May 2009

Mavis and Herman Malbunka at Ioplera, 2009. Herman's impression was taken in 1946 by Heath. It is uncertain whether Herman was also examined by Heath in 1947

The National Museum has a repatriation program to help Aboriginal communities to bring back their ancestral remains from overseas. In 2003, the Museum received a collection of dental casts from the Royal College of Surgeons in London. These casts were made by a dentist called John Heath during visits to the Central Australian communities of Haasts Bluff and Hermannsburg in 1947.

Casts are produced from a mould or impression taken directly from a living human body. A substance such as plaster is then poured into the mould to make a model identical to the original. Casts fall into a grey area in terms of repatriation. Although not actual human remains, they are intimately connected to the person from whom they were taken. For this reason, the National Museum treated the dental casts from Central Australia in the same way as other human remains and contacted the relevant communities to seek advice.

This situation was somewhat unique in that some of the people who had their casts taken in 1947, as children, were still alive and were able to be contacted and consulted in relation to their own casts. In May 2009, the National Museum visited these people and their communities. Images of the casts and photographs taken by Heath's photographer were shown to people from Ipolera (an outstation of Hermannsburg), Haasts Bluff, Papunya and Kintore. These included Herman Malbunka and Willy Nakumpala, who were named by Heath, as well as people who were likely to have been resident in Hermannsburg and Haasts Bluff as identified from the 1955 census and their descendants. The consultations with people from Haasts Bluff and their descendants were carried out in Pintupi/Luritja.

The collection of dental casts from Central Australia consists of 164 casts taken mostly from children of school age. John Heath led two expeditions to Central Australia. On his first trip in 1946 Heath obtained casts at Hermannsburg and Haasts Bluff as well as from children from the Jay Creek settlement (who were in Alice Springs Hospital at the time). Heath's 1946 trip was shortened when two assistants contracted dysentery. Heath then returned in 1947 to Haasts Bluff and Hermannsburg to complete the research. The 1947 expedition involved a party of eight, including three dentists, a radiographer and a chef. Two government-supplied trucks were used to carry four tons of equipment to the two remote communities. The dental casts were later sent by Heath to Sir Frank Colyer at the Royal College of Surgeons in London, where they remained until their return to Australia in 2003.

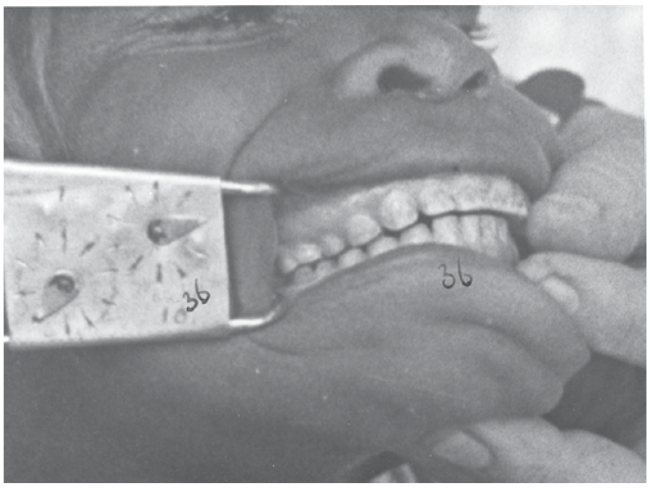
In 2009, reaction among Aboriginal communities in Central Australia to the news that the casts were back in Australia was positive. It was felt that the collection would be useful to teach others about the early history of the two communities. Haasts Bluff was a ration depot, where limited rations were used to supplement a predominantly traditional diet. People who lived there could recall how they lined up for the dentist in much the same way as they did to receive rations. The examination of their teeth using various scientific instruments would have been strange and frightening to children at the time. Medical intervention in Aboriginal communities was not unique to Heath's visit. It was consistent with attitudes and policies of the missions and government at the time, as it is today.

In reflecting on that period today, Aboriginal communities remain optimistic about the potential of the dental cast collection. Rather than restricting display of the casts, the people consulted were happy for the collection to be seen and the story to be told. It is the communities' wish for other Australians to learn about the history of dental health in remote communities where there is a strong desire for a high standard of dental care and the provision of good dental health services. It was felt that the collection would show how healthy their teeth used to be. In the words of Willy Nakumpala, 'katitiya palya nyinangu yirrirti' (their teeth were strong back then), and of Mavis Malbunka, 'At school they never used toothbrush and toothpaste — good food they gave to eat'. She said the casts would be good to display, 'that way you can see their teeth are healthy'.

