

Network Noise

Newsletter of the Youth Affairs Network of Queensland Inc

Quarterly Newsletter August/September 2005

Attention Given to Deficit of Medical Model

During the month of August YANQ embarked on an ambitious tour of south-west and south-east Queensland, presenting lectures arguing that psychiatric diagnoses (such as 'Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity' or 'Oppositional Defiant Disorder') and their 'cures' (drugs) were unnecessary and dangerous. The lectures were presented by Dr Bob Jacobs, a US based children's lawyer and psychologist who some readers may remember from the 2003 State Youth Affairs Conference in Mackay.

The lectures argued that diagnoses such as ADHD and ODD and the drugs



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used to treat them were damaging to children. Research claiming some sort of biological or genetic link to challenging behaviour was also criticised, as was the process in which diagnoses were voted into existence.

The aim of the lectures was to encourage further debate and to question the appropriateness of applying a medical model to children's challenging behaviour.

This aim, we hope, was achieved. Over the two weeks from the 1st to the 15th of August, Dr Jacobs presented to 230 people in Charleville, Roma, Toowoomba, Ipswich, Gold Coast, Logan, Bundaberg, Maryborough, Maroochydore and north and south Brisbane. The discussions at each lecture invariably raised some interesting points. Listening to these, it became clear that YANQ is not alone in its criticism of psychiatric diagnoses such as ADHD or ODD. Nevertheless, some points

of view were raised at the lectures that were critical of Dr Jacobs' position that the diagnoses are damaging to young people. The two most common points of disagreement that were raised at the lectures were:

a) that the diagnoses provide useful information to youth workers, teachers etc. and help them to 'tailor' programs that meet young people's needs;

b) diagnoses are required so that young people and their families can receive extra support (for instance, family payments or teacher aide hours).

On the first point, it might be useful to distinguish between labels that refer to objectively identifiable physical conditions, such as cancer or a fractured tibia, and subjective labels that simply describe collections of behaviours and have no identifiable biological basis (such as ADHD for instance). In the former

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- change of address
- latest resources
- research news
- innovations

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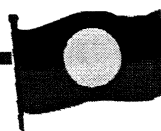
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in this publication do not necessarily
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YANQ believes that the primary culture of Australia is Aboriginal.

We recognise that Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and South Sea Islander peoples are 3 separate cultures. We recognise Aboriginal people as the permanent custodians of mainland Australia, including those areas of land whose owners have been wiped out as a result of racist policies and acts. We use the term *custodianship* in the context of protection and care for the land. YANQ is committed to respecting Murri communities and individuals. We seek to understand their responses to policies and issues affecting them. We are committed to learning about their understandings of the impact of decisions on them. YANQ apologises for the past and present social mistreatment of Murri and Islander people created by colonisation, and is committed to supporting the healing process.

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case, these labels can assist health professionals to offer the correct treatment needed to cure the ailment (chemotherapy for cancer, a plaster cast for the broken leg).

The problem with the latter type of label is that they pathologise and categorise unique individuals. Diagnoses such as 'ADHD' mark certain characteristics (eg 'always on the go') as deficits, discount these traits as possible strengths (now or in the future) and ignore other strengths in the diagnosed person. Furthermore, they do nothing to describe the context of the labelled person's life, or suggest reasons why the behaviours that others (eg schools) find challenging might be somehow rewarding or useful to the person performing them. In this way then, these labels imply a problem within the 'patient' and in so doing de-emphasise problems outside the person that may be more relevant (e.g. poor teacher:student ratios, bullying, pressures to conform etc). Proponents of labelling theory would further argue that the labels can reinforce the 'deviant' behaviour. According to this theory, people that have been labelled are treated by others (who are aware of the label) in ways that reinforce the label (eg 'oh Johnny, you always misbehave'). Those who have been labelled may then react to such treatment by acting out the behaviour that is now expected of them.

The other common point that was raised was that the diagnoses are required in order to receive various forms of special assistance. Unfortunately this is the present reality. If parents of young people reject some psychiatric diagnoses, they potentially cut themselves off from various opportunities for assistance. However this need not be the case. It is possible to envisage a system of (for instance) additional educational supports that were offered on the basis of factors impacting on students (low achievement, homelessness, challenging behaviours) rather than diagnoses of deficit. Such a system could be far less stigmatising, and allow schools and administrators greater flexibility in providing support services. Such a system may also be more expensive, however with Ritalin now listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (and therefore subsidised by tax dollars) perhaps we need to question if this money could be put to more effective and ethical use within schools and communities.

