

Organisational Matters

A National Congress attended by representatives from each State and Territory, ANTaR's Indigenous Reference Group and its organisational members was held in Melbourne in July. Eleven National Management Committee meetings took place throughout the year.

On the funding front our current strong financial position is being fortified by the discussion of the ongoing challenges in maintaining and developing ANTaR's fundraising base, particularly in relation to state and territory ANTaRs.

Staffing

A great deal of ANTaR's work is done by volunteers. Many give whole days of time regularly each week, working on the full range of ANTaR's activities. Other dedicated volunteers work 'on call' doing the huge amount of organising and implementing that is behind the many stalls, rallies, forums, petitions, mail-outs, Sea of Hands displays and other events that ANTaR initiates or participates in across the country.

ANTaR's National office is headed by Dr David Cooper, who has held the position of National Director since 1999.

Hilary Blackman begins her third year as National Communications and Fundraising Manager while Janene Collins continues in her second year as part-time Administration Officer.

Part-time coordinators have also supported committees in ANTaR offices in New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia and Queensland.



Honorary staff member Kathleen Gilbert, who for five years has given 2-3 days per week to volunteer in the ANTaR office.

Financial Report

ANTaR has again achieved further improvement in its financial position over 2004-05 with significantly better than budget results.

The Profit and Loss report for 2004-05 has not yet been audited. A draft, in summary form, is shown right.

Income from donations, merchandise sales and grants all out-performed budget, continuing a steady growth in each of these areas over the past three years.

Savings on fundraising costs helped keep total expenses down, as did an equipment grant for a colour printer that has enabled more in-house (and thus lower cost) printing.

Alomst \$50,000 was disbursed to the State and Territory ANTaRs to support their activities. The system of disbursements is currently being revised to provide State and Territory ANTaR's with additional, direct income streams linked to support generated in each region.

Summary Profit & Loss: 1 July 2004 - 30 June 2005

Income		% of Total
Donations	\$ 332,306	80.32%
Bequests	\$ 20,000	4.83%
Merchandise	\$ 39,066	9.44%
Interest	\$ 1,497	0.36%
Miscellaneous	\$ 809	0.20%
Grants*	\$ 20,069	4.85%
Total Income	\$ 413,747	100.00%
Cost of Merchandise Sales	\$ 22,314	
Gross Profit	\$ 391,433	
Expenses		
National Office Administration		
Office Expenses	\$ 25,088	
Wages & Salaries	\$ 26,684	
	\$ 51,772	13%
Education & Campaigns		
Office Expenses	\$ 13,509	
Meetings & Events	\$ 22,747	
Printing, Post, Media	\$ 25,577	
Wages & Salaries	\$ 159,918	
State & Territory ANTARs	\$ 46,374	
	\$ 268,125	68%
Fundraising Costs	\$ 74,662	17%
Suspense Account	\$ 1,343	0.3%
Total Expenses	\$ 395,902	100%
Operating Profit	\$ - 4,469	
Other Income	\$ 34,465	
Net Increase/(Decrease) Cash Held	\$ 29,996	



Annual Report

June 2004 – July 2005

Youth Reconciliation

ReconciliACTION Network

ReconciliACTION is a network of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people aged 16 to 30 years. ReconciliACTION was formed in 2002 by young people involved with ANTaR, the Edmund Rice Centre and the NSW Reconciliation Council. This group were primarily responsible for the establishment of the enlarged ReconciliACTION Network.

Freedom Ride 2005

February 2005 was the 40th anniversary of the 1965 'Freedom Ride', led by Indigenous activist Charles Perkins. To commemorate the anniversary, ReconciliACTION mobilised 30 social justice advocates to tour regional NSW to review what has changed and to regenerate the Reconciliation debate.

The 1965 Freedom Ride helped awaken mainstream Australia to discrimination against regional Indigenous people. Inspired by similar U.S. protests, Australia's Freedom Ride was part of an Indigenous civil rights movement, influencing reforms such as the 1967 referendum.

The 2005 Freedom Ride was a very different experience to 1965's. In 1965 there were only two Indigenous participants; in 2005 half the group was Indigenous. In 1965 racism and segregation were key issues and Freedom Riders faced violent opposition. In 2005 the focus was on Reconciliation.

The 2005 Freedom Ride visited over 13 communities in two weeks. The Freedom Riders conducted community interviews in to find out how people felt race relations had changed and whether Aboriginal people were getting a fair go.

Much had changed since 1965. In Wellington, both the Mayor and Aboriginal elders welcomed Freedom Riders. The Moree Council opened the pool to the Freedom Riders and Indigenous children for free. In Bowraville, local Aboriginal kids now learn their own language.

