

ANTaR SA News

September 2004

Newsletter of Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (South Australia) Inc
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Indigenous Affairs in Australia?

Australia reaches the middle of the first decade of the twenty-first century with the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians wider than in the early 1990s. This at the end of the UN International Decade of Indigenous Peoples.

We think this is a deplorable record, adding to the previous 200 plus years of injustice for the First Nations of Australia: Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders.

This record is deplorable - what sort of society do we want to live in?

The abolition of ATSIC and its proposed replacement by a government appointed advisory body, without effective independence, is a big step backwards. Dr Jonas, the former HREOC Social Justice Commissioner, points out that in light of the discrimination and inequality experienced by indigenous people, the abolition of ATSIC breaches Article 5 of the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (The Australian, August 23, 2004).

The record speaks volumes. In the 9 October election we encourage people to vote for candidates who have positions consistent with ANTaR's, ie. social justice for Indigenous Australians based on real recognition and self-determination. ANTaR National has produced an election score-card of

major parties responses on major Indigenous issues to help inform voters wishing to vote with Indigenous issues as a priority. See antar.org.au or contact ANTaR SA office. (More inside.)

There are two Indigenous candidates in South Australia: **Andrea Mason** (lead Senate candidate in SA for Family First Party) and **Waluwe Simpson-Lyttle** (ALP candidate in Barker).

ANTaR SA AGM

20 Sept.

Please be invited to our
Annual General Meeting
on Monday, 20 September, 2004,
7pm – 9pm
Pilgrim Church, Flinders Street, Adelaide

A panel with:
Senator Penny Wong (ALP),
Kate Reynolds MLC (SA Democrats Indigenous
Affairs Spokesperson),
- Indigenous affairs policies in the context of the
October 9 Federal election

Light refreshments provided
Please send nominations (mail or e-mail) for
committee and office holders by 5pm Friday 17
Sept. We are intending to video-record the
meeting.

International Human Rights

On International Human Rights Day, 10 December, 2004, we are planning an event to mark the end of the UN International Decade of Indigenous Peoples (it ends at the end of 2004) - a decade which began with some promise in Australia with Keating's 'Redfern speech', but ends having been dominated by Howard's 'neo-assimilation' approach, capped by mainstreaming services and knee-capping national representative Indigenous voice by abolishing ATSIC and not replacing it with a representative body.

Back on U.N. International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, August 9 2004 Amnesty International launched a campaign to raise world-wide attention to the disadvantage and discrimination faced by Indigenous peoples across the world.

Australia is among a select group of mainly 'white' countries (see below) holding up the final draft of the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Amnesty International Launches Campaign For Indigenous Rights

<http://www.eniar.org/news/amnesty8.html>

Lisa Schlein

9 Aug 2004 - Amnesty International is launching a campaign to promote and protect the rights of indigenous peoples. The effort corresponds with the U.N. International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. Amnesty International says the estimated 370 million indigenous peoples around the world continue to endure widespread discrimination, impoverishment and ill-health. It says their unique cultural identities are threatened, their lands are confiscated and they are subject to armed violence.

Amnesty argues the failure to respect and uphold indigenous peoples' rights to land and other economic, social and cultural rights is at the heart of conflicts that often lead to political killings and forms of abuse.

An Amnesty expert on indigenous rights, Joshua Cooper, says the aim of the campaign is to put pressure on governments to adopt the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

"To put key pressure on certain governments that have really been obstructive, and actually try to take away even the legal rights that have been recognized under international law from indigenous peoples," Mr. Cooper said. "And, on that front, we

are going to try and work over the next five months on key dates to put pressure on governments."

The campaign goes until the end of the year to correspond with the end of the International Decade of Indigenous Peoples. Mr. Cooper says Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Japan are mainly responsible for holding up the final draft of the U.N. declaration.

In 1977, governments and indigenous peoples first started work on a declaration to set standards for the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples. The U.N. Sub-Commission on Human Rights adopted the draft declaration in 1994. Since then, little progress has been made in agreeing on the final wording of the text.

Les Malezer, who is from Australia and Co-Chair of the Foundation for Aboriginal and Islander Research Action, says the stand-off must be resolved by early next year when the U.N. Human Rights Commission reviews progress. If little or nothing has been achieved by then, he says, it is possible the commission might stop the process.