This is one question YANQ intends to follow up in the future, and we hope that many of those who attended the lecture series will help us out in whatever way they can. If you'd like more information about the lectures, or YANQ's criticisms of diagnoses such as ADHD please contact David at YANQ or e-mail him via ndo@yanq.org.au

Young People and Democracy in Australia: Recent History

Since 1996 the Howard Government has systematically eroded the rights and opportunities young people have to participate in the Australian democratic system and the ability for others to represent young people on their behalf. The most recent instance of this is the Government's decision to exclude Tasmanians from the National Youth Roundtable and reduce the number of young people it consults within this formal mechanism.

Following the decision to abolish funding to the federal youth peak body - the Australian Youth Policy Action Coalition (AYPAC) - in 1999 by the then Minister for Youth Affairs, David Kemp, there has been no body that advocates the specific interests of young people, youth workers and youth organisations at a federal level. It has been left to the state's youth peak bodies - funded by state governments - to do all the necessary work.

Since then, the Howard Government has continuously resisted the many calls for the establishment of an independent Commissioner for Children and Young People made by youth workers, state peak bodies, academics, the Federal Opposition and the Australian Senate (in the Forgotten Australians Inquiry, the Senate Committee for Community Affairs called for the establishment of a National Commissioner for Children and Young People).

Representation of youth by youth matters. Most would agree that young people have important contributions to make to society. As young people are not allowed to vote, they should be formally consulted. As with all constituencies, this must happen on a formal basis in order to have credibility and efficacy.

The key consequence of the Government's decision to abolish AYPAC is it is no longer accountable for its decisions to young people under the age of 18. Being unable to vote, young people now have no way to formally participate in the

Australian political system. The lack of a peak body or commissioner for Australian youth below voting age means they have virtually no input into Government policies that directly affect them.

This is an absurd situation, and public policy suffers as a result. Youth are the main recipients of secondary and tertiary level education, are the exclusive beneficiaries of certain payments intended to help them study, are employees and sometimes even employers, as well as the target audience for various 'education campaigns' conducted at enormous expense to the taxpayer.

It stands to reason that federal education policy, youth income support payments, industrial relations changes and campaigns to make individuals and societies safer and happier could be improved by articulate and thoughtful youth.

After the Government defunded AYPAC in 1999, it established the National Youth Roundtable as its method of consultation with young people. The Roundtable has brought together 50 young people every year for the past 5 years at the relatively low cost of \$500,000 a year.

This year the Government has halved the number of new participants to the roundtable, the only mechanism for young people to consult with the Government. This is a very regressive step. There are thousands of young people in Australia who have valuable contributions to make and yet the Howard Government insists on reducing the number of young people it will consult with.

With 450 applications for the Roundtable in 2005, there is undoubtedly interest from young people, yet the Government insists on reducing the number from 50 to 30 as 'fifty is a little unwieldy' according to the manager of the Youth Bureau.

No more 'unwieldy', or problematic, than the 150 members of House of Representatives, surely?

Even when young people are selected for the roundtable they are not able to fully express their views.

In 2004, not one agenda item set by the Government discussed issues that young people often feel most strongly about - war, terrorism or refugees.

The absence of both a federal peak body and commissioner for children and young people points to an attempt by the Howard Government to silence the voices of young people and those speaking on their behalf. Young people hold a unique position within Australian society and face unique challenges.

While they may be seen to have more opportunities than any generation before them, they also face unprecedented challenges. Alarming rates of young people suffer mental health problems, have no home and no job - this is a sobering fact about the generation which is said to have benefited from so many advances - both socially and technologically.

These are the challenges facing young people and every effort should be made to solve them. These efforts, if they are to be most effective, must involve young people.

It is time to recognise that young people need an effective way to communicate their needs and ideas to the Federal Government. This must be done through more than just a shrinking roundtable: it must involve a peak body and a commissioner.

It is time for the Howard Government to begin valuing young people's views on society's challenges, and establish innovative and inclusive means for young people to get their views across - not limit them. Ensuring the wellbeing of Australia's young people ensures the wellbeing of Australia's future.

- By Luke B'Osher

A joint venture between YANQ Training, Anglicare Central Queensland and Department of Employment & Training resulted in successful training for Youth Workers

During March 2003 I attended the YANQ State Conference held at Mackay and participated in a workshop presented by Natalie Bell about the recently developed YANQ Training.