However racism has not disappeared. Aboriginal people are still denied entry to some shops. The 2005 Freedom Riders encountered an Indigenous man denied entry onto a bus for being late, while minutes later the bus driver allowed a non-Indigenous person to board. In many communities non-Indigenous people refused to speak to the Freedom Riders.

There was a sense that many of the gains of past decades have stalled and some are being eroded. It was felt that few people had faith in mainstream politicians to support Indigenous people to empower their communities.

Anti-Racism Youth Forum

In November 2004 ReconciliACTION held an Anti-Racism Youth Forum. Over 50 Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth attended from across NSW.

Forum workshops addressed cultural awareness, partnerships with Indigenous communities, creative community education about reconciliation, lobbying and working with media and how to get involved in reconciliation and Indigenous rights campaigns.

National Youth Forum

ReconciliACTION hosted a National Youth Forum to provide a youth response to the National Reconciliation Workshop held in May (p.9). Youth delegates who attended the National Reconciliation Workshop joined 50 other young people from across Australia to discuss key reconciliation issues for young people and how to effect change in local areas.

Website

RAN's website continues to be expanded, with several new sections added in 2005, including a section of diary entries from the 2005 Freedom Riders. More information: www.reconciliaction.org.au.

Report by Sylvie Ellesmore, Co-convenor ReconciliACTION.

Communications

2004-05 saw further consolidation of ANTaR's communications activities resulting in increased public exposure of ANTaR's campaigns and other work. Communications activities were focused on media opportunities, relations with government and other stakeholders, communication with our supporters and the wider public, as well as events targeted to a variety of audiences and outcomes. There were many highlights.

The material in ANTaR's Indigenous Health Rights Kit has contributed significantly to the frequency and quality of newspaper, radio and television discussion about Indigenous health. To date nearly 12,000 of the kits have been distributed.

ANTaR was a sponsor for the national forum Indigenous Health and the Treaty Debate: Rights, Governance and Responsibility, organised by the Gilbert + Tobin Centre for Public Law and held in September 2004. The forum was attended by key health professionals, academics and government representatives. Sixty percent of attendees were Indigenous.

The Sea of Hands continues to be an important communications tool for ANTaR. A major Sea of Hands event in Hyde Park, Sydney in November 2004, drew significant participation and interest. Local schools helped set up the display and many new supporters were gained. Many smaller displays were installed across the country over 2004-05, involving thousands of ordinary Australians in positive awareness-raising on the issues of reconciliation and Indigenous rights. The Sea of Hands will also be featured in the new Macquarie Atlas of Indigenous Australia.

At the end of 2004 ANTaR supported and promoted AFL football champion Michael Long's historic Long Walk from Melbourne to Canberra to meet with Prime Minister Howard. ANTaR

About ANTaR

Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR) is an independent, national, mainly non-Indigenous organisation set up to help protect the human rights of Indigenous Australians and advance the reconciliation process in Australia.

ANTaR was established in 1997 in response to public concern about Federal Government moves to wind back Indigenous native title rights. The result was a people's movement, co-ordinated by a partnership of Indigenous leaders, non-government organisations and concerned citizens, which became known as ANTaR.

ANTaR's campaign work addresses a range of issues pertinent to current Indigenous affairs:

- Native Title & Land Rights
- Reconciliation
- Self-determination & self-governance
- Stolen wages
- Stolen generations
- Indigenous health rights
- Human rights obligations
- Indigenous culture and heritage
- Indigenous disadvantage and 'practical reconciliation'
- History and recognition of the past

Vision, Mission & Goals

Vision

An Australian society that respects and values Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultures and heritage, and provides justice and equity for all.

Mission

To generate in Australia a moral and legal recognition of and respect for the distinctive status of Indigenous Australians as First Peoples and for the protection of Indigenous Australians' rights, including their relationship to land, the right to self-determination and the maintenance and growth of their unique cultures.

Goals

To achieve this mission ANTaR works to:

- Provide ways for Indigenous voices to be heard by non-Indigenous Australians
- Raise awareness among non-Indigenous Australians and international populations
- Promote recognition of the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Achieve social and economic equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Maintain close liaison with Indigenous leaders and communities
- Sustain and strengthen the people's movement for reconciliation
- Provide non-Indigenous Australians with opportunities to share responsibility for healing in this country
- Encourage all Australians to acknowledge the past and build a shared future.

ANTaR coordinates its national community education and advocacy work by:

- maintaining close liaison with Indigenous leaders and communities,
- conducting national campaigns and lobbying governments,
- conducting education and awareness projects targeted at non-Indigenous Australians.