Peter Thorley, *Curator, ATSIP*

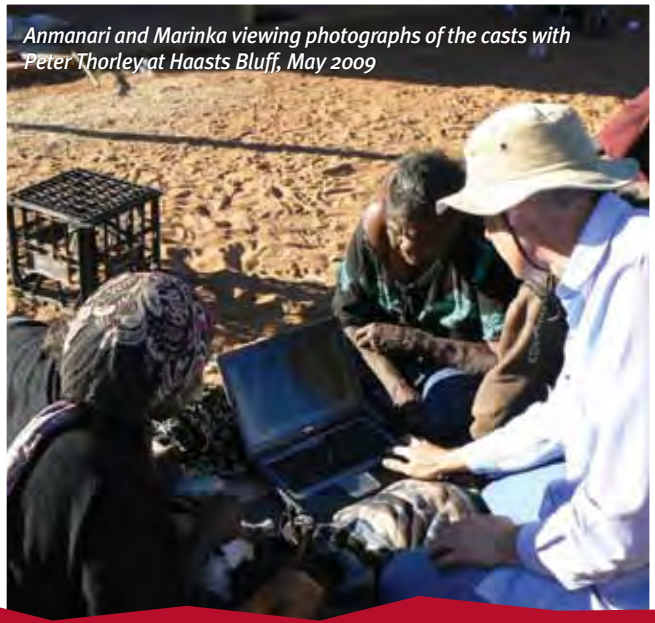
Photos: Peter Thorley

Whose ethics?



Above: Unidentified child having biting pressure measured at Haasts Bluff in 1947. There is a similar photograph for each cast in the collection with a corresponding number. In May 2009, digital copies of these photos (below) were shown to people at Ipolera, Haasts Bluff and Hermannsburg

The collection of Central Australian dental casts held by the Museum



Anmanari and Marinka viewing photographs of the casts with Peter Thorley at Haasts Bluff, May 2009

Above: Joe Neparrnga Gumbula, Aaron Corn, Margo Neale and Troy Pickwick

Right: Joe Gumbula's relative holding Joes face mask

Photo: Katherine Aigner

Joe Gumbula, a Gupapuyngu man from Galiwinku (formerly Elcho), stood transfixed before a photo wall in my office, alive with archival images from the 1948 Arnhem Land Exhibition, which is the subject of an international symposium at the National Museum of Australia entitled Barks, Birds & Billabong, from 16 to 20 November 2009. Gumbula's focus was firmly on an image of two Yolngu men proudly holding aloft plaster casts of their own faces. Most of us are made to squirm with discomfort by these images, evocative of death masks, however not so Joe. He pointed out with great excitement that they were his relatives. One of the men was his great-grandmother's uncle and Joe proceeded to tell me about his feelings on discovering the mask in recent years. He cupped his hands in a re-enactment of cradling the mask in his hands. His overpowering sense of ownership and connection to this ancestor was not diminished by its resting place so far away. He had no issue with either its production or its current place of residence at the Smithsonian, in Washington, DC., and encouraged its use in images. He was just pleased it existed so he and his family can reconnect with ancestors.

If we had gone with our gut reaction these images may have never been seen and others like Joe from communities could be denied access to images and objects that culturally belong to them. Today, many who condemn most of what was done with 'native' subjects in the past as unethical often resort to unauthorised censorship. So as not to repeat the practices of the past one need only to consult with the relevant people and allow Aboriginal communities the opportunity to make such decisions on how their cultural material should be represented

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

Dreamings in New York:
Aboriginal art on the world stage

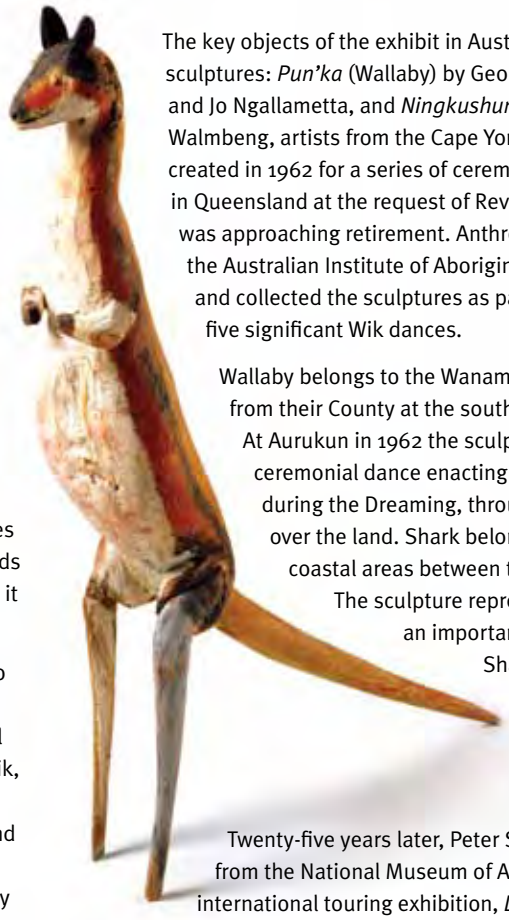
In January 2009 the National Museum of Australia officially opened its new permanent gallery, Australian Journeys. The gallery explores the passages of migrants, traders and travellers to, from and across Australia, and traces how people and their objects connect Australia with other places in the world.

Among the 42 exhibits — and more than 750 objects — visitors to Australian Journeys can engage with a display that explores the emergence of Australian Aboriginal art on the world stage.

In September 1988, the *Dreamings: The Art of Aboriginal Australia* exhibition of 103 works including acrylic paintings and shields from Central Australia, bark paintings from Arnhem Land, and figures and sculptures from Lake Eyre and Cape York Peninsula opened at the Asia Society Galleries on Park Avenue in New York. The exhibition drew large crowds and by the time it had travelled to Chicago and Los Angeles, it had attracted over half a million visitors.