A couple of months down the track, Kim Moir, my Regional Manager from Anglicare Central Queensland, asked me to try to ascertain how many people there were in Central Queensland who may be interested in undertaking training in Certificate III or IV in Youth Work. Via numerous networks, I posted emails and made phone calls seeking expressions of interest - by October 2003 I had 15 people listed.

I contacted YANQ Training and asked if I was able to gain funding would YANQ be willing to provide the distance learning course including two 2 day face to face workshops. Natalie agreed. Anglicare Central Queensland Management agreed to be the Community Based Organisation for the application. So began the process of applying for funding.

Ray Power from Department of Employment & Training was encouraging and of great assistance during the C R T F application process. By the time the final application was lodged we had 15 Certificate IV and 10 Certificate III participants. We were fortunate to be funded to provide these places.

John Flanagan was the facilitator appointed by YANQ for this training. In Moura John must have wondered what he had got himself into when on a very cold May 2004 morning he first met the 25 students from several areas of Central Queensland. We came from varying backgrounds, a multitude of educational experience levels and age groups; some had previous youth work experience others had none - but our common goal was a burning desire to make a positive difference in the lives of the young people we had contact with.

After our first face-to-face workshop it was clear that several people enrolled in Certificate III were capable of completing Certificate IV. YANQ generously offered to provide training at a discounted rate so these people would get an opportunity to complete study at the appropriate level. The first contract variation was made for a change to 21 Certificate IV and 4 Certificate III students.

We have had numerous applications for contract variations during the period of the course and these have been assisted by the efforts of Beth Roberts from Department of Employment & Training, who took over from Ray as Regional Executive Officer shortly after funding was allocated, and Natalie at YANQ Training. John Flanagan has been very supportive and was able to assist & advise me on several occasions regarding extending timelines and queries from DET Contract Management on questions relating to qualifications.



Listed from left to right are Siyavash Doostkhah (Director of YANQ), Gary Latcham (Graduate), Sue Meier (Graduate), John Flanagan (Trainer), Jenny Tebby (Graduate), Yvonne Smola (Graduate), Lyn Webb (Graduate), and Robyn Sanewski (Graduate).

When it became obvious that an additional face-to-face workshop was advisable YANQ Training arranged for this to happen - YANQ is commended for that decision as this additional workshop was not originally budgeted for.

Being the Community Based Organisation contact person has been a learning curve for me. I have learned that, although you ring, write or email students, they don't have to return your contact. Although a study

buddy system is implemented, students can choose to attend or not attend as they see fit. Of course if the students do attend then the work is easier and the outcomes better for the students.

Even though it was explained at all workshops and in all correspondence that students are welcome to contact the trainer, there is a reluctance to do so. Students would mention to me they were having or had had difficulties; but when asked if they had contacted John, every time except once they had not contacted him. The student who contacted John said it took John only two minutes to clear up the confusion, "he made it so easy, I don't know why I didn't call him sooner" was the response.

As a student, I think I can safely say that many of us found the prospect of returning to study that required more than a one or two day workshop daunting. I admit that I found balancing family, work and study, at times, even more difficult than I had expected. I can safely say that I owe a debt of gratitude to my family, my supervisor at work and to my fellow students for their support and encouragement during this time.

The distance mode of delivery expects a lot from the

student and I would recommend that, if you are considering seeking funding for a similar course, at least 12 months is required by most students. I would also advise you to budget for more than 2 face to face workshops.

As is usual in the country several of the original 25 students moved interstate or gained full time employment in non-youth or community service fields and were unable to submit their assessments. We also found that those students who were isolated by long distances from other students found it difficult to take part in the study buddy system and also did not submit all of their assessments.

We had 9 students achieve their full qualification of a Certificate IV in Youth Work and five others who submitted some modules and will be receiving Certificates for the modules they completed. All these students now have a clearer understanding of a youth workers role, their own capacity and organisational policies & procedures. They also have the tools to provide a better service to the young people, parents and other stakeholders in their communities. One Student credits the fact that he had completed this

course with his being appointed to a new full time position. Another student has already enrolled in tertiary studies and 7 others are researching tertiary or further accredited training options that best fulfil their needs and aspirations. This in itself is a major step forward for many of us who have not been in the formal education system for many years.

Overall it has been a positive experience topped off by a Graduation Ceremony, with family and friends present, held in Biloela on July 29th where 6 of the Graduates received their Certificates from Siyavash Doostkhah, Director of YANQ and a bottle of Bubbly from the course facilitator John Flanagan.

If you wish to contact me for more information please feel free to do so.