A great deal of ANTaR's work is carried out by State and Territory ANTaRs supported by ANTaR National. Numerous local advocacy groups work with the State and Territory branches at a grass-roots level, undertaking local reconciliation initiatives in conjunction with local Indigenous groups and other members of local communities. ANTaR is linked to a network of over 200 reconciliation groups across Australia.

Our purpose is to support Indigenous people speaking for themselves. ANTaR works in partnership with Indigenous leaders and organisations, to give voice and support to the concerns of Indigenous peoples. This happens, in the first instance, via communication with an Indigenous Reference Group, made up of twelve eminent Indigenous Australians from across the country.



2005 Freedom Rider Sandy Greenwood with Uncle Martin Ballingary in Bowraville



Michael Long on *The Long Walk*.

Indigenous Policy & Self Determination

2004-05 saw the introduction of the Government's "new arrangements" in Indigenous Affairs based on abolishing ATSIC and elected Indigenous representation and returning all Indigenous-specific programs and funding to mainstream departments. Despite the Government's own review recommending the retention of ATSIC and elected Indigenous representation, the Government has chosen, on ideological grounds, to return Indigenous affairs policy to the assimilation era of the 1960's.

'Mutual obligation' and 'shared responsibility' policies are actually decreasing Indigenous involvement in decision-making while failing to provide urgently needed resources to tackle Indigenous disadvantage.

ANTaR has strongly opposed the changes via media, lobbying and community education initiatives, including a submission to the Senate Select Committee Inquiry into the Administration of Indigenous Affairs and activities focused on the 2004 Federal Election and 2005/06 Federal Budget (see our website for details).

A major concern is that the Government's coercive approach to welfare and service delivery reform for Indigenous communities will usher in a renewed era of racially discriminatory treatment of Indigenous peoples.

Many of the problems in Indigenous communities stem from long term under-funding of services and infrastructure and a culture of neglect by governments and mainstream

departments. These failures of 'mainstreaming' will continue under the "new" arrangements, which significantly reduce Indigenous input into policy formation and service delivery.

The Government fails to see that unless change is led by Indigenous people themselves and solutions are 'owned' by Indigenous communities, outcomes will be piecemeal and unsustainable. It continues to turn attention away from its own failures by shifting blame onto Indigenous people.

ANTaR is committed to Indigenous aspirations for self determination and to making the Government accountable so that it meets its responsibilities to Indigenous Australians.

Stolen Wages

From 1900 right up to the 1980s governments throughout Australia misappropriated the money earned by Aboriginal people who were under their care and protection. This money also included child endowment, pensions and even soldiers' pay.

Aboriginal people were condemned to lives of poverty while their money was used as public revenue or disappeared through fraud or negligence. It's estimated that more than \$1 billion in today's value was lost or stolen from Aboriginal families in this way.

ANTaR has been campaigning hard to end this national scandal and make governments meet their

responsibilities to Aboriginal people.

In Queensland, the Government has only offered one-off payments between \$2000-4000 to elderly Aboriginal people, even though this is only a fraction of what was stolen from them over their working lives. The Government's refusal to negotiate with Aboriginal people forces many into lengthy legal action. It knows that many of these old people will die before their money is recovered.

ANTaR Queensland has been lobbying the Beattie Government furiously to extend its 31 December 2005 deadline and rethink its inadequate offer to Stolen Wages claimants.

In NSW the scheme is much fairer than Queensland's. A tribunal to administer Stolen Wages reparations in NSW has been set up. But progress is extremely slow and information for claimants elusive.

Other states have not addressed this issue at all although Victoria has promised to look into it.

ANTaR is pushing for a national inquiry and for governments to pay Aboriginal workers what they are owed.

On the national front, Dr Ros Kidd is preparing a report on Stolen Wages around Australia for release in May 2006. All this underpins the need for a national inquiry into Stolen Wages.

Racial Discrimination

ANTaR's submission to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) highlighted the alarming decrease in Indigenous employment in Indigenous administration, particularly at a senior management level, in the Australian Public Service (APS).

The exodus of Indigenous people from Indigenous administration is a disastrous development at a time when the centrepiece of Government policy is the mainstreaming of Indigenous service delivery.

The Government promised that its move to mainstreaming would be accompanied by an increase in Indigenous participation in the public service. New figures reveal very clearly

that this is not happening.

According to the National Indigenous Times there is only one senior Indigenous manager in the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination (OIPC).

Indigenous people are also leaving the APS at almost double the intake rate. Our submission to the UN Committee contended that this represents a breach of the CERD Convention.

ANTaR's submission catalogued other multiple breaches of the UN's CERD Convention, including the moves to abolish ATSIC and with it Indigenous representation.