Dreamings was curated by anthropologist Peter Sutton, who began developing it during the mid-1980s. Sutton and his team from the South Australian Museum, along with several Aboriginal language speakers and an American — Mr Pekarik, Director of the Asia Society Galleries — travelled around Australia discussing the exhibition with Aboriginal artists and communities. Sutton, his co-curators and the artists knew the scale and content of *Dreamings* would be a first for many American audiences but none of them anticipated the overwhelming response.

Dreamings attracted record crowds at all venues it toured. Queues formed to hear the artists speak at the associated symposium and see the sand-paintings being created on the gallery floors. The accompanying book, *Dreamings: The Art of Aboriginal Australia*, sold out and the exhibition captured media attention with reviews in major newspapers and journals and coverage by national television and radio stations.



The key objects of the exhibit in Australian Journeys are two sculptures: *Pun'ka* (Wallaby) by George Ngallametta with MacNaught and Jo Ngallametta, and *Ningkushum* (Freshwater Shark) by Lesley Walmbeng, artists from the Cape York Peninsula. The sculptures were created in 1962 for a series of ceremonial dances at Aurukun Mission in Queensland at the request of Reverend William Mackenzie, who was approaching retirement. Anthropologist Frederick McCarthy from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies filmed the ceremonies and collected the sculptures as part of the process of documenting five significant Wik dances.

Wallaby belongs to the Wanam ceremonial group and comes from their County at the south entrance of the Holroyd River. At Aurukun in 1962 the sculpture was used to lead a ceremonial dance enacting the fight between two wallabies during the Dreaming, through which the species was spread over the land. Shark belongs to the Apelech people living in coastal areas between the Love and Kendell rivers. The sculpture represents the estuarine shark, an important food source for Wik people. Shark appears in many Apelech ceremonies, representing the group's major ancestor who became a shark after he walked the land as a man.

Twenty-five years later, Peter Sutton selected Wallaby and Shark from the National Museum of Australia's collection for the international touring exhibition, *Dreamings*.

The *Dreamings* exhibition was not the first event to take Australian Aboriginal art to an international audience but it changed how people, both in Australia and overseas, viewed Aboriginal art. Art critics in particular began thinking about Aboriginal art not as ethnographic objects made by a 'primitive people' but as examples of fine art.

Susannah Helman, *Curator, Australian Journeys*
Kirsten Wehner, *Senior Curator, Gallery Development*
and **Cheryl Crilly**, *Curator, Australian Journeys*

Above centre: Pun'ka *(Wallaby), 1962, by George Ngallametta with MacNaught Ngallametta and Joe Ngallametta, Thawungadha, western Cape York Peninsula*

Below left: *Aboriginal artists Djon Mundine (left) and David Malangi (centre) and curator Peter Sutton in New York for the* Dreamings *exhibition and symposium, 1988*

Below middle: *Papunya artists Billy Stockman Tjapaltjarri (front) and Michael Nelson Tjakamarra create a sand-painting at the Asia Society Galleries, New York, for the* Dreamings *exhibition, 1988*

Below right: Ningkushum *(Freshwater Shark) by Lesley Walmbeng, Cape Kerweer, western Cape York Peninsula*

Photo: Felicity Wright, courtesy Peter Sutton

Photo: Marcia Weinstein

Voyages of the Pacific Ancestors: *Vaka Moana*

Duncan Kerr, Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs, officially opened the exhibition

Who doesn't love the history of the sea?

Brave Europeans pushing off into the unknown. Ships that, for their time, were the technological equivalent of a space shuttle. Cutting edge technology. Down the coast of Africa and eastwards into the Indian Ocean, or westwards to the New World and eventually the unknown Pacific. The stuff of 'ripping yarns' and Russell Crowe movies.

But what if the new discoveries weren't new? What if there were already well-established shipping lanes travelled by hi-tech vessels with world class navigators? What if sailing thousands of kilometres was already considered 'business as usual'. The gloss falls off the achievements of the great western explorers somewhat.

And that's the story of the Pacific. For thousands of years before Europeans tentatively poked their ship's bows mouse-like into the Pacific, from both east and west, Indigenous navigators had made the Pacific their own. Now there's a movie-in-waiting!

From June to October 2009 the National Museum of Australia was host to the *Vaka Moana* exhibition. Curated by the Auckland Museum, this exhibition detailed the achievements of the human colonisation of the islands of the Pacific Ocean. It is a complex story of human endeavour, knowledge and technology.

The settlement of the western Pacific occurred at least 60,000 years ago. Remember, Australia and Papua New Guinea are part of the Pacific too! We can guess that watercraft were used to cover some of the greatest leaps across water. However we can also be reasonably confident that, for the most part, the voyages were leap frogging along coastlines, or making short dashes across open waters to distantly visible features. Certainly brave explorers but predominantly assured that some landfall was close at hand.

The settlement of the Pacific was a different matter, with the first push suspected of being around 4000 years ago. What happened? Had maritime technology and knowledge been progressively refined in Asia and Melanesia until it was time for the new frontier of the open seas? Imagine making the decision to sail into the unknown. What was the motivation? Ecological pressure? Warfare? Or just that damned human spirit of adventure and enquiry?