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Young people to suffer under the Federal Government's IR changes

By Vera Smiljanic, Research Worker, Job Watch¹

The Federal Government has announced major changes to industrial relations laws. These changes are going to impact on all workers; however, young workers in particular are going to be adversely affected. Approximately 1.7 million young people aged 15-24 years (62 percent of the age group) were in employment in Australia in 2003-2004.²

The wide ranging changes announced by the Government, likely to come into effect from January 2006, include:

- exempting businesses with up to 100 employees from unfair dismissal laws.
- increasing the probationary period from three to six months for new employees of companies with more than 100 employees.
- the replacement of the no disadvantage test, which individual agreements (AWAs) and certified agreements have to meet, with a lesser standard, the Australian Fair Pay and Conditions Standard.
- setting up a new body, the Fair Pay Commission, to determine minimum wages.

Unfair Dismissal

Employees of businesses of up to 100 employees will be excluded from using unfair dismissal laws.³ Unfair dismissal laws protect workers against being harshly, unjustly and unreasonably dismissed.

Sue - 19 - worked part-time as a retail assistant at a video store for 2 years. After returning from holidays she was dismissed and was given no reason for her dismissal or notice.

Ben - 17 - had been working as a casual on a regular basis at a hardware store for 18 months. When he turned 17 his boss continued to pay Ben at the 16 year old pay rate. When Ben raised the issue about being paid as a 17 year old he was left off the roster.

Sam - 20 - was employed full-time as a shop assistant for a bakery. He had worked 9 nights in a row. Sam's employer asked him if he could work the next night. Sam refused and was sacked.

John - 24 - was a tyre fitter. He arrived at work as normal and was assaulted by his supervisor with a knife. John did nothing to provoke the attack. The boss the next day called John in and sacked him. When John asked his boss for a reason he was given none.

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The exclusion means that young workers, who are unfairly dismissed, as in the case studies⁴ below, will have no redress. In other words these employees will no longer be able to make a claim for unfair dismissal against their employer at the Australian Industrial Relations Commission.

The exclusion will result in young people being more reluctant to complain about unfair work conditions such as bullying, underpayment of wages, occupational health and safety issues. A young person is not likely to complain if they can be sacked at the whim of their employer and they have no recourse if they are sacked.

The exclusion also fails to recognize the devastation experienced by workers on a personal and financial level as a result of being sacked. This devastation will be further exacerbated if they have no avenue to seek redress.

The Federal Government's justification for excluding employees from accessing unfair dismissal is that it will create more jobs. However there is little research to back up the Government's claims.⁵

Minimum Wages

A new body, the Fair Pay Commission, will be established to set minimum rates of pay.⁶ This body is likely to have a heavy economic focus.

Currently the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) determines minimum award pay rates. It considers a number of criteria in determining minimum award pay rates including the needs of the low paid and the impact of the decision on the economy.

The Federal Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, Kevin Andrews, justification for setting up a new body was that the award pay rate rises set by the AIRC had been excessive and had priced the unemployed out of the job market.⁷ The unemployment rate in Australia in April this year was 5.1 percent, which is near a 30 year low.⁸

The Minister would not give any guarantee that the minimum wage rates would not be lowered and therefore could not confirm that workers would not be financially worse off under the new system.⁹

Around 20 percent of Australia's workforce are covered by awards and therefore rely on the minimum pay rates set by the AIRC to receive an annual increase in their wages. This group of workers are likely to be women, young people, casuals, part-timers and in low skilled occupations.

Replacement of no disadvantage test

Currently individual and certified agreements are required to meet a no disadvantage test based on conditions contained in the designated award. These conditions include casual loading, overtime pay rates, higher rates of pay for shift and weekend work.

The replacement of the no disadvantage test means that all new agreements only have to meet the Australian Fair Pay and Conditions standard, which includes minimum wages, and the legislated conditions of annual leave, personal leave, parental leave and maximum number of ordinary hours. It also means that young workers will have to negotiate with their employer to receive conditions above that such as casual loading, overtime pay rates. These are conditions young people rely on to make ends meet.

Job Watch believes that any industrial relations system should balance the needs and rights of employers with the rights and needs of workers. The Federal Government's IR changes will create a system heavily skewed towards employers. Workers, in particular those who are most vulnerable in the labour market such as young people, will suffer detriment as a result of the erosion of many of their rights and conditions.