This has been accompanied by a failure to address Indigenous disadvantage

after 8 years of 'practical reconciliation'. In many areas, such as health, the situation of Indigenous peoples has declined relative to other Australians.

ANTaR's submission to the UN's CERD Committee points to a long list of areas in which the Howard Government has breached Australia's obligations, including:

- the stalling of progress on national reconciliation; and
- failure to implement the recommendations of key reports such as the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, the stolen generations Bringing Them Home report and the Final Report of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation.

President's Report

ANTaR began in 1997 and by October the stunning Sea of Hands was laid out in front of Parliament House in Canberra. We thought it would be a short campaign about Native Title. But with the Government announcing pacts with farmers and miners while turning their back on those most affected - Indigenous people - it became clear our mission was much broader. The people whose land we were talking about weren't included and their overall situation of crippling disadvantage and alienation was not being faced.

If we look at similar countries to ourselves, countries like Canada, New Zealand and the US, they have managed to significantly improve the health and living standards of their Indigenous peoples over the last 25 years as well as addressing land issues.

In all of those countries they have had agreements in place with their Indigenous peoples for more than a century. We haven't even got that yet. Clearly those countries where there have been agreements with their Indigenous peoples, and a closer relationship particularly with federal governments, have delivered better outcomes and more coordinated actions. We need similar agreements.

This requires shared commitment from government and people at all levels. Partnerships with Indigenous people are essential for this to be meaningful. We don't need politicians storming into Indigenous communities to hold a press conference extolling the virtues of the contribution that they might make. We've tried that for 216 years and it hasn't worked - it won't work now.

We need to talk and we need to listen. We need to seriously listen to Indigenous leaders such as Patrick Dodson, to seriously listen to the leadership in Redfern, to seriously listen to young Indigenous people. Because I believe if you've managed to live on this continent for some fifty to a hundred thousand years, there's a fair chance you've probably got something fundamentally right, and that you've got something fundamentally important to contribute to the humanity of the rest of us.

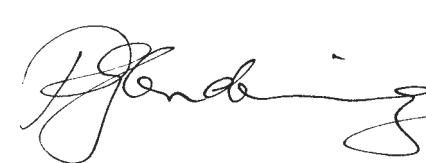
Seven years on ANTaR is still working hard, asking ordinary Australians to hear the moral call and not be ashamed to say we want a better Australia. We don't hear it from government leaders and that's part of our poverty. The people's movement needs to re-energise. You can read about ANTaR's contribution to that via its 2004-05 campaigns in the pages of this report.

ANTaR's national campaign priorities for the year ahead and longer term are about basic human rights: health rights, the right to representation and participation, the right to a cultural identity and to the lands and heritage on which that identity is based, rights to the return of stolen wages, and to a respected place in the nation. Localised law and justice issues, such as related to Palm Island and the redevelopment of The Block in Redfern, and the issue of land rights in remote communities also retain ANTaR's close attention. They are active proof that racism festers widely across Australia and that the exposure of this racism must be a backdrop for all ANTaR campaigns.

Disadvantage and discrimination are structural. They're political matters: by-products of how society is organised. Remedial strategies aren't enough. Services are important but will not bring about substantial attitudinal change. Without attitudinal change there can be no driving force for political action and no prospect of enduring justice for Australia's Indigenous peoples. Above all, this work requires us to listen to Indigenous people and to acknowledge and understand our impact over the last 200 years.

ANTaR remains committed to challenging destructive policies, such as the Government's "new arrangements", that disempower and restrict the participation of Indigenous people. We will continue to put the case for urgent action by governments underpinned by proper evidence-based research.

With sincere thanks to ANTaR's many supporters, without whose financial and other contributions ANTaR's work could not continue.



Phil Glendenning
ANTaR National President



Below: detail from Sea of Hands display in Hyde Park, Sydney, November 2005.



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Above: Bill Doonsday watches 3 year-old Nicholas Ovi cool off in a plastic rubbish bin at the Mulan Aboriginal community. Photo by Nic Ellis, courtesy *The Age*.

Cover photo: scene from *Second Helping* - a play written and directed by Indigenous man John Harding and produced by ANTaR Victoria. *Second Helping* addresses the reconciliation debate in the context of two school teachers in conflict over the history of early Australia. The play was performed to packed houses in Melbourne during July 2005.

This report was compiled by ANTaR National. For enquiries please contact our office: tel. 02 9555 6138, email: antar@antar.org.au

We gratefully acknowledge the financial assistance and in-kind support of the Mercy Foundation and the Rio Tinto Aboriginal Foundation for the development of its *Indigenous Health Rights Campaign*. Thank you!



