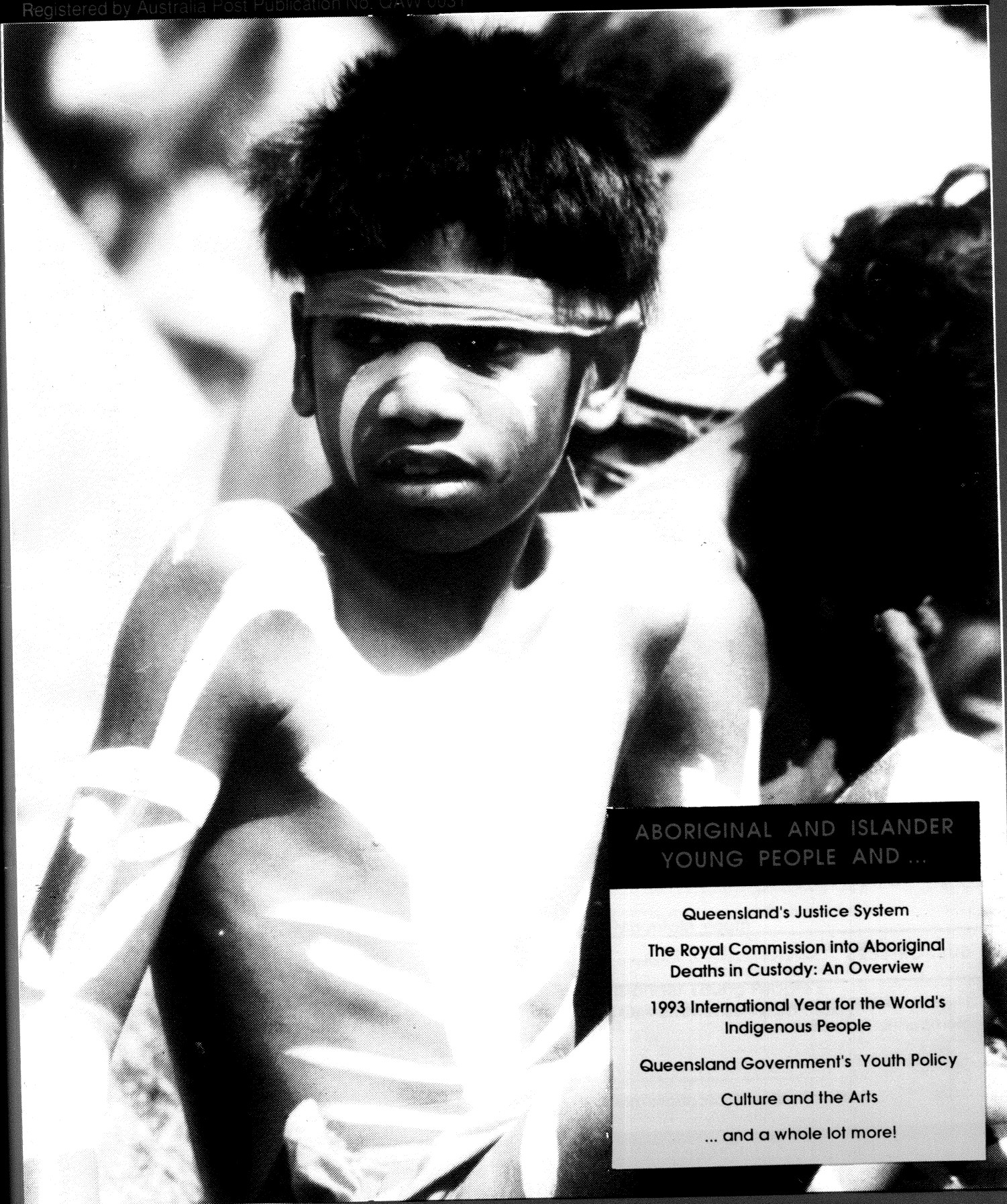


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# transitions

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## ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER YOUNG PEOPLE AND ...

Queensland's Justice System

The Royal Commission into Aboriginal  
Deaths in Custody: An Overview

1993 International Year for the World's  
Indigenous People

Queensland Government's Youth Policy

Culture and the Arts

... and a whole lot more!



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## editorial ...

YANQ is very fortunate in this issue in having access to the expertise of Aboriginal and Islander contributors. This is particularly appropriate in the International Year for the World's Indigenous People. It is very important for Aboriginal and Islander young people to have a forum through which their hopes, feelings and concerns for the future well-being of our people can be expressed.

Various areas of concern are covered in this issue of *transitions*, areas which pertain to the lives of indigenous people everywhere.

All articles demonstrate that indigenous young people give serious thought and consideration to the problems and issues that confront our people, and their views are well worth listening to.

The hard edge of interaction between white authority and indigenous young people is clearly portrayed in many of the articles, in particular, in those concerning Black Deaths in Custody, and the legal system.

The profile on Aboriginal writer Jackie Huggins is a fine example of the experiences and achievements of many Aboriginal/Islander individuals in their recording of the real history of our country.

The article on Clump Mountain Youth Wilderness Camp shows quite clearly

the importance of teaching our young people their own culture and values.

Other writers have put forward ideas and strategies for improvement in the areas of arts, education, health and cultural matters which could helpfully contribute to the general debate on these topics.

In Lafe Charlton's article he tells how, through teaching of the arts (incorporating Aboriginal cultural values) he witnessed the personal development of young people who as a result were able to obtain a much clearer direction to follow in life.

One of the subjects that is most important to Aboriginal and Islander people is Land Rights, and the article by Roy Tatten on this topic gives a good coverage of the current situation.

The older generation of Aboriginal people have always said that teaching our young people correct behaviour is vitally important. Just as important, however, is to ensure that our young people inherit a world in good order. In the words of Aboriginal poet Oodgeroo Noon-uckle (quoted in the first article by Joan Hendriks):

*To our Father's Fathers  
 The pain and sorrow,  
 To our Children's Children  
 The glad tomorrow.*

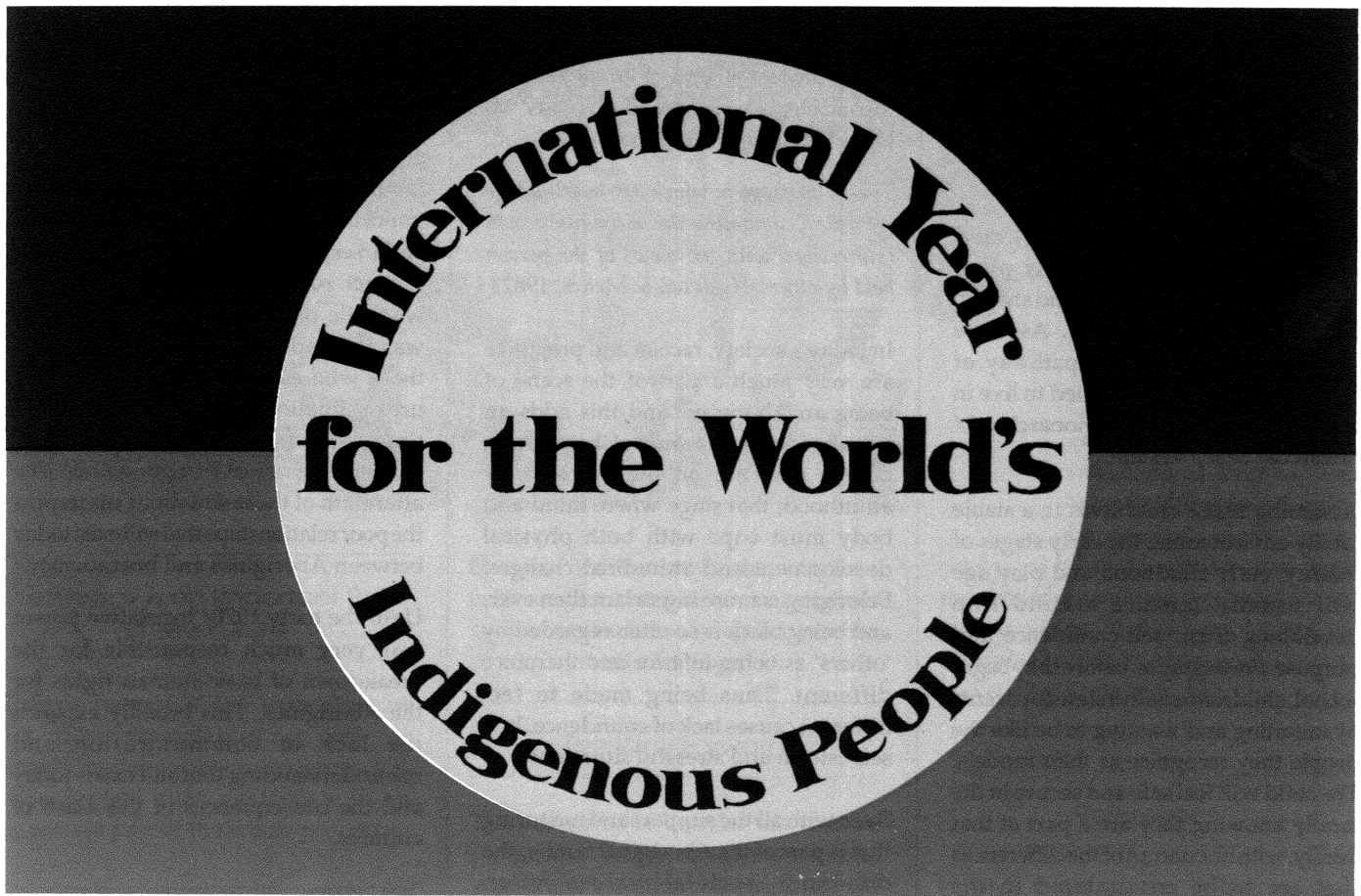
Mary Graham

Mary is Director of Mary Graham and Associates. She is a Consultant to federal and state governments and Aboriginal community organisations and is also a Freelance Editor. She is an Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet appointee to the Reconciliation Council, a member of the South East Queensland ATSIC Regional Council and until recently, a member of the Queensland Corrective Services Commission.

**At the 1992 YANQ Policy Forum issues concerning Aboriginal and Islander young people were voted by delegates as the highest priority for YANQ's attention in the following 12 months. This edition of *transitions* is part of YANQ's efforts to raise consciousness and debate.**

**It is important however, that Aboriginal and Islander issues are not confined to a "special" edition. The Editorial Committee would welcome the opportunity to publish articles on Aboriginal and Islander issues, particularly those from Aboriginal and Islander people, in all future journal editions.**

# Aboriginal Young People In The



Joan Hendriks

*1993 has been designated as International Year for the World's Indigenous People (IYWIP). With a focus on the Indigenous People of Australia we need to consider as individuals what each and every one of us can contribute towards making this particular year a successful, rewarding and memorable celebration for the Aborigines of Australia.*

When we focus on a particular group of people we automatically think about the culture of those people and how they differ from other groups. How many people are really interested in the culture of the Indigenes of Australia? Or more importantly - how many people want to learn about the history of Australia in the true sense, including the Black History of White Australia? The term 'learn' is used because until recently the black side of Australia's history was not even recognised. Hence the exclusion from the education system's syllabus, and the mind set of racism and discrimination against the Aborigines, that is alive and well in today's society in Australia.

The Aborigines of Australia have a culture that is now recognised as one of the oldest cultures in the world. How then does one justify the dispossession and dispersal of Aborigines as a natural part of the colonisation process? And today, further down the track, the legacy of loss of identity and many social problems that are so much a part of 'being Aboriginal'? This leads one to seriously think about what needs to be done to rectify such a situation. More importantly, when considering today's present situation, what does the future hold for Aboriginal people of Australia?

1993's International Year for the World's Indigenous People offers Australia the

opportunity to weather the storm that has clouded Australia's real history for the past two hundred years. The strength of this turmoil has remained because of the conditioned beliefs and value systems, of 'those' responsible for setting the scene for today's current issues and problems.

In facing the reality of this statement, cultural differences will need to be addressed to find a foundation that will be the support mechanism for our young people, our future leaders. And, just as importantly, the situation of being Aboriginal and having to live in two worlds also needs to be addressed.



## Childhood

With an understanding that the two factors that influence a person's value and belief system are family and environment, Erikson's theory of Psychosocial Stages is used to exemplify the path of an Aboriginal child who is required to live in two worlds.

Being Aboriginal means being born and nurtured into an extended family group with a value system of caring and sharing 'whatever' and 'whenever'. As these children travel down the pathway of childhood they are compelled to live in a dominant society with a monarchical/hierarchical based system.

Assuming that a child lives in a stable family environment, the early stages of infancy, early childhood and play age will usually nurture a child into developing trust, self-confidence and purpose. For example, before they begin school, children usually relate to parents by imitating and wanting to be like the people they recognise as their models. The child will feel safe and secure in the family knowing they are a part of that family, with no concept of the differences that are to be encountered in the environment that is waiting for them as they move into the field of education based on societal demands.

Somewhere along the way between the second or third year at school a non Aboriginal child manages to highlight cultural difference; and so the doubt of self starts to emerge within the mind of the Aboriginal child. Then comes the stage where that child has to learn about Australia and how the first settlers moved to this country in 1788. There is no mention of the stories already learnt in the family environment. Another blow to the ego. That safe environment at home led the Aboriginal child to believe that they lived here on this land for a long, long time; and now there is a different story being told. The child has been led to believe that the school is the answer to having a place in that other society that we must all live in. So what impact does the teaching of history beginning at 1770 really have on the child? This is often the onset of 'loss of identity'; and so confusion starts to worm its way into the child's mind.

## Adolescence

As the child continues along the pathway of life in the big world out there, the crisis of self opinion is really put to the test when a child moves into the adolescent stage of Identity vs Identity Confusion. In Erikson's opinion,

*This is the stage in which a firm self image is formed, combining the individual's own impressions with the views of the person held by others. (Gatchel & Mears, 1982)*

In today's society, racism and prejudice are very much a part of the scene of being an Aborigine; and this adds an extra burden on the mind of these young people who are on the precipice of adulthood; that stage where mind and body must cope with both physical development and attitudinal changes. Belonging is more important than ever; and being black is so often regarded by 'others' as being inferior and therefore different. Thus being made to feel different causes lack of confidence, low self esteem and stressful situations.

Even with all the support and nurturing that is part of the Aboriginal family, the dominant societal values often determine how and where Aboriginal young people fit in. Everybody needs support, but young people especially need to belong and feel accepted. The main concern then is where, or more importantly 'how', Aboriginal young people fit into dominant society. This vital stage almost always processes the making or breaking of identity.

## Parenting

At this point one needs to review the process and consider the situation with a more in-depth focus.

Dispossession and dispersal caused the Aboriginal society to experience different levels of cultural contact; thus fragmenting traditional Aboriginal lifestyle. As a result of this process the child will be supported by the parents in a manner that channels their own individual parental guidelines through the reflection of a belief and value system that has been founded on their life

experiences as a part of the dominant society's conditioning.

Policies such as protectionism and assimilation were the government's way of dealing with "the problem of Aborigines". For example, some parents were victims of the Reserve System that promoted authoritarian paternalism, and segregation of children from families. The family was of utmost importance in traditional society. Each and every member of the family had a distinct role to fill and without this wholistic process the family structure was incomplete. This also applied to those who escaped this way of life in urban situations. These people paid the dear price of isolation from the caring and sharing of just being together. The aftermath of these situations underpins the poor relationships that still exist today between Aborigines and bureaucracy.

Until the early 1970s legislative power was very much responsible for the breakdown of basic human rights for the Aborigines. This broadly explains the lack of communication and misunderstanding that still exists today and the consequences of this clash of cultures.

## Culture

Culture is constantly changing and is a process that can be experienced in varying degrees from developing acceptance to causing traumatisation, depending on the circumstances of the environment.

As Eckerman, Dowd, Martin, Nixon, Gray and Chong state, culture is here, there and everywhere:

*It is the sum or totality of man's learned or behavioural traits in an identifiable society ... that complex whole that includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, customs and any other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society ... a blueprint of all human behaviour ... [that] tells us what is pretty ... [or] what is ugly; what is right and what is wrong; ... [but] more importantly culture is living, breathing and changing - it is never static. (Eckerman et al, 1992)*

Culture is therefore responsible for the moulding of our beliefs, values and expectations.

Photograph: Michael Aird



### Yesterday is an Important Part of the Future

Today's harvest is the foundation of tomorrow; yesterday is not past - it underpins our current experiences. It is then logical that yesterday is an important part of the whole process.

Colonisation of yesterday meant for Aborigines the loss of identity. Until 1967 the Indigenous of Australia were not allowed citizenship in their own country. This meant for many the extinguishing of the warmth of the extended family society, the prevention of appropriate role modelling as the support mechanism for the younger generation and total degradation for many of the older members.

The hearts of many were broken but the spirit lived on; reacting but also having to interact in accordance with the cross cultural experiential conditioning that has set the mould of young people of today. As Lorna Lippman (1991) indicates:

*Many Aboriginal children live in worse conditions than those in Third World countries, their families a seemingly permanent underclass. Appalling living standards, homelessness, chronic unemployment and ill health are still the lot of large numbers, as are absence of clean water and sanitation.*

She also indicates that there is clear evidence that Aborigines, even in today's society are discriminated against in terms of employment and housing.

### The Way Forward

The International Year for the World's Indigenous People has come at a time when the Aborigines are on the threshold of recognition of land rights as a just and equitable means of identification of Aboriginality.

Yesterday has gone but the effects linger on, slowly but surely still being a destructive mechanism in today's society. The gift of understanding is free to each and every Australian and needs to be cross fertilised with care and concern and nurtured through the good and the bad of past beliefs and values.

Such a team effort would be a fine example of leadership towards developing a better future for tomorrow's leaders. Such kind words; thoughtfully spoken but harder to put into action, without pain, somewhere along the way; but "No pain, no gain". In salutation to the Aborigines of Australia, the words of the Aboriginal Poet Oodgeroo Noonuckle:

*To our Father's Fathers,  
The pain the sorrow  
To our Children's Children  
The glad tomorrow.*

If the International Year for the World's Indigenous People is to be a year of celebration for Indigenous young people, there needs to be an effort to show respect for the culture of the Indigenous of Australia; by listening to understand the issues and concerns within our society; and accepting the responsibility of supporting the Aborigines of Australia in their struggle for justice, through equity and equality.

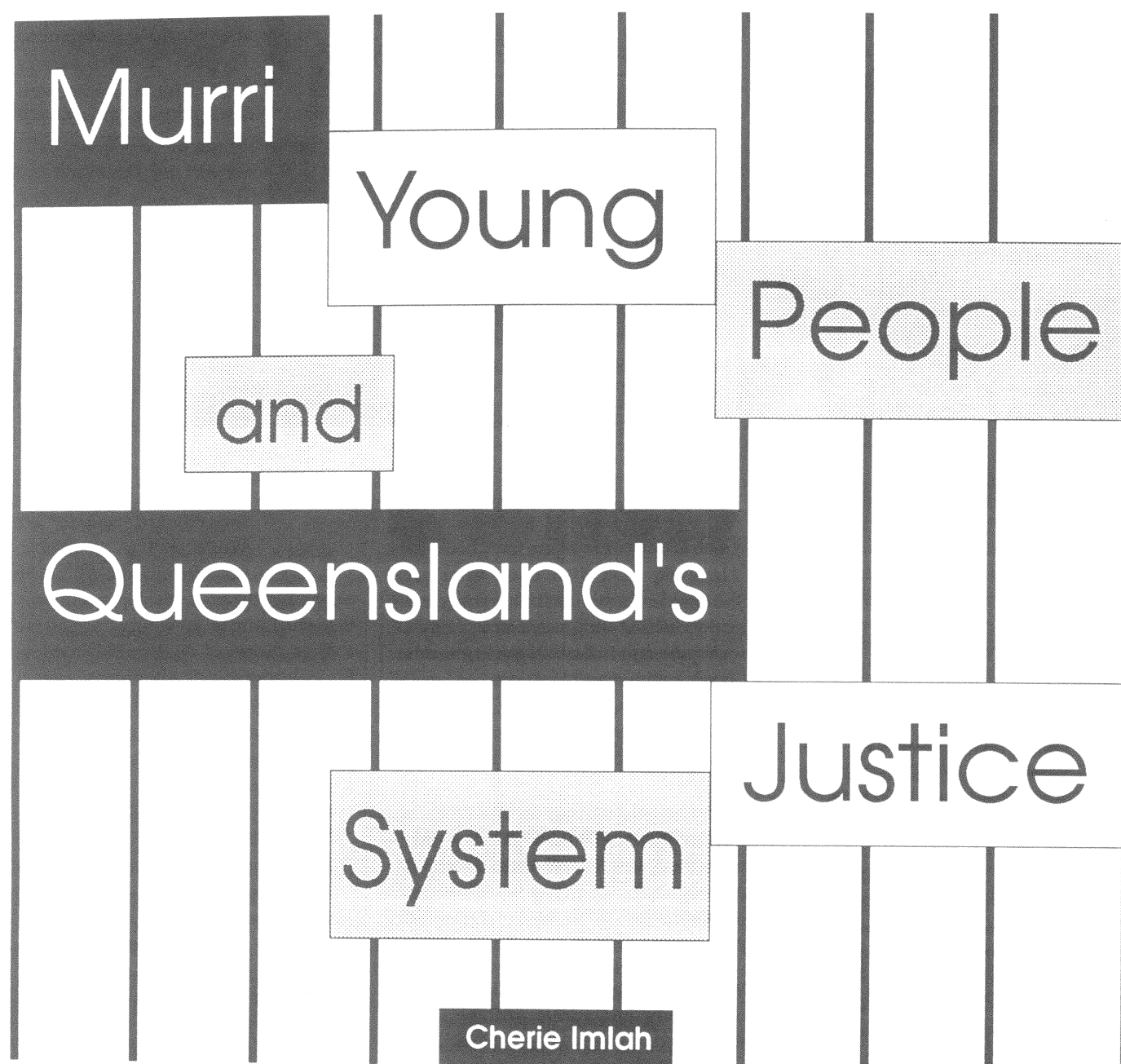
Only then will the celebration of 1993, the International Year for the World's Indigenous People, be recognised as being

celebrated by all Australians; and only then will Indigenous young people have a clear vision of their entitlement to future leadership as Aborigines, in a just and equitable manner. ☼

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Joan Hendriks is a Lecturer at the School of Aboriginal and Islander Studies at Kangaroo Point TAFE in Brisbane and has been an active member in the Aboriginal community for many years. She has a belief in and vision of justice for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through partnership on a basis of equity and equality.



## Introduction

It has been known for several decades that Aboriginal people have been over-represented in the Criminal Justice system. However, this knowledge has not served to reduce the incidence of incarceration of young Aboriginal people in Australia.

An Amnesty International Report released in February 1993 (Courier Mail) states that,

*"Aboriginal people are imprisoned at 27 times the rate of other Australians".*

The report refers to *"systematic practices which discriminate against Aboriginal people and lead to the detention or arrest of hundreds of people"*.

There has been an increase of Aboriginal juveniles (under 17 years) in Queensland detention centres. From a total of 357 Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander (ATSI) juveniles being incarcerated in 1987, the number has increased yearly to 385 in 1990.

While the increase may not appear alarming, at first sight, the percentage of ATSI male juveniles in child detention centres has increased from 30.8% to

46.7%. That is, almost half of the male inmates of detention centres are ATSI juveniles.

In the 1991 Prison Census for Queensland Corrective Services, young ATSI prisoners in the age group 17-24 years represented 26.55% of all prisoners in that age group. Significantly, this young age group of ATSI prisoners represented nearly half of all ATSI prisoners. This is compared to non-ATSI young prisoners 17-24 years of age who represent 32.25% of the total non-ATSI prison population. (Queensland Corrective Services Commission Annual Report 1990-1991).



The overwhelming majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners are identified as being Aboriginal. Torres Straits Islander adult male prisoners represent only 1.47% of total male prisoners and 1.79% of total ATSI male prisoners.

While the ATSI juvenile figures do not differentiate between Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander young people, it is likely that similar proportions apply. However, there is a proportion of ATSI young people who are of mixed Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander descent and it is not known how Family Services identifies them.

ATSI women represent 15.4% of the total female prison population, with 18% in the 17-25 age group. Torres Strait Islander women prisoners represent less than 1% of the total female prison population.

Since the major group of incarcerated young people is Aboriginal, this article will deal exclusively with this group in the following discussion.

### The Revolving Door and Aboriginal Deaths in Custody

There is strong anecdotal evidence to suggest that a large number of Aboriginal juvenile offenders progress into the adult prison system in what may be termed the 'revolving door' phenomenon. From the foregoing data and the writer's experience in the community and in a Townsville Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander Legal Service, this appears to be the case.

One thing is clear - too many of our young people are being incarcerated and are in life-threatening situations, as the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Report (1991) and the Human Rights Commission Report on Racist Violence (1991) confirm.

Eight of the 27 Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander deaths in custody in Queensland were young people under 23 years of age, including a girl of 14 years of age. (RCADC, 1991). There have been another nine deaths of ATSI young people out of a total of 33 Aboriginal deaths in custody since the end of the

Royal Commission of Inquiry in 1989 (Behrendt, 1992).

Three of these young people were 17 years of age and two of the three were imprisoned long distances from their communities and were placed in dangerously isolated situations, despite the early findings of the Royal Commission which pointed to the severe effects of such isolation on Aboriginal prisoners. In the case of David Barry, in order to visit him his relatives had to take a plane from Palm Island, a bus to Cairns and another bus to Mareeba,

involving several days travel each way and considerable financial cost.

### Arrest and Sentencing Practices

It may be said that incarceration is not a deterrent for Aboriginal young people and that this approach to offending fails to address the role of the criminal justice system in the process. Ian O'Connor's Report for the Royal Commission (1990) suggests that over-representation of Aboriginal young people in the system reflects sentencing practices which



Illustration by Leanne Roberts from "The Dark Side: Poems by Cherie Imlah"



The study by Gale et al (1990) also reveals that police discretion to arrest Aboriginal people is culturally and racially biased, and mobility of residence in the kinship structure, high visibility as a race and high unemployment are some of the factors leading to arrest.

In Mark Finnane's Report to the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (1990) he states:

*"The contribution of trial and sentencing practices to the levels of Aboriginal incarceration present perhaps the most intractable obstacles to reform or change."*

discriminate against them in Queensland. He states:

*"They are more likely to be dealt with harshly by the Court. This means that they move through the juvenile justice system into institutional care at an accelerated pace."*

A South Australian study by Gale, Bailey-Harris and Wundersitz (1990) confirms that Aboriginal young people are more likely than other young people to be sentenced to detention. Aboriginal young people are more likely to be arrested, rather than being served with a warrant, and are less likely than other young people to be referred to a Juvenile Aid panel instead of appearing in Court. Gale et al found that disadvantage for Aboriginal young people increases as they move deeper into the criminal justice system, being over-represented in detention some 23.4 times that of the non-Aboriginal population.

Finnane (1990) cites Hazlehurst (1987) as stating that Aboriginals are *"less likely than whites to be released early from prison on good behaviour, and more likely to have their prison term extended."*

### Police Violence

Chris Cunneen's Report for the National Inquiry into Racist Violence (1990) documents the treatment of Aboriginal young people in detention in Queensland and other States. His research found that 90% of Aboriginal juveniles had been assaulted by police, which included being hit with batons, telephone books and torches.

Added to this physical abuse, police have made suggestions or threats relating to hanging or suicide, such as

*"why don't you hang yourself, you black cunt", "keep going and we'll hang you", "rip the edge off a blanket if you want to hang yourself"* (Cunneen, 1990).

A recent allegation was made in Brisbane at an Aboriginal/Police Liaison meeting, concerning a young, incarcerated Murri being offered a sock with which to hang himself, and this is currently being investigated.

### Policing and Community Consultation

A large amount of funding arising out of RCADC recommendations has been allocated to the Police Service for cell modifications, police education and the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander police recruits. These initiatives largely ignore the urgent need for strategies to keep our people out of the criminal justice system as a first priority.

In numerous meetings of the Brisbane Aboriginal/Police Liaison Committee, community members have called for the employment of Murri Police Liaison people, to mediate between the community and the police. These requests have fallen on deaf ears, and community consultation is farcical when the Police Service fails to heed such advice.

Constantly, there are incidents involving young Murris and uninformed, aggressive police in Brisbane, in which community members with authority could intervene and reduce arrest rates and violent confrontation. Again, this process would need to be community controlled. Existing Aboriginal organisations are seriously under-resourced to provide this service.

The Police Service is implementing education of new recruits, as well as existing officers in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, and it is imperative that the history of colonisation and an understanding of cultural differences

*"Aboriginal young people are more likely to be arrested, rather than being served with a warrant, and are less likely than other young people to be referred to a Juvenile Aid panel instead of appearing in Court."*

be disseminated as a matter of urgency. Also, close monitoring of racism within the Service is required.

In particular, knowledge of Murri kinship and child rearing patterns, methods of dispute resolution and customary law are required. The relationship to land is integral to this understanding as, without the land, the social organisation and control which are sustained by sacred places and ceremonies in establishing authority are diminished or lost.

### Community Response: Picking Up the Pieces

Quite clearly, the justice system is oppressing and failing our Murri young people and communities are calling for greater control over juveniles passing through the system. The Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander Queensland Legislation Review Committee has requested control and ownership of laws, juvenile court structures, sentencing options and rehabilitation programmes. (Legislation Review Committee, 1991).

The new Queensland Juvenile Justice legislation includes the provision for Immediate Release Orders which allow Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander communities some control of reparative programmes. Also, there will be an extensive allocation of resources to implement the legislation.