Whatever the cause, people sailed into the Pacific 4000 years ago and never looked back. Over the ensuing years they progressively discovered and occupied the Pacific. Animals and plants were imported. Complex trade networks established. Ideas exchanged across thousands of islands and thousands of kilometres. All dependent upon a maritime culture.

The *Vaka Moana* exhibition takes us on a tour of time, space and cultures. It describes the prehistory of Pacific occupation. It looks at the animals, plants and technology that accompanied the travellers. It looks at their technologies, arts, histories and cultures through to their first encounters with Europeans — those 'Johnny-come-latelys' to open sea travel.

The exhibition is presented through the means of wonderful objects from across the Pacific. These include full sized vessels, or vaka, plus the sacred and secular objects that characterise the cultures of the navigators. Exquisitely carved ancestral beings, paddles, house and boat panels, bowls and jewellery. All go to present a unique insight into the exhibitions theme of the 'Voyages of the Ancestors'. This exhibition is a tribute to our Indigenous neighbours of the Pacific.

Michael Pickering, *Head, ATSIP*

View inside the exhibition

Te Reve O Te Tarakakao Canberra and Queanbeyan Maori Culture Group performing at the opening

Guests viewing the exhibition

Trish Kirkland, Warwick Anderson, Duncan Kerr, Craddock Morton and Mike Pickering touring the space

ATSIP NEWS

All articles by **Barbara Paulson** unless otherwise stated

Photo: Photo attributed to Howell Walker

Barks, Birds & Billabongs

'Ethnologist Charles P Mountford led the 1948 Arnhem Land Expedition ... one of the most significant scientific expeditions ever mounted in Australia — and also one of the least understood', said Margo Neale who, with the Museum's Centre for Historical Research and Public Programs section, will present the international symposium Barks, Birds & Billabongs in November 2009. The symposium will investigate the expedition's significance to Australia and America and the relationships and collections created from the expedition. For more information on this symposium visit www.nma.gov.au/barks_birds_billabongs.

Charles P Mountford and Groote Eylandt artists, 1948

A Western Australian Stolen Generations story in Maitland, New South Wales

In February this year, Museum photographer Lannon Harley and I had the great opportunity to visit Mary Terszak, a Nyoongah woman from south-west Western Australia, to record her memories and memorabilia of institutionalisation and her reflections on how being a member of the Stolen Generations has affected her life.

Mary had lived in four different institutions — including 18 years at Sister Kate's Children's Home, Western Australia — by the time she turned 20 years old and started living independently. A lifetime of living with memories of her forced removal from her family and her subsequent life in institutions led Mary to research, collect, write and lecture about the various tangible and intangible components of her early life.

One of the documents that Mary located through her research was her Certificate of Exemption — a once common document issued by the government of the day to advance its policy of assimilation. Mary kindly allowed us to interview her about her remarkable life and to photograph this certificate, as well as other personal documents and photos, for inclusion in the civil rights website and travelling exhibition *From Little Things Big Things Grow,* which is on show at the Museum until March 2010.

Karolina Kilian, *Assistant Curator, ATSIP*

Mary Terszak with her Certificate of Exemption

Kelp containers and fibre basket

Tayenebe Exchange: Tasmanian Aboriginal Women's Fibre Work

The *Tayenebe* exhibition is the result of three years work by 35 women. It opened in Hobart on a bitingly cold and wet July evening. But the cold was forgotten with the joy and pride of the women, whose expectations were exceeded by the stunning simplicity and elegance of the exhibition. The newly made baskets and kelp containers were on display alongside some of the historic baskets and documents from the collection of the Tasmanian Museum and Gallery. There was a selection of traditional historical forms and contemporary expression.

Threads of connection run through the show — family ties, links to places, connections felt to the old people whose shadows remain, and new ties to the wider group of makers. Another new connection now has been made to the National Museum. A partner in the project, the Museum is delighted to have acquired 35 baskets from *Tayenebe*. The exhibition, curated by Julie Gough, is on display in Hobart until 25 November 2009. It will come to the National Museum in Canberra in May 2010 as part of its tour, which also includes the Casula Powerhouse, New South Wales, Queensland Museum, Brisbane, the Koorie Heritage Trust in Melbourne, and Flinders University Gallery in Adelaide.

Andy Greenslade, *Curator, ASTIP*

Marking a historic day — The Apology

13 February 2009 marked the first anniversary of the Australian Government's Apology to the Stolen Generations. Thousands of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people travelled to Canberra to participate in this historic event. Some were invited guests of the government, others crowded the lawns of Parliament House.

For many years Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples campaigned for recognition of the hurt caused by government policies promoting forced removal of children from their families. *Bringing Them Home*, the report of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's findings published in 1997, recommended in Section 5a.1: *That all Australian Parliaments officially acknowledge the responsibility of their predecessors for the laws, policies and practices of forcible removal*. Eleven years later, on 13 February 2008, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, on behalf of the Australian Government, offered this Apology.

In acknowledgement of the anniversary of this historic event the Museum produced a display reflecting on the event and its meaning for Australians. The Museum, along with other government departments, also held a staff morning tea to further the understanding that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities across Australia were affected by the policy and practice of 'removing the children'. Indeed, that staff they worked with and alongside were affected.