Information sheets are available from Job Watch's website:

www.job-watch.org.au

1. Job Watch is an employment rights legal centre based in Melbourne but services the whole of Victoria. It operates a telephone advice service and assists around 19,000 workers annually.
2. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Year Book Australia: Young People in Employment, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats>
3. We are unaware at the time of writing whether the exclusion applies to new employees or existing employees as well.
4. These case studies are based on the actual experiences of Job Watch callers. Names have been changed to protect callers' privacy.
5. Fed: Government's unfair dismissal laws could reduce jobs - academic, CCH Australia Limited, 26 April 2005, <http://www.cch.com.au>
6. Misha Schubert, Super, long service out in IR plan, The Age, 18 May 2005, p12
7. John Garnaut, The Sydney Morning Herald, 1 March 2005, as cited on Australian Council of Trade Unions website, http://www.actu.asn.au/work_rights/background_info/on_the_record_html
8. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 6202.0, Labour Force Australia, April 2005, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats> and Prime Minister's ministerial statement to parliament on workplace relations, 26th May 2005, as cited on The Age website, <http://www.theage.com.au/news>
9. Kevin Andrews, ABC Radio, 12 April 2005, as cited on Australian Council of Trade Unions website, http://www.actu.asn.au/work_rights/background_info/on_the_record_html

BOOK REVIEW

Why Warriors lie down and die by Richard Trudgen

In his book, *Djambatj Mala. Why Warriors lie down and die* ("Why Warriors"), Richard Trudgen investigates the reasons why the Aboriginal people of Arnhem Land face the "greatest crisis in health and education since European contact." Trudgen draws from his own learning and experiences as a tradesman, student and eventually a community development worker with the Yolgnu people of North East Arnhem Land spanning over 30 years.

Although Trudgen's book is specific to the Yolgnu experience, much of Trudgen's unpacking of the issues, identification of root causes and the methodologies which he puts forward are relevant to Indigenous affairs nationally. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in Australia are distinct and separate; however they share the experience of having been dominated by another culture, and indeed federal government policies affecting Aboriginal peoples have been applied arbitrarily across the continent. This aspect of the Yolgnu experience is paralleled in other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia and Trudgen's analysis and recommendations provide important keys to cross-cultural understanding and true communication which can be applied beyond Arnhem Land.

Why Warriors was written at the request of Yolgnu man Rev. Dr Djiniyini Gondarra, political leader of the Golumala clan, director of the Aboriginal Resource and Development Services in Darwin, and a member of the former Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation. He says in the foreword:

I wanted *Wamut* [Trudgen] to speak to Balanda about the real situation we face in our lives every day, a reality that is hard for people of another culture to imagine. I wanted him to show Balanda the important role they have in helping Yolgnu break through the confusion that confronts us.²

Or, as another Yolgnu leader had said to Trudgen years earlier,

...the new Balanda do not understand us and we do not understand them. *Nhe marngi napurrungalanuw nayanuw, ga napurr marngi nayanuw nhikalanuw* (You know the deep inner-being of Yolgnu people and we know your deep inner-being). We need people like you so we can get control of our communities again.³

Trudgen is an effective cross-cultural communicator between Yolgnu and Balanda because of his ability to speak Yolgnu Matha⁴ and his understanding of Yolgnu cultural knowledge-base and world view, gained from decades of living with Yolgnu and studying these elements.

Yolgnu have been blamed for the sickness in their communities, the deaths of their children, high unemployment and alcoholism, failure to respond to health advice, and perceived disinterest in education. The dominant culture response is that it is because Yolgnu are stupid, or primitive, or lazy, or apathetic, or simply lesser beings that they face these problems. Trudgen offers a lucid alternative to such inherently racist conclusions.

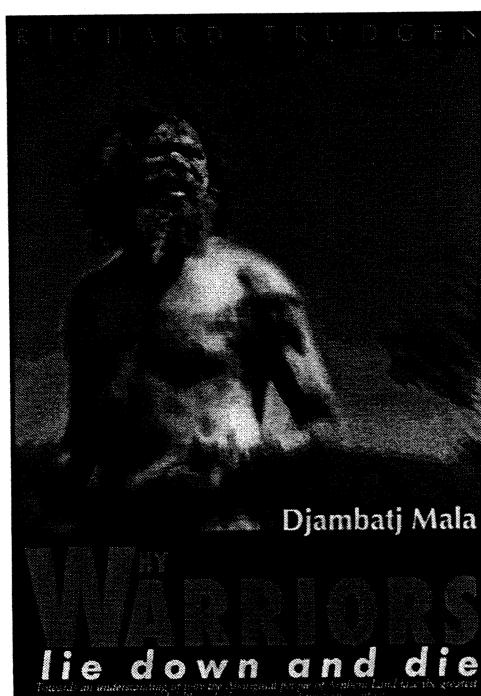
Firstly, Trudgen gives an abridged history of North East Arnhem Land. In 1887 when the first white pastoralists came to Arnhem Land, Yolgnu were a thriving, healthy, peaceful people, living according to ancient law, passing on an ancient knowledgebase through their educational structures, multilingual, and with a vibrant and independent economy boosted by inter-clan and international trade.