The Act also allows for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders to be involved in cautioning Aboriginal juveniles. However, an authorised police officer has the discretion to decide whether or not an Elder is to be requested to administer a caution. This, clearly is a very limited approach to community involvement.

The Aurukun community is taking some responsibility for their young people who are coming before the Court, with elders taking them to outstations for instruction, arranging camping, and supervising work programmes (Carter, 1992).

Unless communities are given authority, as well as responsibility, time and

resources to work out their own methods of control, the system will continue to oppress Aboriginal people. The ownership of structures and decision-making by communities is vital if community authority and effective social control are to emerge.

Aboriginal communities throughout Australia are calling for similar measures, especially in view of the deteriorating situation of Aboriginal young people (as in the draconian juvenile legislation in Western Australia which treats young offenders more harshly than adults in the sentencing procedure).

Both the employment of Murris to deal with our young people, and adequate resources to facilitate programmes are also required to meet this situation. Organisations such as the Aboriginal Child Care Agency in Brisbane are under-resourced and find difficulty in meeting narrow, bureaucratic guidelines for funding.

Kenny Murphy who runs the Aboriginal and Islander Youth Program in Brisbane supports the concept of Elder control but believes that cultural strategies will take some time to develop to a point where young people are prepared to accept authority, since their family structures have broken down and old ways of maintaining authority diminished. He says: *"the only thing you can get out of them is respect"*.

Kenny takes his charges to his home ground of Stradbroke Island, camping

out and teaching them survival skills. Also he is endeavouring to get some back to school to complete their high school education. This programme suffers severely from financial restraints, and Kenny uses his own personal resources to give young people life skills experience.

Paddy Jerome (1992) who worked in Aboriginal alcoholic rehabilitation and has worked with Aboriginal young people in Brisbane, sees the need for a program *"designed to enhance the positive aspects of the Aboriginal person and culture"*. He sees a Murri youth subculture centred on alcohol developing as a status symbol and as a stereotypical norm. Paddy says that because there is a lack of identification with European-based society and the destruction of Aboriginal cultural values, Aboriginal young people are most vulnerable.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Care Agency has plans for an extensive youth complex in a rural area, and is anticipating a grant of land from the Queensland State Government. However, a local white community group is opposing this plan and a group of Aboriginal elders are currently negotiating with them. Paddy thinks it is vital that self-esteem and development of cultural pride be instilled through community members who can advise young people of their traditional roots, providing a knowledge base and understanding of cultural values.



Photograph courtesy of Dundali House Youth Shelter



## Community Loss

The RCADC Queensland Report (1991: 10-11) relates this process to land, describing a North Queensland community situation in which land has been excised from community control and encroached upon:

*"Young men have nowhere to go and nothing to do. They feel trapped. With the disappearance of most ceremonial life, there is a lack of formal relations with senior male kin and a consequent loss of authority by the latter over the young men."*

Aboriginal Commissioner Dodson (RCADC, 1991) suggests that the current juvenile justice process "represents nothing short of a further practice of 'taking the kids away'", in the destabilisation of family life and social cohesion which results. Even when children are not physically removed, the undermining of traditional patterns of authority has the same effect.

In Queensland, many Aboriginal children are being removed from their families and placed with non-Aboriginal families. At the 30 June 1990 44.6%, or nearly half, of Aboriginal Children under Care and Protection, were in the custody of non-Aboriginal families or in Hostels or Family Group homes. (Aboriginal and Islander Consultation Workshop, 1991)

The 1987 Census found that 50% of the ATSI population are under 21 years of age. This very large young population coupled with high early mortality rates for Aboriginal adults, who die 19 years earlier than the non-Aboriginal

Queenslanders, on average, (The Australian, 16/12/92) poses severe problems for Aboriginal communities in the availability of mature role models, authority of the Elders and general caregivers in the extended family relationships.

Because of this loss of mature people through endemic ill-health, especially Diabetes, Murri human resources are stretched to the limit to cope with community needs.

Unemployment is a major factor in the social disadvantage of Aboriginal families, with very few being employed in the private business sector. Adult males are not generally the main breadwinners and there is a lack of positive role models, except in governmental, identified, specialist positions or in Aboriginal community organisations.

At a time when, traditionally, young men would be under the strict control and regime of adult males, many are now dropping out of a largely culturally irrelevant, alienating education system. The traditional rite of passage into the adult world is no longer there in most Queensland communities, and the Anglo-Australian alternative to this, in the discipline and rules of entering regular employment, is denied to most Aboriginal young people.

This unstructured period of young adolescence provides a major dilemma for communities who do not have the resources to provide viable alternatives.

In this respect, money allocated as a result of RCADC recommendations is

not getting through to community level to the necessary extent. Almost a year has passed since the setting up of a Queensland State Aboriginal Secretariat was planned to implement funding of community initiatives. However, the proposed community-controlled structure is not yet in place.

## Conclusion

Much of the RCADC finances has been allocated to bureaucracies, but the myth of self-determination and self-management remain. It is becoming clear that RCADC recommendations cannot be met through bureaucratic procedures.

However, it is my belief that money alone will not solve the problem of over-representation of our young Murris in the justice system, and that the addressing of racism and ethno-centrism are the priorities for any reduction of oppression and incarceration of our people. In this year of Indigenous People, governments should be focussing on these destructive and divisive forces in Australian society. ☼

**Cherie Imlah is a descendent of the Bundjalung people of Baryulgil, Northern New South Wales and is a Lecturer in Justice Studies at the Queensland University of Technology. She has previously worked at the Aboriginal Legal Service in Townsville and has researched institutional racism in the justice system. Cherie has a continued interest in Aboriginal justice issues at a community level.**

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# Indigenous Australians Win Major Awards

## ***Mandawuy Yunupingu Recognised as Outstanding Ambassador for Aborigines***

***On Tuesday, 26 January 1993, Mandawuy Yunupingu, lead singer of the acclaimed Aboriginal pop group Yothu Yindi, was named Australian of the Year.***

Announcing the award, the Chairperson of the National Australia Day Council, Mr Phillip Adams, said Mr Yunupingu was widely recognised as an outstanding ambassador for Aborigines and their achievements. He said Mr Yunupingu and Yothu Yindi had put traditional music on the world map and Mr Yunupingu had made achievements far beyond his artistic field, being the first Arnhem Land Aborigine to graduate with a university degree in education and the first Aborigine to become a headmaster.

Accepting the award from the Prime Minister, Mr Keating, before an audience of 250 specially invited guests, Mr Yunupingu said he hoped it would add to the "chemistry" needed to bring black and white Australians together. "This award can only help towards building unity in Australia," Mr Yunupingu said. "That involves non-Aboriginal people accepting reality for what it is and Aboriginal people doing the same."

*(The Australian, 27/02/93)*

## ***Land Rights Campaigner named The Australian's 1992 Australian of the Year***

***A year and five days after his death Eddie Mabo was named "The Australian's" 1992 Australian of the Year.***

Eddie Mabo's ten year campaign to prove that his people owned their remote homelands in Torres Strait gave rise to one of the most important High Court rulings since Federation - a decision that the common law recognises a form of native title. It is the first time The Australian of the Year title has been conferred on a person posthumously.

"Above all," said Paul Kelly, Editor-in-Chief of *The Australian*, "Eddie Mabo and the court have insisted that Australians confront the basic issue of native title which arises from the manner of European settlement and which is a necessary and inevitable step towards a full reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians."

*(The Australian, 26/02/93)*

# Land Rights For Whom?

Roy Tatten

## Introduction

The subject of land rights has become an emotive issue with little or no emphasis on justice, legal rights or, in particular, morality. The original basis of settlement used the concept of Terra Nullius, which literally means "empty land", but in practice is taken to mean a land with no obvious legal system or settled society. The following paragraph was taken from a Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Aborigines (British Settlements) London, 1837:

*"Their land has been taken from them without the assertion of any other title than that of superior force ... they have an incontrovertible right to their own soil, a plain and sacred right, which seems not to have been understood."*

In contemporary Australia the land rights issue has been used with great effectiveness by vested interest groups who see Aboriginal claims as a threat to profits. Recently in Western Australia, mining companies spent millions of dollars in an advertising campaign to divide white and black Australians by creating a fear that Aborigines were going to claim the State.

The whole debate varies from state to state. The Northern Territory has a limited form of land rights which are guarded by the Aboriginal Land Councils. Queensland has years of conservative government and paternalism to overcome with Aborigines being under the infamous Queensland Aborigines and Torres Strait Islander Act (1972) which replaced the

Queensland Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act of 1897. The 1972 Act became known as "the Queensland Act" and gave the government control over the lives of Aborigines on reserves and missions. Governments enforced the policy of assimilation and were committed to forcing Aborigines to merge into the wider community with the subsequent loss of culture.

Commonwealth policy evolved differently and seemed to recognise the rights of Aboriginal and Islanders to preserve their culture, language, traditions and ceremonies. As with any government policy, however, it is only as effective as the people who administer it. A major problem in Aboriginal affairs has been the rise of "experts" who decline to consult with Aboriginal people about processes and issues.



Photograph: Michael Aird



### Announcement of New Legislation Brings False Hopes

In February 1991 the Premier of Queensland announced that there would be land rights legislation before the end of the year. He further announced that he didn't want to tell Aborigines what they wanted and that they were to come to him and tell him what was wanted. Immediately steps were taken by Aborigines to establish land councils and a Queensland Federation of Land Councils was formed. Land Councils are formed by groups of Aboriginal people getting together in their own area and electing a council to convey their wishes to a central body. Great hope was expressed that these land councils would bring a consensus view back to the Federation of Land Councils, which would in turn take these views

“A major problem in Aboriginal affairs has been the rise of “experts” who decline to consult with Aboriginal people about processes and issues.”

to the government as had been requested. Unfortunately these high hopes were not realised when it was announced that the legislation would be brought in before the end of 1991 with August as the first date mentioned. It became apparent that the government was aiming at an earlier date than this; which left little time for any consultation, let alone adequate consultation, with Aboriginal groups. On the contrary, Aboriginal people were mostly excluded from the consultation process and had to glean what information they could from the environmental groups who were fully briefed, as were the pastoralists and mining groups.

Aboriginal fears grew as the Premier announced that the mining and development groups would have little to fear from the new legislation which was being shaped in a secret section



Photograph: Michael Aird

created within the Premier's Department for that purpose. When the new legislation was passed in May 1991, three months after it had first been announced, Aboriginal people living in urban areas found that they had been ignored and that only people living in tribal situations had any hope of claiming land. Only Crown land could be claimed and it had to be gazetted as claimable before being available. National Parks could be claimed on the proviso that they were leased back to the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service immediately, as Uluru in the Northern Territory had been. There was no Land Acquisition Fund so that urban Aborigines could purchase land, as was the case in New South Wales. This had been urged by all Aboriginal groups in Queensland. Land Councils were considered undesirable in the eyes of the Government, and in fact, despite the rhetoric, Aboriginal aspirations were still controlled by government officials.

### The Situation Today

The situation as it stands today is that the wider population need have no fears for their suburban dwellings, as they are not claimable. In fact, there is very little land that is claimable apart from land on Cape York. A government bureaucracy still decides what land Aborigines may claim. The Mab case has been discussed ad nauseam, with mining interests again raising anxieties in the minds of the general public. The concept of Terra

Nullius was exploded when a group of people on the island of Mer were able to prove that continual occupation constituted Native Title in the High Court. While this has aroused interest it has yet to be proved that it will have any relevance for Aboriginal people on mainland Australia.

Aborigines in Queensland still have no real land rights and it would seem that there is little hope that people who were removed from their lands to suit early colonists will ever be able either to claim their lands or to be compensated for dispossession. It would be interesting to conjecture what compensation would be liable if Aboriginal people who know their ancestral lands were to be compensated for loss of land in the same way as people whose land is compulsorily resumed for roads, airports and other public utilities for which their houses and land are needed.

While it would seem that Terra Nullius is legally overruled, until Aboriginal people get some form of recognition of prior ownership of, and compensation for, the loss of their land, and while the government view remains as it did in 1788; the land is in effect neither occupied nor owned by its original inhabitants, the Aboriginal people. ★

Roy Tatten is a descendant of the Gungabulla Tribe of South West Queensland. He is the President of FAIRA, the Foundation for Aboriginal and Islander Research Action.

# Surviving the Future:



Photograph: Michael Aird

## Murri Young People, Culture and the Arts

Lafe Charlton

***Lafe Charlton has been a Youth Theatre Worker at CONTACT Youth Theatre in Brisbane for the past four years. Here he talks about the significance of youth arts in the future of Murri young people.***

*My ancestors are indigenous to the land and sea known as Minjiribarr, more commonly known as Stradbroke Island. Our family adopted the name Moreton (after Moreton Bay) around the turn of the century because it was no longer permitted to have native names or to speak the native language. I spent my childhood on Stradbroke Island and then, after moving from place to place in the big smoke, finally settled in Inala. My interest in the arts came at an early age, starting with the embarrassment of singing in front of my class in primary school, and then on to such heights as EXPO '88, and more recently a lead role in a feature film called "Jailbird's Run".*

### Cultural History

Ceremonial art has always played a significant role in Aboriginal culture and tradition. It was used to pass on beliefs, morality and codes of behaviour and was integral to the ordering of society. Tradition was based on having respect for the environment and living in harmony with it, unlike today's technological western world which tends

to have a hierarchical relationship to the environment. It was believed that a wholistic view all round should be part of a healthy culture and stories often used environmental metaphors.

### Youth Theatre in Australia

While the arts have played an integral role in Aboriginal society for many thousands of years, youth theatre in Australia is relatively new in relation to other countries, with its beginnings there around ten to fifteen years ago. From an early stage Europe recognised the benefits of youth arts and what influence it can play in the community and society in general. After the second World War three prominent European countries - England, France and Russia - established the World ASSITEI Congress to support people who worked with young people in theatre. ASSITEI is French for the International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People and encompasses youth theatre, theatre for young people and theatre in education.

Today, ASSITEI's membership comprises representatives from over 40 countries. Australia was well represented at the 1990 Congress held in Sweden and was unsuccessful in gaining the position of President by only one vote. From my discussions with other representatives at the Congress I believe Australia is considered an innovative leader in the ongoing development of youth arts.

### A Voice for Change

The arts have always provided an avenue for individuals and groups to voice their opinion in relation to their cultural and political beliefs. Theatre in particular is reaching out to a greater number of people and is being taken more seriously than it has in the past to inform and educate society. The power of theatre is slowly becoming more accessible throughout more venues, ranging from main stage to community theatre to street theatre, with an increase in numbers participating.

Youth theatre is finding its strength by providing young people with a greater

opportunity to empower themselves and develop their sense of identity in today's rapidly advancing society, that is, by providing them with a voice for change. It is becoming a significant platform for young people to express their needs, issues and beliefs, as did my brother and sister on the lawns of Canberra in the early seventies when they provided a voice for the Indigenous People of Australia.

Gradually too, the use of the arts as an effective tool to educate our young people is beginning to be recognised by more and more institutions. In particular, there is a demand for more arts related study units in the education system, evidence of which can be seen in

**"Youth theatre ... is becoming a significant platform for young people to express their needs, issues and beliefs ..."**

the increase of arts related courses available in tertiary institutions. Through my work with CONTACT I have been able to encourage increased black participation in youth arts and from the efforts of both myself and the Murri artist over the past four years we are beginning to see the initiatives of young black people to enrol in tertiary and arts institutions

around the country. This is providing a starting point for greater black involvement in the artistic evolution of this new country ... but old land.

### Finding a Clearer Direction in Life

Working in the Murri community over the last four years has been rewarding, to say the least. I have witnessed the personal development of quite a number of young people who now seem to have a much clearer direction to follow in life. This is not to say that they have chosen to pursue a career in the arts, but that they have more of a sense of what they would like to do and what roles they identify with.

"MoovinnoN", in particular, was a significant performance project, devised solely by a group of Murri young people working with CONTACT. Young Murri people were responsible for all aspects of the performance, from researching and writing the play, to acting, lighting and music. The show was a follow-on from our work in the regional areas of Queensland. The story behind "MoovinnoN" originally came from Woorabinda and is the true life story of Dulcie and Hubert Dooley. Members of the Murri Workshop Group travelled to Woorabinda to research what it was like for these people and countless others like them to be continually moved around from place to place by the authorities. Not only did Dulcie and Hubert experience "MoovinnoN" for



Photograph: CONTACT Youth Theatre



their entire lives but their children also went through similar things. They were pleased to share their story with us and all who saw the sole Murri performance at CONTACT in June 1992.

Travelling to Murri communities throughout the state has given me some insight into the effects a lack of cultural activities has on the young. In my dealings with the regional communities of Hope Vale, Yarrabah, Woorabinda and Cherbourg I became aware of many of the difficulties these communities face. The young people have to deal with the ever increasing influence of alcohol, violence, petrol sniffing and a money-driven society which are major contributors to the break down of the family. I believe one of the biggest factors, as in the cities, is the influence of the electronic media in the form of television and videos. The young Murris are heavily influenced by the white television programs and videos that paint totally unrealistic pictures for their situation. The violence, morality and values portrayed may be OK for white people in a white dominated society, but for young black people to take part in these aspects of mainstream society is impossible because of their upbringing by parents who have been subjected to and rejected by an ignorant system that has only consciously created confusion for the Aboriginal race.

The work I initially did in these communities was to create awareness and a realisation of what has happened to our people in the past and what effect this has ultimately had on them today.

Using the arts to work with young people we can provide them with some sort of picture for them to see where they can fit, and how they can work towards creating a better future for themselves and others.

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#### Combining the Old with the New

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I believe Aboriginal arts is now coming to the fore as a cultural influence on the developing culture of Australia, while being simultaneously influenced by mainstream art and its forms. The rich traditional Aboriginal ceremonies of Aboriginal society are beginning to

feature more prominently in contemporary Aboriginal art practices. An example of this is the work of *Bangarra*, a professional dance theatre company in Sydney, which combines old and new to create truly unique art. On a visual level there are artists such as Trevor Nickolls and Gordon Bennet who have also successfully integrated the old and the new.

There is a growing need to tell the truth about the history of this nation which has lived on a lie for the past two centuries, by telling the people of today the stories of the past that black people have had to hide for so long. As I mentioned earlier, the advent of confusion created by the dominant white culture caused fragmentation of black culture which in some cases was lost forever, and art was part of this destruction.

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#### Challenge for the Future

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I believe we need to rethink some of the Christian Anglo-centric ways which, in my opinion, show little respect for our history, which question and challenge everything that exists and which have been responsible for the gradual destruction of many animal species, cultures and races and gradually the planet. We need to re-examine our education system which continues to pump out an overflow of people and products which simply serve to uphold capitalist ways. The current system has remained unconquered for too long. Is

it not better to provide a society for future generations which will not constantly challenge people from the moment they enter life? I believe we need to provide a future environment for young people where compensation is made for the physical, emotional and environmental destruction caused by the capitalist system.

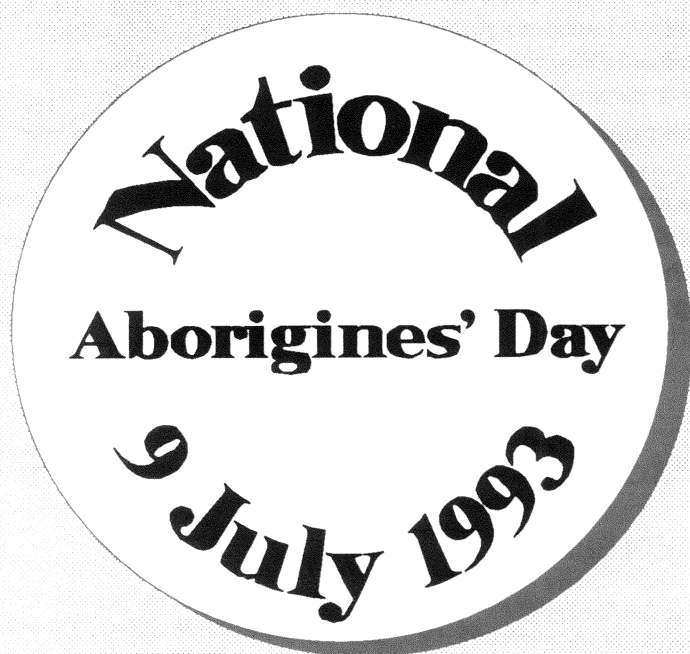
I believe the arts can have an important influence on the development of our Australian culture. The arts can be used to identify the change in society's attitude towards the value of culture and its evolution. I believe a more artistic and culturally conscious population would encourage a greater awareness amongst people to respect and exercise their own traditional laws and religious and cultural beliefs in day to day life. In this way I believe the arts can have a significant role to play in the development of our natural human instinct to protect, provide for, and respect our fellow human kind, our fellow brothers and sisters.

There is now a move amongst black people to retain and revive what is left of their culture, to recognise and develop its uniqueness. In the years to come we will see black culture used as a platform from which to address all basic human rights and social justice issues. In my view, Aboriginal art is progressing as it did in the time of the old people and we now have the opportunity to create something that can provide Aborigines with a status never before seen in this country. ★

## STOP PRESS

**ASSETEI has its first Australian President in over 40 years. At the 1993 ASSETEI Congress held in Cuba in March, Michael Fitzgerald was successfully elected as the President of ASSETEI, the International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People. Michael has been the Director of the COME OUT Adelaide youth festival for the past four years and now works full-time for ASSETEI.**



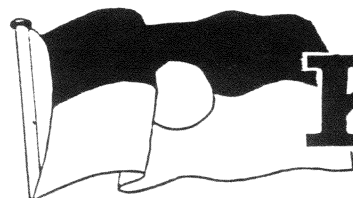


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**SORRY - WE  
WERE WRONG**

In *transitions* Vol. 2 No. 3 in the article Safe Sex for Young People under "Ways to Prevent STDs" (page 31) the second sentence reads "Consider having short term relationships ...". It should have read "Consider having long term relationships ...". We apologise for this error.

# Aboriginal Young People and White Law

*In 1992 the Bicentennial Youth Foundation (now the Australian Youth Foundation) called for tenders for the establishment of a national Youth Law Centre. The following article formed part of a submission to the BYF by a group which argued that, in addition to a "mainstream" Youth Law Centre, there should be established a centre examining legal issues affecting Aboriginal young people. The group comprised representatives of the Northern Territory University, Aboriginal Legal Services in the Northern Territory and Flinders University, South Australia. The author of this part of the submission was Martin Flynn, of the Law Faculty at the Northern Territory University, in consultation with various Aboriginal and legal organisations in the Northern Territory. The project was awarded to a Sydney-based tenderer but the AYF is working with the Northern Territory group on ways of implementing their proposal.*

## Aboriginal Young People and Crime

During the month of August 1988 an Aboriginal young person was 21.9 times more likely than a non-Aboriginal youth to be taken into police custody (RCIADIC [1]). It is a fact that Aboriginal young people are over-represented at every level of the criminal justice system:

*"they are charged with more serious offences; they have more charges laid against them; and they are more likely to have a history of prior appearances...than non-Aborigines". (Gale, Bailey-Harris & Wundersitz, 1990).*

The extent of the level of over-representation of Aboriginal young people in the criminal justice system means that the result of comparing absolute figures is particularly sobering:

- of the 450 young people in custody in NSW in April 1990, 20% (90 young people) were Aboriginal (RCIADIC [2]). Aboriginal people comprise 1.1% of the population of NSW (1986 census).
- of the 772 young people sentenced to imprisonment or detention in WA during 1989/90, 65% (500 young people) were Aboriginal (RCIADIC [3]). Aboriginal young people represent 4.1% of the population of WA (1986 census).
- of the 36 young people in custody in the NT on 31 March 1992, 72% (26 young people) were Aboriginal (Department of Correctional Services, 1992). Aboriginal people comprise 22.4% of the population of the NT (1986 census).

There are marked variations in the level of over-representation of Aboriginal young people in the criminal justice system among states. In August 1988 the level of over-representation in police custody varied between 7 times and 25 times in the respective States and Territories (RCIADIC [4]). There are even greater variations within regions in States. During the five year period July 1979 to June 1984 Aboriginal young people were over-represented by seventy-six

times at the point of arrest in the Yorke Peninsula region of SA compared to 4 times in the far North West regions of SA (Gale et al, 1990).

Why has this over-representation occurred? In examining the high levels of over-representation of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system, the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC) concluded that there were two explanations for this fact.

First, factors associated with the operation of the criminal justice system resulted in Aboriginal people having a greater chance than other people of coming into contact with the criminal justice system (RCIADIC [5]). These factors include problems resulting from alcohol abuse, policing techniques and policies that are inappropriate when dealing with Aboriginal people, the lack of funding available to Aboriginal people, the lack of funding available to Aboriginal Legal Services, the failure to initiate programs to target the prevention of particular offending, the limited range and use of sentencing options and the ignorance of Aboriginal culture displayed by the participants (police, court staff, lawyers, judicial officers, the media etc) in the criminal justice system.

Secondly, Aboriginal people have been deprived (by Government) of the political and economic power to control their own lives. This has led to disadvantage and inequality in such areas as health, housing and education and is directly linked to the large number of Aboriginal people in custody (RCIADIC [6]).

While the cause of the levels of overrepresentation may have been discussed, surprisingly, potential solutions have received very little analysis. Statistical information concerning Aboriginal young people in general is inadequate:

*"in most areas of Australia empirical data on the nature and frequency of offending by Aboriginal young people are non-existent" (Gale et al, 1990).*

There are considerable variations in juvenile justice philosophy between the various Australian jurisdictions (RCIADIC [7]). This fact is highlighted by the much publicised recent amendments to sentencing legislation in Western Australia contained in the "Crime (Serious and Repeat Offenders) Sentencing Act" 1992 (WA):

*"It is widely accepted that the majority of children caught in this new penal net will be Aboriginal. The Department of Community Services itself estimates that just over one half will be Aboriginal"* (Wilkie, 1992).

Approaches that offer a way forward for Aboriginal young people have received little, if any, attention at a national level. The RCIADIC could do little more than point out that systemic problems existed, list and evaluate the current approaches and point to potential areas for more work.

### Aboriginal Young People and Other Areas of Law

The experience of Aboriginal young people and the law is of course not limited to the criminal law. Other issues that require consideration include:

- The rights of Aboriginal young people in relation to issues of public policy that particularly affect young people: education, health and housing. There are two aspects to this issue. First, some Aboriginal young people, for cultural reasons, may resist mainstream policy in relation to some issues such as education. Is this a right? Secondly, the evident disadvantage (in areas such as health and housing) of many Aboriginal young people may or should result in heavy demand being made on behalf of Aboriginal young people for resources to meet their needs. Are there any legal remedies when just demands for equity are not answered?
- The need for reform of the law and promotion of public policy concerning Aboriginal families and communities that reflect and strengthen the importance of the Aboriginal family and community in Aboriginal culture. The Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) devoted five chapters of its report "The Recognition of Aboriginal Customary Law" (1986) to this issue. A review of the progress on the implementation of the recommendations is

needed. The RCIADIC commented:

*"Of particular concern for Aboriginal youth is the relationship they have with their family and community. The strengthening of this key relationship knits into the thesis of empowerment which is referred to throughout this report."* (RCIADIC [8]).

- Other issues include the interaction of the law and alcohol and substance abuse policy, employment issues, land rights, adoption, and issues arising from proposals for a form of reconciliation.

### Recognition of Aboriginal Cultures

The significant underlying cause of the level of over-representation of Aboriginal young people in the criminal justice system is the attempt to undermine and supplant Aboriginal culture that has been a characteristic of government policy until relatively recent times. One of the many consequences of this fact is that some Aboriginal young people are not subject to any effective cultural and social controls.

*"The Aboriginality - the essential feature with all its historical and cultural connotations - of these (Aboriginal) children and their families is overlooked. Yet they are expected to benefit equally from programs designed for non-Aborigines and naturally bear the blame when they fail to do so."* (Wilkie, 1992b).

Furthermore, Aboriginal people are best placed to formulate, implement and campaign for goals, policies and programs that bear on the legal rights of Aboriginal young people. Aboriginal people are best placed to develop solutions that deal with the underlying causes of the problems facing Aboriginal young people. This point was emphasised by the RCIADIC:

*"Aboriginal organisations and communities will have a central role to play in the construction and implementation of appropriate strategies to deal with Aboriginal juvenile offending."* (RCIADIC [9]).

The involvement of Aboriginal people in decision-making addresses one of the underlying causes of overrepresentation in the criminal justice system: a lack of power.