Fundraising

organised a welcome event in Canberra which included a large *Sea of Hands* display and community BBQ. Michael's walk to raise awareness of the plight of Indigenous Australians was arguably the highest profile Indigenous event during 2004.

ANTaR produced an Election Kit for the 2004 Federal Election, assisting people to make voting decisions supportive of Indigenous rights. ANTaR's Kit and media in the lead-up to the election, including an Opinion piece in the Sydney Morning Herald, helped to raise the profile of Indigenous issues, particularly health.

ANTaR's work developing government relations is ongoing. In March 2005 President Phil Glendenning and Director David Cooper visited key Government and Opposition members in Canberra. This was in addition to ongoing contact with a range of politicians during the year.

Significant submissions over the year included to the Senate Select Committee Inquiry into the Administration of Indigenous Affairs, which addressed the proposed abolition of ATSIC and the mainstreaming of Indigenous services. ANTaR also gave evidence to the Committee.

During 2004-05 a re-design of ANTaR's website was underway and the new site is expected to be completed by the end of 2005.

A generous grant from Oxfam for the appointment of a Media and Campaigns Officer for 2005-06 has enabled ANTaR to plan more substantial media activity for the coming year.



Direct Mail Appeal Donations

The 2005 Annual (May) Appeal result matched the May 2004 result of over \$100,000. Mail-out cost savings achieved meant that net income from the Appeal increased by \$15,000.

Inserts of this Appeal in *Eureka Street* as a trial donor acquisition strategy proved successful.

Letters to 'lost donors' in early 2005 raised \$5,500 for the Award for Innovative Reconciliation. Further appeal letters to targeted segments as well as magazine appeals are planned.

Merchandise

The merchandise range was revamped and expanded, and promoted in a catalogue distributed late in 2004. ANTaR published a 2005 Tiwi Islander calendar as part of the new range.

Profit from merchandise sales grew by 378% comparing July-December 2003 and 2004 (the period when then catalogue and calendar were released). The growth in merchandise profit as a proportion of total income grew by a similar 357% for this period.

Profit from merchandise sales grew by 33% comparing the post-Christmas January-June periods for 2003 and 2004. Similarly, merchandise profit as a proportion of total income grew by 45% for this period.

A 2006 calendar has been produced; pre-sales already recover costs. Similar sales as for the 2005 calendar are expected, and lower costs were achieved this year. A solid gain from this venture is thus anticipated.

Events

Fundraiser screenings of the film *Red Dust* are arranged for Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane in November. Fundraiser screenings in Adelaide, Perth, Canberra, Darwin, and some regional centres will



follow. The events are expected to raise approximately \$4000 each from ticket sales and foyer raffles. Awareness raising among new audiences (upwards of 200 per screening) and potential supporter acquisition are also important goals of the events.

Grants

\$60,000 was granted for the Indigenous Health Rights Campaign from the Mercy Foundation (\$10,000), the Rio Tinto Aboriginal Foundation (RTAF \$30,000) and Oxfam Australia (\$20,000).

Oxfam Australia have also provided \$50,000 specifically for the 12-month appointment of a Media and Campaign Officer.

An additional \$25,000 has been granted from the NSW Premier's Fund for equipment.

The total value of grant income generated for 2004-05 was \$20,069, more than tripling 2003-04 grants.

This does not include bequests, which have not altered over the period.

Other grant opportunities were investigated, including with international foundations. ANTaR will continue to explore opportunities with these sources in the coming year.

Images from ANTaR's 2006 fundraising calendar. Photos: Heide Smith.



ANTaR National Management Committee 2004-05

Office Bearers

Phil Glendenning (Edmund Rice Centre) President
Roger Cook (ANTaR WA) Vice President
Merrindahl Andrews (ANTaR ACT) Secretary
Helen Barnes (At Large) Treasurer

Ordinary Members

Bob Makinson (ANTaR NSW)
Margaret Hardy (ANTaR QLD)
Peter Lewis (ANTaR VIC)
Glenn Giles (ANTaR SA)
Hugh Bland (ANTaR NT)
Helen Fielder-Gill (ANTaR TAS)
David Raper (Amnesty International Australia)
Anouk Ride (Australian Council of Social Services)

ANTaR's Non-Government Organisation Members

Amnesty International Australia
Australian Council for International Development (ACFID)
Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS)
Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU)
Edmund Rice Centre
National Union of Students (NUS)
Oxfam Australia
Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA)

National Staff

David Cooper - National Director (full-time)
Hilary Blackman - Communications & Fundraising Manager (full-time)
Janene Collins - Administration Officer (part-time)