Then, the battle for survival begins. Balanda enters territory, taking lives, land, and livelihood from Yolgnu, and bringing guns,

diseases and confusion in their place. Balanda imposes a new system of law, government, health, education, and welfare... and most significantly, a new and very foreign language. After 50,000 years of civilisation, Yolgnu have been required to adapt to an entirely new world in a matter of years.

Many Balanda fail to realise that Yolgnu are in a state of culture shock from this massive shift in their environment, and are enduring multigenerational legacies of trauma from the wars on their people. Trudgen shows how, in the new world, Yolgnu have lost control of their lives. They have lost their roles as healers, lawmen and women, educators, traders, historians, artisans, providers and carers for their families. Yolgnu have been intellectually marginalised; their language, law and knowledgebase dismissed as simple and devalued by the newcomers. Thus, Yolgnu have learnt that they are worthless and dependent on the mysterious and powerful "government" or Balanda for survival.

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Trudgen critiques the argument that at this point in time Yolgnu should be "left alone because contemporary knowledge will only destroy their traditional ways." He surmises: "The time for the romantic notion that Yolgnu can live in isolation is well past"⁵. Trudgen's Yolgnu associates are curious about Balanda culture and society and are eager learners. Alas, their survival depends on it. Yolgnu need to access new knowledge to survive in the new world, for example, to know how to cope with diseases formerly unencountered. What is lacking is culturally appropriate education and cross-culturally competent educators from the new world to deliver it.

*Yolgnu can be a strong and vibrant people again... [but] this can only happen...if the dominant culture of this land will be responsible and creative enough to meet the challenge. The people cannot move on their own because they are not the only actors in this drama. The dominant culture must move first. Then, with the systems and knowledge needed, Yolgnu will be empowered to respond to the challenges facing them.*⁶

Trudgen points out that Yolgnu have had to do all the linguistic and cross-cultural work interacting with Balanda. The exhaustion of bearing this burden alone has often proved too much for Yolgnu. As one young Yolgnu girl, a speaker of five or six Aboriginal languages said, in perfect English, "English makes me tired." Balanda too often overlook the fact that English is a fifth or sixth language for many Yolgnu, and that for Yolgnu, English is still an uncharted language. There is no recourse to something so easy as a dictionary when new "secret" words arise: understandings are feigned, false conclusions are drawn and words take on different meanings for Yolgnu and Balanda. Miscommunication abounds and danger and tragedy ensue.

Trudgen gives example after example of his involvement in health interventions where simply by being able to speak with a Yolgnu patient in Yolgnu Matha, and explaining new concepts to them from the point of their world view, sometimes after decades of meaningless interchanges with health professionals, the Yolgnu patient finally *understands* what is going on and is able to take responsibility for his or her health and make truly informed choices. The miscomprehending Yolgnu patient has seemingly paid no heed to advice from their doctor to the point of serious illness, and upon understanding has taken the advice and healed.

Trudgen explains why government policies, programs and services have failed Yolgnu people: evidently, the more Balanda have intervened and imposed things on Yolgnu, the more desperate and endangered their lives have become. Trudgen cautions:

The failure of the dominant culture to recognise the importance of languages leaves Yolgnu in a very vulnerable state. I am constantly approached by people from various organisations and companies who have been given jobs that involve educating or consulting with Yolgnu. The questions are always the same: 'How can I really hear what the people are saying?' or 'How do I know if the people are hearing

*what I am trying to teach them?' My response is always the same: "Without language and without understanding the worldview of the people, it is impossible. Yes, you can go out and get some responses; but you will never really hear the people, nor they you, unless you can communicate intellectually with them in their own language."*⁷

He goes on:

*Policy makers too are severely disadvantaged by this communication breakdown...The visitors accept [Yolgnu's] simple English words as being their deep, complete thoughts because the dominant culture tends to see the people as simple. But what the people say in English is just a faint echo of the powerful knowledge and information they want to share. So the world loses the chance to hear wisdom that is thousands of years old while the people are passed off as an almost muted race.*⁸

Why Warriors is essential reading for policy makers, community workers, educators, health personnel, and anyone else living and working with Indigenous people in Australia. Members of the dominant culture need to take a trip to the other side of the cultural fence if they are serious about creating positive social change for and alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Trudgen gives clear guidelines as to how this can happen here and now and for the future. His book offers a pathway to understanding and a methodology for cross-cultural practice which can take Indigenous policy and service delivery out of the current state of limp tokenism and into a future of true Indigenous empowerment.