*"Non-Aboriginal people must face the fact*

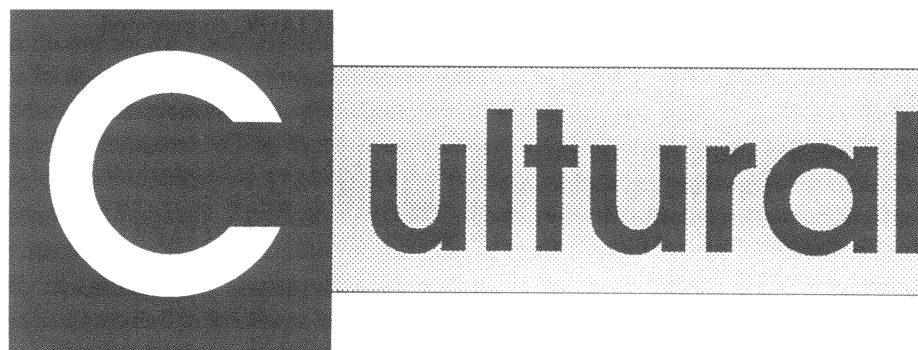


*that for a very long time we have proceeded on the basis that Aboriginal people were inferior, were unable to make decisions affecting themselves, that we knew what was best for them ... This is true both for public officials and for private persons. It is an attitude which is very deeply resented by Aboriginal people, as would indeed, be by us if the roles were reversed ... it is important that non-Aboriginal people not try and impose on Aboriginal people their non-Aboriginal ideas of what is good, wise or moral but to let Aboriginal people feel their own way ... the whole thrust of this report is directed towards empowerment of Aboriginal society on the basis of their deeply held desire, their demonstrated capacity, (and) their democratic right to exercise, according to circumstances, maximum control over their own lives and that of their communities."* (RCIADIC [10]). ★

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- RCIADIC [4] Vol.2 p. 258.
- RCIADIC [5] Vol.1 p. 13.
- RCIADIC [6] Vol.1 p. 15.
- RCIADIC [7] Vol.2 p. 251.
- RCIADIC [8] Vol.4 p. 165.
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Paddy Jerome



# Cultural

## Introduction

There are hidden factors within Australian history which could be the underlying causes to all major social problems affecting Aborigines in today's society.

Some of the problems reflect the overall responses of the dominant society's attitude and could be endemic with race relations in this country. Many of the problems have their basis in areas which could be termed psycho-social and could be the causes why Aborigines are "committed to a self fulfilling prophecy" leading to racial extinction.

It is a statistical reality that Aborigines are the most incarcerated race on earth and 96% of these are because of alcohol related offences. There are other areas besides criminal statistics where this link can be established as well. For instance, it has been assessed that 80% of Aborigines die before reaching the age of 50 years - most deaths are alcohol related. The number of Aboriginal children in the care of Family Services is an impressive 47% - all from alcohol affected Aboriginal families.

All the issues mentioned could be labelled as normal issues which reflect "normal" Aboriginal behaviour, but this is not so. Traditional Aborigines would consider this behaviour utterly intolerable, in fact it did not exist in any form at all.

All the issues discussed so far could be termed as learned behaviour induced by pressures from society and could be linked to factors relevant to the historic aspects culminating in the destruction

of Aboriginal culture and the loss of positive social identity. It is with a sense of reality that I state that alcohol plays a major role in this scenario and could be labelled as the cause of the problem ... but is it?

The term alcoholism reflects a person who is psychologically and physically addicted to the drug alcohol and because of this addiction, is deemed unable to fully function in a positive way in society. When this type of stigma is tied into the very social image of a race, this aspect takes on a new dimension.

It is a well known fact that many Aborigines have internalised this social role model and by doing so, are conforming to the expectations of society.

Aboriginal young people are the most vulnerable within this new sub-culture which is evolving in contemporary society.

Because of the lack of identification with European based society, a system of conforming to the established norm has been established. This "norm" is developing into the catalyst for a sub-culture which has its value base centred on alcohol. This is made possible by the destruction of Aboriginal cultural values and by the need to feel the psychological need of belonging (identity).

What is needed, and needed urgently, is a program based on nativism, a program designed to enhance the positive aspects of the Aboriginal person and culture. By doing this the Aboriginal will develop a sense of pride and positive direction, a program adopted before by other races who were also undergoing traumatic changes in their culture.

## Social Alienation

To begin, perhaps I will address some of the misconceptions that are held by the majority of white Australians in their dealings and their acceptance of my people, both personally and socially. I will bring to light the factors and influences of socialisation - how antecedent stress factors influence the present generation in their ability to cope, and how this coping mechanism manifests itself.

It is a fact that Aborigines today tend to conform to a role that is neither beneficial to themselves as a means of self-motivating, nor one that may lend strength or encouragement to people outside the race. There seems to be a high degree of apathy in my people, and a lack of personal identity as well.

In most cases, the psychological need for self-esteem is not met, and the results are expressed in negative behaviour patterns such as alcoholism and violence which I could term as a projection of self-hatred. This has been so dramatically highlighted in the recent murder trial of Elwyn Peter.

In putting forth my theory, I would have to first enlighten the reader on the basics of my people's culture values as they were prior to white subjugation and the loss that has resulted from this action.

## Aboriginal Society

With traditional Aboriginal culture, land is the generation point of existence; it is a living place, made up of sky, clouds,



# A Alcoholism

rivers, trees, the wind, the sand, and the spirits that live within them, all interacting with humans in a dynamic interaction of spirituality to combine all into a oneness with each other.

The limitations of the land were clear to us; it is the area of our existence, from where we derive our existence. This is all clear to me and to those of my people who have not given in to the tribulations of a materialistic culture, a culture that has decimated many of my people in the past. Land provides for all my physical needs and all my spiritual needs - the land and I am one.

## Associated Traumas Involved

People living in a relatively stable society will find it difficult to understand what the destruction of a society involves - its effect on the individual and the community reaches future generations of the victims. Traumatic loss, disorientation, helplessness and hopelessness are followed by the humiliating dependence on the destroyer of that society.

Unless people really understand or could empathise with people who have suffered the traumas involved, it is unlikely they would be sensitive to them.

## Aboriginal Family Dynamics

During my early years, my socialisation was conducted entirely by my Grandparents, who themselves were traditionally Aboriginal orientated and adhered to the customs and values that have been maintained for perhaps fifty thousand years in this country.

Within traditional Aboriginal families, the interactive system of personal relationships and cohesion is very highly developed indeed. It is maintained in such a way to instil into its members a very close spiritual awareness to each other and the environment. This spiritual awareness extends far beyond the family of orientation into what we call "Totemic brothers and sisters", that is, people who belong to the totemic symbols or spiritual kinship of any animal or object in the environment.

Within the nuclear family, this cohesion is so intense that it may cause confusion for a casual observer who may not be aware of the dynamics of Aboriginal families or the tribal hierarchy systems of roles. The confusion may be generated by what may be termed conflicting role plays within the family structure - who is the natural mother, or father, uncle or aunt and who is a natural brother or sister, cousin or any other genetic relative for that matter? This closely knit relationship constitutes a very high degree of support and interpersonal co-operation.

This Aboriginal family dynamic does not apply to most urban Aboriginal families today. This breakdown is the basic ingredient in social alienation and non-acceptance and personal stresses that are involved with the associated traumas.

## Personal Communication

By including this section in the paper, I will endeavour to clarify a few points on how feelings are relayed by personal communication of traditional Aboriginal people. This system had been our

fundamental method of communication for thousands of generations, and leaves no doubt in the listener's mind what is being expressed to the group or individual.

With traditional Aboriginal people, communication is a dynamic thing, consisting of speaking, acting out and expressing all the emotions involved, be it aggression, joy, or any other feeling that may be involved in the discussion, the result being that there is no doubt in the listener's mind what is being said - it is felt as well as heard.

This is the environment I was socialised in, and due to the method used by my older relatives I could say that I could relate feelings going back to the "Dreamtime", if necessary. But for the benefit of this paper, I will only keep to the feelings of social alienation, and how these feelings are relayed from my antecedents and apply them to my own feelings today. In this way, I will be able to co-ordinate all these emotions and apply them to the way my personality is constructed and lend some sort of working relationship to my client's problems.

## The Beginning of Alienation

For the benefit of this article, I will go back 150 years to the middle of the last century. The onset of social alienation, as could apply in this situation, began then with the initial contact with Europeans, in my case, with my Great Grandfather.

The initial contact was made at Warra Station, on the Darling Downs in Queensland. At the time, my Great Grandfather was about 12 years of age.

Together with about thirty other members of the tribe, he was camped at a lagoon that is now known as Warra Station.

It was late afternoon on a cloudy summer's day when the attack took place. Everything was peaceful, the old men were sitting in a group discussing matters that involved the tribe, women and children were performing communal duties and young men, including my Great-Grandfather, were discussing hunting areas that were to be foraged the following day.

The event was very vivid in the old man's mind. I won't describe the carnage that took place that day, but I could feel all the emotions he did.

At the time of these descriptions by my Great-Grandfather, I was only a small

child, but I absorbed all the emotions and feeling that were displayed and have identified them and consolidated them into my own experiences of life, on the battle fields in Korea, and, as a result of this, I feel I am in perfect empathy with the old man that day.

### Shock Reaction

Imagine for a moment an invasion of super-scientific aliens on a peaceful community who were completely unaware of their existence. Imagine a sudden eruption of thunder and lightening emanating from a huge four-legged animal, the likes of which have never been seen before.

Imagine the terror and confusion that developed when these strange monsters

erupted from the surrounding bush. Imagine the effect on people whose very cultural laws and values were based on spirituality and could only explain this phenomenon as malevolent spirits wreaking vengeance. Imagine the awe, terror and panic that followed, that resulted in shock to my Grandfather and resulted in cultural repression for my race. I know this action was repeated by settlers and troopers Australia-wide in the past.

### Clinical Picture of Shock

Shock in people may show a wide range of symptoms depending on the nature and severity of the terrifying experience; stunned, dazed, and apathetic, and a feeling of unreality; this was not happening, this was beyond the learnings. Terror took over and he ran, but was ridden down by troopers and knocked unconscious.

With my Grandfather, I was able to identify not only shock during the massacre, but other symptoms as well. There was denial, this was not happening, this was unreal, it could not be; this was when he seemed to be stunned, dazed, and apathetic. Then anger took over and he ran, they could not do this to him, he'll get away from here, from the stress this situation was bringing him.

### Retreat Reaction

Simple retreat is a primary type of task-orientated reaction to stress. However, although retreat may be an effective task-orientated reaction, the fear that may accompany it could lead to other negative types of reactions. In coping with stress, a person is confronted with two problems:

- (1) To meet the requirements of the adjustment demand, and
- (2) To protect the self from psychological damage and disorganisation.

In the case of my Grandfather, he did not understand what was happening. By recalling the old man's actions and empathising with them, I could identify several emotional responses associated

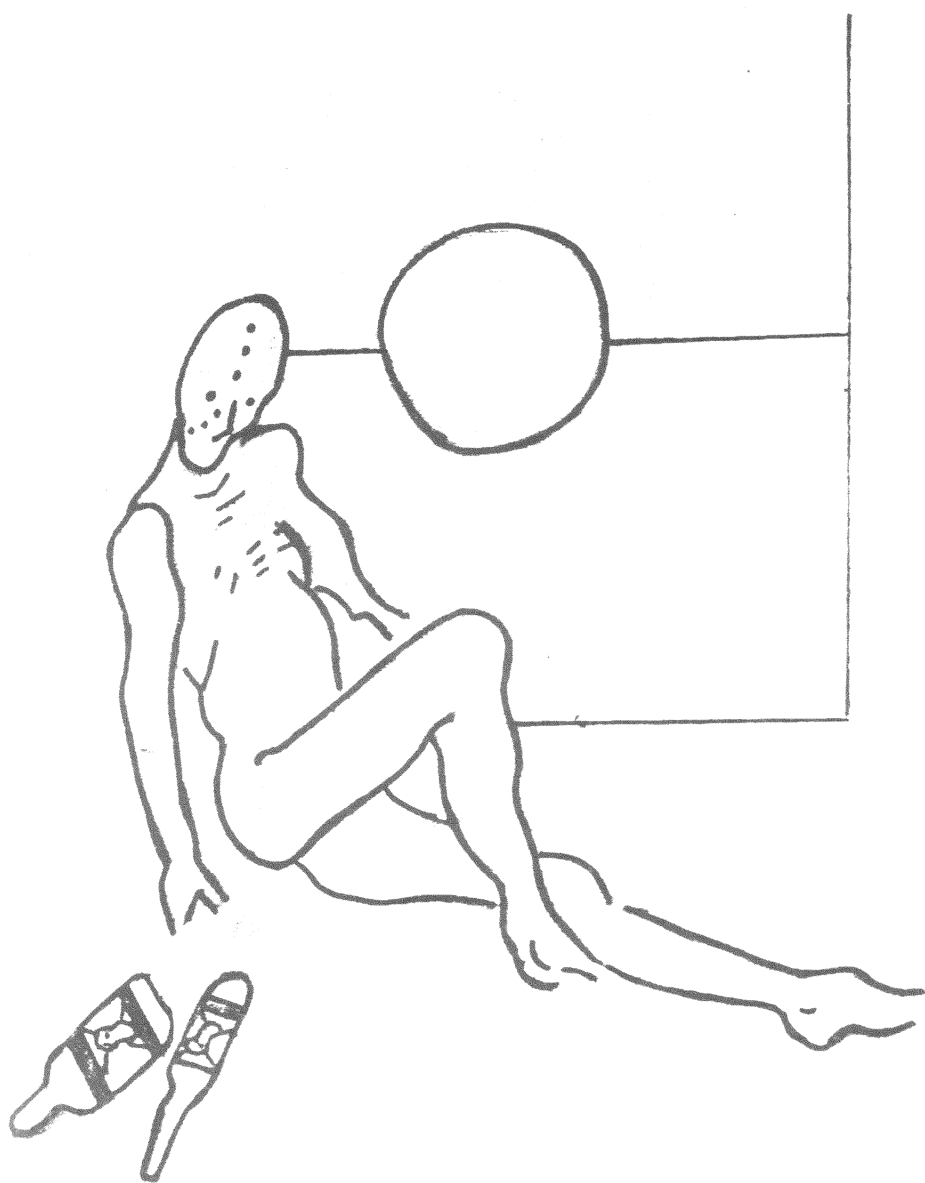


Illustration by Leanne Roberts from "The Dark Side: Poems by Cherie Imlah"

with fear. These responses consist of facial and vocal expressions, posture and gestures, and, even today, these relayed emotions instigate a very high degree of stress within my personality, as it most certainly did in him.

In the case of the old man, the fear was not generated by primarily the physical dangers involved but by the fact that his spiritual awareness with the environment was developed to such a degree as to identify these happenings as a part of this spirituality. He was helpless to what he should do in this situation and, as a result, he internalised all the emotions involved which resulted in him becoming "cowed".

After he recovered consciousness, he became passive and suggestible and willing to take directions. After the initial trauma caused by the attack and resulting massacre, my Grandfather was subjected to further atrocities and was flogged and force marched to a compound that was set up at Taroom about seventy miles away and was forced to remain there with what remained of his tribe and that is where the isolation took place and the resulting loss of identity.

The stresses experienced by Grandfather during this period were enormous and adjustment was extremely hard. This was instigated by the loss of immediate family groups and the disruption of the tribal system. His feelings varied, ranging from fear through to hopelessness and despair.

This was the beginning of social alienation for my Great Grandfather and ultimately myself and other Aborigines today. As previously stated, this action has been duplicated many times in the past in this country.

After the initial contact, my people were subjected to laws and Government policies that left no doubt as to its eventual aims: complete destruction of our identity and culture. This statement could be substantiated by laws and regulations going back to 1887, when the Aborigines Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act was passed. This act was passed by the Colonial Parliament of Queensland and it empowered the Government to forcibly move Aborigines into reserves and keep

them there. This Act supported segregation of the Aboriginal population and legalised paternal control over their lives.

It was generally believed at the time that Aborigines were a "dying race" and so needed "Christianising" and providing with comforts of shelter, food and clothing until they died out.

The restrictive provisions of this legislation manifest in a severe way the "protectionist framework" that is the basis of all influences affecting myself and my people today.

The legislation mentioned also reinforced prejudice in other areas as well, and this prejudice is basic to our lack of social identity and feelings of self-worth in relation to European Australians, which is negative in the extreme.

### Education

The education system, we know, concentrates tremendous power in the hands of those who control it and direct it. The present system indicates a massive failure on the part of the various educational authorities to provide learning situations which are meaningful to Aborigines. To my way of thinking, it could only reinforce the feelings of social alienation.

Until very recently, the main reason for the lack of formal education among Aborigines, was the absence of schools in the areas where they lived, or the fact that only a few grades of primary education were available often from the hands of untrained teachers which is the case on many reserves. Today, especially in the north of this State, or where schools are available, family poverty prevents the child's attendance. This is a simple explanation of why a large number of Aborigines are illiterate today.

Schools are seen as yet another white institution, controlled and dominated by whites, to 'educate' children to live in a white society, a society that reflects them as not being socially equal by expects them to conform. Usually



Aboriginal children are expected to be slotted in to what has been ordained and their or their parents' wishes and differences have been ignored.

This feeling of difference and distance has been compounded by the curriculum and text employed in schools, which will accept 1788 as the date of the founding of Australia, and will not pay tribute to the Aboriginal contribution. Australian history, strictly from the white side, presents Aboriginal culture (if it is dealt with at all) with an emphasis on its so-called quaintness and non-utility in comparison with European culture values. This deals a devastating blow on a child's feelings of self-identification and self-worth.

The Aboriginal child, whether from a traditional or urban area, is acutely aware of the difference of lifestyle, history and culture between himself and his white classmates and usually suffers stress in the process and will conform to the "Role of the Aborigine" to combat the stress.

### Racial Discrimination

I can't speak from a white perspective - only how it appears to me.

I believe that the seeds of the average white Australian attitude to Aborigines were planted in those very early years of which I have written. The "average Australian" attitude today is hard for me to define, but to me it is just that - "an attitude", often unrecognised, generally disowned by the holder, but nevertheless there, dormant but smouldering until an issue arises, then it becomes racism of

the most blatant and undisguised sort, for instance, when an Aboriginal house or Hostel is to be built in a suburb where none previously existed.

“... the Aborigine feels under constant threat and the stresses generated by this account for the huge proportion of alcoholism, low life expectancy and abnormal behaviour by many of my people in modern days ...”

It appears to me to be an attitude of resentment because the Aborigines refuse to go away, to disappear or die out. I think it is a guilt complex causing stress, and projections and rationalisations stem from previous attitudes of white antecedents as mine is from my black ones. For instance, it is very easy to find shameful quotes in the pages of white history in relation to how we were perceived by them.

Racial discrimination is part and parcel of whites dealing with Aborigines, both at an individual and an institutional level. But the disturbing thing is, we have been institutionalised to believe them ourselves.

To a great extent these self attitudes, as well as the attitude of the dominant culture in this country, are educated into us. For instance,

*When the white men first came to Australia, there were a great number of blacks in the land. The white man soon found that he could not trust the blacks, who made sudden attacks on settlers in lonely places. Today, however, there are few blacks left, and those who are remaining, are dying out rapidly.* (Whitcombe, 1948)

The above quotation is an example of a particularly insidious type of racism, a sort of subtle brain-washing. “White men” are contrasted, not with “Black

men”, but with “blacks”. Immediately a relationship of superiority/inferiority is set up in the child’s mind, both black and white. The blacks cannot be “trusted”, obviously because they are treacherous, they are also cunning and sneaky, because their attacks are “sudden”. They are cowardly because they attack in “lonely places”, but, anyway, why worry, they are “dying out rapidly”.

Racial prejudice, often engendered parentally from both sides, undoubtedly exists in many schools which have a significant intake of Aborigines. But in the main, the poor opinion of Aborigines held by some white parents is passed on to their children, either consciously or unconsciously, and school text-books, particularly Australian history and social studies, tend to reinforce this opinion.

So, all in its real perspective, the Aborigine feels under constant threat and the stresses generated by this account for the huge proportion of alcoholism, low life expectancy and abnormal behaviour by many of my people in modern days, together with poor health, caused by the methods I have mentioned.

My opinions are that Aboriginals are not genetically more predisposed to illness, to mental breakdowns or alcoholism than Europeans, but to me, the huge area of ill-health and poverty that is the Aborigines’ lot in this society stem from social alienation and feelings of low self-worth, instigated by the processes described.

### Conclusion

Easing the situation that exists (social alienation) and the problems that stem from it, will have several facets, but basically it will be structured towards changing attitudes, both of the Aborigines and the European. By doing this, the relationships should improve and by doing so bridge the huge communication gap that exists.

To begin with, culture classes for Aboriginals need to be established. This is to bring back to my people a pride of identity that is almost lost in the

traditional sense.

Within present Aboriginal culture there is a spectrum of sub-cultures. It ranges from the culture of those less affected by contact with white society, through groups living on reserves and missions, to communities living in the country towns and cities. It needs to be recognised that these last communities have a sub-culture of their own. They have authentic roots in the past, relayed by methods described earlier in this paper, and have evolved through decades of clashes with white invaders. These sub-cultures were instigated by reactions of stress brought about by being excluded from their lands and through being exploited over this period of time.

Indeed, such sub-cultures should be respected as proper and essential means of coping with a hostile environment. In the absence of such recognition and respect, negative images of Aborigines, current in the dominant society, can and do produce and perpetuate a negative self-image among all Aborigines, stifling pride in their race and culture.

The broad range of sub-cultures must not be allowed to obscure the reality of an Aboriginal identity.

With a re-established identity, the loss of self esteem and psycho-social traumas from the past can be supplanted with an enhanced life-style and the cycle of poverty and alcohol can be broken. ★

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**Paddy Jerome is the Program Coordinator of the Aboriginal and Islander Alcoholic Rehabilitation Services in Brisbane which he co-founded in 1976. Paddy is an Aboriginal Elder of the Warra Tribe, a sub-tribe of the Waka Waka Tribe of South East Queensland.**



## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## TO THE EDITOR

The November 1992 'Young People and Health' edition of your journal was (as usual) excellent. However, one article, "Safe Sex for Young People", contained some irresponsible advice.

The writer purports that one option for preventing STD's is "... to establish that you and your partner are HIV free (have tests) and then have a one-to-one relationship. The reliability of this option would be dependent upon the development of honest communication and trust. To put forth that condoms be used for all sexual encounters by everyone suggests that people are incapable of assessing the levels of honesty and trust within their relationship. It needs to be recognised that many people have both the right and ability to do this." (p31)

As workers with young people we should not be advocating that a one-to-one relationship is a reason to abandon condoms (and other practices for avoiding genital to genital contact and transmission of bodily fluids). A one-to-one relationship is the best time to establish and explore safer sex habits, making it more likely that young people will go into new relationships with confidence, familiarity and techniques of safer sex practices.

Many young people, particularly young men, have not developed "honest communication and trust" and while some young people may be capable "of assessing the levels of honesty and trust", many more may not. Research has shown that,

"... Another difficulty with using monogamy as a safe sex strategy is that the views of males and females may differ. A study of Australian students showed that 95% of females thought that they and their partners should be monogamous in regular relationships ... but somewhat fewer males (78%) believed they would be monogamous in a regular relationship (Rosenthal et al, 1989). These gender-based differences increase the risks for women who rely upon monogamy to protect them ... Further, one-third of the men studied admitted to having lied to their partner in order to have sex with her (Cochran)". (Gallois, Statham & Smith, 1992: p42).

Furthermore, young people have their own definition of what is a long-term, monogamous relationship. "A regular partner is seen to be one with whom one has an exclusive relationship for as little as three months" (Crawford, Turtle & Kippax, 1990).

While the writer may understand a one-to-one, long term 'regular' relationship to be monogamy that lasts years, many young people see it as serial monogamy with a change of partners after a relatively short time. In the words of one young woman "We shared needles because he was my boyfriend and has been for a week". In the education of young people it is vital that we identify their meanings.

Finally, there are STD's such as chlamydia which often show no symptoms and herpes which may not be detected in tests. It is not impossible that new STD's may arise (as AIDS did) which we are not yet able to detect.

If a high number of young people used condoms, it may be feasible to advise that young people who are in monogamous relationships, who have waited the window period and have been cleared for all STD's, don't need to use condoms (unless they wish to avoid the health risks of other forms of contraception). However, as the rate of use of condoms is very low (around 20%) it is extremely irresponsible to be giving young people any excuse to put themselves at risk.

While I support the promotion of monogamy to young people (for its emotional safety) I am disappointed to see a representative of the Family Planning Association ignoring the very real hazards for young people depending solely on monogamy to avoid STD's.

Daele Healy

Don't  
Delay!

HAVE  
YOUR  
SAY!

SEND IN  
YOUR  
ARTICLES  
AND  
LETTERS TO  
THE EDITOR  
TODAY

ALL  
CONTRIBUTIONS  
ARE  
WELCOME

Forward  
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PO Box 116  
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Qld 4006

**The Royal Commission**

**into Aboriginal**

**Deaths in Custody**

**An Overview**

Coralie Ober

*The following paper is a brief overview of the inquiries conducted by the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, its reports and the recommendations made.*

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The Royal Commission

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The Royal Commission was established in 1987 among growing concern about the large numbers of Aboriginal deaths in custody. In that year there were a

total of twenty deaths, nine being from Queensland. Deaths occurring since 1 January 1980 were made subject to inquiries. When first announced, there were 44 known deaths since that date and Jim Muirhead was appointed as Commissioner. It was a joint Royal

Commission and letters Patent were issued by both the Commonwealth and the States to him.

Deaths in custody data was not (and still is not) collected centrally by State Governments. Once inquiries started, it was discovered that the number of deaths was much greater than first thought. In 1988 additional Commissioners were appointed. Lew Wyvill QC was appointed to conduct inquiries in Queensland. A cut off date was set and deaths after May 1989 would not be the subject of inquiries. In the end, 99 deaths were investigated, 27 (or nearly a third) of which occurred in Queensland.

### Terms of Reference and Reporting

The Terms of Reference required that the Royal Commission look at three things. Firstly, Commissioners were to inquire and report on the circumstances of each death. Secondly, there was inquiry into the investigations that followed each death - police investigations and coronial inquiries. Thirdly, there was to be inquiry into the *"social, cultural and legal factors bearing on the deaths - also referred to as the underlying issues"*.

The Terms of Reference therefore required reports to be published on a number of things.

In the first instance, there were reports published continuously during the life of the Commission on each of the 99 deaths. These contained a personal profile of each of the deceased, details of how they died, and an examination of the Coronial Inquiries that followed the deaths. They also identified those underlying issues which may explain why the death occurred.

The Interim Report of the Royal Commission was presented to Governments in December 1988. This is generally referred to as the Muirhead Report.

The Interim Report was largely concerned with matters of arrest, detention, custodial health and safety and post-death inquiries. The purpose of the Report was to improve practices

and procedures to limit future custodial deaths. All the recommendations that were made in the Interim Report have been refined.

Each of the Commissioners also wrote a Regional Report which was, if you like, a summary of all the individual case reports. These Regional Reports contained no recommendations.

The Final Report of the Commission, prepared by the National Commissioner, Elliott Johnson, in consultation with the other commissioners, was presented to Governments in April 1991. It was tabled in the Queensland Parliament in October 1991 and it is the Report which we are concerned with.

It is a very detailed study, consisting of

### The Structure of the Report

The five volume National Report is divided into a number of parts:

**Part A The Deaths Investigated by the Royal Commission**

**Part B The Disproportionate Number of Aboriginal People in Custody**

**Part C The Underlying Issues which Explain the Disproportionate Number of Aboriginal People in Custody**

**Part D Reducing the Numbers in Custody**

**Part E Reducing the Risks of Death in Custody**

**Part F The Underlying Issues: Directions for Change**

**Part G Towards Reconciliation**

**Part H Appendices to the Report, Terms of Reference, rulings made, methodology adopted and sources of information.**

about 2,300 pages and 339 recommendations impinging upon the responsibilities of both State and Commonwealth Government Departments. There was a detailed research program and consultative process embarked upon. For example, officers were seconded from the Australian Institute of Criminology at the start to form a Criminology Research Unit which, with the co-operation of police services around the country, did the first ever National Police Custody Survey.

Aboriginal Issues Units were established in each State to ensure that the studies were complemented by Aboriginal perceptions of the issues.

I make these points to emphasise that there is much that can be learnt by Departments by having such an up-to-date and detailed policy analysis.

### Recommendations

Recommendations appear through the text of the Report, though similar topics may be dealt with in different chapters. For example, there are chapters in Part C that examine the education and juvenile justice systems as underlying issues which explain the disproportionate number of Aboriginal people in custody. In Part F there are chapters titled "Education for the Future" and "Breaking the Cycle: Aboriginal; Youth and the Juvenile Justice System" that examine how policies may be changed.

### What the Commission Found

(1) Deaths were not the product of deliberate violence and brutality by police or prison officers. There was however, little appreciation of the duty of care owed to people in custody. There were problems with systems of care operating in watch houses and prisons, failure to exercise proper care, and a poor standard of care.

(2) It was shown that deficiencies in the care of detainees were not improved upon. Authorities did not learn from earlier deaths and so they continued. It was quite clear that the Royal Commission would not have been necessary - or

at least the Terms of Reference different - if there had been adequate and independent investigations into the deaths in the first instance.

(3) Aboriginal people in custody did not die at a greater rate than non-Aboriginal people in custody. What is overwhelmingly different is the rate at which Aboriginal people come into custody. This includes both prison and police and juvenile detention centre custodies.

(5) There are two levels at which the problems of disproportionate numbers of Aboriginal people in custody can be tackled. The first is in reforms in the operation of the criminal justice system itself - diversion from custody. Reforms in matters such as arrests, bail, non-custodial corrections, community service orders and the like.

It was found, however, that the more fundamental causes are not to be found in the criminal justice system itself but in those factors that bring Aboriginal people into conflict with the system - underlying issues. These include such matters as health, housing, education and employment.

### Themes that Emerged from the Report and Recommendations

There are a number of themes that emerge from the Report that may assist in understanding what has been found and considering means of implementation.