ANTaR's Indigenous Reference Group

Patrick Dodson, Chair, Lingiari Foundation
Professor Mick Dodson AM, Professor of Indigenous Studies, Australian National University
Professor Lowitja O'Donoghue AC CBE
Professor Larissa Behrendt, Professor of Law, UTS Sydney
Aden Ridgeway, chair of the NSW Aboriginal Trust Fund Reparations Scheme, former NSW Senator
Dr Bill Jonas, formerly Indigenous Social Justice Commissioner, HREOC
Linda Burney, MP, NSW Legislative Assembly
Olga Havnen, Australian Council of Social Services Board, formerly Fred Hollows Foundation
Professor Marcia Langton, Professor of Australian Indigenous Studies, Melbourne University
Peter Yu, former Executive Director, Kimberley Land Council
David Ross, Director, Central Land Council
Lester Irabinna Rigney, Yunggoorendi First Nations Centre, Flinders University

Reconciliation

ANTaR Award for Innovative Reconciliation

In early 2005 ANTaR created an award for Innovative Reconciliation in Action. The prize aims to celebrate and foster community-based reconciliation initiatives that are creative, meaningful and effective.

Nominations were sought from the national network of organisations and individuals working in support of reconciliation.

Two members of ANTaR's Indigenous Reference Group and one long-serving non-Indigenous ANTaR member assessed eight outstanding projects for:

- Creativity and originality
- Impact on local community
- Impact on wider community
- Community involvement
- Meaningful connection to land

The inaugural award, with a \$2,000 prize, went to the Myall Creek Massacre Memorial.

The Memorial honours a group of some 55-60 unarmed Aboriginal people killed by a gang of stockmen in June 1838. Seven stockmen involved were sentenced: the first time white people were convicted for murdering Aboriginal people.

The Memorial comprises seven granite stones, inscribed with text in Gumilaroi and English. The inscriptions tell of traditional inhabitants of the region and of the massacres brought on them by colonial Europeans. The stones mark a walkway through the massacres' sites.



Fifteen hundred people attended the Memorial's opening ceremony on 10 June 2000, 162 years after the massacre. It brought together descendants and representatives of the victims and perpetrators of the massacre, an act of reconciliation with implications for the whole community.

National Reconciliation Workshop May 30-31 2005

On the fifth anniversary of the reconciliation bridge walks, a national conference organised by Reconciliation Australia (RA) was attended by 200 people from across Australia, 45% of whom were Indigenous. Representation came from government, non-government organisations - including ANTaR, education, business, media and faith groups.

The workshop program featured many high profile speakers and open plenary discussions. Small group workshops were also held, focussing on key issues such as overcoming disadvantage, policy development and education. The Federal Government's contribution came from the Prime Minister, John Howard, the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Amanda Vanstone, and from Peter Shergold, Secretary of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

The event provided a rare opportunity for Indigenous people to come together in a national forum. The loss of a national structure to represent Indigenous voices was keenly felt.

One of the forum's key messages was

that Indigenous people must set the direction of Indigenous policy. The role of reconciliation bodies should be to inform and educate the broader community. The workshop provided an opportunity to discuss important issues and the role that different sectors have in achieving justice for Indigenous people. The importance of engaging the breadth of the Australian community was repeatedly highlighted, with recognition that there is a mosaic of organisations working to advance reconciliation.

The Prime Minister said that he would meet Indigenous people "more than half way", which for some was an important turning point. Others, however, expressed cynicism about whether the apparent change in language would be accompanied by a change in policy. The point was made that reconciliation organisations have a role to play in holding the government to its word.

The general feeling was that the Workshop provided a good opportunity to raise issues, and to involve sectors where involvement in reconciliation can be increased - especially media and business.

For the wider community, this project has been remarkable in bringing people together who are now dealing openly with differences and committing themselves to working together. It shows that looking at history together is not divisive, but rather helps healing.

Two Fires Festival

ANTaR's Award for Innovative Reconciliation in Action was awarded on 20 March 2005 at the *Two Fires Festival for Arts and Activism*, held in Braidwood NSW. It is a new festival of national significance, bringing together artists, writers, filmmakers, poets, activists and environmental thinkers from all over Australia. Inspired by the legacy of the great Australian poet, conservationist and reconciliation activist Judith Wright, the festival celebrates society's two fires: arts and activism.

The festival's program included a discussion forum chaired by ANTaR entitled *Indigenous perspectives on Reconciliation*. Over 400 people filled Braidwood's National Theatre to listen to acclaimed Indigenous writers Gordon Briscoe, Richard Frankland, Anita Heiss and Bobby McLeod with a ceremony led by Helen Moran.