Nyukana (Daisy) Baker: A Retrospective

Nyukana 'Daisy' Baker's artistic career of over 50 years was honoured in Adelaide in August 2009. Nyukana, who has lived most of her life on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunyjatjara Lands in South Australia, has led an extraordinary life of making art, developing her skills and transferring her individual designs across many different media. Looking back on her life through the works on display, it was hard to believe that one woman could be so exquisitely skilled in so many things. A photo of the young Nyukana standing on the lawn in front of the manse at Ernabella shows a young and delicate woman with a diffident air that is belied by the evident sureness and confidence of her work.

Small, precise paintings, prints, wool work, batiks, ceramics, fibre and beadwork light the walls of this exhibition, curated by Diana Young and staged at the Jam Factory. It draws on a number of collections, both private and institutional. The National Museum is happy to have been able to contribute to this important show with loans from its large collection of Ernabella-related material.

Andy Greenslade, *Curator, ASTIP*

Nyukana Daisy Baker Retrospective

Photo: Courtesy Ernabella Arts

Have your say — the right way

If you're interested in the issues surrounding Indigenous craft and design, such as ethical practice, authenticity and education, why not check out — and contribute to — the online forum Rightway, on the Craft Australia website http://carightway.ning.com.

The forum is one of the outcomes of the Selling Yarns 2: Innovation for Sustainability conference held at the Museum in March this year. You'll also find papers presented at the conference, including the keynote address by Aboriginal designer and TV personality Alison Page. The sell-out conference, with its market day and extensive program of workshops, was presented in association with our partners Craft Australia and the Australian National University.

Andy Greenslade, *Curator, ASTIP*

Bottles, *2006, by Robyn Djunginy, Ramingining, Northern Territory, as seen in the exhibition* ReCoil: Change and Exchange in Coiled Fibre Art

Namatjira's gift — on display

This is the only thing left from our childhood — the only tangible thing. **Lola Edwards**, 2009

The famous artist Albert Namatjira visited the girls of Cootamundra Aboriginal Girls Training Home in 1956. After he returned to Central Australia he painted a picture of his Country and sent it back to the girls at the Home. It was his gift for those Aboriginal children who had been deprived of family, culture and Country.

The painting was hung in the main dormitory, and became a part of every girl's life. Everything else the girls had belonged to the Home; only this belonged to them. This year the 'Girls' — as the women call themselves — generously donated the painting to the National Museum. The painting was on display in the Museum's Hall during July this year.

Albert Namatjira (centre) with his son Keith (rear) with the girls from the Home. Lola Edwards is directly in front of Namatjira

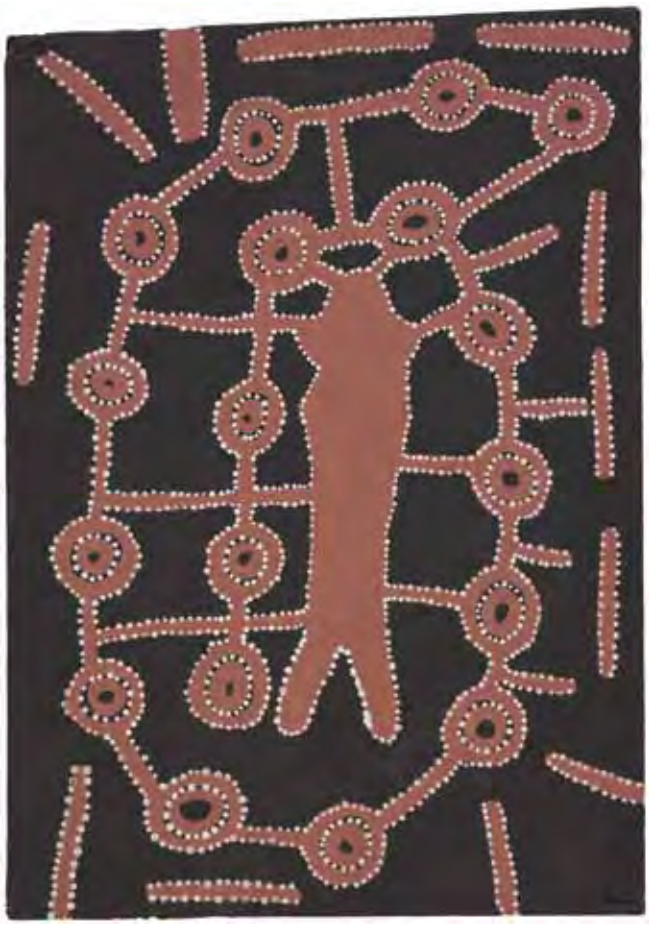
Representing an era

History of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Art collection

In 2005, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) Amendment Bill was passed into law, abolishing ATSIC and its companion agency, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services (ATSIS). Many decisions followed, but one that would prove to be important to the National Museum of Australia involved ATSIC's corporate assets. In particular, the numerous artworks and other objects that had brought life and colour to the walls of ATSIC offices across the country. More than 2000 artworks and objects came under the control of the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination (OIPC), following the abolition of ATSIC. OIPC later transferred the entire collection to the National Museum of Australia.

The collection draws its name from the all the departments and organisations with which it was associated. Many of these artworks were acquired by bodies that pre-dated the creation of ATSIC in 1989. These other bodies included the Office of Aboriginal Affairs, the Council for Aboriginal Affairs, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, and the Aboriginal Development Commission. They were involved in the administration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs at different times following the 1967 Referendum; and many of the older works that ATSIC held were acquired while these bodies were active.