### Emphasis on the Positive

An important point is that the Report seeks to emphasise examples of Aboriginal Affairs policy initiatives that work. The Report is not harshly critical of actions by Government but rather documents innovation and applauds it. A variety of Queensland Corrective Services Commission policies, and community policing initiatives in the Queensland Police Service are praised in the text. The Report highlights some community models and initiatives across Australia that have proven successful and urges Government to learn from

them by examining them. They include:

- teacher training programs at Batchelor College in the Northern Territory (rec 294).
- the Community Justice project in Echuca in Victoria (rec 220).
- a Public and Environmental Health Review of the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands 1987 in South Australia (rec 76)

### Policy Evaluation

In addition to the highlighting of community programs and models that have shown to be successful, there are a number of recommendations that call for reviews of operation of various laws, and the monitoring and evaluation of others.

### Composition of the Aboriginal Population

There are two points to make here:

- Firstly, the Aboriginal population is growing at a rate much faster than the non-Aboriginal population. The population is much younger and increasing numbers of young Aboriginal people are coming into conflict with the law. I have referred to the extent of the disproportion of the number of Aboriginal children in juvenile detention centres. There is a sense of urgency in the Report in the discussions of Aboriginal children.
- Secondly, the greater proportion of the Aboriginal population lives in rural and remote areas which underlies the importance of the regionalisation of Government Departments, especially where services are delivered to Aboriginal people.

### Local Resolution of Issues

The report acknowledges that Australian Governments have over time tried to find or make organisations that could speak for all Aboriginal people. The attempts have failed and the Report states that negotiation at a local level is

more fruitful.

It is acknowledged that problems in policing and issues of custodial health and safety can best be resolved at a local level by negotiation between Aboriginal organisations and police.

### Aboriginal Organisations

This leads to another theme - that of the importance and success of Aboriginal organisations in fostering negotiations and dialogue with Government and the community. Organisations that have the resources, back-up, expertise and are recognised as speaking on behalf of Aboriginal people should be supported.

### Applications to Non-Aboriginal People

Not all the recommendations are directed specifically to Aboriginal people and this was so intended. About 130 of the 339 are applicable to non-Aboriginal people. These relate to matters such as:

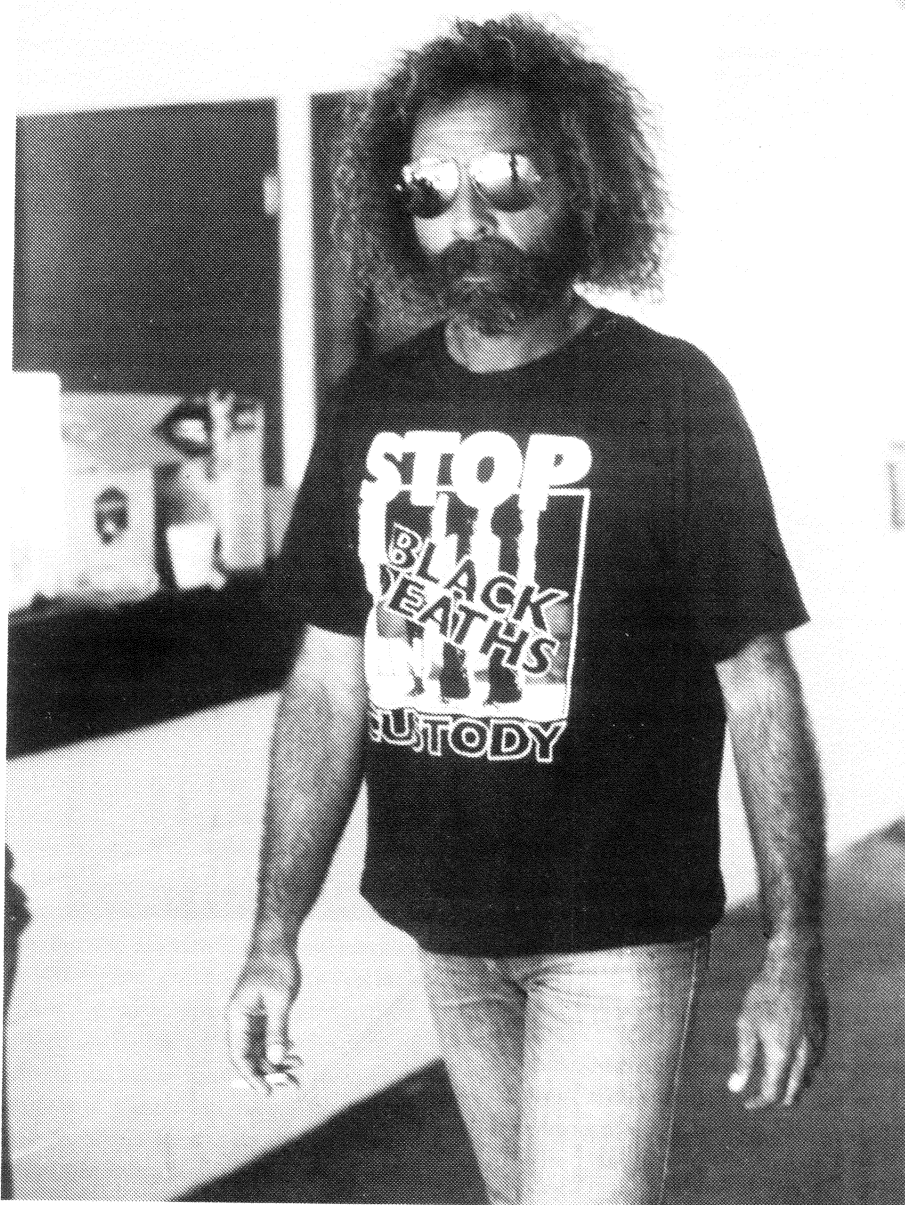
- prison conditions and services
- custodial health and safety (rec 36)
- liquor laws and policing (rec 8)
- non-custodial corrections (rec 14)
- diversion from police custody-arrest and bail (rec 8)
- statistical information on the composition of custodial populations (rec 7)
- reform of the Coroners Act and the conduct of Police investigations (rec 31)

### Inter-relationship of Issues and Coordination

Issues overlap throughout the text and the recommendations. This makes the report a little more difficult to consider from the perspective of Government and Departmental responsibility. It does, however, highlight the necessity for there to be a greater emphasis on policy co-ordination and on the monitoring and reviewing of programs and policies.



Photograph: Michael Aird



### Education of Non-Aboriginal People

There are a number of recommendations that call for appropriate training of non-Aboriginal people who may come into contact with Aboriginal people. These include prison officers (rec 177), prison medical staff, teachers, police officers, and judicial officers and court service officers (rec 96).

It is not proposed that people be trained "to be amateur anthropologists" (to use the language of the report) but that they be trained in cross-cultural communication and sensitivity and something of the history and circumstances of local Aboriginal people and the history of race relations in the area. There was

overwhelming support for this principle expressed by police and prison officers, and organisations such as the Australian Medical Association.

### Recruiting Aboriginal People

The chapters on education (rec 297), prisons (recs 174, 178), police relations (rec 229) and health all contain recommendations on recruiting Aboriginal people in Departments.

The involvement of Aboriginal people should not be restricted to employment in these positions but should also occur in policy development. Recommendation 225 calls for the establishment of an Aboriginal policy and development unit within the Queensland Police Service.

### Youth Strategy

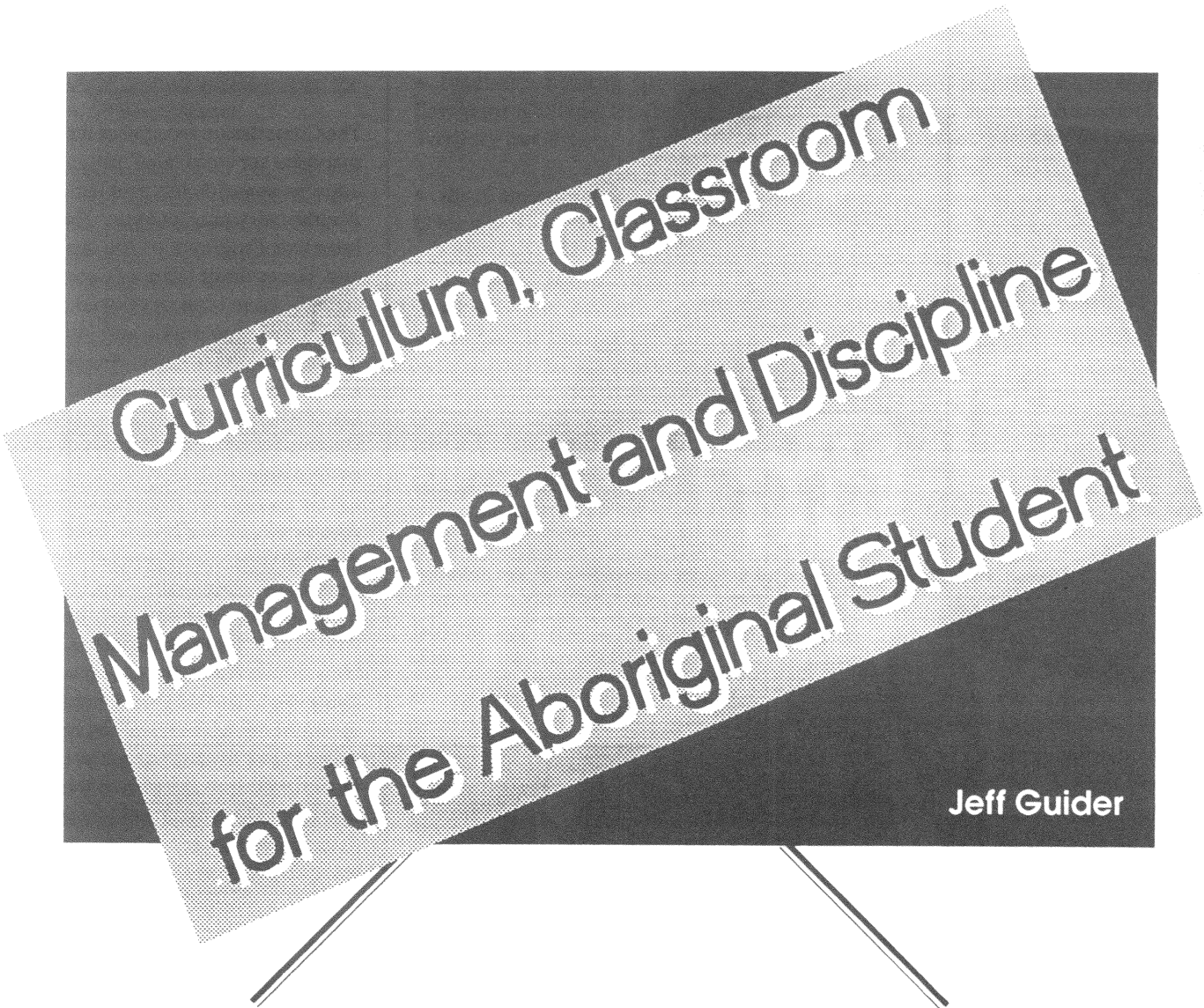
The Commission recognises the need to provide services and programs to address some of the problems facing Aboriginal young people. The Youth Initiative Programs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) have been developed to assist communities to devise and implement youth action plans, ensuring equitable access for males and linked to the Community Development Employment Program or other community development plans.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations have supported our young people by providing employment placements whenever possible. Aboriginal Youth Bail Hostels in both New South Wales and Queensland are being established to provide a culturally appropriate environment as a way of support at a traumatic time in the lives of our young people when they come into conflict with the law.

### Conclusion

The Royal Commission has certainly raised the consciousness of the community to the plight of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Unfortunately, like so many other issues, death had to occur before the voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people could be heard. ☸

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# Curriculum, Classroom Management and Discipline for the Aboriginal Student

Jeff Guider

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## Introduction

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In 1982 the Director-General of Education, Mr D Swan, stated that Aboriginal education should enhance the development and learning of Aboriginal students to have some knowledge, understanding and appreciation of Aborigines and their cultural heritage (Aboriginal Education Unit, 1982).

Unfortunately, Aboriginal students today still do not enjoy compatible success and participation rates to those of non-Aboriginal students. They are predominantly taught irrelevant curriculums and faced with inappropriate teacher classroom management and discipline styles. Consequently, many Aboriginal students view schools as alien and hostile places. Schools do

not meet Aboriginal students' needs, and problems of low self-esteem, motivation, academic achievement and a sense of safety and belonging often occur. Aboriginal students often do not behave in the same manner as non-Aboriginal students and teachers should be aware of the purposes of Aboriginal students' behaviour and of the family and cultural influences which shape Aboriginals' feelings, attitudes and values. There is a need in our schools for the inclusion of more Aboriginal perspective in curriculums and for teachers to become aware of the need to change the way they teach and interact with Aboriginal students.

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## Aims of the Education System

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The aims of education in Australia have been closely aligned to Australia's

political ideology since compulsory education began. For much of this time schools have been assimilation agencies for a relatively pro-British mono-culture reflecting the complete control people of Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Celtic origins have had on Australian politics. The culture and education of the indigenous Aboriginals was virtually ignored or treated in a typical British imperialistic manner. The history of Aboriginal education in NSW is characterised by cultural imperialism, assimilation and exclusion (Hill, 1989).

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## Aboriginal People in the Education System

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To assist in equality of opportunity for Aboriginal people, initiatives have been made to improve the access and quality of education for Aboriginals. Yet, despite

improvements in educational facilities, most Aboriginals find themselves in mainstream classrooms where methodology and organisation follow a white Australian tradition (Bamblett, 1985). Aboriginal students' needs are still not being met in our schools (DEET, 1988) and low levels of achievement and low retention rates are a cause of great concern (House of Representatives Select Committee on Aboriginal Education, 1985).

Many Australian Aboriginals have the same aspirations for their children at school as do most other non-Aboriginal parents. They share concern for their children to acquire basic skills and want their children's education to provide access to jobs and the skills for living in the modern world (Muir, 1983). Aboriginal parents, like many other of Australia's ethnically diverse parents, want recognition and valuing of their unique culture so that their children will feel confident about themselves and their Aboriginal heritage. Herein lies the main reason why Aboriginal education is failing Aboriginal people. Schools generally do not have programs which enhance self-esteem and cultural identity for Aboriginal children. There is a lack of Aboriginal perspective in curriculum design and a lack of understanding of Aboriginal behaviour. This can lead to a conflict of values between Aboriginals and schools and adversely affect Aboriginal students' motivation, self-concept, achievement and general participation at school.

### Student Motivation

Motivation is a key determinant of school success. Research into the educational attainment of Aboriginal students, particularly in secondary schools, suggests high attrition and low academic attainment is caused by low levels of motivation (Hill, 1989; McConnachie, 1982; Lovegrove, 1986). Aboriginal children are often not motivated towards school because their basic psychological needs are not being met at school. Children's basic needs include a sense of belonging, affection, independence, social recognition, self-esteem and achievement. Lefrancois (1988), when describing Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of

basic and meta-needs, states that, "... higher level needs will be attended to only after lower level needs are satisfied". Watts (1974) in a detailed paper on personality factors in school achievement writes,

*"If youngsters are miserable, unloved and insecure it is nonsensical to expect them to be interested in things intellectual in the classroom".* He adds, *"It does not matter how bright we are: if we are not interested in succeeding in something, we will not succeed because we just will not put any effort into it".*

We cannot expect Aboriginal children to have the energy or drive towards a higher level need such as school taught knowledge if their basic needs aren't being met. If we showed our Aboriginal children more often that they and their culture are valued, then many of our motivation problems should disappear.

### White Values, White Practices

What is happening in our schools is that Aboriginal children are often being presented with a set of values and practices which are in direct opposition to their intrinsic values, feelings and attitudes. Aboriginal homes and communities strongly reflect Aboriginal cultures, values and lifestyles. When a school doesn't consider these differences in curriculum design, or when children cannot find much at school which relates to their cultural background, learning is impeded (DEET, 1988). Skills and characteristics that are highly valued in Aboriginal homes often become irrelevant at school because of the way classrooms are organised (Malin, 1990). This rejection of Aboriginal children's sense of being can leave them alienated or hostile and threatens their psychological safety, sense of belonging, self-esteem and cognitive development in the classroom.

The child functions in the classroom as a total person, bringing with them all the results of their learnings and experiences which have shaped their emotional, physical and intellectual being: their self-identification and their influential friends, their concept of themselves and their level of adjustment, their motives, values and aspirations,

their attitudes to and perceptions of school, learning and the world about them, their health and nutritional status and their sensory functioning, their level of cognitive functioning, their preferred ways of knowing and learning and their competence in language usage (Watts, 1974).

An Aboriginal child growing up under the influence of attitudes, values and beliefs in Aboriginal society will have quite different life experiences to those of a non-Aboriginal child. It is these life experiences that shape the Aboriginal child's social and cognitive behaviour at school and help them to decide whether or not school appears meaningful, relevant or attractive. In short, there are a number of innate characteristics that many Aboriginal students possess due to encouragement they receive during childhood.

### Aboriginal Values, Aboriginal Practices

In a study of why schooling is difficult for urban Aboriginals Malin (1990) reports that Aboriginal families encourage their children to develop qualities of autonomy and affiliation. Aboriginal children's autonomy is encouraged through the child's:

- self reliance;
- ability to regulate his or her own behaviour;
- seeking help and attention from peers as much as from adults;
- approaching new tasks cautiously to avoid making mistakes;
- being emotionally and physically resilient.

The intimate, interpersonal childhood that many Aboriginal children have develops in them a strong need of family and belonging. This affiliation with others is encouraged through:

- keeping an eye on those around them and knowing where everyone is;
- helping others;
- trusting that peers can be relied upon to help if need be.

(Malin, 1990)



In teaching Aboriginal children, teachers must be aware of the nature and purpose of the Aboriginal child's classroom behaviour. Watts (1974) writes, *"The Aboriginal youngsters in New South Wales' country schools are affiliation-orientated rather than achievement orientated"*.

If this were true of the majority of Aboriginal children in all classrooms in Australia, then it would indicate that the Aboriginal student's needs are more social and emotional than cognitive. Aboriginal children may see little future in a classroom that forces compliance to a code of behaviour that they can neither understand or follow. It is important that teachers possess a knowledge of characteristic Aboriginal student behaviour so as not to mistake behaviour, the purpose of which is to meet the children's needs, for disruptive and disobedient behaviour.

Malin (1990) also details some characteristic Aboriginal students' behaviours which teachers should be aware of. Malin groups what he sees as autonomous Aboriginal student behaviours, under the heading of self-regulation and self-reliance. A few of the behaviours he lists could be viewed by some teachers as threats to their authority in the classroom. What is essential for teachers to learn is that, *"... Aboriginal families' constraints on and tolerance levels of behaviour differ from those of the school"* (Bamblett, 1985). Too often teachers ignore the fact that children have individual differences in intelligence, ability, behaviour and preferred ways of learning. Malin's list of Aboriginal student autonomy components is:

#### Self-Regulation

- Doing things in one's own time.
- Not always obeying directives first time round.
- Wanting to size up a situation before plunging in.
- Not having to demonstrate contrition at being disobedient.
- Using questioning in an indirect, unobtrusive manner.

#### Self-Reliance

- Being assertive verbally: expressing one's needs and wants as declaratives and directives.
- Being physically assertive: in obtaining what one desires, or is entitled to.
- Possessing particular competencies including: 1) acute observation skills; 2) the ability and tendency to orient within a wide geographic area; 3) practical dexterity and experience; and 4) ingenuity, astuteness and initiative.

#### Classroom Management

The classroom management techniques of many teachers must change if the teaching of Aboriginal children is to become more effective than the levels of Aboriginal student success currently indicate it is. As Watts (1974) states:

*With each child one must ask, "What makes this person tick, what are his basic needs?" When this has been ascertained, teaching strategies can be decided and teaching methods devised that will rouse that motive and that will help the youngster to learn in the classroom."*

In summation, many Aboriginal children at school today should be viewed as children who are self-reliant, self-regulating and affiliation orientated, who have a sense of worth and belonging towards Aboriginal culture, who possess many qualities which are not fully utilised and encouraged, and most importantly, children whose basic needs of affection, belonging, recognition and self-esteem are not being fully met in our schools.

#### Acknowledging Differences

The effective teachers of Aboriginal children are those that understand the individual child's needs and appreciate and acknowledge that which makes the child, the child's family and culture. There are teachers that have high expectations of the child and those who don't make judgements about Aboriginal children's performance and

ability based on the present success rates for Aboriginal children in schools. The effective teacher acknowledges that schools are failing Aboriginals, not vice versa, and decides to do something to improve the Aboriginal child's chances of success at school. The effective teacher ensures that the Aboriginal child gets to enjoy strong social, emotional, physical and cognitive growth.

Teachers need to adopt more appropriate strategies so that teaching and learning is effective and enjoyable in classrooms with Aboriginal children. To bring about desirable outcomes for students, teachers need to consider the type of classroom management they use and their style of discipline. Just as there are differences in individual students, there are also a variety of classroom approaches to management and discipline that teachers use. The important point becomes marrying up the teacher's methods of teaching and discipline and the students' styles of learning and behaviour. What type of teaching approach is the most effective in meeting the needs of Aboriginal students?

#### Characteristics of Effective Teaching

In her investigations of effective teachers of Indian and Eskimo students Judith Kleinfeld (1972) proposed that teachers could be labelled under four distinct titles which described their approaches to teaching: traditionalists, sophisticates, sentimentalists and warm demanders. Warm demanders are also known as supportive gadflies. Teachers were placed into each group on the basis of two main criteria, namely the degree of demandingness a teacher insists upon and secondly, the personal warmth or professional distance a teacher adopts in interacting with the students. Honeyman (1986) summarises the characteristics of the types and their significance to Aboriginal students as follows:

#### Traditionalists

- concentrate exclusively on academic subject matter;



- consider interpersonal dimension of classroom as an illegitimate concern;
- prefer highly structured lecture type lessons maintaining professional distance;
- tend to ignore non-academic students;
- often seen as hostile by students.

### *Sophisticates*

- highly educated, well travelled;
- employ humour often tending towards irony;
- intellectually fascinated by culturally different students;
- often confuse unsophisticated students by fast-paced repartees and use of irony;
- tend to focus on cultural differences from a professional distance and thus reinforce minority students' sense of being different and estranged;
- act according to stereotypic description of ethnic minorities;
- exempt minority students from standards of behaviour and academic performance applicable to others;
- view deviant behaviour as an expression of culture.

### *Sentimentalists*

- warm kindly people;
- find it difficult to make demands of any students;
- react with aggrieved anger at defiance;
- show apparent favouritism to minority group children resulting in anger and resentment from mainstream students;
- require little learning.

### *Warm Demanders*

- tend to be successful with all students;
- spend time to establish positive interpersonal relationships between teacher and student, and student and student;

- become demanding only after rapport established;
- concerned with what students learn;
- avoid minor forms of direct criticism;
- structure classes largely to cater for students' personal needs;
- strive to increase minority students' status in class.

In a study of teacher effectiveness with adolescent Aboriginals in Brisbane, Fanshawe (1983), using Kleinfeld's system of classification, stated that there was ... *strong evidence that ... the warm and friendly supportive and sentimentalist approaches are considerably more effective than the cold, distant and aloof traditionalist and sophisticate approaches.*

Support of the need for teachers to establish a warm and understanding rapport with Aboriginal students also comes from Honeyman (1986) when he states:

*Teachers concerned with helping Aboriginal students can appraise their approaches according to this typology (Kleinfeld's) and seek to modify their professional behaviour to approximate as closely as possible the warm demander (p36).*

Eckermann (1988) in proposing a set of strategies for teaching Aboriginal students also follows a warm demanding approach. She sees effective teachers of Aboriginal students as being demanding, warm and supportive, stimulating and responsible and organised.

A warm demanding classroom management style is effective with Aboriginal students because it suits their cultural and personal needs. There is an emphasis on the building of positive relationships

between teachers and students and students and students which enhance an Aboriginal child's chances of affiliation at school. Warm demanders are also better motivators of Aboriginal students who are more likely to be motivated by affection for a teacher than by respect for authority or interest in classroom tasks (Bamblett, 1985). Warm demanders include aspects of Aboriginal culture in curriculum design and classroom instruction because they are concerned that what the students learn is meeting their needs. The student's self-esteem is maintained and encouraged through the teacher's valuing of Aboriginal culture and increasing Aboriginal status in the classroom. Aboriginal students who are taught by warm demanders should enjoy greater success and participation at school as warm demanders tend to be successful with all students.

### *Appropriate Discipline*

The style of discipline teachers use for Aboriginal students should also be



Photograph: Michael Aird

compatible with Aboriginal feelings, attitudes and values. Discipline approaches can be expressed along a continuum that sees teachers in control of student behaviour at one end and students responsible for their own behaviour at the other end. Between these two extremes lies a variety of discipline styles which use a balance of teacher control and student self-control. Teachers who tend to maintain complete control are called interventionists, whilst teachers who allow students responsibility for their own behaviour are called non-interventionists. Interactionists are those teachers in the middle ground (Sutton, 1983, p9). It would appear that Aboriginal children would respond best in classrooms with a code of discipline that was based on the interaction and non-intervention styles.

As mentioned earlier, Aboriginal students are autonomous and independent and therefore do not enjoy a strict, demanding style of interventionist discipline. Hoopgood (1986) writes that a majority of Aboriginal students "...are often visibly upset by strong demands and insistence. This frequently leads to ... their refusing to follow the direction, and ultimately swearing at the teacher and/or threatening physical abuse".

Aboriginal students are taught to be self-regulators at home and schools should further encourage Aboriginal students to develop self-discipline. This may best be achieved in classrooms that use mainly non-intervention discipline codes. Non-intervention by teachers allows students to have the most control of their behaviour. It is a method of maximising the chances of students 'working through' their own misbehaviour in an atmosphere of teacher support and valuing of the students' decision making (Sutton, 1983). There are times, however, that all children need guidance as to the validity and consequence of the decisions they make, especially when they are younger. The success of non-intervention lies in students being able to make rational and logical decisions. It is important that in any decisions students make that they consider not just their own, but others' needs. In a study of Adelaide Aboriginal students who were considered troublesome and having low academic ability Darvall (1990) writes, "the major

restriction on the child's individual autonomy was the adult's expectation that children modify their independent drive with a nurturing and socially considerate orientation". Teachers may need to use an interactionist method of discipline so as to show Aboriginal students the need to consider the effects of their behaviour on others. When students are unable or not prepared to make fair and proper decisions about behaviour, interactionist teachers are able to guide and assist the students to develop more socially appropriate responses. Still, whether a teacher uses non-intervention or interactionist discipline, it is important that, like classroom management, a teacher chooses a style that is going to best meet the students' needs.

### Looking Ahead

Once teachers have been educated in the optimum methods and content to instruct Aboriginal students, education will become more relevant and attractive for Aboriginals. School is often a difficult time for Aboriginal students today and there is much that needs to change. Curriculums based on an understanding of Aboriginal cultures have to be written and Aboriginal students' values, skills and characteristics must be utilised and promoted at school. As Aboriginal students begin to see that schools value them and their culture and that their basic needs are being met they will become more motivated to attend and participate at school. By changing the process of education for Aboriginal students we should be able to make a far better product ... students whose school experiences are enjoyable and richly rewarding. ★

**Jeff Guider wrote this paper whilst a student at the University of Western Sydney.**

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**While previous studies have sought to identify health issues of adult Aboriginal populations and of the state of Aboriginal health generally (Reid and Trompf, 1991; The National Aboriginal Health Strategy Working Party Report, 1988), little information is available on the health status of Aboriginal young people. This study is an attempt to identify the major health issues faced by Aboriginal young people.**

# Health Issues of Aboriginal Young People

Margaret Browne and Ted Murphy

The work of the National Aboriginal Health Strategy Working Party Report (1988) suggests that the health statistics of Aboriginal Australia are more consistent with those of third world countries. Unfortunately, even this most exhaustive study does not permit any insight into the specific health issues faced by Aboriginal young people. This report does, however, offer an Aboriginal definition of health:

*"Health" to Aboriginal peoples is a matter of determining all aspects of their life, including control over their physical environment, of dignity, of community self-esteem, and of justice. It is not merely a matter of the provision of doctors, hospitals, medicines or the absence of disease and incapacity (The National Aboriginal Health Strategy Working Party Report, 1988).*

In order to find out what these specific health issues are, Aboriginal young people were asked a series of questions, designed to identify issues highlighted from previous studies (National Health and Medical Research Council, 1992; Reser, 1991a; and Reser, 1991b). These studies have suggested a high incidence of homelessness, depression and suicide, sexual abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, use of both legal and illicit drugs and unemployment.

That there is a relationship between education, employment, homelessness

and health status is well documented (National Health and Medical Research Council, 1992). Criminal behaviour may well be a contributing factor to poor health as well (Bush 1983). Thus, education, employment, criminal activity, drug use, sexual abuse, sexually transmitted diseases and suicide became the focus of this survey. Once this data had been collected, is it then possible to cross tabulate and test the relationship between age and: employment history; criminal activity; drug use; sexual abuse; sexually transmitted diseases and suicide?

## Methodology

To answer these questions, a pilot study was conducted, consisting of a structured interview schedule, asking both closed and open questions. Youth, for the purposes of this study, is based on the Queensland state government definition of between the age of 12 and 25 (Department of Tourism, Sport and Racing, 1992). The sample was drawn from Aboriginal clients of the Innovative Youth Health Program in Woolloongabba, and from Youth and Family Services, at Logan City.

The interview consisted of thirty questions, asking about their age, accommodation, employment and income, education, criminal history, their attitude toward safe sex, sexually

transmitted diseases and whether they had ever attempted suicide. This data is then interpreted using descriptive statistics (see Figure 1 and 2), and tested for any relationship between age and employment history, criminal activity, drug use, sexual abuse, sexually transmitted diseases and suicide (see Figure 3).