"Only two of the 45 articles have received any form of endorsement, and those articles simply say - one of them says, all indigenous individuals have the right to a nationality, and the other one says that indigenous women have the same rights as indigenous men. Now, as you can imagine, that is not a great breakthrough in human rights, and certainly no breakthrough for human rights for indigenous peoples," Mr. Malezer said.

Amnesty International says its campaign's success will hinge in large measure on mobilizing citizens to pressure their governments to respect the rights of indigenous peoples.

Source: <http://www.voanews.com/> Voice of America

'Australia Change' January 26

On January 26 2004 ANTAr SA helped organise a gathering, with bbq, music and several speakers on human rights, under the 'banner': Australia Change. Several speakers, including Tom Trevorrow, Sandra Kanck MLC, Kris Hanna MP, Peter Lewis MP, questioned a national celebration on the day. If you can help organise something for next year, please contact our office.

Further information, see the web-page: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/AustraliaChange_SA There is an Indigenous sponsored site for Australia Change at: www.australia-change.com . This is being promoted by Camp Coorong (www.ngarrindjeri.com).

ANTaR National : Federal Election – call to vote against Coalition

This is edited (for length) from a National ANTaR media release from Monday 16 August 2004. The release points to the record of failures of the Howard Governments' Indigenous Affairs policies, as demonstrated by its patronising relations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and non-achievement on various social dimensions (especially health, eg life expectancy).

ANTaR National makes an unprecedented call on citizens to vote against the incumbent Coalition in the Federal election. National ANTaR President, Phil Glendenning, said: "If voters are concerned about Indigenous justice and reconciliation they should not vote for the Coalition candidates, but direct their vote elsewhere."

ANTaR National launched its 2004 Election Kit on 16 August, to assist reconciliation and other community groups to actively support Indigenous issues and candidates at the upcoming Federal election. Election Kit and Report Card of the policies and priorities in Indigenous affairs of the major political parties, which was produced from responses sought from the major parties by ANTaR, are available online at www.antar.org.au. The Kit includes information on lobbying politicians, use of the media and other suggested election activities.

The launch of the 2004 Election Kit follows the release on 12 August of the third AMA Indigenous Health Report which stated that Indigenous health is currently under-funded by at least \$452.5 million a year. "There is also a critical shortage of health professionals providing services to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders," said AMA President, Dr Bill Glasson.

"The Howard Government has failed to make a dent in the shocking rates of disadvantage faced by Indigenous people, particularly in relation to health," ANTaR National President Phil Glendenning said.

"Despite the Government's lack of outcomes on Indigenous issues, it has attacked Indigenous organisations and particularly ATSIC to undermine their financial, political and public support."

"The Howard Government has consistently ignored its responsibility to consult with Indigenous people about decisions that affect their lives. Its contemptuous attitude to Indigenous people is reflected in its decisions to abandon an independent Indigenous voice in policy-making and return to hand-picked Indigenous advisors."

"The 2004 Election Kit offers more information on the rationale for ANTaR's decision to recommend people vote for parties other than the Coalition. It does not endorse any particular political party."

Indigenous Health Rights campaign, "Healing Hands".

In February ANTaR National launched an Indigenous Health Rights Campaign, aimed at turning the tide of the crisis in Indigenous health in Australia, and raise the prominence of Indigenous issues on the national political agenda.

The campaign includes a letter to Prime Minister Howard; an 'Indigenous Health Rights Statement'; 'information sheets' on Indigenous Health; a critique of Practical Reconciliation; and an Australian Medical Association Report Card. Visit the national ANTaR web-site for information: www.antar.org.au

Contact your state and federal politicians, urge them to make Indigenous health a priority. Politician contact details, State and Federal, at following:
http://www.parliament.sa.gov.au/members/7_members.shtml
<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/members/index.htm>
<http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/senators/index.htm>

Candle Light Walk:

Treaty; NO SA Nuclear Dump; Bill Of Rights - at Government House, North Terrace, Adelaide, at sunset. First Friday of month.