***Why Warriors Lie Down and Die: Towards an understanding of why the Aboriginal People of Arnhem Land face the greatest crisis in health and education since European contact*, by Richard Trudgen**

Published by Aboriginal Resource and Development Services Inc Darwin (2000)

All proceeds from the sale of the book go to the Aboriginal Resource and Development Services Inc for community development and community education work.

Reviewed by Claire Cottone, Multicultural Development Officer @ YANQ. Questions, feedback welcome cald@yanq.org.au

1. Whitefellas [Yolgnu Matha]
2. Trudgen, p3.
3. Trudgen, p5.
4. "Yolgnu tongue": refers to the range of traditional languages spoken by persons of different Yolgnuclans in the north-east Arnhem yolgnu (see Trudgen, pii).
5. Trudgen, p123.
6. Trudgen, p211 (my emphasis).
7. Trudgen, p95.
8. Trudgen, p77.

Challenging racism and advancing reconciliation... ...what is happening in Queensland?

A research project for YANQ, by Emma Davey, a young Australian-Filipina woman on student placement

Over the past few years, some of you may have come across me in other roles - working in projects supporting recently arrived refugee women from Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran at the Multicultural Centre for Mental Health and Well-Being (Harmony Place) and at QPASTT; or working with refugee action groups (Refugee Action Collective, Freedom Bus), encouraging people to challenge Australia's practice of detaining refugees and asylum seekers.

Until the end of November, I'll be working with YANQ as a Student Project Officer, in order to complete the final placement requirements of my Bachelor of Human Services at QUT.

It was earlier this year that I met Claire, YANQ's Multicultural Development Officer, at a national "Youth and Reconciliation" forum.* Amidst an inspired atmosphere of honesty, solidarity, and boundless energy for positive change, 50 young Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants had come together to talk up the good things they were doing in their own communities for reconciliation, and against racism. This was amazingly powerful, and incredibly refreshing; racism and reconciliation continue to be highly emotive, highly sensitive subjects that often only get their negative dimensions aired in the media. Seldom do we acknowledge the complexity involved in dealing with these issues *but also celebrate what is working*. That got Claire and I talking about challenging racism and building for rights-based reconciliation in Queensland. What are people in our state doing in their communities to constructively tackle racism, to explore and action reconciliation? How are young people involved? And what's working?

We guessed that there is a lot going on out there to be celebrated, a lot of good practice being modelled that others might want to know about, a lot of collective wisdom that could be shared. Claire has already begun the networking process by bringing people together to dialogue on the topics of racism and reconciliation, through YANQ's ERACISM! forums, and through inviting people to link into the MYNQ and ATSI-YA e-mail lists. She and YANQ welcomed my offer to contribute my university placement, to extend on YANQ's reconciliation and anti-racism work.

Over the next couple of months I will be investigating what is out there in terms of anti-racism and reconciliation initiatives with young people in QLD, in order to:

- Enhance YANQ's engagement with a rights-based reconciliation process and strengthen its anti-racism activities
- Explore people's perceptions of racism, anti-racism and reconciliation
- Highlight where there is potential for further discussion and work
- Create a shared resource discussing elements of good practice for anti-racism and a rights-based reconciliation process; to be made available to government, the community sector and the general community as an educational and networking resource
- Promote broader communication, support, collaboration and resourcing for anti-racism and rights-based reconciliation
- Acknowledge, celebrate and promote the good work people are doing

Are you aware of, or involved in, successful initiatives that challenge racism and/or advance reconciliation with young people in Queensland?

I'm interested in **your** stories. That is, the perspectives and experiences of young people, of service providers, of government & funding bodies, of people in the community. I'd like to hear about the significant projects you are aware of, that you regard as "good practice", that build for rights-based reconciliation, and that challenge all levels of racism. What have you been involved in, or what do you know about, that has worked? And why?