## RESULTS

### Results for the Total Sample

The results for the total sample (n=30) indicated that 47% had never been employed, 67% used tobacco, 53% used illicit drugs (not specified), 70% used alcohol, 57% had attempted suicide, 37% had been sexually abused, 47% had been in trouble with the police, 100% were aware of safe sex practices and 77% practiced safe sex (Figure 1).

### Results for Female Respondents

The results for females (n=15) indicated that 40% had never been employed, 47% used tobacco, 33% used illicit drugs, 60% used alcohol, 47% had attempted suicide, 40% had been sexually abused, 47% had been in trouble with the police, 100% were aware of safe practices, and 93% practiced safe sex (Figure 2).

### Results for Male Respondents

For males (n=15), the results showed that 53% had never been employed, 87% used tobacco, 73% used illicit drugs (not specified), 80% used alcohol, 67% had attempted suicide, 33% had been sexually abused, 80% had been in trouble with the police, 100% were aware of safe sex practices, and 60% practiced safe sex (Figure 2)

### Comparison of the Results for Female and Male Respondents

When the results for male and female respondents are compared, males are overrepresented in most categories, with two notable exceptions: sexual abuse and safe sex practice. Specifically: those males who have never been employed are represented in the majority by 13%; tobacco use in the male population outranks females by 40%; illicit drug use in the male population is 40% greater than females; use of alcohol is 20% greater in males than in females; 20% more males have attempted to commit suicide; and 33% more males have a criminal history. All the respondents were aware of safe sex practices, however, females reported a 33% increase in the practice of safe sex. Female reports of sexual abuse were 7% greater than males (Figure 2).

### Comparison of the Results for Age Class (Male and Female)

Age classes were divided into four groups (Figure 3): under 15 years; 16 to 18 years; 19 to 20 years and over 21 years.

In the under 15 years age group (n=7 and 23% of the sample size), none of the respondents had ever had a job and this represented 54% of those who had never been employed. Tobacco use in this age group accounted for 29% of all smokers, 35% of the illicit drug users, 26% of the alcohol users, 18% of the attempted suicides, 20% of the sexual abuse victims and 33% of those respondents with a criminal history are under 15 years. Safe sex practice in this group was 13% of the total number who practiced safe sex.

Figure 1. Percentage of All Respondents Who Answered Yes

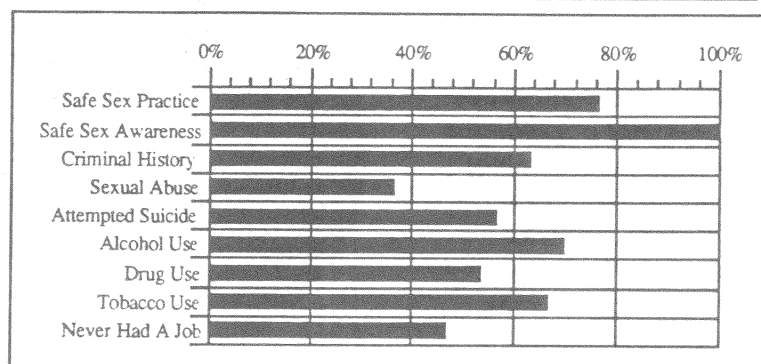
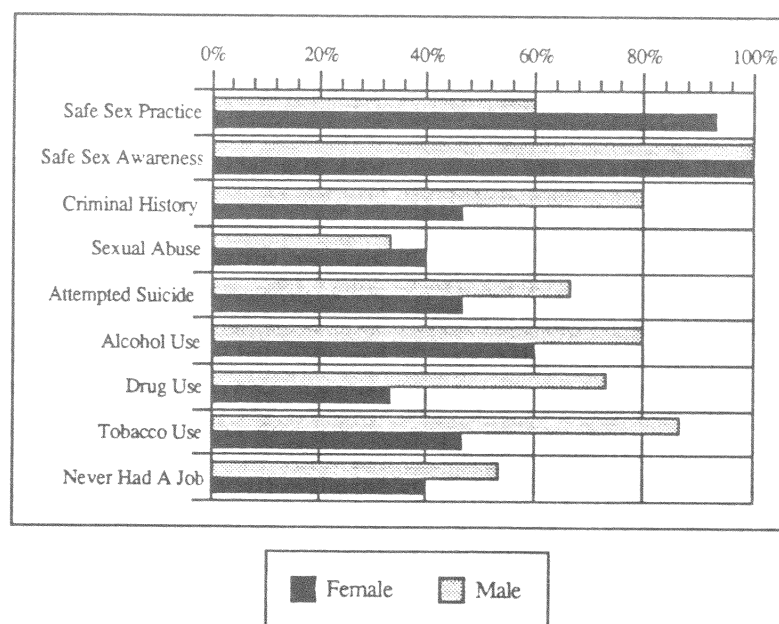


Figure 2. Percentage of Respondents, By Sex, Who Answered Yes



In the 16 to 18 years age group (n=11 and 37% of the sample size), those who had never been employed were 38% of the total figure. This group also formed 33% of the smokers, 35% of the illicit drug users, 30% of the alcohol users, 41% of the attempted suicides, 40% of the sexual abuse victims and 33% of those respondents with a criminal history. This group contained 35% of those respondents who practised safe sex.

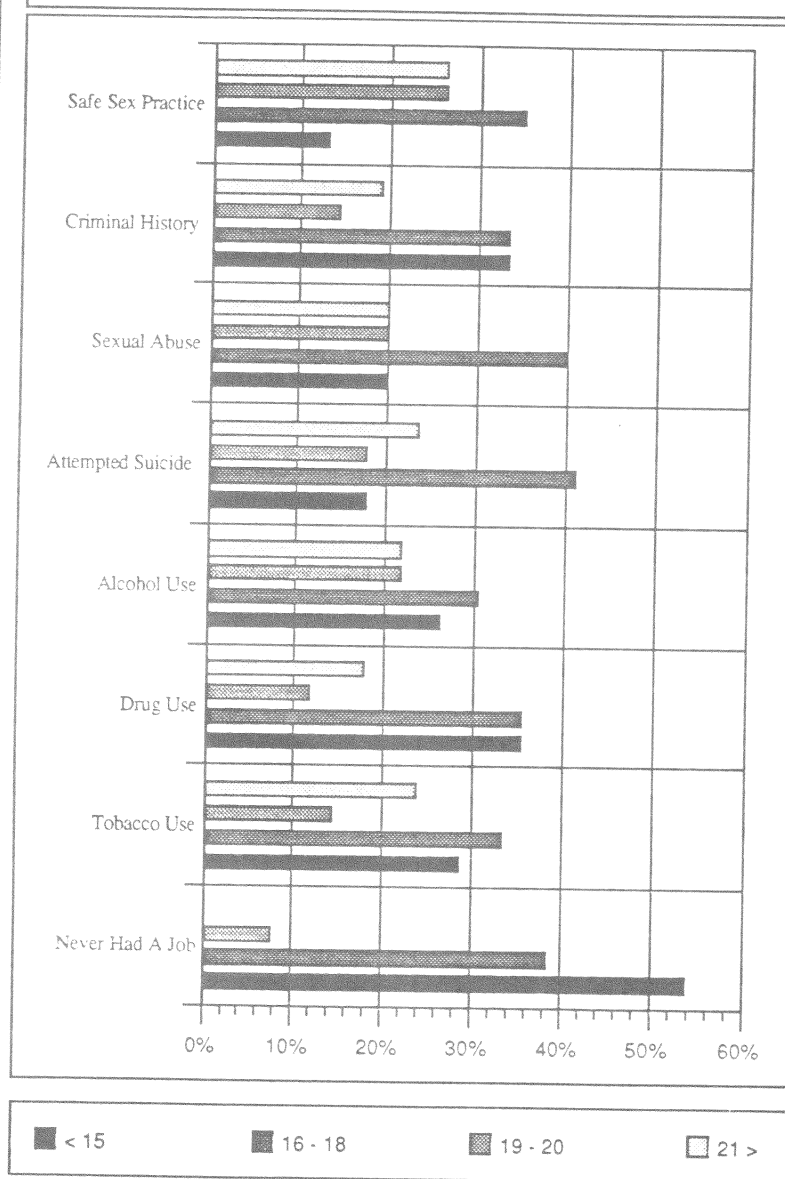
The 19 to 20 year age group (n=6 and 20% of the sample size) represented 8% of those who had never been employed, 14% of the tobacco users, 12% of the

illicit drug users, 22% of the alcohol users, 18% of the attempted suicides, 20% of the sexual abuse victims, 14% of those with a criminal history. All of the six respondents in this group practiced safe sex being 26% of the total.

The over 21 age group (n=6 and 20% of the sample size) contained 35% of those who had been employed, 24% of the tobacco users, 18% of the illicit drug users, 22% of the alcohol users, 23% of the attempted suicides, 20% of the sexual abuse victims, 19% of those with a criminal history. Again, all of the six respondents in this group practiced safe sex (26%).



Figure 3. Percentage of Respondents, By Age Class, Who Answered Yes



## Discussion

These results suggest a surprising number of risk factors and an increased health risk for the under fifteen and the sixteen to eighteen years age groups. The particular risks are identified by increased unemployment, tobacco use, drug use, alcohol abuse, attempted suicide, sexual abuse, and criminal history within these age groups. Safe sex practice alone represents an area of very real risk to this age group. The older age groups, while not immune to these concerns, would appear less

affected. It may well be the case that the 'problems' die out, both literally and figuratively, before reaching the older age groups.

Services, such as the Innovative Youth Health Program and Youth and Family Services, deal with issues daily, not as separate concerns, but as an integral part of responding to the whole client. That all of the respondents are aware of safe sex practices must be some measure of their success.

It is beyond the scope of the pilot study to argue with any precision, the effect of each of the variables on the state of

Aboriginal youth health. At the same time, considering the diversity of these risk factors, it is clear that interventions will need to be much more than "a matter of the provision of doctors, hospitals, (and) medicines".

For the efforts of organisations like the Innovative Youth Health Program and Youth and Family Services to produce results, however, requires that other professional bodies (lawyers, police and publicans to name but a few) work in concert with service providers to respond to the whole client. If we are to address Aboriginal youth health, we, as service providers, need to address all the risk factors to be at all effective. ★

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# NAIDOC

## National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee

### WHO IS NAIDOC

NAIDOC is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders organisation of volunteers drawn from ten Regional Committees, responsible for organising and coordinating the annual promotion of Aboriginal and Islanders cultural heritage and the positive contribution made by Aborigines and Islanders to the identity of this nation.

### LOOKING BACK

1988 Association's name changed to acknowledge Torres Strait Islanders.

1985 National Committee agreed to change of National Aborigines' Week from July to September.

1975 National Aborigines' Week established.

1974 NAIDOC became all Aboriginal

1957 NAIDOC was formed.

1955 Aborigines' Day made national.

1940 Aboriginal Sunday established.

1939 William Cooper from Cumerangunja wrote to the National Mission Council of Australia requesting the assistance of the Council in promoting a permanent annual Aborigines' Day.

1938 Australian Aborigines' League and the Aboriginal Progressive Association combined to hold a day of Mourning on Australia Day (26th January).

1937 • Cooper presented a petition of the Commonwealth Government protesting at Aboriginal living conditions • Cooper called a public meeting of Aboriginal people to suggest a Day of Mourning for the next Australia Day • Cooper and William Ferguson (first Aborigine to stand for parliament) called a public meeting in Dubbo to relaunch the Aborigines' Progressive Association.

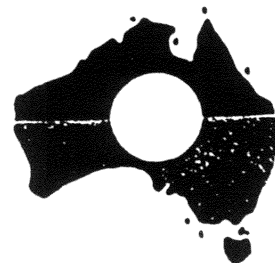
1936 Cooper called for a deputation to ask for a representation of Aboriginal people

in Parliament, a unified and national department of Native Affairs and State Advisory Councils on Aboriginal affairs.

1932 • Cooper drafted a petition to King George the Fifth. The Government (Australian) advised that the petition was unconstitutional • Cooper formed the Australian Aboriginal League in Melbourne.

1927 Australian Aborigines' Progressive Association closed down following Police pressure.

1924 Australian Aborigines' Progressive Association formed under leadership of Fred Maynard.



For more info contact NAIDOC  
C/- Jeannie Barney on 234 4222.

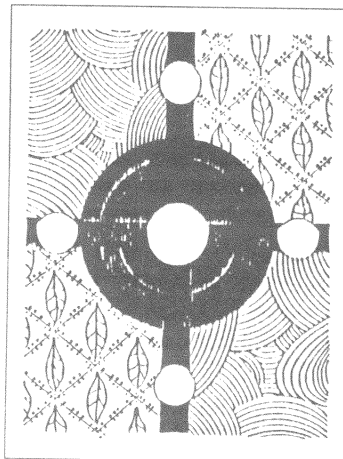
The Aboriginal flag was first flown at Victoria Square, Adelaide, National Aborigines' Day, 12 July 1971 and was used later at the Tent Embassy in Canberra in 1972, when Aboriginal people sought national justice in many areas, including land rights, education, legal rights and health.

The distinctive Aboriginal flag was designed by Harold Thomas in 1971. It is divided horizontally into two equal halves - black (top) and red (bottom) with a yellow solid circle at the centre. Black symbolises Aboriginal people - past, present and future. Yellow represents the sun - the constant giver and renewer of life. Red depicts the earth. It also represents red ochre, symbolising the spiritual attachment Aboriginal people have to the land.

Today, the flag has been adopted by all Aboriginal centres throughout Australia. Its colours have become widely associated with Aboriginal people.

*"Mullauna" is an exciting new program which aims to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people with the opportunity to overcome their self-stated social alienation and lack of confidence, in a generally supportive learning environment. Jointly funded by Inala Workskills Incorporated and the Federal Youth Bureau, the program, designed and implemented by an Aboriginal youthworker in 1991, extends what youthworkers can do to confront the problems faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people today.*

# Mullauna



# Program

## Mullauna means "together"

### How Mullauna was Developed

Research was undertaken by interviewing Aboriginal and Islander young people and conducting pilot workshops in both urban and rural communities. Courses were evaluated by students filling out evaluation and feedback sheets and their recommendations were implemented in subsequent courses. Workshops were then conducted to train 48 Aboriginal and Islander young people to become Peer Educator Trainers which will enable them to train their peers as part of the on-going implementation of the Mullauna Program. The program has been successfully implemented due to the support gained from discussions and valuable input from Aboriginal and Islander young people and appropriate community education resources.

### Content

The intention was to deliver a program that would enable young people to deal more effectively with social issues in their everyday lives and cover on-going issues related to health, law and consumer credit. A model of peer group learning has been implemented to raise self-esteem, confidence and to provide opportunities to meet the relevant cultural and personal learning needs of young people.

### Health

The topic of Health explores individual, emotional and physical well being and at the same time enables participants to investigate the myths associated with healthy living. Information on health issues, including substance abuse and STD's, can be contextualized without the usual fears and/or judgements, which facilitates greater learning and group exploration of healthy attitudes and lifestyles.

### Law

The Law topic focusses on self-empowerment with the aim of preventing participants from offending and subsequently being separated from their familiar environment and families while in detention. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people have one of the highest incidence rates of contact with law enforcement agencies, coinciding with little awareness of the law, their legal responsibilities and rights. Improved understanding and awareness of the law leads to greater

self-confidence, empowerment and positive involvement in the community as citizens.

### Consumer Credit

Consumer Credit deals with the on-going dilemma that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people face coming from a lower socio-economic background. Consumer credit and related issues are often perceived as being either "too hard" and/or "foreign" to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. General lack of familiarity leads to a lowered self-confidence in the use of this economic facility taken for granted elsewhere in society. This section presents the pitfalls and benefits of the practical use of money and credit.

### Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the support that was given to the program by Woree and Murgon State High Schools in Queensland. Of the total number of young people we assisted, half of them came from the above mentioned schools. Twenty-four participants successfully completed the program.

We also wish to thank and acknowledge the Koobara Family Support Centre at Zillmere for its commitment to presenting Mullauna.

### Resources Available

A Worker Guide and Student Workbook have been written as a result of the program and they are now available for purchase. The cost of the Worker Guide is \$15.00 and The Student Workbook is \$3.95 with an additional fee of \$2.50 for postage and handling. These costs are to cover printing expenses and have been kept to a minimum.

#### For further information contact

Graham Pattel,  
Inala Workskills,  
PO Box 2046,  
Inala Heights Qld 4077.  
Ph: (07) 372 1665

## A GUIDE TO ABSTUDY: An Option for Aboriginal and Islander Young People

Emma Kerslake

ABSTUDY provides financial assistance for Aboriginal and Islander students to further their education. It is not a wage given to students for study purposes but is a form of financial assistance that helps with some of the costs of obtaining an education.

In 1992 ABSTUDY assisted 15,723 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tertiary students across Australia, with 3,500 of these students studying at Queensland tertiary institutions, including TAFE colleges and Universities. (Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) Management Information Septeun Reports).

DEET's 1993 ABSTUDY booklet states that education and training increases the skills available to Aboriginal communities, as well as Australia as a whole, assisting with job prospects and contributing to improved standards of living. More importantly however, education enables Aboriginal people to gain self confidence and get to a level in the Australian community where they feel they can contribute and that their ideas and opinions can be heard.

### CASE STUDY

In November 1989, Torres Strait Islander Donald Martin was unemployed and had spent eight consecutive months on unemployment benefits. Three years later Donald graduated from the University of Queensland with an Arts degree. The Rochedale resident was one of nine Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who had graduated from The University of Queensland in 1992 in areas ranging from Arts to Physiotherapy and Law.

While Donald had resided in Brisbane since 1981, he had only been able to gain employment for five years. It was during 1988, when watching students travelling to Griffith University, that he considered furthering his limited education.

In October 1989 Donald, tired of continual job searching, visited the University of Queensland's Aboriginal and Islander Studies and Support Unit making enquires about summer Japanese classes. By the end of the week Donald had decided to enrol at the University.

The monetary assistance provided by ABSTUDY enabled Donald to study. Without its support he would have never been able to convince his wife that they could survive financially.

### QUALIFYING CRITERIA

ABSTUDY is available to any Aboriginal or Islander who is:

- doing primary education and aged 14 years or over at January 1 1993;
- pursuing secondary education;
- involved in full-time or part-time study after leaving school; or
- studying part-time or doing a correspondence course.

### BENEFITS AVAILABLE

Two different forms of benefits are available: income and non-income tested. Every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student, regardless of parental/spouse/own income, is eligible for non-income tested benefits.

### SCHOOL FEES ALLOWANCE

For a secondary school student, under 16 years old and living at home, a \$150 a year School Fees Allowance is payable. If a person is approved under ABSTUDY rules to live away from home, a school fees allowance of up to \$3,882 is available.

### INCIDENTAL ALLOWANCE

For full-time students an Incidental Allowance is available to help pay for books, course fees, special clothing

and other necessary equipment. Depending on the type of course being undertaken and its duration this allowance can offer up to \$315 per year. An allowance of up to \$480 per year may be given to part-time secondary and tertiary students to help cover the costs of fees, books, stationery and equipment.

### FARES ALLOWANCE

Also available to students under non-income tested benefits is a Fares Allowance. This is awarded to students who must live away from home to study. This allowance covers the cost of transport from the student's home to the place of study, during the year of study. All students can apply for this allowance to enable them to attend compulsory field trips, temporary placements and other special events associated with their classes or course.

### LIVING ALLOWANCE

Financial assistance to help meet the costs of clothes, books and other student needs is available in the form of the Living Allowance. Whilst this Allowance is income tested, many factors are taken into account. The major consideration is the parents'/spouse's or student's own income. Limits for these are set out on a table but the cut-off differs for every personal situation. These include age, marital status, number of children, whether at home or living independently, as well as the course category.

The number of other children in the family studying, as well as the number of dependent children under 16 is taken into account to alter the level of family income. DEET makes concessions of \$1200 off family income for every dependent child and \$3700 for every other dependent student.

ABSTUDY covers students in every possible situation. Higher allowances



are available for students living away from home than for those living at home.

A living allowance for a student living at home ranges from \$129 to \$251 a fortnight, depending on the individual situation and parental income.

Allowances for students living away from home are similar. Their amount of living allowance varies from \$214 up to \$366 a fortnight depending on the situation. They may also qualify for the Fares Allowance, Incidentals or Child Care Allowances.

### SCHOOL FEES ALLOWANCE

Students living at home receive either the School Fees Allowance or a Schooling Education Supplement. This benefit supplements parents receiving a pension benefit Family Allowance Supplement from Social Security or the Department of Veteran Affairs, to the sum of \$520 a year to assist with secondary schooling costs.

Just as there are differences for at home and away from home secondary and tertiary students, specific allowances are also available to students who are independent, homeless, sole parents or married.

### ONGOING FINANCIAL SUPPORT

ABSTUDY differs in many ways from AUSTUDY. One of the major differences is the length of the allowance. Donald is not finished with education - he has applied to do his Masters of Sociology (social planning and development). ABSTUDY will give him constant financial support in his endeavour to study. Donald believes he will continue until he feels he has a practical foundation to be able to put something back into his Torres Strait Island community. AUSTUDY only supports tertiary students progressing through certain levels, for example, Associate Diploma to Bachelor degree. AUSTUDY'S duration rules are therefore, much stricter. However, ABSTUDY supports students in whatever tertiary course or courses they undertake, for as long as they reasonably need.

But, not all ABSTUDY students are like Donald. Many are aged between 17 and 22. The biggest decision these

students make is if they are going to continue on to further study, and if so what area of study is suitable for them, and in some cases, applicable to their community.

From the most recent figures available in 1991, there are approximately 900 Year 12 students receiving ABSTUDY benefits (Queensland ABSTUDY Retention Rates). This gives Queensland a retention rate from years 8 to 12 of 43 percent. But, in 1992 there were only 900 Aboriginal and Islander students studying at universities throughout Queensland (DEET 1992 Higher Education Student Data collection).

### ENROLLING IS THE FIRST STEP

While ABSTUDY provides financial assistance it cannot enrol students in secondary or tertiary education - students must do this themselves. However, most Australian universities coordinate Aboriginal and Islander 'special entry' programs and interview sessions.

Through these programs Aboriginal and Islander students who have applied for specific courses are interviewed and given the opportunity to be included in the quota for a course regardless of their year 12 'score'.

Here, once again, the personal situation of the applicant is taken into account, as well as many other attributes and their knowledge of what the course involves. At present this system seems to be achieving its aim of increasing the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in certain courses at tertiary institutions.

### FILLING IN THE FORMS

Forms are available at any CES office, the local high school, Aboriginal Community Organisations, TAFE Colleges and University support units or the nearest ABSTUDY Student Assistance Centre. Students and families do not have to be totally familiar with all the different allowances, but they must obtain the forms as soon as possible and fill them in as soon as they are received. Many students may find that if they do not fill in their form and return it to ABSTUDY before November their

payments will be delayed. This problem may seem a simple one of punctuality, but many people who have not decided whether they will continue studying or who have not been accepted into university yet do not remember to collect forms. In such situations students often find themselves in financial difficulties at the start of the new year.

There are three different coloured forms for the different levels of education. The tertiary forms, which cover universities and TAFE colleges are purple. Secondary school students aged 16 and over will require the orange form. The blue form is for primary school students, aged 14 or over and also for secondary school students living at home, or 15 years and younger.

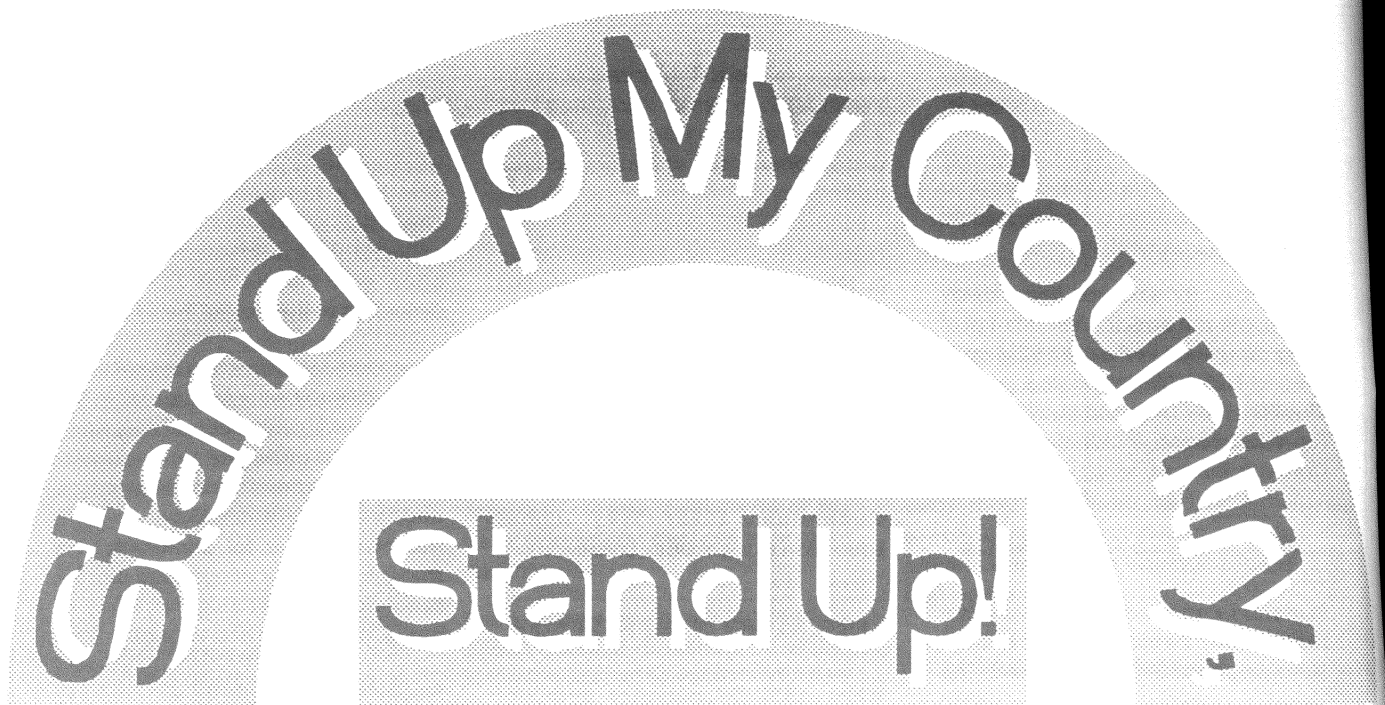
Students continuing in the same course should receive a form through the mail with many of their details already provided on the form. This form can be corrected or completed more easily and is therefore much quicker to process.

The process of gaining information about ABSTUDY and applying is not a difficult one. DEET has many service centres as well as toll free phone lines to assist with all enquires. As an ABSTUDY student I would encourage all Aboriginal and Islander students to apply for the benefits. Even if you do not think that you will qualify, you may be pleasantly surprised.

### TOLL FREE ABSTUDY ASSISTANCE NUMBERS

Brisbane	(008) 811 178
Rockhampton	(008) 175 212
Townsville	(008) 801 406
Cairns	(008) 801 407

Emma recently graduated from the University of Queensland with a Bachelor of Arts (majoring in journalism and drama) with assistance from ABSTUDY. She has applied to undertake a Bachelor of Law in 1993 and has an interest in Aboriginal and ethnic minority groups.



## Aboriginal Views on Education since Colonisation

Jack Frawley

**Aboriginal Artists, authors and songwriters have expressed their thoughts and experiences about Aboriginal education through plays, poems, short stories, novels and songs. Their views cover a broad spectrum of educational issues that focus on educational experiences since contact, the teaching of traditional Aboriginal knowledge as part of the school curriculum, and other issues in both ways education.**

### Education Without Consultation

Aboriginal writers have documented the effect that white contact had on traditional Aboriginal society, and how education was used to implement white government policies. Big Bill Neidjie expresses his feelings about the influence of missionaries and outlines how schools eroded the fabric of Aboriginal society. He pin-points the lack of consultation as the underlying reason for the erosion of Aboriginal knowledge.

*Should be missionaries first they started  
and asking people this culture  
What they done? They run it quick!...  
The bin rush in.  
They took up school ... teach.  
Now Aborigines losing it now ...  
This story I'm telling it*

*because I was keeping secret myself.  
I was keeping in my mind with the culture  
and see other people what they was doing  
and I was feeling sad you know.  
White-European different story  
what we new generation now,  
different story.  
Because school doing it and something else  
They going little by little.*

(from "We Like Whiteman All Right",  
Neidjie, 1989)

### Education for Conversion

Aboriginal songs highlight how education was used for the purpose of Christian conversion. Education was characterised by missionaries' efforts to control, Christianise and civilise the Aborigines. Ironically, violence was often

resorted to as a means of teaching and enforcing Christian principles. Kev Carmody has expressed the hypocrisy of education based on Christian principles where violence was often the method used to impart Western knowledge.

*And they taught us,  
"Oh black woman thou shalt not steal.  
Hey black man thou shalt not steal.  
We're gonna civilise  
your black barbaric lives  
And we'll teach you how to kneel."*

*And the racist contradiction  
That's understood by none,  
Mostly their left hand holds the bible  
And their right hand holds a gun.*

("Thou Shalt Not Steal", Kev  
Carmody, 1990)

### Education for Oppression

Education and violence as tools of oppression were resorted to by governments and white settlers in their quest to firstly dominate and then assimilate Aborigines into mainstream society. Aborigines did not have any say in the overall decision making processes. Bobby McLeod, like Carmody, has drawn attention to the way violence and education was used to dispossess Aboriginal society, rendering the people powerless and attempting to mould them into a white vision of acceptability.