Barry Dexter, who was Executive Member of the Council for Aboriginal Affairs, Director of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs and later Secretary of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, confirmed



Untitled painting by Charlie Tjararu Tjungurrayi

Coffee set with ATSIC logo from the ATSIC office in Nhulunbuy

that these bodies did acquire many artworks over a 38-year period. There was no specific budget put aside for buying artworks. However, towards the end of the financial year, if there was any money left unspent, then artworks were bought. In fact, it had been an unofficial policy that only paintings and objects by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples would be displayed in the offices.

The late 1960s and early 1970s were the very early days of the Aboriginal art movements. The Aboriginal Arts Board of the Australia Council, formed by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, actively promoted the growth of art centres in remote areas. The collection includes many wonderful paintings and carvings from

Yvonne Koolmatrie

The ATSIAA collection in the National Museum of Australia storeroom

Untitled landscape by Shane Pickett

this early period. These include such significant artists as Narritjin Maymura and Yirwala; Western Desert artists Kaapa Tjanpitjinpa, Long Jack Phillipus and Johnny Warangkula; and Hermannsburg artists including Oscar, Keith and Ewald Namatjira.

When ATSIC was formed, it continued to support the arts by collecting and promoting the work of Indigenous artists. This happened at a local office level as well as through the national programs that supported Indigenous arts.

The material collected from the regional offices clearly shows a local flavour, with the artists and makers of the area often well represented. For example, the Adelaide office had displayed two beautiful pieces of batik by a key South Australian artist, Nyukana 'Daisy' Baker, and fibre work by celebrated Yvonne Koolmatrie. The Perth office held paintings by Shane Pickett and Tjyllyungoo (also known as Lance Chadd), as well as other artists from the Carrollup school. The Nhulunbuy office included a hollow log coffin by Galpu man Djalu Gurriwiwi.

Mortuary Ceremony, *bark painting by Narritjin Maymuru*

2001 Survival Day poster and tribute to Charlie Perkins

The regional offices were also likely to have recent works, whereas the Canberra and Sydney ATSIC offices seemed to hold, as a general rule, a selection that was representative of the early growth of the art movement, obtained through the collections of the earlier departments.

One of the great values of this collection is that it provides a snapshot of the art practice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities during the period from 1967 to 2005. As well it gives us some insights into the history of the era. Among the more than 2000 items are objects that give a glimpse into the organisations that held these things: ATSIC sports trophies; NAIDOC awards and other such things; gifts from visiting overseas delegations; reproductions of historic photographs; paintings made in workshops or for instructional reasons — Alison Anderson's painting *Corporate Flow Chart* — or for health reasons — *Sad Boys Sniffing Petrol* or *The Day the Bottle of Wine Was Opened*. The Nhulunbuy office included a set of handpainted mugs, a milk jug and sugar dish with the ATSIC logo alongside local designs.

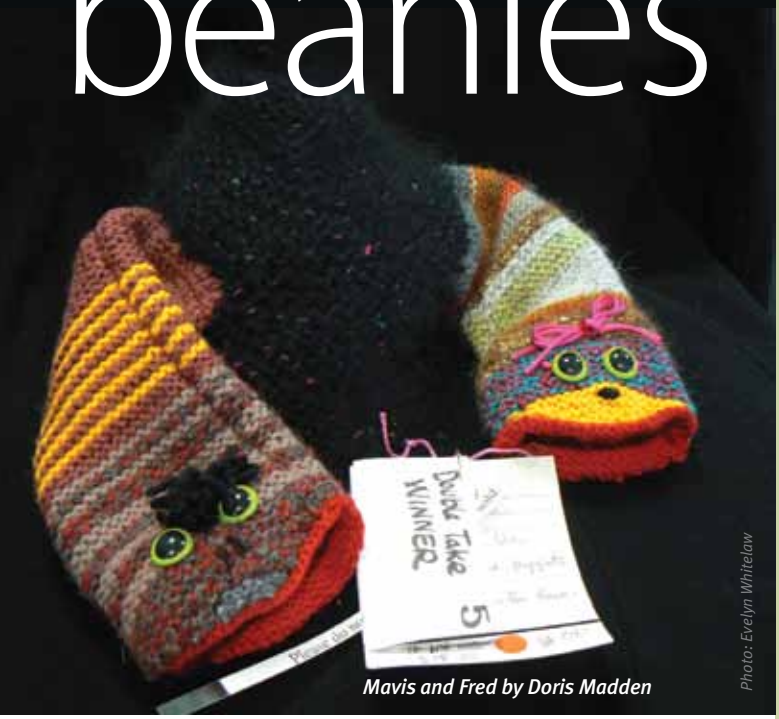
This is an important collection that represents more than the sum of its parts — and one that deserves to be seen by a large audience.