In its final proceedings report for the event, RA highlighted four priorities that were identified from the meeting:

1. Indigenous disadvantage, with a strong focus on education and the importance of children;
2. Making progress on the "rights agenda";
3. The need for a national Indigenous representative body; and
4. The importance of having many networks of reconciliation efforts working effectively together.

The final challenge was put to the workshop by Patrick Dodson:

"If we as a nation have the courage and leadership capable of re-engaging on the road to genuine Reconciliation and Justice, then there will be many who will seize the opportunity to move forward together."

Report provided by Sylvie Ellesmore, who attended the National Reconciliation Workshop on behalf of the NSW Reconciliation Council.

Indigenous Health Rights Campaign

An Indigenous child born today in Brewarrina is going to live less than a child born in remote rural Bangladesh or Mozambique. This must give us all something serious to think about. All of the 97.4% of non-Indigenous people in Australia.

ANTaR's Indigenous Health Rights Campaign began in early 2004. It aims to put the oxy-acetylene torch to under-performing governments and a complacent mainstream Australia.

The campaign has developed an Indigenous Health Rights Statement, a Health Rights Action Kit and forged partnerships with Indigenous and non-Indigenous health organisations.

2004-05 has seen ANTaR's Indigenous Health Rights campaign build on the Aboriginal consultation and which fed the production of ANTaR's Indigenous Health Rights Kit in 2003-04.

The Indigenous Health Rights Working Group has formed, comprising senior representatives from the National Association of Community Controlled

Health Organisations (NACCHO), the Australian Medical Association (AMA), the Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association, Oxfam and ANTaR.

ANTaR has also commenced its Indigenous Health Success Stories Project (see below). This project complements other aspects of ANTaR's Indigenous Health Rights Campaign, including the Indigenous Health Seminars, commencing in 2006.

ANTaR has also developed a campaign to address the important issue of petrol sniffing (see opposite).

Indigenous Health Success Stories

ANTaR has initiated an Indigenous Health Success Stories Project to promote and support successful Aboriginal community-controlled health care initiatives. It will emphasise projects with little or no government support, and those which could be replicated elsewhere.

The project will show that Aboriginal communities are taking initiative in tackling health problems, and that significant progress in improving Indigenous health is achievable through increased support for Aboriginal health care initiatives.

The project will produce a publication and other education materials to disseminate to the community and to use in a series of public seminars about Indigenous health.

The project will seek the participation of and be carried out in consultation with, Aboriginal community controlled organisations, from which appropriate Success Stories projects will be sought.

Example Success Story: Townsville Aboriginal & Islander Health Service 'Mums & Babies Program'

It's common knowledge in any health centre that women who use pregnancy care services enjoy better health, and thus better birth outcomes. The link between maternal and infant health and ill health in middle age is equally well known.


Many of the Indigenous women in Townsville knew this. But the waits at the general clinic in a room full of sick people were long. Staff turnover was high meaning they rarely saw the same doctor twice. Understandably Indigenous women chose to stay away.

Since 2000, the TAIHS has been operating a Mums and Babies health program in its own clinic where it now

delivers culturally sensitive health care to around 160 pregnant women per year. It has three Aboriginal health workers, and three female doctors who have been there since the clinic opened, providing much-needed continuity and building confidence and trust among the pregnant women and mothers.

Some major achievements

- no. of pregnancy care visits per pregnancy more than doubled
- births before 37 weeks fell significantly from 17% to 9.5%
- low birth weight has fallen from 16% to 11.7%
- perinatal deaths have more than halved



Some Key Success Factors

- Townsville Aboriginal and Islander community initiated, designed and implemented
- A collaborative team approach involving Indigenous mothers and infants, TAIHS Aboriginal & Islander Health Program and wider regional and State health programs
- Existing services, transport and education were improved.

Photo (above): Healthy and content: a TAIHS 'Mums & Babies Program' Patient.

Indigenous Health Seminars

ANTaR is developing a series of education seminars addressing Indigenous health, to be held during 2006. The seminars will involve Indigenous health decision and opinion-makers - doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, politicians, policy makers, academics, research professionals, legal advocates, teachers and the media. The seminars will have three components:

A. Information and case studies illustrating the nature and depth of the Indigenous health crisis and its direct relationship to social exclusion and disadvantage.

B. A showcase of Indigenous Health Success Stories, considering how and why they were effective, and what would sustain or progress the projects' outcomes.

C. The seminars will be organised in collaboration with the Indigenous Health Rights Working Group and the participants for whom they are held.

ANTaR will research, write and produce a publication incorporating information on each of the three seminar sections, again in consultation with the Indigenous Health Rights Working Group and relevant professional experts, Indigenous and non-Indigenous. Professional experts in Indigenous health issues will be engaged to present the seminars. They will include members of the local community where each seminar is held.