*But then the whiteman  
With his gun and education  
The land they did collect  
When the blackman said,  
"You must not take."  
It was classed as disrespect  
And replied with, "Blackman you are  
standing in the way  
Of a more progressive way to live,  
In a whiteman sort of way."*

("Wayward Dreams", Bobby McLeod, 1987)

### Education for Assimilation

The Western educational system provided a vehicle for the implementation of government policies. During the protection and assimilation periods, from the 1930s through to the 1960s, Aboriginal children were often taken from their parents to be schooled. Aboriginal children were basically taught the 3 R's and trained in domestic and manual skills. Jack Davis comments on how Western education claimed to be based on equality, but was in fact aimed at submissiveness and assimilation.

*So they said: "Go to school."  
This was the rule.  
This was the yard stick of advancement in  
a society  
Which, with clasped hands and piety,  
Spoke of equality within the eyes of God  
and the law.*

("Whither", in Davis, 1983)

The physical separation from family and culture caused mental anguish and these experiences have been well documented

by Aboriginal writers, but none more poignantly than Archie Roach. He speaks of the humiliation that Aboriginal children suffered and paints an atmosphere of grief and hopelessness that prevailed during these terrible years.

*This story's right, this story's true  
I would not tell lies to you  
Like the promises they did not keep  
And how they fenced us in like sheep  
Said to us, "Come take our hand"  
Sent us off to mission land  
Taught us to read, to write and pray  
Then they took the children away.  
Took the children away.  
The children away  
Snatched from their mother's breast  
Said it was for the best  
Took them away*

*The welfare and the policeman  
Said, "You've got to understand  
We'll give to them what you can't give  
Teach them how to really live  
Teach them how to live," they said  
Humiliated them instead  
Taught them that and taught them this  
And others taught them prejudice.*

("Took the Children Away", Archie Roach, 1990)

The result of these policies had disastrous effects for many Aboriginal people, particularly those who had been taken from their parents and educated in a total Western environment. Many were torn between two worlds and were unsure of their identity. Davis mentions the toll that this had on Aboriginal children, as they struggled to find their identity and their position in society.

*You have turned our land into a desolate  
place.  
We stumble along with a half white mind.  
Where are we? Who are We?*

(from "Desolation" in Davis, 1983)

### Combining Aboriginal and Western Knowledge

Historically schools had taught a Western curriculum that relied on culturally inappropriate educational methods. No thought had been given to the relevance of Aboriginal knowledge, and the use of appropriate Aboriginal teaching methods were totally ignored.

The result was that Aboriginal children were losing out both ways. Peter Miller writing for Blekbala Mujik notes how Aboriginal knowledge was ignored and how this culturally affected Aboriginal children.

*Children now are losing out,  
They're not learning their old ways.  
They are floating by,  
In a world of their own.*

("Living in the Dreamtime", Blekbala Mujik, 1990b)

During the Whitlam era of the early 1970s Aboriginal voices called for a more appropriate and equitable educational system that responded to the requests of Aboriginal people. It was felt that it was important to be able to understand and to be competent in handling Western knowledge and society, particularly in areas which would benefit Aboriginal society. Jack Mirritji saw the underlying importance of understanding Western knowledge in the Aboriginal struggle for cultural survival, and places the importance of the education of the young as a step towards winning the battle.

*For dealing with balanda society we need  
assistance to learn to read and write to fight  
for our won rights and to be able to explain  
our ways ourselves. We are waiting for  
younger people, who have had school for  
long time and know how to read and write.  
We need our own educated people, to explain  
our way to the balanda, but also to explain  
the European way to our older people.*

(Mirritji, 1976)

This ability to communicate with non-Aboriginal people especially through the development of English literacy skills was seen as vital. Odgeroo Noonuccal emphasised the ability to read and write as the priority, supplanting the priorities of missionaries.

*Holy men you cam to preach:  
'Poor black heathen, we will teach  
Sense of sin and fear of hell'  
Fear of God and boss as well;  
We will teach you work for play,  
We will teach you to obey  
Laws of Gos and laws of Mammon....!  
And we answered, 'No more gammon,  
If you have to teach the light,  
Teach us first to read and write...!*

("The Teachers", in Noonuccal, 1990)

The importance of Aboriginal knowledge in Aboriginal society and the maintenance of that knowledge through schooling, has been expressed by several Aboriginal authors. Oral traditions coupled with illustrated representations have come to the forefront, particularly with accessibility and availability of Western art mediums. Aboriginal artists have expressed their desire for Aboriginal knowledge to be part of the schooling system and have encouraged their children to immerse themselves in Aboriginal Law, lest they lose this important structure of Aboriginal society and inevitably their Aboriginality. Paddy Japaljarri Stewart emphasises this point as he explains the reasons for painting Dreamtime stories.

*We painted these Dreamings on the school doors because the children should learn about our Law. The children do not know them and they might become like white people, which we don't want to happen. We are relating these true stories of the Dreamtime. We show them to the children and explain them so that the children will know them. We want our children to learn about and know our Law, our Dreamings. That is why we painted these Dreamtime stories.*

(Paddy Japaljarri Stewart in "Warlukurlangu Artists", 1987)

### "Both Ways" Education

The notion of "both ways" education has been a theme in Aboriginal writing and has been the subject for analysis by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal academics. Many Aboriginal schools focus on Aboriginal knowledge, learning styles and teaching methods to implement a more meaningful curriculum. Restrictions are placed on some aspects of Aboriginal knowledge used in the school curriculum, however the emphasis is always on the Aboriginal way of education and its importance in shaping the children's future. Interestingly enough Aboriginal people see education as a two-way process

where aspects of their culture can be shared with non-Aboriginal people and emphasise the importance of cultural understanding. Mainstream non-Aboriginal education has had a history of resisting this and in most cases is still reluctant to take up this offer of two-way learning. Eli Rabuntja, a former Principal of the independent Aboriginal



Photograph: Michael Aird

school Yipirinya, stresses the overall benefit of education that consider Aboriginal and Western ways.

*Education means everything ... That's why you've got to learn. We just take the kids to the bush first and show them food, and water, where you go to find them, and take them around. In our own culture there is a lot to teach the children about their own ways - there's both Western and Aboriginal ways. But by education in European ways, we mean schooling and stuff like that - jobs, how to survive. Today they think two ways. It's got to be like that. We have two people here - white and black. Aboriginal people can learn something from white cultures and white people can learn from Aboriginal cultures. They've got to be learned together.* (E. Rabuntja in Bowden & Bunbury, 1990)

Aboriginal people have expressed this wish to continue teaching a both ways system and underline its importance in curriculum development. The institution of school is seen as a vehicle that can be adapted to transmit this knowledge, along with the learning of Western knowledge. Tess Napaljarri Ross speaks on how traditional knowledge can be used in schools and how Western materials can be used in the conveying of this knowledge.

*Many people told the children about the Dreamtime by drawing on the ground and on paper; they told them a long time ago in the bush by drawing on their bodies, on the ground, and on the rocks. This was the way men and women used to teach their children. Now, when children are at school, at a white place, they want to pass on to them their knowledge about this place. They want them to keep and remember it. They want them to learn both ways - European and Aboriginal.*

(Tess Mapaljarri Ross in "Warlukurlangu Artists", 1987)

### The Language of Learning

The teaching of Aboriginal knowledge, the development of language maintenance programs and the implementation of bilingual programs have been identified as a priority in Aboriginal education. There is a certain amount of pride expressed in the speaking of one's own language.

*It's important that the children learn their own language because it is their own language. Why teach English to Aboriginal kids if they've got their own language? They should learn and be taught in their own language so they can learn more quickly and it's their first language. It makes it strong with themselves. They'll be fluent then to speak and to write it. They can have anything if they know the language, make a book of their own or film, make a video ... especially in teaching their own kids, generation after generation.*

(in "Being Aboriginal", 1990)



## Aboriginal Teachers

Aboriginal people traditionally relied on elders or each other as teachers, with elders having a particular and important role in teaching Aboriginal children. There continues to be a need for the involvement of Aboriginal people as teachers and tutors. Mandawuy Yunupingu writes about the value of having Aboriginal elders as teachers as they are the ones who are the keepers of Yolngu knowledge, knowledge that is important in the formation of a full Yolngu life.

*You see that old man taught me things I  
should know  
From the memories of the past  
And the situation is the bottom line  
between illusion and reality  
We have always thought  
of making things right  
Right from the beginning  
It's a big proposition  
from the Yolngu of the earth  
How about you come too  
This is my kind of life  
This is a Yolngu, Yolngu way of life*

("My Kind of Life" by Yothu Yindi, 1991)

## Aboriginal Control of Education

Aboriginal people have identified Aboriginal knowledge as a priority in education and have stressed that they are the most appropriate teachers. Big Bill Neidjie states that Aboriginal children must continue to learn the Aboriginal way and he continues as a teacher, seeing it as a traditional obligation.

*We have to keep pressure  
on young people to learn.  
They must learn these things.  
I have to stay on to teach my children.*

(from "Land" in Neidjie, Davis and Fox, 1985)

Peter Miller describes the pride he feels working in an Aboriginal school, and how he sees education as a means in understanding white society. He also highlights the importance of the development and ownership of an

Aboriginal education system. He states that Aboriginal teachers not only have a role in education as teachers and curriculum designers, but also within the community as leaders.

*I feel so proud and okay  
Standing up this day.  
I have been here for sometime.  
What's the purpose of this game?  
Our people are in need then,  
Want us to be trained.  
Come on let us reach out,  
Call it harmony.  
I'm standing here and looking,  
Out across the crowd,  
I'm standing here and thinking  
About our future plans  
Blackman's school.*

*I will be your leader  
Through these mighty days.  
Education's to be a plan  
To know the whiteman's ways.  
Stand up my country, stand up,  
Stand up!  
Support your fellow man.  
We are to be equal,  
Try to be as good as them.  
Blackman's school.*

("Blackman's School" by Blekbala Mujik, 1990a)

Aboriginal schools must be controlled by Aboriginal people, if the both ways approach is to be successful. This requires the vesting of power in Aboriginal school councils so that they can determine their children's future. Power is seen as the basis for not only the development of Aboriginal education but also the re-establishment of Aboriginal pride and identity. Mandawuy Yunupingu writes how the homeland movement can be a way in which power is obtained so that Aboriginal people can determine their education.

*Power to the people, power to their land  
Power for cultural revival, power for  
survival  
See that campfire burning  
And the children are yearning  
Talking about peace and harmony  
Yolngu education is the key for  
redemption  
And the homeland centre movement is  
here to stay*

*And the old men are calling seeking help  
from their young  
Yolngu education is the key for  
redemption  
And the old men are calling seek help  
from their young  
Power to the people, power to their land  
Power for cultural revival, power for  
survival*

("Homeland Movement" by Yothu Yindi, 1990)

## Conclusion

Throughout the Western history of Aboriginal Australia, education has been used as a means to impose a system which has not only been inappropriate but has had dire and disastrous effects on Aboriginal society. Despite this, Aboriginal people are still prepared to share what knowledge they can with non-Aboriginal society so that harmonious progress can be achieved. It calls for the understanding that Aboriginal knowledge is vital, not only for Aboriginal education but for mainstream schools as well, and that the ones who are best qualified for teaching this knowledge and for making the decisions on how and when it is best implemented, are Aboriginal people.

*We are happiest  
Among our own people.  
We would like to see  
Our customs kept,  
Our old dances and songs,  
crafts and corroborees.  
Why change our sacred myths  
for your sacred myths?  
No, not assimilation by integration,  
Not submergence but our uplifting,  
So black and white  
may go forward together  
In harmony and brotherhood.*

("Integration" in Noonuccal, 1990). ☼

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**This article is reprinted with permission from "The Aboriginal Child at School" journal, Vol 20 (5) 1992, published by the Department of Education, University of Queensland.**

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# Healing through Land and Culture

## Clump Mountain Youth Wilderness Camp

**Clump Mountain Wilderness Camp aims to provide a culturally appropriate program to benefit at risk and homeless young people. Clump Mountain is situated on 167 acres of tropical rainforest at Mission Beach near Innisfail, 80 kilometres south of Cairns in North Queensland. The land was willed to the Aboriginal people by the late Rupert Fenby. The Clump Mountain board has a license to occupy the land and runs programs for the Aboriginal people.**

The Youth Wilderness Camp began as a result of a mandate from Aboriginal people to address the needs of their young people. In 1989 a number of young Murris in the Innisfail area suicided. Project Manager at Clump Mountain, Gerald Appo, said these deaths gave added urgency to the Aboriginal communities' desire to provide something culturally relevant for young people. Clump Mountain is founded on the belief, common to all Aboriginal community controlled initiatives, that the loss of cultural identity is the most important factor contributing to the harmful use of alcohol and other drugs, suicide, juvenile crime and other problems in Aboriginal communities.

"I'd say that's the most important issue, that one there, a breakdown in the continuation of the culture with our young people. When we're talking about the culture, we're talking about the way of life of our people, and there's a breakdown in the values: respect for old people, respect for the environment, caring and sharing. Those things have been eroded in such a way, our young people haven't got very much respect for anything any more. They're in a survival mode more than anything else. We have

to go back to some of our old ways, some of our old values," Mr Appo said.



Youthworker at Clump Mountain, Tim Edwards, adds a reminder, to non-Aboriginal people, that Aboriginal cultural values were deliberately taken away through the policy of assimilation. Aboriginal history was not, and still isn't, widely taught in schools, and Aboriginal people on missions and reserves were not permitted to speak their language, hold ceremonies, dance or practice other traditional aspects of life. Now, he says, there is a hunger in young Aboriginal people, to know more about themselves and their cultural identity:

"There have been very few programs put together that are culturally appropriate for Aboriginal and Islander young people. Here, the kids are introduced to their own culture, and build a pride in that identity. They walk away from here feeling proud about being a Murri."

The Youth Wilderness Project was jointly funded in 1989 through the Commonwealth and Queensland governments. The Project is funded for two and a half positions, but employs an extra person who they are currently seeking funding for. In addition the Project has a number of volunteer workers who act in various capacities, from cooking on the camps, to unpaid tutoring on fishing trips or rainforest culture walks.

One Youth Wilderness Camp is held every month, with 10-12 young people between the ages of 14-20 attending each camp. The organisers attempt to keep the camps small and concentrate on quality of attention and care. Young people are referred through the Department of Family Services, Aboriginal and Islander Affairs; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations; or "just through the grapevine".

"Clump Mountain is founded on the belief ... that the loss of cultural identity is the most important factor contributing to the harmful use of alcohol and other drugs, suicide, juvenile crime and other problems in Aboriginal communities."

During the camps, the young people are taken back into the natural environment and taught aspects of traditional life and lore. They are taken fishing, hunting and gathering. They learn to live in the bush, and about bush 'tucker'. They also participate in workshops on history, on substance abuse, on HIV/AIDS prevention and on First Aid.

Tim Edwards has worked in the drug and alcohol field for the past seven years, including the Tamworth Base Hospital in NSW. He recently returned to North Queensland and found that harmful alcohol and other drug use is a problem for young people in the area. Alcohol misuse is widespread, particularly in the towns. Cannabis (yandi) is available



and readily used. Heroin and speed have become accessible in the area as well, due to the growing popularity of Cairns as a tourist centre.

"When you take away those substances - whether it be alcohol or other drugs - they need to be replaced with something else, and this is where the cultural side is so important," he said.

"At our camp we don't have any counselling rooms as such, and no chosen time for counselling. But the natural surroundings of the rainforest in which the kids feel more comfortable means they open up when they feel like it, and we can then respond with assessment and problem solving."

Although run by and for Aboriginal people, the program is also a cross-cultural program for all young people at risk or facing disadvantage, regardless of race.

"The kids mix very well in the camps. The good thing is that other young people are getting to understand and experience Aboriginal culture which is building bridges between races," Mr Appo said.

Both Gerald Appo and Tim Edwards say the Project's success is testimony to the importance of involving Aboriginal people when it comes to making decisions about their young people.

"The traditional stuff where you had your elders leading the way, that's been eroded and it's been replaced now by

the police, the family services, you name it. There needs to be more autonomy given back to our people. Self determination is still very important to our people." Mr Appo said. "Generally, it's not happening, unfortunately. What really amazes us is that following the Royal Commission into Black Deaths in Custody the people working in government agencies have failed to respond to the recommendations in this area."

They point out that the lack of Aboriginal and Islander participation and involvement is seen as the principle lesson for the failure of many government programs in the past. They quote from the findings relating to young people (Recommendation 236), in which the Commission said all governments should support in funding decisions: "that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are best placed to identify, assess and respond to the needs of their young people, including the rehabilitation of young offenders."

Clump Mountain Youth Wilderness Camp had, they say, received a great response from the young people because it is: "a culturally appropriate response - appreciation of Murri rainforest culture and history", delivered by Aboriginal people themselves. ★

Louise Butt: Editor, *Connexions*

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# Through the Eyes of Youth

*Aboriginal  
and Islander  
Young People's*

*Workshop to Influence*

*the Queensland Government's Youth Policy*

***In April 1992 a Youth Issues Seminar was conducted by the Clump Mountain Youth Wilderness Camp in northern Queensland. As a result of recommendations arising, a Youth Policy Development Workshop was held for Aboriginal and Islander Young People at Clump Mountain in early August 1992. The outcome of the Workshop was a report entitled "Through the Eyes of Youth". Youth Policy Issues and Recommendations contained in this report were submitted to the Queensland Government's Youth Policy Project. The following is an abridged version of the report.***

## Foreword

In taking on the responsibility for the development of policy recommendations to the Queensland State Government's youth policy development process for Aboriginal and Islander young people in North Queensland, it must be made clear that any policy set in place for young people "cannot work" unless all those associated with the development and implementation of that policy can comprehend the significance of land, spirit and culture to Aboriginal and Islander people, as well as understand what impact Australia's recent history has had on the present Aboriginal and Islander situation in North Queensland.

It should also be acknowledged that the Aboriginal and Islander people have made only a few achievements in Australian society, therefore it must be recognised that racism is well entrenched in this country and, what achievements have been made, have been made through the continuous struggle of the "Aboriginal Community", despite degrading and patronising Government policies, the high level of general bigoted community attitudes, and a highly resistant and paternalistic bureaucracy. Australia's contempt for Aboriginal and Islander people is returned to Australian society through the rebellious and self destructive attitudes (Deaths in Custody) of many of our Aboriginal and Islander young people.

As such, it must also be understood that even though Aboriginal and Islander people have made significant advances in coming to terms with the reality of the dispossession, disbursement, displacement, deculturalisation, deprivation and discrimination of their people, the central problems of low social status, lack of any real economic base and an inadequate access to resources to deal with the resultant major concerns and problems, and/or to implement any real developmental programs aimed at achieving equity and equality for Aboriginal and Islander people in Queensland, particularly young people, are very real, and are the major basic reasons underlying our young people's problems today.



Therefore, in this policy development process, it was the intention of the young people to develop recommendations that are good for the Aboriginal and Islander young people of North Queensland and to ensure that the government's proposed policy is a document that the Aboriginal and Islander people in North Queensland, particularly the young people, are content with. For this purpose the document cannot become a tool for the bureaucrats, but rather a tool by which the people can influence the bureaucrats to reach some level of achievement about what the community (young people) perceive as positive development, and to support young people's perception about their needs.

Victor Jose,

Chairperson, Clump Mountain

## Background

The plight of the young people of this country has finally come to the attention of both the State and Federal Governments. In coming to terms with the situation the Federal Government is attempting to save face by putting in place a number of knee-jerk responses which provide an increase in services to the young people, in particular, providing assistance to increase access to training and employment.

On the other hand, the Queensland Government has put in place a program of extensive consultations over a two year period to develop the Queensland Government Youth Policy. Already fairly detailed consultations have been carried out, however, Aboriginal and Islander input into this process has been very minimal. Hence, the reason the Clump Mountain Youth Wilderness Camp staff and committee and concerned others working with young people saw the need to ensure Aboriginal and Islander young people's input into the Policy Development process.

A Working Committee was established and as a result a Youth Policy Development Workshop was held at Clump Mountain on 4-6 August 1992 which included representation of young people from all over North Queensland.

## PURPOSE OF THE WORKSHOP

The purpose of the Youth Policy Development Workshop was to gather Aboriginal and Islander young people and through their eyes develop a statement about their needs, their problems and their aspirations.

There have not been many opportunities for young people to have a say in their future, and yet much of what is decided in government and in the community affects them significantly, as they will have to live with the decisions that are made by adults for the rest of their lives or until they are considered old enough to make the changes they want.

What was achieved over the three days of the Workshop provides the basis for a policy statement which we hope will influence all levels of government.

## Overview of Key Issues

In essence the issues raised by the young people at this Policy Workshop were not all that different from those raised by other young people across Australia. However, there were a number of major differentiating factors, including:

- the matter of Social Justice and the underlying issues of racism, discrimination and prejudice, combined with,
- a general low self-esteem, a lack of confidence and an uncertainty by many about their identity and their ability to do anything,
- a feeling of hopelessness and powerlessness,
- a shortage of relevant information for young people about what is available to them, and
- a virtual total lack of any real access to services and programs for Aboriginal and Islander young people.

These issues of Social Justice (racism, discrimination and prejudice), shortage of information and lack of equal access to services further compound and

exacerbate the other issues of Employment, Education and Training, Health, Alcohol and Drug Abuse and Accommodation, concerns raised by Australian young people in general.

The Policy Discussion Paper put out by the Government certainly raises those matters which are the symptoms of the Aboriginal and Islander status in Australian society but does absolutely nothing to address the underlying causes of these problems. The issues of Social Justice were the priority issues raised by the young people at this Policy Workshop.

On the other hand, the issues raised at the Youth Issues Seminar by the people involved in the delivery of services to young people and dealing with their problems, were quite similar to those raised by the young people themselves. The major differences were the different perspectives they have as providers of services as opposed to that of their clients (the young people). These differences were:

- the lack of any real Youth Policies by either the State or Federal Governments and their agencies to set direction for the development of Youth Programs and the delivery of programs for the young people;
- the lack of resources to deal with the enormity of young people's problems we have in this country, in particular with Aboriginal and Islander service agencies, as well as to follow up with young people at risk and to conduct the necessary research into young people's problems;
- a lack of any service for young people aged 10-16 years;
- the real lack of coordination between Government Agencies and Community Organisations, in dealing with young people's issues.

The issues raised here certainly give support for Aboriginal and Islander young people's issues to be specifically identified within any Youth Policy and for relevant programs to be established that address Aboriginal and Islander young people's issues.

## ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE THEIR SAY

### Parents and Adults

The young people were adamant that the real problems within our society are caused by the adults, for they are the people in power who make the decisions and determine the direction in which society will go. And it is many of them (parents) who lack the responsibility for their children. Many neglect and abuse their children which leads to problems when they grow older. The young people feel that this neglect is caused by alcohol abuse, gambling and bingo. A comment was made that the parents should stop playing so much bingo. Many parents even defend their children when they are in the wrong which also causes problems.

The young people also feel that many parents are over-protective and do not trust their children which leads to feelings of rebellion.

Therefore, respect seems to be a problem that all young people have with adults. It is generally agreed by all the young people that adults do not listen to what the young have to say. The adults expect the young people to respect them but they do not give any respect in return. It must be remembered that respect is a two-way process, and respect is something that is earned not demanded.

### Social Justice

Within Australian society the issues of racism, discrimination and prejudice are always just below the surface. For the Aboriginal and Islander young people it is the harsh realisation that it is something they have to come to terms with because of its very presence within their schools and the rest of society.

They feel that society in general treats black people much differently to white people. They feel that they have to suffer the indignity of always having to do

things the white man's way. For instance, they have to sing the white man's National Anthem and watch the raising of their flag on their land while their flag is not given any respect at all.

The young people feel that they have a real problem with being bullied by cops and they suffer the brunt of police prejudice, discrimination and harassment. Many Aboriginal and Islander people are locked up in jails for offences that non-Aboriginals would merely be fined for. It is also very difficult for the young people to reconcile over zealous enforcement of laws where Aboriginal and Islander people are concerned when the police themselves freely break the law such as speeding, running red lights, not indicating, and so on.

“There is a strong feeling that Aboriginal culture should be taught in schools and that they [young people] should be provided with opportunities to learn more about their backgrounds and be able to learn their own language.”

The young people in their high level of understanding of social justice issues are asking why Aboriginal and Islander people are over represented in jails. They feel that this factor is evidence of the deplorable police attitude towards the Aboriginal and Islander community. They are also concerned about juvenile offenders being placed in with hardened criminals. This causes the young people to also turn into hardened criminals and they believe there should be some sort of alternative.

In places such as Mt. Isa, however, it seems that an Aboriginal Police Liaison Unit is having a positive affect in the community. There seems to be a reduction in violence between the Aboriginals and non-Aboriginal community and within the Aboriginal community itself.

### Alcohol and Drug Abuse

The young people were unanimous in their declaration about the detrimental effects of drugs and alcohol and the seriousness of the problem in their communities. There are instances where drugs and even alcohol involve very young children. They were also unanimous in their request to have something positive done about this problem as a matter of urgency.

They feel that drugs should be stopped and that an extensive campaign be implemented to teach children and young people to say no to drugs. Young people are drinking at an early age and by the time they are 30-40 they are in the cemetery. They also feel the role models (parents) that they are confronted with are very hypocritical, in that they tell the young people that alcohol and drugs are bad, and yet many abuse either or both of these.

Another real problem with the Aboriginal and Islander young people today is that many spend too much money on drugs and alcohol without realising it or without caring that they are killing their bodies and ruining their lives. It is well understood by the young people that alcohol and drugs affect your fitness and sporting ability. The major cause of this problem has been identified by the young people as being peer pressure. They feel this is a very difficult problem for them to cope with and feel training programs should be established to help them cope with these and other such problems.

### Employment, Education and Training

The Aboriginal and Islander young people are under no misapprehension about their employment opportunities in North Queensland. With the serious unemployment situation Australia wide being compounded by the unemployment predicament for young people, a general lack of the necessary vocational skills by the Aboriginal and Islander young people, and the bigoted and discriminatory attitudes by most employers towards Aboriginal and

Islander people, little scope is left for young people to be optimistic about their future.

The young people know that with the unemployment crisis the way it is, job opportunities for them are, and will continue to be, very rare. They also know that their chances of employment are much less than for other young people. Many have already experienced the prejudice of would be employers and the short term, going nowhere job training schemes. Even when they get educated and or trained, most Aboriginal and Islander young people still remain unemployed. Their lack of self-confidence and self-esteem also results in many of them not seeking employment because they fear being knocked back.

However, they also know that it is becoming more crucial for them to be educated and to have qualifications for them to get a good job. While they acknowledge the opportunities being presented and the valuable contribution that Skillshare, TAFE and ATSIC (DEET) Training Programs have made and continue to make to their abilities to gain employment, in general they feel that there should be many more apprenticeships and better access to training if they are to have any opportunity for employment.

Within the education system young people feel that there is a problem with teachers picking on Aboriginal and Islander students and that there should be better communication between students and teachers. Further to this many students lack self-esteem and self-confidence and are afraid of being the only one or one of the very few Aboriginal and/or Islanders in a class. This, and a transport problem for many, are contributing factors to the high truancy rate amongst Aboriginal and Islander students.

There is also a serious problem with the young people claiming that there is not enough information available to them about their options in the form of special youth support programs, special entry programs to university and apprenticeships and training programs. However, existing homework programs are a positive in that they assist students in



Photograph: Michael Aird

coping with the heavy school workload when there is an overcrowding situation at home.

### Housing and Accommodation

A major issue to come out of this workshop was the real problem that Aboriginal and Islander young people have regarding housing and accommodation. They feel that parents have as their first priority the younger children within the family and in large families the young people are left mostly to fend for themselves. Another problem is where landlords turn black people away because they think that all ATSI people would ruin their property. The young people seem to suffer the worst extremes of this situation. In Mt. Isa there is a high incidence of young people having to sleep in the river-bed because of the problems outlined above.

These problems combined with the high incidence of overcrowding in Aboriginal and Islander homes are compounding problems that lead to the deplorable homeless crisis situation for young people. In addition there is also the problem of unemployment and poverty causing an inability to pay rent.

The young people feel that Aboriginal organisations should also do more to help out young people and other Aboriginal and Islander people in crisis situations.

### Sports and Recreation

Young people feel that the area of sports and recreation is a real levelling agent within our society. It is one of the few areas where they saw positive things happening for them. Sport allows them to play at the same level and to mix freely with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Sports also allows them some of the rare opportunities to make something of themselves and to develop a positive future for themselves.

The young people feel that most Aboriginal and Islander people like sports and recreational activities, and involvement in these activities is much better for them than drinking, drugs and fighting. However, their access to alcohol free entertainment is practically non-existent. Once they are over eighteen the only places good bands play and where live performances are held are at venues where alcohol is sold. They feel very strongly that young people must have a much greater access to sporting and recreational activities, such as performances by live bands and discos, which are alcohol free.

Recreational activities (playing cards) was seen as one of the few areas where the young people can find enjoyment and where there were opportunities for the ancient tradition of social interaction between the various groups to be an ongoing process.

However, a problem arising in this area was that communities that do have sports facilities aren't doing anything to foster access for young people or use of these facilities. The young people feel that the older people will not help them make use of the facilities or even help them with organising sports in general.

A lack of access to adequate sporting and recreation facilities has been identified as a problem within most communities. It is generally accepted that all communities, particularly young people, should have access to relevant facilities as a strategy to foster positive development and to combat the negative influences on young people in our community.