The main object categories represented in the collection are as follows:

paintings on canvas and board (486)
works on paper (346)
bark paintings (179)
spears, spear-throwers (118)
boomerangs (103)
photographs — original and reproductions (102)
fibre, woven plant material (98)
posters — fine art and promotional (87)
wood carvings (51)
ceramics (49)
coolamons (41)
fabrics (40)
shields (31)
clapping sticks (20)
didjeridus (19)
reproductions of historic print (5)
cartoons, original drawings (4)

Andy Greenslade, *Curator, ASTIP*

Alice Springs Beanie Festival beanies



Mavis and Fred by Doris Madden

Photo: Evelyn Whitelaw

In July 2008, the Museum acquired four creative and expressive beanies produced for the 2008 Alice Springs Beanie Festival competition by various Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artists from Titjikala in the Northern Territory, Ernabella in South Australia, and Allansford in Victoria.

The Alice Springs Beanie Festival was founded in 1997 by Adi Dunlop. It grew from her interaction with Indigenous communities gaining the trust and involvement through teaching the women how to crochet beanies. Beanie making grew in popularity and importance as it evolved from traditional forms of wool-spinning and weaving that already existed in the region. The production of beanies grew until Adi Dunlop and Merran Hughes decided they would hold a beanie party at the Araluen Arts Centre in Alice Springs in 1996. The response was overwhelmingly positive from both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. Adi stated, 'The first year we threw a beanie party and it was so popular that it evolved into an annual community festival attracting thousands of visitors. The first weekend in July we sell more than a thousand handmade beanies and have a wonderful time sharing skills, songs and stories'.

The Beanie Festival encourages people to express the way they interact with their local environment and each other in a fun and exciting way. It also provides the opportunity for different communities to interact and develop understandings of each other's cultures. In 2008 the festival has developed an international audience, with entries and audience members from places such as Japan, Sweden, Canada, New Zealand and the United States of America. It has significant tourism and economic benefits for local businesses in Alice Springs. It also supports a growing cottage industry among Indigenous women, which has positive economic outcomes for local communities.

Evelyn Whitelaw, *Curatorial Intern, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Program*

Hollywood Mission tin

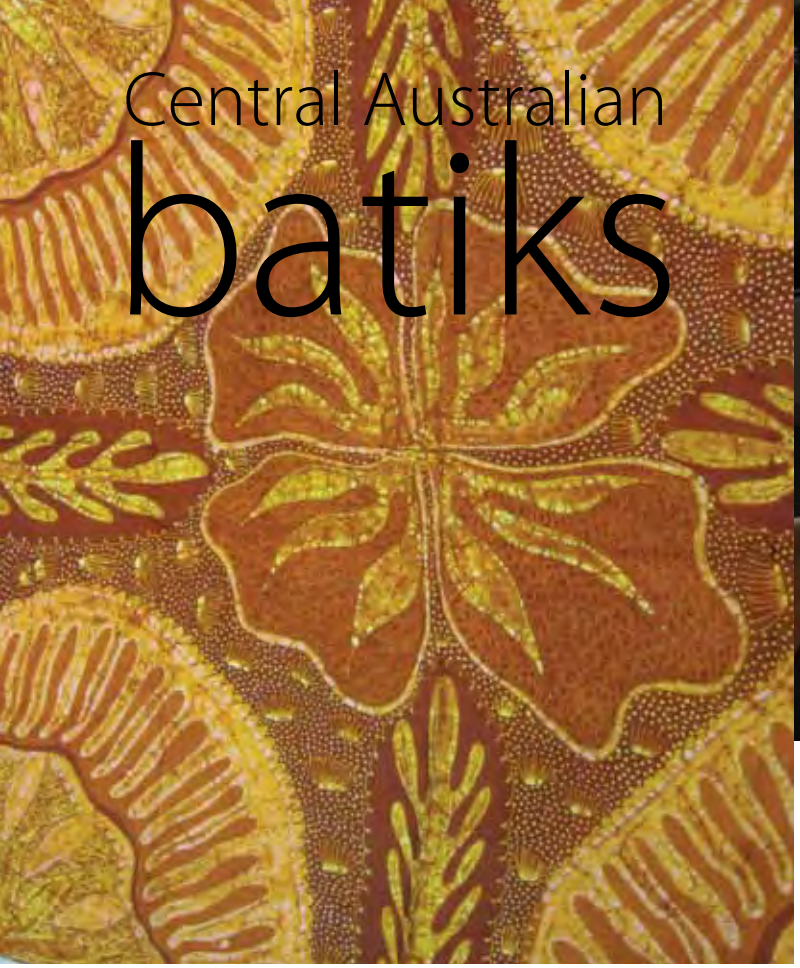
The way this tin came to be in the Museum's collection tells something of the history of black/white relations in Yass, New South Wales. The ripple iron sheet was collected from the site of the former Hollywood Mission, Yass, by local, Terry McGann, sometime around 1960. McGann knew many of the Hollywood residents well and had a good relationship with the Aboriginal community of Yass generally. When Hollywood was gradually being vacated and demolished, McGann collected a piece of the distinctive red tin as a 'keepsake'. In April 1999 he passed the piece of tin to Mrs Penny Butt, who was collecting stories for a project she was doing on Hollywood as part of a Cultural Heritage Management unit at the University of Canberra. In 2006, Mrs Butt passed the item on to Eric Bell, a former resident of Hollywood, who also recognised it as having been the material from the houses he grew up in.