It is proposed to hold seminars in capital cities and regional centres across Australia.

Indigenous Health in Central Australia

In late 2004, David Cooper and Hilary Blackman visited a number of Indigenous health related organisations in Central Australia:

Central Australian Aboriginal Congress

Congress is the community-controlled health service for Central Australia. Congress is keen to work with ANTaR to raise the profile of Indigenous health rights issues and to assist in lobbying government.

Western Desert Nganampa Walytja Palyantjaku Tjutaku Aboriginal Corporation

The Corporation grew out of the Western Desert Dialysis Appeal, an initiative of the small remote community of Kintore which raised \$1 million from the sale of its art to purchase a dialysis machine. This machine allows community members on dialysis to move home from Alice Springs. It is a mind-boggling case study of the effects of one preventable epidemic on a small community and the ongoing burden it represents. ANTaR plans to help highlight the issue and promote its work.

Central Land Council (CLC)

A successful Alice Springs native title claim resulted in the establishment of a local native title holders' organisation, the Lhere Artepe Aboriginal Corporation. This has generated a range of negotiated outcomes for local claimants and non-claimant residents. ANTaR and the CLC plan to jointly

develop education material about how success in claims helps improve people's lives and health through increased income, better housing and intercultural cooperation.

Central Australian Youth Link-Up Service (CAYLUS)

Set up by a coalition of Aboriginal health and community service organisations, CAYLUS supports Aboriginal community programs dealing with petrol sniffing and other substance abuse throughout Central Australia. These programs are run without adequate resources or ongoing funding. We discussed developing community education material, supporting individual projects and helping to lobby. One outstation program to stop petrol sniffing will be included among the Indigenous Health Success Stories.



Photo: Liam Campbell courtesy Warlpiri Media

Help Stop Petrol Sniffing Campaign

During 2005 ANTaR has been working with CAYLUS on a national campaign to help stop petrol sniffing in remote Aboriginal communities.

The campaign encourages Australians to send postcards to the Prime Minister urging a roll out of un-sniffable Opal fuel throughout Central Australia. Although Opal is not the solution to petrol sniffing, it would certainly be a major life saving factor in Central Australia.

A comprehensive roll out of Opal fuel would cost \$10 million - less than one percent of the \$4 billion in fuel subsidies currently going to mining companies, primary producers and other users, and substantially less than the additional costs of treatment without such action.

The Northern Territory Coroner recently said that the problems of petrol sniffing are "immediate, stark and urgent." He described the lack of action by the Federal and NT Governments as "pathetic" and called for the introduction of Opal fuel to substantially reduce petrol sniffing and its associated harms.

A broader, comprehensive strategy is required, in which the Opal initiative is key.

Land Rights & Native Title

Land rights and native title received increased attention during the year when the Government foreshadowed winding back Aboriginal land rights and introducing further reforms to native title legislation.

In April 2005 the Prime Minister foreshadowed changes to the communal ownership of Aboriginal land in favour of private ownership rights, particularly home ownership. This followed widely reported comments by Labor's President elect and member of the Federal Government's hand-picked National Indigenous Council (NIC), Warren Mundine, arguing that the communal nature of Aboriginal land title was "retarding our economic development".

This view was widely rejected by Indigenous leaders, including Mick Dodson, who pointed out that private and commercial leasing was already occurring under the Land Rights

Act, delivering significant economic returns. They feared the issue of home ownership was being used as a 'trojan horse' for more draconian changes.

Such fears were supported by claims by Minister Vanstone and others, that land rights has been a cause of Indigenous poverty and disadvantage. The so-called "land rich - dirt poor" argument is an unfounded though appealingly-simplistic attack on land rights.

It suits the Government to blame land rights for Aboriginal poverty in order to shift focus away from Government responsibility. However, evidence shows that tenure is not a significant barrier to either home ownership or commercial development on Aboriginal land.

The Prime Minister sought to allay concern in a speech to the National Reconciliation Workshop in May. He said that his government was

"committed to protecting the rights of communal ownership...And...that the Government does not seek to wind back or undermine native title or land rights."

However, on 16 June the NIC issued its Land Tenure Principles, which recommended the racially-discriminatory measure of compulsory acquisition of communal land if Traditional Owners withheld consent for a private lease.

ANTaR has argued that private home ownership opportunities should be in addition to not at the expense of communal title. Where communal land ownership has been replaced by individual land ownership overseas, Indigenous people have ended up losing their land.

The failure of the Federal Government to consult with traditional owners over the changes is a major concern.