While there are many positives in the area of sports for Aboriginal and Islander young people, a major problem exists in that many Aboriginal and Islander young people feel they cannot afford to participate in sports because they do not have the money to get to training or to the games, or even to acquire the necessary personal gear to play sports. And many can not follow a sport because it costs too much to get into the sporting venues.

### Culture

The young people at this workshop also acknowledge that many of them lack any real knowledge of Aboriginal culture, but there is a want within all of them to learn about culture from the old

people. However, it was felt that it was a real positive that some communities still follow their ancient traditions of 'hunting and gathering'.

These young people also have no misunderstanding about the value that Aboriginal arts and crafts have in the economics of this country and in developing a positive future for themselves. Through arts and crafts industry they feel that they can develop enterprises where they can sell their products at the markets, make money for themselves and show that they can contribute to Australian society.

There is a strong feeling that Aboriginal culture should be taught in schools and that they should be provided with opportunities to learn more about their backgrounds and be able to learn their own language.

### Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is one of the major problems that young people find very hard to come to terms with. Many young people suffer from many forms of domestic violence or are helpless bystanders and once again feelings of hopelessness and powerlessness arise with their perceived inability to change this situation. Many have seen the violence in the home that has no apparent reason whatsoever. Many others put the blame squarely on alcohol abuse, gambling and stress related matters such as inadequate income.

### Teenage Pregnancies

Young teenage girls find it difficult to find employment. Some get themselves pregnant so they can get a pension and in some cases for the sole purpose of getting more money to drink.

### Health

The young people also feel that many of them lack self-esteem and as such lack the confidence to attend white medical institutions when they are sick.

The young people also raised the concern that many of them are having too many sexual partners without practising safe sex. These young people have a real concern that their generation will be the most affected by dangerous contractable diseases if concerted efforts are not made to make sure they are properly educated about safe sex.

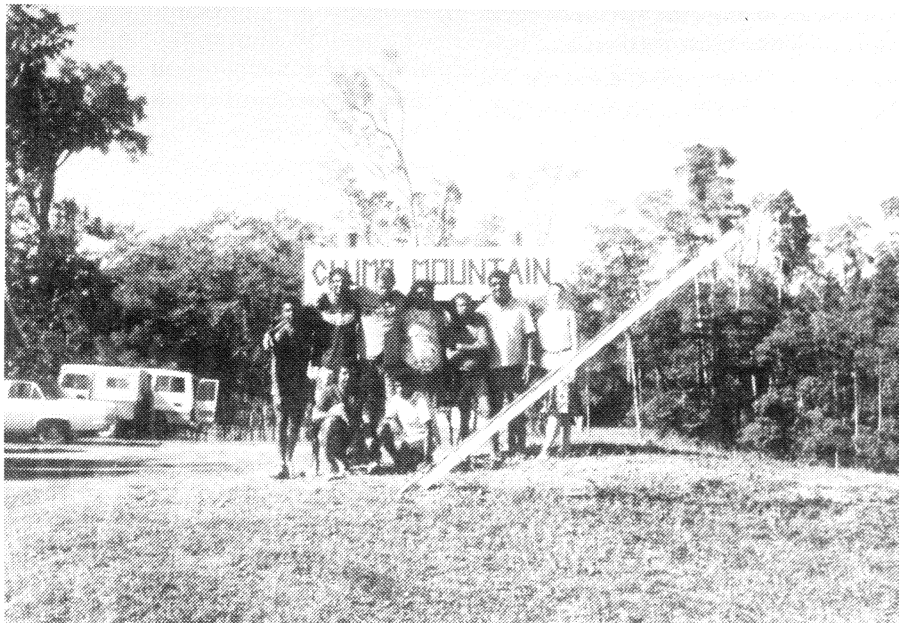
The young people also say that there is not enough being done about sex education for them. They feel that many of the programs that are in place are not relevant to the Aboriginal and Islander situation and that they therefore they have very little affect on the attitudes of the young people.

### Vandalism and Juvenile Delinquency

The young people acknowledge that even though it is wrong unemployment, which causes boredom and frustration, in many instances leads to vandalism, stealing, breaking and entering. They also ascertain that unemployment and lack of adequate income is also a major cause of violence within the home as people are under severe stress because they can't pay their bills or don't have enough money for food to feed their children.

### Stereotypes and Negative Role Models

Discussions on this topic raised a major debate: the young people were unanimous in their criticisms about the double





standards and hypocritical attitudes of adults towards matters of extreme concern, with regard not only to them but to all of Australian society. This criticism was aimed mainly at advertising (media, television) where sporting and entertainment stars are used in advertisements to promote products such as alcohol, cigarettes and fast foods while at the same time adults are saying these things are no good for you. They make it seem that these bad things are what we need and are good for us. Being impressionable and susceptible to all kinds of pressures young people are the ones most likely to be affected by these negative influences.

### ISSUES RAISED BY SERVICE AGENCIES

Many of the issues that were raised at the Service Agencies seminar have already been identified within the issues raised by the young people in the preceding statements. However, there are a number of issues which were not identified by the young people which are considered too important to be omitted from any Aboriginal and Islander Youth Policy Statement. These issues were as follows:

(1) there is a dramatic lack of resources to deal with Aboriginal and Islander issues. For instance:

- there are no psychological rehabilitation programs for Aboriginal and Islander young people for which there is a need; parents are often scared of their children;
- there are no counselling or support services for families to keep children at home; and
- there is nothing in Cairns to accommodate the hard core juvenile problem.

(2) Service Agencies were also unanimous in their views that family break-ups was a major contributing factor to many young people's problem situations. In these instances the young people lack the support mechanism that families provide during that period when they are learning to cope with life and be independent.

(3) The Service Agencies also have a deep concern about the number of Aboriginal and Islander young people being held in detention institutions, such as Cleveland in Townsville. In particular, the Aboriginal and Islander Community Organisations say there must be alternatives. They do not want to see their young people continually sent to these institutions. If there are no other alternatives then that institution must be properly equipped to educate and train young people to cope with social development (communication, numeracy and literacy), as well as cultural development and vocational skills development.

(4) Many problems also stem from the fact that Aboriginal and Islander people are mostly unemployed and on welfare and are unable to support their young people as they would like to.

(5) There is also a problem with young people who have missed much schooling or have dropped out and their inability to return to school. It is often heard "put them back in school" but for many they do not know how to exist in this situation, therefore putting them back into the school system will not remedy the situation, it may only make it worse. Programs must be established with the necessary support systems to assist those young people who cannot cope in this situation.

(6) Also many young people are disaffiliated - they have an identity crisis, they do not know who they are or where they fit in. This is a serious problem particularly where Aboriginal and Islander young people are adopted or fostered by non-Aboriginal and Islander families.

### RECOMMENDATIONS BY YOUNG PEOPLE

For the purpose of simplicity the following statements and recommendations have been placed under the main issues headings as identified by the young people.

### Parents and Adults

- The young people feel it is important that community awareness programs for adults be implemented, particularly for parents. These programs should include messages such as:

1) that children and young people learn from adults; and

2) that adults, particularly parents, should lead by example and be positive stereotypes for their children.

- The young people emphasised the importance of adults spending time with their children, giving encouragement, guidance and appropriate discipline, as well as the fact that parents should listen to their children, show a little bit of love and caring and take interest in what they say and do, in particular their schooling. The importance that the young people attached to parent involvement in children's primary and secondary schooling (ASSPA Committees) must be realised.

- Social activities such as family outings are also seen as an important strategy for bringing parents/adults and young people closer together.

- Young people also strongly recommend that low income earners be provided with greater access to low interest housing loans and that these housing loans be available to young people including unemployed young people.

### Social Justice

- Young people were adamant in their recommendations and strongly requested that the Criminal Justice Commission have a good look at the Queensland State Police Force and implement investigations into: • recruitment procedures and policy; • training procedures and policy; • the treatment of Aboriginal and Islander people in jails (deaths in custody); • the underlying practices of racism and discrimination towards Aboriginal and Islander people in this State; • complaints made by the public against members of the Police Force.

- The Police Department should also implement an awareness campaign aimed at building better relations between the Police and Aboriginal and Islanders and to encourage Aboriginal and Islander participation in Police Youth Club activities.

- The young people feel that it is imperative that rehabilitation programs be an important part of jail life and that these programs be relevant to the needs of the Aboriginal and Islander inmates. These programs should include general education (literacy and numeracy), trade training and cultural development.

- The Aboriginal and Islander young people are distressed at their over representation in punishment and detention institutions and the severity of the punishment handed out to them and are strongly requesting that alternative detention centres for minor offenders be established. These detention centres should have major focus on training and rehabilitation so that they can learn the skills necessary (learning to read and write) to allow them to participate as positive members of society.

- The program of Aboriginal and Islander Liaison officers as go-betweens is seen by the young people as a positive program and should be supported and expanded throughout all North Queensland.

- Young people also feel that because of their age they do not have the same access to legal aid when they need it. This problem is exacerbated by a lack of knowledge and information about how and where to get legal aid assistance when required. Therefore it is important that programs promoting awareness be implemented.

- Because of the problems the young people see they have with the Police it was considered that knowledge and understanding about a person's civil rights was important to be able to function within this society. Therefore the young people felt that they should have access to training and education programs that deal with knowing your civil rights within this country.

### Alcohol and Drug Abuse

- The young people were unanimous in their condemnation of alcohol and drug abuse and have a broad understanding of the detrimental effects of this abuse on fitness, health and social life. They declared it white man's poison and strongly recommend that an extensive public awareness program be launched in an attempt to address this very serious and major problem. This program should not only be aimed at the young people and High Schools but also the Primary and Pre-School levels.

- Young people see alcohol and drug rehabilitation programs as a case of trying to close the gate after the horse has bolted. Therefore the basis of any alcohol and drug policy statement must focus on the preventative rather than the curative approach to this problem. They perceive that learning to say "no" to alcohol and drugs through awareness programs, is much easier than trying to kick the habit after years of domestic violence and health problems.

- They also ascertain that such awareness programs must be relevant to the client community that the program is trying to reach. For example, Aboriginal and Islander people should be employed in awareness programs such as advertisements about the detrimental affects of drug and alcohol abuse. These awareness programs should also show the real life results of drug and alcohol abuse.

- This of course should not detract from the importance and necessity for drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs. This is evident in the fact that the young people see a need for more rehabilitation programs to deal with already present serious youth drug and alcohol problem.

- The need for "Alcohol and Drug Free" entertainment is an area of desperate need and therefore an area of very high priority. Also, mostly because of their age, transport for young people to get to Alcohol and Drug Free activities is a matter of concern. For instance, there should be more "Blue Light" discos for the young and at the discos there should be a couple of black police to

stand by the door to see if any alcohol is brought into the disco.

- Young people see it as important that adults, in particular parents, should practise what they preach and be positive role models for the youth and children.

- The young people also stress the importance of social and cultural activities as a means to occupy their time and that any preventative program must include the use of cultural, sports and recreational and social activities as a strategy to address boredom and alcohol and drug abuse.

- A large percentage of the young supported calls of the legal drinking (alcohol) age to be raised to the age of twenty-one. (This matter needs to be discussed further by the young people).

- There should be a concerted effort by the Government to educate young people about the detrimental effects of smoking and there should be "Quit Smoking" programs for the young people.

### Employment

- The young people feel that there should be more Aboriginal and Islander people employed in the community to give the community, in particular the young people, greater access to training programs such as apprenticeships.

- The young people understand the necessity for the Aboriginal and Islander community to be able to establish their own employment generating industry, as well as the necessity for them to be adequately skilled to be able to take advantage of any opportunity in these industries and in the mainstream job market in general. Therefore they are requesting the Aboriginal and Islander community be given the necessary assistance to establish these industries and that more training opportunities be made available to them. The young people want the situation addressed whereby training funding assistance support benefits be appropriate for the training undertaken and be adequate to support the trainees' needs for a living in this society.

Photograph: Michael Aird



### Training

- One thing is for certain, the young people are fed up with short term training schemes that go absolutely nowhere. Training for the acquisition of skills and knowledge, to be able to obtain employment in jobs that require a high level of ability and skills is in many cases an on-going and long term process, therefore any proposed training program must reflect in length, content and necessary support, the necessities for a person to acquire those skills.
- Young people also requested that the Government give support to the creation of permanent jobs for the young people when they have completed their training program.
- The young people were also adamant that People Development Programs (where they are educated to be able to deal with every day life matters) be a

major part of any proposed Government Youth Training Scheme. They feel that if they are trained to do only one job, that's all they can do, but if they are given a broad range of skills to be able to cope within this society, then they will not have the same level of difficulty in finding a job or acquiring the necessary and relevant training for that job. These programs should include building confidence and self esteem, literacy and numeracy, job search skills (job applications and obtaining references) and communications skills.

- The establishment of Training Centres in each Aboriginal and Islander community was also seen as a major strategy for dealing with appropriate training and unemployment issues.

- The young people are also distressed about the lack of information regarding education assistance, training and training support available to them and therefore recommend that more comprehensive and relevant "Awareness Programs" be developed and implemented. Relevant programs are those where Aboriginal and Islander people are used as positive role models and are giving encouragement to Aboriginal and Islander young people and the information being presented is at a level that is easily comprehensible by Aboriginal and Islander people.

### Education

- Many young people stated that they feel uncomfortable within the present education system and that this feeling

stems from a feeling of alienation. One of the ways of dealing with this feeling, has been to employ Aboriginal and Islander teachers. The young people therefore request that programs of training Aboriginal and Islander primary and secondary teachers and teacher aides be greatly expanded and that these teachers and teacher aides be specifically appointed to schools with high Aboriginal and Islander student populations. The strength and sincerity of their request to have more Aboriginal and Islander teachers in the classroom must not be understated.

- The young people are also calling for an expansion of and an improvement in the opportunities being offered to them, to acquire better tertiary and trade qualifications.
- Programs that give support to and encourage more Murri students to go on to complete their education are seen as being very important to the retention rate for Aboriginal and Islander young people in the Education System. These support programs must include an improved access to the necessary tutoring and other training and education support mechanisms.
- The young people made strong recommendations about the teachers of Aboriginal and Islander young people and the necessity for them to have a high level of awareness and understanding about Aboriginal and Islander culture and heritage, in particular the historical factors that have given rise to the present status of Aboriginal and Islander people in this country.
- Knowledge about Aboriginal and Islander culture and heritage is a matter of high significance to the Aboriginal and Islander young people and is seen as being an important element of any education program for them. They want to know more about their culture and this information must be presented in a way that makes them proud of who they are.

- Cultural camps and other such activities are also seen as an important element in this educational process. Training in hunting and gathering of traditional foods, making traditional artefacts and art, dance, music and song

are also considered to be of high importance and essential elements of any cultural program.

- The young people are also supportive of the concept of young people being trained to train other young people.

- The young people are also requesting better access to counselling services, career guidance and home school liaison services. They say that more Aboriginal and Islander School Councillors, Guidance and Home School Liaison Officers who are actually going to help the students should be employed, particularly at schools with large Aboriginal and Islander populations. The young people are sick of the whites appointing black people to jobs that they cannot do or will not do properly, and thereby make the Aboriginal and Islanders suffer even more.

- Young people are saying that the present school semester lengths are far too long and there is a feeling that the school semesters be broken up into shorter periods with different sections dealing with different issues and matters of learning content.

### Housing and Accommodation

The problems of lack of access to adequate low cost housing and severe overcrowding have led to the deplorable youth homelessness crisis. The young people recommend the following as means to address this deplorable housing situation for Aboriginal and Islander young people in North Queensland:

- that the government increase the rental assistance to the unemployed;
- that there be an increase in funding to the Aboriginal and Islander Councils and the Aboriginal and Islander Community Housing organisations;
- that much more Student and Youth Hostel accommodation be established;
- the young people also feel that the authorities should contact Aboriginal Welfare Offices such as Aboriginal Child Care, before taking the homeless to homes.

### Sports and Recreation

The young people feel that recreational and sporting activities are probably the

most positive mechanism for dealing with boredom, frustration, keeping young people off grog and drugs and decreasing fighting. They also provide an avenue for the young people to have a good time, like dancing without falling over and making a fool of themselves and not having hangovers and not looking around for a pick-up or being picked-up. Sports and recreational activities provide opportunities for making friends, keeping fit and chances of travel as well as being enjoyable and relaxing.

- The young people therefore recommend that there be an improvement in access to these activities. Talking in youth groups, mixing with other people and being involved in youth camps was seen as appropriate and desirable type activities. There should also be more Aboriginal and Islander people involved as supervisors in these activities.

- The young people emphasised the importance of and the need for Aboriginal Sports and Recreational Officers in the Aboriginal and Islander community. More importantly these Officers must be properly trained (including First Aid Qualified) and be able to do the job properly. Young people are tired of gammon and half hearted attempts in this area.

- Young people's participation in Sporting Carnivals or even specific Youth Carnivals "All Blacks" are also seen as being a real need and therefore as having a high priority.

### Community Resources

- The young people feel that Aboriginal and Islander organisations should be provided with more resources and should do more to help out young people and other Aboriginal and Islander people in crisis situations.

### Entertainment (Alcohol Free)

- The need for "Alcohol and Drug Free" entertainment is an area of desperate need and therefore an area of very high priority. For instance there should be more "Blue Light" discos for the young. At the discos there should be a couple of black police to stand by the

door to see if any alcohol is brought into the disco.

- Also, mostly because of their age, transport for young people to get to Alcohol and Drug Free activities is a matter of concern.

### Sex Education

A major concern, not only to the young people but to all of the community, is the spread of sexually transmitted diseases throughout the Aboriginal and Islander community and the prevalence of adolescent pregnancy (between the ages of 13-18) in the community.

- The young people feel that there should be a major strategy of Sex Education programs put in place aimed specifically at young people. These programs would include:

- more prevention programs (not having too many sexual partners, use of condoms) and hygiene (particularly with those people who use needles);
- more programs on video and TV, as well as more posters and pamphlets;
- more safe sex education in schools - understanding about safe sex, contraception, STDs;
- more AIDS, diabetes, hepatitis A and B awareness programs;
- appropriate counselling for young people with sexual and relationship problems;
- free condoms to be given out by health workers;
- A strategy for delivering these programs, particularly in rural and isolated, sparsely populated areas, could be the use of Mobile Health and Sex Education Units;
- The young people are also concerned that the aged and the disabled have adequate access to health programs and facilities;
- The young people considered that everybody should have a broad knowledge of First Aid and they, the youth have access to training programs about this matter.

### General Health Matters

- The young people feel for many and varied reasons that many of them do not



have proper access to health facilities, programs and information, therefore they would like to have, particularly for those who live in isolated areas, a greater access to these facilities, programs and information. Health programs should also contain information about nutrition. The young people feel that good health is the first step in being a positive member in society.

- The young people also stated that there should be more Aboriginal and Islander doctors, more younger employees in medical centres to understand young people's feelings and that Children's Clinics should be established.

- The importance of traditional bush and/or natural medicines must be considered in establishing a statement about health for Aboriginal and Islander young people.

### RECOMMENDATIONS BY SERVICE AGENCIES

The Service Agencies feel that the Youth Policy must state that all agencies involved with young people have the same responsibilities in dealing with young people's problems, namely with liaison, communication, trust and rapport building between the young people, Service Organisations, and Community members (including parents).

The Policy must also ensure that there are mechanisms in place that foster clearer assessments and appropriate referrals from Schools, Service Organisations and Government Agencies dealing with young people and children.

The Policy must also include the establishment of programs that will develop positive relationships between the older people and the young people (bridging the generation gap) and where the elders (respected members of the community) play an important role in assisting to develop young people's cultural and social identity.

The Policy must include an increase in Aboriginal and Islander input into Government and procedures, such as:

- direct funding and an increase in funding to Aboriginal and Islander Service Organisations dealing with young people to establish facilities and to implement new programs;
- involvement in the recruitment of staff that work with Aboriginal and Islander young people;
- more input into the making of policies and the development of programs that deal with Aboriginal and Islander young people;
- appropriate consultations with Aboriginal and Islander Service Organisations when developing and reviewing policy and programs.

The Policy must also include an increase in funds for the provision of resources such as:

- community sporting and recreation facilities;
- drop-in and youth activities centres;
- Aboriginal and Islander Youth Education and Training Centres and facilities (Petford);
- Aboriginal and Islander Independent Schools (cultural studies and living skills);
- alternative Detention Centres;
- more Aboriginal and Islander operated and staffed Youth Safe Houses;
- alternatives to Juvenile Institutions, (Clump Mountain), Detox and Wholistic Healing Centre;
- youth crisis and long term youth hostel accommodation.

Furthermore, it must include the implementation of short and long term programs that:

- give support to existing youth services and provide follow-up and ongoing aftercare as well as appropriate feed-back;
- build self-esteem, self-respect, respect for others, a strong positive identity and self confidence, (sporting and recreation, creative eg arts, crafts and cultural activities);
- foster the social and cultural development of young people (providing them with more positive role models and living and survival skills);
- increase Aboriginal and Islander access to vocational skills development

and increase their employment opportunities;

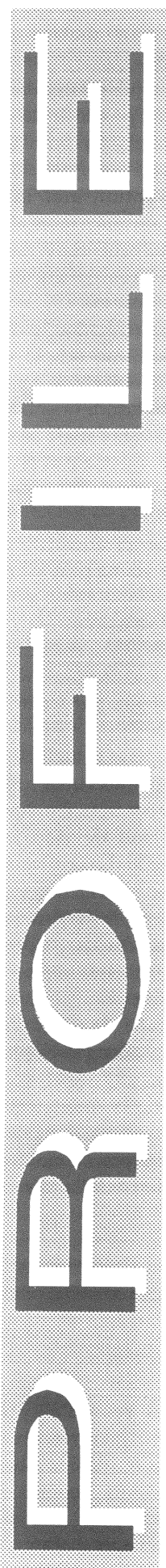
- prevent children from becoming "At Risk" young people (it has been stated quite strongly by both the Service Agencies and young people themselves that prevention and intervention programs are much more efficient, cost effective and beneficial to the Aboriginal and Islander community than band-aid curative measures);
- provide education and awareness for teachers and school counsellors (assessment of their own prejudices);
- provide health (mental health and drug and alcohol abuse programs) and sex education (AIDS and STD awareness and safe sex) programs relevant to young people;
- provide an adequate counselling service for young people in need;
- foster community awareness on Social Justice issues;
- provide awareness about what programs and facilities are available to young people, particularly in crisis situations;
- give support to the establishment of Youth Committees in each region which give guidance from the elders;
- foster and develop interagency networking and coordination.

Finally, the Policy must include mechanisms for the proper continued development and review of Youth Policies, for example:

- Youth Policy Development Workshops,
- Planning for the implementation of priority programs, short and long term youth development and Youth Service Organisation development.

### Conclusion

The essence of these recommendations is to ensure that the Government has a broad yet sound framework on which to develop its Youth Policy which, it is hoped, will give recognition to the uniqueness of some of Aboriginal and Islander young people's issues and concerns, as well as take into account all of the other issues that are similar to the issues, problems and concerns experienced by all other young Australians. ☼



# Cherbourg Community

David Thompson

*Cherbourg is an Aboriginal community situated 250 kilometres north of Brisbane in the South Burnett region which has a population of around 1500 residents. It is located on Deed of Grant in Trust (DOGIT) land which covers approximately 3500 hectares and also includes the grazing lease of the Wondai Forestry which is around 5000 hectares in size. Children and young people comprise approximately 65 percent of the population.*

Cherbourg Community Council has been in existence since 1986 and has experienced many problems and triumphs since the handing over of Cherbourg from Government control to the people of Cherbourg in March that year.

The Council has five members and operates under the general conditions of all other Local Authorities. In the past the Council was deemed as just a token gesture from the Government with the final say laying with the Manager of the community at the time. However, today the Council has full control over all community matters.

## COMMUNITY NEEDS

### Housing

There is a problem of overcrowding within the community, but Council, with the help of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) is addressing the problem. With the

construction of a motel, two sets of single accommodation, a dormitory style student accommodation and improved housing standards the problem is slowly being resolved. Although Council admits that this will take some time, it is keen to overcome the problem in the shortest possible time so the community can benefit.

A 1990 survey revealed that sixty-four new houses were needed just to cater for the houses providing accommodation for more than six persons per house. The housing problem is expected to escalate based on the present growth rate of Cherbourg and the expected influx of residents due to the implementation of the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) in early 1993.

### Employment

Unemployment should be non-existent within Cherbourg with the implementation of CDEP. This program will provide employment for unemployed people, who will work for

the amount of benefit they are currently receiving. The benefits are that the employee, although working part-time, receives the full benefits of a full-time employee (eg. leave loading, sick pay, workers compensation, etc). Council will provide full-time employment opportunities for Cherbourg people also.

It is expected that young people will come back to Cherbourg to work under the program and once again be reunited with their families. Alcoholism is expected to drop considerably, along with the associated crime. It is expected that because the young people of Cherbourg will now be working two or three times per week and going to TAFE the other days, this will instil a sense of pride and self esteem back into this once proud and committed community.

### Law

The Council has adopted new By-Laws that deal directly with people who break community law. A Court system is in place that deals with the Council By-Laws and the Magistrates are Justices of the Peace from within this community.

### Services

Young people in Cherbourg have no real youth services. There need to be more services provided to the community that can cater for young people

who repeat offend, run away from home, or continually abuse family, the system and their peers.

Other services should be brought into the community also. At present the majority of the community do all their shopping at Murgon, because there are no shopping facilities in Cherbourg itself. Enterprises need to be set up and run successfully. People need to be properly trained to operate these businesses at a profit and how to cater for situations that arise from time to time. People involved in the existing services need to look at their own role within the community and take a vested interest in their job.



### WHAT SHOULD BE DONE

Housing should be addressed by the Government, both State and Federal. There is a need to provide suitable accommodation for community residents who are currently living in overcrowded conditions with their relatives.

The TAFE Centre should be utilised to benefit the community more. Courses should be provided that prepare the young people for the outside world and also teach them about Aboriginal Culture so it does not fade into the background the way it is at present.

Existing community organisations should liaise more often and identify other services that are needed within the community.

More Government input is also needed. After all, it was the Government that created this community and now they expect to just walk away from the problems they have caused. The Government must inject more funding into Cherbourg, and other Aboriginal communities, to allow the community to provide a better service to its residents. ★

David Thompson is the Public Relations Officer of the Cherbourg Community Council. He is a relative to the Bligh family who are descendants of the Kabi Kabi tribe and has worked at Cherbourg for 4 years.



# Jackie Huggins

Niki Widdowson

**Aboriginal writer, historian and activist Jackie Huggins has returned to her writing after an eight month stint with the Division of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs where she was employed to restructure the division.**

*"Part of my job description was to remove institutionalised racism. Now, I said, if I can do that in six months you can pay me a million dollars."*

*"I had been away from the Public Service for about seven years, it may well have been 70, because attitudes and the levels of ignorance haven't changed that much."*

The pen is mightier than the sword for Jackie, more effective, she believes, than jousting within bureaucracies. For the last three years writing has been her chosen mode of activism.

She holds a degree in history and anthropology, a Diploma of Education and an Honours Degree in women's studies and history and her writing style reflects this background.

*"I am too busy, I feel, telling the truth about what has happened to Aboriginal people in this country and I can't get off the surrealist approach in terms of doing fictional stuff,"* Jackie said.

While the preferred medium of many Aboriginal women writers is poetry, selected for its brevity and impact potential, Jackie's writing blends oral history, recorded narrative and fact.

What is "fact", however, is debatable. There has been an absence in the history books of what the Aboriginal experience of recorded events was about and where they were coming from.

*"All the government documents have been very much tainted by a very eurocentric mis-match of information so what you are getting is not the Aboriginal story. You are*

*getting the white officials' interpretations and the filters that have come through and their prejudices, of course,"* Jackie said.

*"I think for an Aboriginal historian, what we have to do is read between the lines of those documents and say 'Well this doesn't exactly fit here, what's missing?' and I think only Aboriginal people who have the insight are able to do that."*

While white historians can get their information "out of the prized white archives", the Aboriginal method is to go back to the oral history and ask the old people.

*"They have quite vivid memories still about what happened in 1923 on the mission when so and so was sent off to work ...."*

In the last funding round of the Arts Advisory Committee, Jackie received \$10,000 towards costs for a collection of writings on historical issues and racism from an Aboriginal perspective. She notes the grant was not made under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage category but in the individual project category.

Although her writing has been largely unpaid to date, Jackie says her activism is unstoppable.

*"Everything that has happened for Aboriginal people in this country has been at the initiative of Aboriginal people themselves. It has not been handed to us on a platter, like myths that are around out there say."*

*"Everything that has been done for Aboriginal people has been done with, I guess, a degree of goodwill but not very*

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*much and it has been done on the backs of Blacks and the blood, and the bones and the sweat and tears of our ancestors who fought for justice in this country."*

It's not surprising then, that Jackie sees the putting in place of an Aboriginal history as a priority that ranks alongside the need for a treaty acknowledging her people's prior claim to the land. In this she echoes the sentiments of Samoan writer Albert Wendt who held that the history of the Pacific had not been written until it had been written by people indigenous to the region.

An Aboriginal history would go a long way towards fostering better race relation, Jackie feels.

*"Racism is just fed on ignorance ... racism is at the very heart of our problems, it's endemic. It's very hard to say whether it's improved or not. Sometimes I think it has but then I go out the door and I am faced with the same old thing,"* she says with a weariness that is palpable.

*"It's still around us, it's a disease, it's in all sorts of shapes and forms and we need a lot more non-Aboriginal people to understand and come to terms with that and to start treating Aboriginals as their equals and give them the dignity and trust they deserve."*

She has a book in the offing called *"If the Truth be Known."* It's the one she received the grant for and it will be a collection of essays on history, racism, colonialism and women's issues, the manuscript for which should be ready by the end of this year.