The Hollywood Mission in Yass opened in 1934, and was deserted by 1960. Its status as an Aboriginal reserve was revoked in 1963. The establishment of the mission arose out of pressure by the townspeople to remove the Aboriginal people camped near the proposed site of the town waterworks and, in general, to remove them from town. Hollywood was on the edge of town, out of sight, overlooking the cemetery and the slaughter yard. It was on top of a stony hill, exposed to the westerly winds and remembered as the coldest place in Yass. The mission houses were two-roomed (bedroom and living room) iron structures on concrete stumps, with front and back verandas which, over the years, tended to be filled-in for extra rooms.

The characteristic ripple or corrugated iron used for the walls of the houses affected the quality of people's lives. In the Yass climate the tin mission houses were freezing cold in winter and baking hot in summer. Residents used newspaper or hessian to line the tin walls to keep out the cold. The red paint on the exterior iron walls is a colour that has remained in the memory of many people who lived in Hollywood. The collection of this sheet of iron is particularly important because little of the Hollywood site remains.

Eric Bells, a Wallabaloa (Ngunnawal) elder of Yass, New South Wales, obtained the tin and later offered it to the Museum not only through his interest in his own history, but in his concern that this history be told to the wider community. So the survival of this piece of tin comes out of an Indigenous and a non-Indigenous effort to preserve the history of an Indigenous community

Jay Arthur, *Curator, ATSIP*



Central Australian batiks

The Museum has recently acquired four batiks produced at Fregon and Ernabella, South Australia, by Kunmunyara Ken, Atipalku and Yilpi Michael. *Yam Dreaming*, by Yilpi Michael (above) was one of the four aquired from a private collector.

Batik-making originated in Indonesia. It was introduced to the Ernabella community in South Australia in 1971 and spread quickly to Fregon, an outstation of Ernabella, during the early 1970s. The technique is a form of resist dyeing that Indigenous artists have perfected. It is suited to being produced in communities as it does not require the use of complicated equipment. A design is painted or drawn onto the cloth using hot wax and an instrument called a canting or tjanting — a small metal receptacle with one or more spouts attached to a wooden handle. The cloth is then dipped in dyes. This process is repeated a number of times depending on the complexity of the design and number of colours being used. The wax is then removed. This technique was quickly adopted by Indigenous women at Ernabella and Fregon. The practice of batik-making was encouraged by non-Indigenous art advisors and coordinators who believed in and promoted the artists and their work.

The batiks being produced at Ernabella integrated repeated symmetrical patterns using bright, bold colours. The artists at Fregon developed their own distinctive style, which included depictions of flora and fauna, along with representations of the topography of the local area. Artists from Ernabella participated in a cross-cultural program in Indonesia in 1975 that enhanced and showcased their extensive skills. Because there was a limited market for batiks, the practice became commercially unviable and soon gave way to painting as it was cheaper to produce and less labour-intensive. The major interest of the art market in Western Desert art focused on painting genres, allowing batik artists to take risks and experiment with colours and styles. This resulted in the production of unique and beautiful objects such as these.

Evelyn Whitelaw, *Curatorial Intern, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Program*

Repatriation of a secret/sacred object

A handshake between Director Craddock Morton and Dr Pamela McClusky, Curator of African and Oceanic Art at the Seattle Art Museum, symbolised a historic moment in repatriation history. On Monday 29 June the Seattle Art Museum repatriated an important Central Australian secret/sacred object to Australia. The return is particularly important as it marks the first time an American collecting institution has decided to repatriate a secret/sacred object of its own accord.

The elaborately crated object sparked significant interest from local, national and international media. The Public Affairs team received several requests for images of the object. It was an unusual situation to find ourselves in; advising the media of the story of the object while declining requests to view or photograph it.

Head of the National Museum's Repatriation Program Dr Michael Pickering said that according to custom, Central Australian men's secret/sacred objects are not allowed to be viewed by uninitiated men, women or children. 'Their public display is a cause of great distress to Aboriginal elders, who have been seeking their return for many years', he said. 'Secret/sacred objects of the type returned are typically used in religious ceremonies by Central Australian Aboriginal men and are considered to be physical manifestations of sacred ancestral beings and as such have great spiritual power', Michael said.

The object, known as a Tjuringa, was first collected in 1970 and has been in the Seattle Art Museum's collections since 1971. It has never been on public display. Pamela McClusky said that early misgivings about the object prompted her to ask visiting Australians for their views. 'It quickly became apparent that it was collected under circumstances that were not the best', Pamela told the *Australian*. 'In fact, throughout Australia, museums were taking them off display ... we wanted to follow suit and honour that effort'.

The object will be housed in a restricted store while the National Museum's Repatriation team consults with Central Australian elders and their representatives to determine the culturally appropriate management and return of the object.

Caroline Vero, *Public Affairs*

Next issue highlights

- The civil rights exhibition *From Little Things Big Things Grow*
- Canning Stock Route exhibition and projects
- The international Barks, Birds & Billabongs symposium
- Personal histories representing the 'mission' experience
- More objects from our National Historical Collection
- Updates on new and continuing projects.

Next issue due out in April 2010.

Campbell Leisha's stockman's puzzle

Bowraville Theatre chairs as featured in the From Little Things Big Things Grow *exhibition*

'Together' concert featured Elena Kats-Chernin and William Barton

Billabong Koorie Invitational poster, 1994

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Goree: 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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