More information at www.ngarrindjeri.net

Kumarangk Ferry Project

(KRAUWI KAINGGI YUKE)

Please use the information below to make a financial contribution toward Ngarrindjeri Kumarangk Ferry Project. We encourage ANTaR supporters to also contribute to this practical project.

You can see more about the ferry project at <http://www.ngarrindjeri.org/ferry/>

DONATE to the Ngarrindjeri Kumarangk Ferry Project: KRAUWI KAINGGI YUKE (Ngarrindjeri Big Rainbow Boat) FUND

Direct Deposit: Ngarrindjeri Krauwi Kaingge Yuke Fund: a/c No: 016274440

Branch: 105 165 Meningie SA, State Bank of SA
Organiser: Tom Trevor

Chairperson, NLP - Ngarrindjeri Land and Progress Association Inc

P.O. Box 126, MENINGIE, SA 5264
TEL: +61 8 8575 1557/1657
FAX: +61 8 8575 1448
E-mail: nlpa@bigpond.com
Website: www.ngarrindjeri.org

Umeewarra Media might be first casualty of abolition of ATSIC

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The work towards achieving reconciliation of substance in this country needs to be based on a fuller and better informed recognition of Australia's Aboriginal peoples. Important to this are the presences of Aboriginal Australians in the public realm, especially where these are self-determined. Access to the media is clearly important.

Umeewarra Media is an Aboriginal organisation providing access to media for Aboriginal people. It facilitates their community's participation in the media. Its broadcasts play a positive role in the community in various ways. Umeewarra Media is in Port Augusta. ANTAR SA (Co-ordinator) met with Vince Coulthard, its Director, at its impressive premises recently. Mr Coulthard talked about how Umeewarra has suffered an annual budget cut of nearly a third, nearly \$100,000. Umeewarra's continued operation is uncertain, to put it mildly.

Umeewarra has needed to put off half their staff - an exemplar of the fantastic results of 'practical reconciliation'!, in a regional town with few opportunities for Aboriginal employment; many, many fewer than necessary to meet the need.

It would be more than a great shame if Umeewarra were not able to continue. It offers significant employment opportunities for Aboriginal people in Port Augusta; but also much more. The station has a number of people undergoing formal broadcasting training, including with Batchelor Indigenous Tertiary College in the Northern Territory. The station broadcasts much information for the community, such as about legal and health services, local organisations and institutions. It has broadcasts in local Aboriginal languages; and music programmes popular with the local community.

Umeewarra have a pretty impressive set-up; refurbished building, with new recording studio, broadcasting booths, etc.

Mr Coulthard also talked about the transmission upgrade (from 20 to 20,000 watt), that has been approved, but is held up by government imposing unreasonable conditions on Umeewarra accessing funds it gained from sale of previous premise.

Mr Coulthard emphasised that the local community cannot afford to lose their voice in the media. "Umeewarra Aboriginal Media Association is vital to the Aboriginal community and the wider community of this region. We are the true voice of Reconciliation."

Umeewarra calls for you to not let this government silence the true voice of Aboriginal people and Reconciliation; help them continue this vital service. You can do this by contributing to the SAVE OUR VOICE - Umeewarra survival fund. Umeewarra has Tax Deductible gift status, so any donations are fully tax deductible.

Please send donations to :

Umeewarra Aboriginal Media Association
PO Box 2192 Port Augusta 5700
Umeewarra Aboriginal Media Association - South
Australia's leading Aboriginal media voice
PH:- (08) 86422422 Fax:- (08) 86425720
Email:- umeewarra@umeewarra.com.au
Web:- www.umeewarra.com.au

Thank you for your support
- the future of justice in this nation depends on the survival of organisations such as ours.

Indigenous Voice Campaign

You may be aware that Richard Frankland, playwright, film director and musician, is in the process of establishing political party "Your Voice", from Victoria initially. This is a press release from him, on 26 July 2004:

Richard Frankland a Bill of Rights for all Australians!

Playwright, film director and musician Richard Frankland to-day thanked all the people whose votes helped him to win the Sunrise Channel 7 Sponsorship for his forthcoming Senate campaign.