Of the three books Jackie has pending, the first to be published will be *"Auntie Rita"*, a biography of her mother which, she hopes, will be put out later this year by the Institute of Aboriginal Studies in Canberra.

*"My mother wrote the story in her head. She has lived with the story all her life and what I merely did was transpose those thoughts into a written language."*

*"I am comfortable about writing and I know that I can write in a style which doesn't inhibit my Aboriginalness but it also helps to convey a meaning to the wider public."*

She wants the book to speak to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people using a mix of her mother's oral history in Aboriginal English and standard English.



Jackie's mother was forcibly removed from her traditional homeland in Carnarvon Gorge in the early twenties and sent to a place outside of Kingaroy to the Cherbourg Aboriginal settlement.

*It was in the days when the Government had a policy of putting all Aboriginal people out of sight, out of mind into missions and reserves to keep them away from whites, under the guise of having to protect Aboriginal people from the very violent stuff that was happening on the frontier. But it really was to create a mental dependency on the powers that be."*

The removal of authority of Aboriginal people over their children was an attempt to sever them from the ties of traditional Aboriginal culture, and thereby lead to its extinction.

At 19, Rita received her exemption papers which meant she could leave the mission because, as she was told, "she was a responsible person now."

*"We say that all these kinds of things happen in South Africa... but they have happened within the living memory of many people, and still happen today."*

Despite her experience, Jackie's mother instilled in her children a pride in being Aboriginal, involving them in Aboriginal activities from an early age.

*"There are beautiful aspects of my culture like sharing, non-competitiveness, non-materialism, respect for others as human beings which I never saw reciprocated in Anglo society. I never wanted to be white because my dignity and spirit would be dead,"* she once wrote.

Jackie reiterates the Ernie Dingo joke: *"The only time I want to be white is when I am trying to hail a cab"*.

She estimates 90 per cent of her writing so far has dealt with Aboriginal women's issues, something she intends to change to avoid being labelled as exclusively a women's writer.

However, she does plan to edit another book of a collection of Aboriginal women's writing. Here again, she sees herself as an intermediary, who can negotiate the system on behalf of Aboriginal women and get their views into print.

For the last couple of years she has been seeking writings from women that are not life stories but rather probing, analytical looks at their history and experience and the issues that have affected them.

*"I want to look at their motivation about why they have written that, about the messages they want to get across, about the audience they hope to address and about how educative that material is or if they want it to be."*

Jackie hopes she can redress the reluctance in the past on the part of Aboriginal women to submit their writing to a white editor or white publishing company because they felt it would not be "good" enough and because perhaps the Aboriginal language and essence of the writing would not be understood.

*"Basically I am not touching it. I want to put it out and say this is the way Aboriginal women write ... and hopefully it will be published by Magabala Books which is the Aboriginal publishing company in Broome, West Australia."*

Talking to Jackie Huggins is a sobering experience. She is polite, she speaks without rancour but hers is a take it or leave it position, there need be no pandering to white sensibilities or consciences.

The message is clear: As long as white Australia remains ignorant of Aboriginal culture, and fails to acknowledge their part in the plight of these people, it can never call itself a whole or just society. ☪

This article was reprinted with permission from "The Brisbane Review", Thursday, 9 July 1992.

## RESEARCH UPDATE

## *Aboriginal Young People and Their Identity*

The Department of Employment, Education and Training is funding a research project at Logan/Beenleigh on the outskirts of Brisbane. The research is aimed at finding out how young people who are at risk of becoming offenders, access information and services in their community. There is a special emphasis on Aboriginal and Islander young people.

The local Interagency is the group responsible for planning the research and LINK-UP is the host organisation in the community.

The project is being conducted in three phases:

- 1) collecting information about the needs of young people for information, and their knowledge of crime;
- 2) implementing some strategies and evaluating them;
- 3) implementing long-term programs.

A workshop of the Interagencies was conducted in March 1993 which will lay the foundation for stage 2. Members of the Aboriginal and Islander community will hold a separate workshop prior to the main workshop.

The Community Development and Crime Prevention Unit at the Queensland University of Technology is conducting the research at phase 1 in cooperation with the local organisations.

The methodology encompasses a self-report survey distributed through the schools and organisations and through consultations with the community. The survey was devised with input from the local organisations. The survey covers topics such as family relationships, activities, criminal activity/attitudes eg. shoplifting, vandalism, knowledge of available help and local organisations, and hopes and plans for the future. A special worker was appointed to make contact with the local young people of Aboriginal and Islander descent.

A report will detail the outcome of the survey and consultation at the end of phase 1. A summary of the report in more simple terms will also be made available through DEET.

For more information contact Kay Thomas, Director of the Community Development and Crime Prevention Unit at the Queensland University of Technology on (07) 864 4764.

# Achieving Adulthood in Aboriginal Communities

## INTRODUCTION

This research is conducted within the framework of a three-year fellowship on Aboriginal Youth, beginning in November 1991, funded by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). The outcome will be a report submitted to the Institute for publication by the Aboriginal Studies Press.

## AIMS

The research aims to analyse the process underlying the acquisition of adult identities, that is, the particular social factors and distinctive difficulties involved in the passage from childhood to adulthood in Aboriginal communities today. It combines a general cross-cultural theoretical perspective with immediate pragmatic concerns. This entails studying the differences and the eventual contradictions that exist between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal understandings of adulthood.

## HYPOTHESIS

The general hypothesis that underlies this project is that relationships between the individual and society (whether in the larger Australian society or in the local community) are conditioned in an essential way by the type of relationships the individual develops within his or her family setting. In this perspective, family relationships are seen as playing a fundamental role in the process of acquisition of an adult identity.

## METHODOLOGY

Although data gathered at a number of remote and urban Aboriginal

communities in different states constitute an important comparative input, this study is centred upon extensive fieldwork within a single country town community in South Australia.

In keeping with the research hypothesis, one principal research tool is the collection and analysis of life stories within the larger framework of family histories. This allows connections to be made between problems confronting the present generation, and events that occurred in previous generations.

A preliminary period of fieldwork has resulted in the selection of a core sample of young people to focus upon. This involves the taking of family trees as well as in depth interviews not only with the young people themselves, but also with their parents, siblings and other relatives, as well as certain members of their peer group. Further information regarding this core sample group comes from daily life in the community. Indeed, interaction with the people in this sample includes:

- sharing everyday community life;
- formal and informal interviews conducted in their family and/or a more neutral place;
- regular participation in youth programs as a support worker;
- occasional participation in school activities;
- accompanying young people to court and to Aboriginal Legal Rights;
- and in some cases, visiting them in jail.

It also entails participating in Community Council discussions

regarding difficulties faced by the community with their young people (vandalism, trespassing rules, breaking in, etc), as well as in other meetings that assemble the different agencies and services involved in youth activities.

## POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

In this research, the family background of young Aboriginal people will provide the framework to better understanding how life events are integrated into personal and community histories and participate in the construction of Aboriginal identities. This includes those pertaining to the history of Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal contact and to the intervention of various agencies and services. As a consequence of this overall perspective, the various problems involving young people - alcoholism, vandalism and juvenile offences, early pregnancy, difficulties at school, etc - will not be considered separately but in connection with each other.

The goal of this study is to analyse the factors underlying Aboriginal young people's involvement in constructive and destructive behaviours, and to emphasise, in both cases, the positive aspects of such behaviours (loyalty to family and community, construction of identity, etc). Indeed, previous clinical work undertaken with young people and their families suggests that to openly identify the positive motivations of destructive behaviours is, in most cases, the best tool for empowering the people involved. Specifically, it encourages them to find innovative ways to transform their destructive attitudes into constructive ones in such a way that respects their own cultural, family and personal values, and makes use of the tools and human resources available to them.

**Marika Moisseeff**

Marika Moisseeff is a French Anthropologist and Psychiatrist specialising in family therapy. She is currently employed as a Research Fellow at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS).

## BOOK REVIEWS

## The Health of Young Aborigines

*"The Health of Young Aborigines: A report on the health of Aborigines aged 12 to 25" prepared for the National Youth Affairs Research Scheme by Maggie Brady. National Clearinghouse for Youth Studies, 1992, 52pp.*

The information and discussion in this report on the health of young Aborigines is presented in a culturally appropriate, informative and interesting manner. It is explained with strong effective wording, finely detailed, logically constructed sentences and well organised chapters. This gives the reader a comprehensive understanding, with a valid and sensitised approach to the complexity of an indigenous society such as ours.

As a Youth Health Worker and also a community conscious person, I can directly relate to the key issues and all of the factors highlighted in this report which contribute to the ill health of Aboriginal young people.

Reading this report has stirred in my mind experiences of ill health events encountered personally and by many, many people in my community, now and in the past.

I have taken into account that Queensland Aborigines have had no input into this report other than the population figures. The report shows that Queensland however has a larger proportion of Aboriginal people in comparison to some of the other states. I believe our state is vastly different from other states in terms of health issues, and should be included in reports such as this.

This report details the issue of racism as one of the factors that impact upon ATSI people in accessing mainstream health services and this report will assist health professionals to recognise their own biases and prejudices in providing health programs to ATSI individuals and communities.

The issues and needs of ATSI young people regarding health have been identified, research has been done and appropriate recommendations have been made. Two of the recommendations highlight unemployment and education.

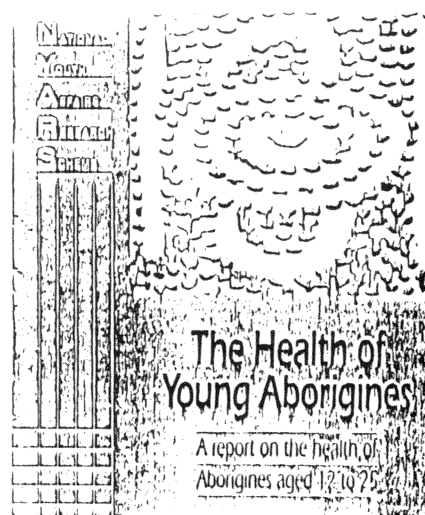
In my view, education and employment should help to establish an economic

base for our people. Unfortunately, our children are subject to so many stresses, especially in the secondary education system. Their only way to address these stresses is to drop out of the education system, thereby leaving them at risk with no direction and no avenues to express their disenchantment with society.

The report also highlights the diversity that exists along with historical events that have shaped Australia's indigenous people today. The information contained in the report makes it vital for non-Aboriginal workers to read, learn and understand the needs, the wishes and the concerns of Aboriginal people.

Lillian Harrison

Lillian Harrison has been a Youth Health Worker at the Innovative Youth Health Program, Woolloongabba for the past two years. She was born and raised in the Cherbourg Community and is interested in the health and well-being of all Aboriginal people.



"The Health of Young Aborigines" is available for \$15.00. A "Short Report for Aboriginal Communities" by Pamela Lyon is also available for \$12.00. Both reports are available from the National Clearinghouse for Youth Studies, GPO Box 252C, Hobart TAS 7001. Ph: (002) 202 591.



# Aboriginal Youth and the Criminal Justice System

"Aboriginal Youth and the Criminal Justice System" by Fay Gale, Rebecca Bailey-Harris and Joy Wundersitz,  
Cambridge University Press, 1990, 156pp.

*Grandfather walked this land in chains  
A land he called his own  
He was given another name  
And taken into town*

*He got special treatment  
He got special treatment  
Very special treatment*

(Extract from "Special Treatment",  
Paul Kelly/Mushroom Music)

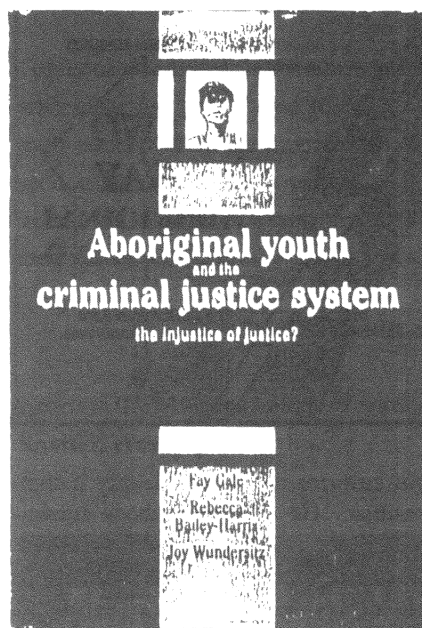
On reading "Aboriginal Youth and the Criminal Justice System" two incidents came to mind. The first was a recent letter to the editor of a Brisbane newspaper. Typical of many similar letters sent to editors of newspapers around Australia, the writer complained of the favourable treatment received by Aboriginal people. The second is a sarcastic reflection on this attitude by Paul Kelly in his song "Special Treatment".

Aboriginal people do receive special treatment, but it is not in the ill-informed way that the writer of the letter to the newspaper editor thinks. The so-called favourable or special treatment received by Aboriginal people is more to do with unacceptable infant mortality rates, higher levels of unemployment, low levels of economic development, inadequate and inappropriate education, welfare dependency and so on.

This book provides a disturbing picture of another form of special treatment, that of Aboriginal young people and the juvenile justice system in South Australia. It comprehensively details the disadvantage faced by Aboriginal young people through the police, screening panels and ultimately the courts, which has ensured that Aboriginal young people are over-represented at every stage of the juvenile justice system. Although based on South Australian statistics and the justice system in that state, the study could easily be of any state or territory in Australia.

"Aboriginal Youth and the Criminal Justice System" provides the reader with

an important insight into how the justice system treats young Aboriginal people once they are apprehended by the police and proceed through the justice system. The statistics used are not meant to reflect behavioural patterns or to identify the causes of crime. They do however provide a clear picture of how the justice system disadvantages Aboriginal young people.



The authors compare the South Australian experience with other countries, and in particular the disadvantage faced by different minorities in those countries. Comparisons with other states and territories throughout Australia are made where comparable statistics are available. Also discussed is the background and history of the juvenile justice system in South Australia in which legislative changes over the past two decades have been intended to ensure a fairer and more equitable system. The authors argue that instead of a fairer and more equitable justice system, Aboriginal young people are now more likely to be caught up in this system than at any time previously.

The findings contained in "Aboriginal Youth and the Criminal Justice System" suggest that the disproportionate

number of Aboriginal young people within the criminal justice system is not entirely due to racial factors. Based on an analysis of the data available, the authors conclude that the juvenile justice system in South Australia, which is based on a justice and welfare model, works well for employed young people from middle class nuclear households.

Those young people who are most disadvantaged by the system are those who are unemployed, from large multi-unit households and who are mobile. Combined with an obvious racial bias it is clear that Aboriginal young people face a justice system which compounds disadvantage upon disadvantage upon them.

This book documents what most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live with and know only too well. The incidence of our children being caught up in a justice system occurs too often and cannot convincingly be blamed solely on offending behaviour.

"Aboriginal Youth and the Criminal Justice System" succeeds in questioning the fairness of the juvenile justice system. It clearly demonstrates that Aboriginal young people do receive special treatment from this system, however this special treatment is not an achievement that either the legislators or those who work in the justice system (particularly the police and the courts) should be proud of.

Michael Jackomos

Michael Jackomos is the Policy Resource Officer, Aboriginal Liaison, in the Juvenile Justice Branch of the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. Prior to moving to Queensland he worked with the Aboriginal Child Care Agency in Melbourne for five years and was also involved with a number of other Aboriginal community organisations.

## Two-Way Aboriginal Learning: Education and Cultural Survival

*Two-Way Aboriginal Learning: Education and Cultural Survival* by Stephen Harris, Canberra, Aboriginal Studies Press, 1990, 175pp.

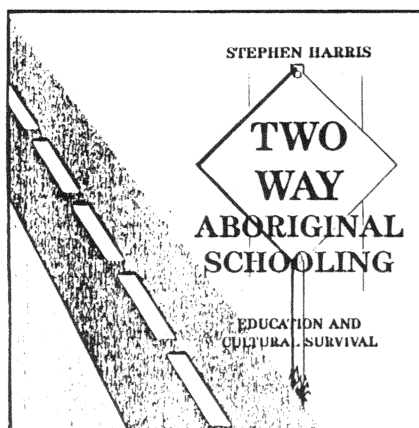
This book raises to a new level our consideration of the fundamental difficulties Anglo-Australians and Aboriginal Australians face - and have always faced - in comprehending the other and in co-habiting in this continent. Not since W. E. H. Stanner's "White Man Got No Dreaming" has there been a comparable work dealing with our difficulties - one so eloquent and unmuddled, written with such a steady ethical eye, one so modest yet authoritative and constructive. I cannot imagine that it will not change the perceptions of all - other than some of the Aboriginal people - who read it.

Yet the book is not about politics or history or economics or health but about cultural survival among the remoter Aborigines and how a particular model for schools might facilitate that survival. Implementation of the model would require an immense resolve among Aboriginal people and an unprecedented consistency in support on the part of governments. The book is an appeal for maturity in recognition by the larger Australian community of the determination of the Aboriginal people to be themselves and of their need to have the space and conditions that will allow them to choose their own path.

Stephen Harris has unusual qualifications for attempting the task of clarification he set himself. A son of particularly resourceful missionary parents he experienced a childhood at Oenpelli, Roper River and Groote Eylandt. He became a linguist and for some years worked in the Bi-Lingual Schools Program of the Northern Territory Education Department. He completed doctoral studies in the United States with a thesis that defined with a new degree of precision and insight the difficulties Yolgnu children have with Balanda (Western) schooling in Arnhem Land. In a published version the thesis was addressed as much to Aboriginal people as to others. All of those working

in Aboriginal education were indebted to him for guidance in mediating Western education to Aboriginal children in the existing school systems.

In "Two-Way Aboriginal Schooling" Stephen Harris has gone much further. He has now come to the conclusion that Western and Aboriginal cultures are not merely very different from each other and perhaps capable of being blended



but cultures which are deeply incompatible. He redefines those incompatibilities. He is difficult to refute. What are the implications? The Western school system is a cultural ladder, a process he has elsewhere described as one of 'initiations into becoming higher status white culture people'. Aboriginal people readily see the need to acquire part of the white culture but at the same time they overwhelmingly want to retain their own cultural and social outlook - in essence to remain Aboriginal.

The 'intuitive' response of Aborigines to their dilemma is to have an education for their children that looks both ways - through the provision of 'two-way' schools. Harris has attempted to work out the practical implications of such maintenance of two 'domains' within the schools and communities and in the minds of Aboriginal people - a Western domain into which Aboriginal people can enter as they require and an Aboriginal cultural domain that is secure and respected. Many Aboriginal people living on remote settlements and stations have long separated their lives into two

such domains, the one public and conforming to white rules, the other secret and bound by Aboriginal rules. Fundamental to the maintenance of an acknowledged Aboriginal domain in the future will be a degree of physical separation for the communities, the maintenance of Aboriginal languages, community control of their own radio and television stations, and local control of community schools. Undoubtedly Aboriginal culture and society will grow and change within its domain but the separation of domains is imperative if Aboriginal culture and identity is to survive and will be the means that will allow Aboriginal society to continue, Harris believes, 'forever'.

Stephen Harris is speaking wholly of people who live in those small communities mainly found in the north of Australia where Aborigines predominate and where Aboriginal languages survive. He has little to say to that larger Aboriginal community that has been trapped by history and culture in the towns and cities of 'white' or multicultural Australia. While there is a movement for cultural reconstruction among urban Aborigines, without language separation it is difficult to foresee the establishment in large towns and cities of separate Aboriginal domains of the kind or degree that Stephen Harris speaks. Yet even there the assertion that Aboriginal people have a fair claim to some degree of space - or to some restitution of equity in land that will render them potentially a permanently separate community - may become harder and harder to deny. For the Aboriginal communities that Stephen Harris is concerned about, the implementation of his - and their - proposal for two-way schools seems a matter of great urgency.

David Lewis

David Lewis is currently working as a Lecturer in the Tropical Health Program at the University of Queensland. He previously worked in the School of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education at Kangaroo Point TAFE and prior to that, in the Aboriginal Task Force in the Northern Territory.

"Two Way Aboriginal Learning" is available from Aboriginal Studies Press, GPO Box 553, Canberra 2601. Ph: (06) 246 1110.

# Aboriginal English and the Law

*Aboriginal English and the Law* by Diana Eades, Queensland Law Society, 1992, 104pp.

If your agency can only afford to buy one publication this year, I would recommend that you purchase "Aboriginal English and the Law". This book is an indispensable manual for anyone who works or wants to work with Aboriginal people.

Eades, an anthropological linguist, has written this short, readable book on the basis of work she has done with Aborigines from Queensland and other Top End communities. She states that, while there are regional differences in particular words, pronunciations and grammatical constructions, these are outweighed by similarities throughout Australia.

The book begins with an outline of the historical and current situation of Aboriginal people. "Aboriginal English" is a dialect of English spoken by most Aborigines in Australia today. Eades distinguishes it from Standard English, Kriol and Pidgin. She maintains that very few Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people are truly "biculturally competent" (that is, fully fluent in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal English). The subtlety of the differences between these forms of English can lead to confusion and frustration in cross-cultural interactions.

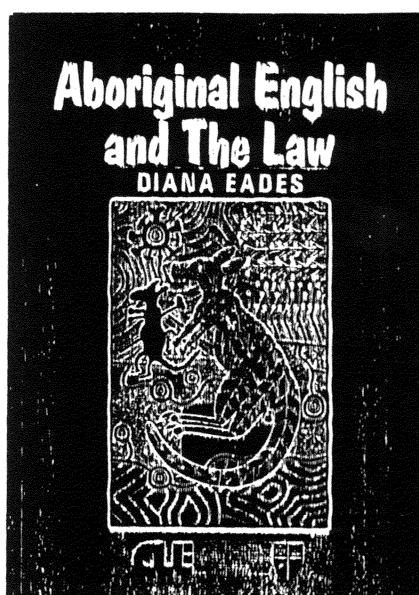
Eades explains how the style of Aboriginal communication is diametrically opposed to that of legal interviews, which usually consist of a volley of direct questions. Because Aboriginal people often have little physical privacy, they maintain their privacy through the style of their verbal interactions. Eades

outlines techniques for achieving effective communication, such as hinting around topics, using silence, reciprocal sharing and rewording questions about quantifiable concepts. Finally, she discusses cultural factors which are relevant to working with Aborigines.

This book is written in layperson's terms, with clear examples used to illustrate each concept and summaries of each section. It is a must for anyone working in the legal setting, but would be valuable for anyone working with Aborigines.

Annie Goldflam

Annie is the Migrant Access Worker at Shelter, Western Australia.



"Aboriginal English and the Law" is available for \$25 (includes postage) from CLE, The Queensland Law Society, 4th Floor, GPO Box 1785, Brisbane 4001. Ph: (07) 233 5817.

BOOK PREVIEW

# youth affairs peak bodies

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## GOVERNMENT

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### Commonwealth

Youth Bureau  
DEET  
Canberra ACT 2600  
(06) 276 8462

### ACT

Youth Affairs  
ACT Housing and Community  
Services Bureau  
3rd Floor, ACT Health Authority  
Cnr Moore & Alinga Sts  
Canberra ACT 2601  
(06) 245 4607

### New South Wales

Office of Youth Affairs  
Ministry of Education, Youth and  
Women's Affairs  
Level 2, 410 Campbell St  
Sydney NSW 2000  
(02) 561 8700

### Northern Territory

Family, Youth and Children's  
Services Branch  
Dept of Health & Community  
Services  
87 Mitchell St  
Darwin NT 0800  
(089) 89 2727

### Queensland

Youth Bureau  
Dept of Tourism, Sport and Racing  
1st Floor, Mineral House  
41-59 George St  
Brisbane QLD 4000  
(07)224 8451

### South Australia

State Youth Affairs  
Dept of Employment and TAFE  
69 Hindmarsh Square  
Adelaide SA 5000  
(08) 226 1820

### Tasmania

Office of Youth Affairs  
Dept of the Premier and Cabinet  
2nd Floor, Franklin Square  
Hobart TAS 7000  
(002) 303 893

### Victoria

Office of Youth Affairs  
Ministry of Ethnic, Municipal and  
Community Affairs  
Level 4, 500 Burke St  
Melbourne VIC 3000  
(03) 602 8300

### Western Australia

Office of the Family  
Youth Policy Unit  
3rd Floor, May Holman Centre  
32 St George's Tce  
Perth WA 6000  
(09) 222 0333

### Local Government

Youth Affairs Reference Group  
Australian Local Government Assn  
Municipal Association of Victoria  
468 St Kilda Rd  
Melbourne VIC 3004  
(03) 867 5266

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## NON-GOVERNMENT

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### National

Australian Youth Policy and  
Action Coalition (AYPAC)  
PO Box 519  
Dickson ACT 2602  
(06) 241 8055

### ACT

Youth Affairs Network of ACT  
(YANACT)  
PO Box 208  
Civic Square ACT 2608  
(06) 247 3540

### New South Wales

Youth Action and Policy  
Association (YAPA)  
4th Floor  
8 Kippax St  
Surry Hills NSW 2010  
(02) 281 2344

### Northern Territory

Youth Services Development  
Officer  
Darwin City Council  
PO Box 84  
Darwin NT 0801  
(089) 82 2511

### Queensland

Youth Affairs Network of  
Queensland  
(YANQ)  
PO Box 116  
Fortitude Valley QLD 4006  
(07) 852 1800

### South Australia

Youth Affairs Council of SA  
(YACSA)  
1st Floor, 194 Morphett St  
Adelaide SA 5000  
(08) 212 5246

### Victoria

Youth Affairs Council of Victoria  
(YACVIC)  
Suite 1  
250 Gore St  
Fitzroy VIC 3065  
(03) 419 9122

### Western Australia

Youth Affairs Council of WA  
(YACWA)  
137 Lake St  
Northbridge WA 6000  
(09) 328 8277



# YOUTH AFFAIRS NETWORK OF QUEENSLAND INC

## WHAT IS YANQ?

The Youth Affairs Network of Queensland (YANQ) Inc. is the independent, non-government umbrella organisation of groups and individuals from Queensland's youth sector.

Operational since 1989, YANQ was incorporated in January 1991. The Network acts to promote the interests and well-being of young people in Queensland, especially disadvantaged young people. It advocates for them to government and the community and encourages the development of policies and programs responsive to the needs of young people.

YANQ also supports the development of regional networks in the non-government youth sector. It is YANQ's view that the development of stronger networks will lead to better services for young people as information and skills are shared.

*YANQ consists of over 400 individual and organisational members throughout Queensland, including youth services, advocacy groups, church groups and community organisations with interests in areas as diverse as juvenile justice, housing, health, rural issues, young people with disabilities, young women's issues and young people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-English speaking backgrounds. Associate members are drawn from federal, state and local government bodies.*

## WHAT DOES YANQ DO?

YANQ employs three staff in its Brisbane-based secretariat. It undertakes a variety of activities designed to raise the profile of and encourage action on issues affecting young people. Activities include:

- submissions to government reviews; • making representations to government/other influential bodies; • undertaking campaigns and lobbying; • consulting and liaising with members and the field; • publishing newsletters and journals; • initiating projects; • disseminating information to members and the field; • providing training; and • cooperating with interstate and national youth affairs bodies.

## HOW DOES YANQ WORK?

YANQ is managed by a Coordinating Committee elected by the Ordinary (non-government) membership to oversee its day to day operation and supervision of staff.

YANQ holds a Policy Forum at least once a year at which delegates representing the membership give direction for YANQ's policy-making and activities for the next twelve months. Delegates to Policy Forum must be Ordinary members.

YANQ working parties on specific issues may be formed at any time during the year. Any interested member may participate in such working parties.

YANQ's decision making processes are based on a consensus model.

## YANQ PUBLICATIONS

### NEWSLETTER

*Network Noise* is the bi-monthly newsletter of YANQ. Members are encouraged to contribute to the newsletter which is ideal for communicating news on: • training events; • youth programs; • interagency or youth forum meetings; • publications and resources; • positions vacant; • changes of address. *Network Noise* is distributed to subscribers and YANQ members only.

### JOURNAL

*transitions* is the YANQ journal published three times per year. It presents in-depth articles on research and topical issues of relevance to youth affairs, both in Queensland and nationally. It is an ideal forum for youth service providers to describe and analyse their work. *transitions* is distributed to subscribers and members only.

## WHO CAN JOIN?

*Membership of YANQ is open to anyone with a proven interest in youth affairs.*

### ORDINARY MEMBERSHIP

Is available to individuals and organisations from the **non-government** sector and entitles you to: • nominate for the Coordinating Committee & Policy Forum; • full voting rights; • six newsletters and three journals per year; • information on campaigns and reviews; • opportunities to participate in YANQ workshops.

### ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

Is available to individuals, departments and services from local, state or federal **government** and entitles you to: • six newsletters and three journals per year; • information on campaigns and reviews; • opportunities to participate in YANQ workshops. Associate members do not have voting rights and cannot nominate for the Coordinating Committee or Policy Forum.

### SUBSCRIBERS

Subscribers receive six newsletters and three journals per year.

### MEMBERSHIP FEES PER ANNUM

Individual	Income < \$16,000	\$5.00
	\$16,000 - \$50,000	\$20.00
	Income > \$50,000	\$30.00
Organisation	No funding	\$5.00
	Funding < \$100,000	\$35.00
	Funding > \$100,000	\$50.00
Government	Department or Service	\$70.00
Subscribers	<i>transitions &amp; Network Noise</i>	\$50.00

*Membership fees are due and payable on a calendar year basis (covering the period 1 January - 31 December)*