"The strength of the support I got, with thousands of people phoning in their votes, augurs well for the Senate campaign" Richard Frankland said to-day. "the \$ 10,000 first prize will come in handy, too - because we are starting the campaign with an empty kitty. The strong support from the whole community, Indigenous people and Non Indigenous supporters, is a major boost to the morale of our campaign team.

"Other candidates and all political parties will need to realise that Australians want a more just society. One of the worst injustices is that Indigenous families still live in conditions which are comparable to the poorest of Third World countries with a life expectancy 20 years less and infant mortality 5 times higher than the rest of the

community. To remedy these and other devastating difficulties will of course be one of my highest priorities, but to focus on just one marginalised community is not the solution to our national malaise.

"We need to address the very substance of our national identity the need to become a more just society for all Australians as former Governor General Sir William Deane said "...the ultimate test of our worth...is how we treat the most vulnerable in our society".

"This is the basis for my challenge to all parties and to all Australian parliaments: We need a Bill of Rights, so that all people, regardless of race, colour, creed, gender, sexuality, physical or mental capacity or income can meet their basic human needs of food, shelter, clothing, health, education, work, cultural tradition and religious belief, freedom of speech and assembly, equality before the law and the right to participate in public life and in political decisions affecting their lives.

Richard Frankland is in the process of establishing political party "Your Voice", but will stand as an independent if time runs out. Donations and requests for information and membership forms to: Your Voice PO Box 1245, Collingwood, 3066 . www.yourvoice.org.au

STOLEN WAGES CAMPAIGN

Ros Kidd's research in Queensland has shown how governments controlled the lives and finances of Aboriginal people. (This report is based on a recent address by Dr Kidd.) ANTAr has been supporting the Stolen Wages campaign, which has gained momentum nationally. You can get campaign updates at ANTAr Queensland web-site www.antarqld.org.au and go to the Stolen Wages link.

In March 2004 the NSW Government agreed to identify and reimburse Aboriginal people who were owed money from trust funds. In May the Carr government conceded it was responsible for paying wages lost. An Aboriginal Trust Fund Repatriation Scheme is being developed by an independent panel, that is talking with Aboriginal communities and will report to the government by October.

A Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission hearing in 1996 found 6 Palm Island workers had been illegally discriminated against by being underpaid between 1975 and 1986, and ordered a payment of \$7000 plus a statement of public regret to each complainant.

Premier Beattie's Queensland government used this \$7000 figure as a basis for reparation payments, offering \$4000 to people over 50 years,

and \$2000 for people 45 - 49 years, plus requiring them to sign an indemnity for the government.

Democrat Senator for Queensland, John Cherry, claims that 2 years after "apologising" for past practices, the Queensland government has paid out only \$11 million of an estimated \$500 - \$700 million owed in Stolen Wages.

Warriparinga Friendship Fires

The friendship fire continues to be lit by the Kurna people at sundown on the evening of the full moon each month as an offer of friendship and reconciliation. Even on the coldest of nights, the fire is welcoming and warming and good conversation abounds. It is also a chance to see the Warriparinga Living Kurna Cultural Centre.

The entrance and parking area runs at the side of the Marion Caravan Park. From the west on Sturt Road, turn right at the second break in the traffic island after the Marion Road traffic lights. If you are coming east from South Road, turn left after you pass the Police Station.

Fires will be lit at Sundown on:

Tuesday 28 September 2004

Thursday 28 October 2004

Saturday 27 November 2004

Monday 27 December 2004

CASM End of Year Showcase

Friday November 19th at the Folk Centre

The Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music (CASM) has been fostering indigenous music and performance across a variety of genres for many years. They come to the Folk Centre to present a showcase of talent that is sure to please and inspire. Call 8354 4606 now to reserve your table and avoid disappointment.

Friday November 19th Friday

More details closer to date

S.A. Folk Centre

Corner of South Road and George Street,
Thebarton

http://www.folk-sa.asn.au/Folk_Centre/events_2004.htm

Note: the 17 Sept CASM Band Night is cancelled.

Invitation to join ANTAr SA

Please consider joining ANTAr SA (*member form on newsletter cover*). We are part of the national ANTAr coalition supporting social justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

Please also consider joining the committee (at the AGM, or nominate by mail or e-mail to our office before the AGM) to help maintain our efforts to promote the full recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians' rights.