Initiatives or projects could take place in any of the following settings:

- Government
- Educational institutions (schools/universities/TAFES/ other)
- Community (not-for-profit organisations, volunteer-run initiatives, sporting initiatives)
- Business/corporate
- Media
- By young people
- By Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- By other communities from culturally & linguistically diverse backgrounds

I'm currently approaching organisations and individuals to gather information and seek out further contacts. I invite you to offer input, through contacting me on the email/phone below. Have a chat to your friends and colleagues also, and let them know about this research project. The more

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responses we have, the more useful this resource will be to more people!

I'm honoured to be at YANQ at this time, to have the opportunity to support the important work of a peak body in the face of the challenges faced by advocacy organisations within the current political climate. I'm passionate about the importance of confronting and dealing with racism at all

levels, for all involved, and in finding ways I can personally act on my responsibility to contribute to a meaningful, rights-based Reconciliation process - one that is relevant to and directed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. I see this placement as special opportunity to action this. I look forward to talking with you soon!

Emma Davey
Student Project Officer

emma@yanq.org.au

(07) 3844 7713 or 1800 177 899

(In office Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays)

0421 002 769

*The forum was facilitated by ReconciliACTION, a national network of young Indigenous and non-Indigenous people working locally and collaboratively for rights-based reconciliation and for anti-racism.

www.reconciliaction.org.au

Spiritual Healing Forum

Townsville Cultural Fest, 21 August 2005



Students from Pimlico High performing their social justice role play

This year's Cultural Fest in Townsville for the first time featured a Spiritual Healing Forum brought together by local Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and multicultural groups in partnership with the Youth Affairs Network of Queensland. This event grew out of YANQ's ERACISM! (Erase Racism!) strategy, and brought together elders and young people from Townsville and Palm Island to celebrate cultural pride and spiritual resilience in the face of racism and adversity.

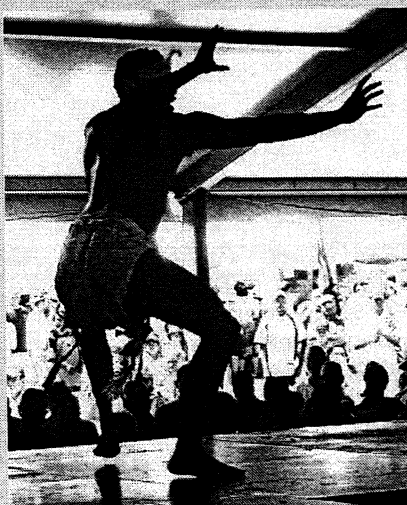
The forum opened up with a traditional welcome from young members of the Galumba dance group, with deadly didge rhythms by Roy Bowman and Stephen Sailor. We then moved into the centre of the global village for more didge jammin' and to move into the social justice side of the forum. Nicollette Conroy from Heatley Secondary College gave a moving speech on activism, and Natalie De Jersey from Pimlico State High School addressed the crowd with a persuasive speech on "Welfare vs. Economic Independence." Three students from

Pimlico High then presented a social justice role play which was both entertaining and thought-provoking.

Audience members then had the high privilege of hearing the wisdom and experience directly from the mouth of Palm Island elder Ralph Norman, followed by the inspirational words and moving poetry of Townsville elder and musical personality Tonky Logan.

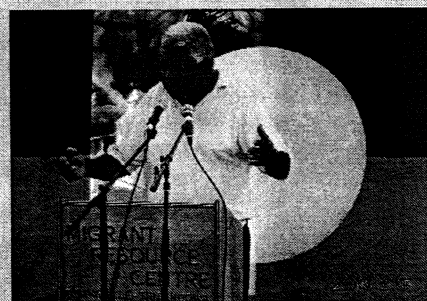
All participants then moved to the main stage where they danced, played music, and delivered their social justice messages to a couple of thousand Cultural Fest attendees. Florence Onus (Traditional Bindal Owner, Chair of Radio 4K1G and all-round wonder womyn) delivered a brilliant address about what "Reconciliation" really means to her and her people...

It was great to hear social justice issues getting some airplay at



Galumba Dancer at Cultural Fest 2005

this very celebratory multicultural festival, and the crowd was certainly captivated by what Townsville's Indigenous young people and elders had to show and share.



Uncle Ralph Norman addresses the Spiritual Healing Forum

Much love and thanks to all the mob up there who welcomed me to Townsville a few months ago, and came together in solidarity to make this event happen. Especially to Florence Onus and Adrian Hepi at JCU for coordinating in Townsville while I was in Brisbane, to Gracelyn Smallwood for your support and advice, to Tonky and Ralph for your time and openness, and to the young performers who stole the show (and your teachers for their support)! Thanks also to Farvardin Daliri, Cultural Fest organiser, for offering a forum for this talented crew to tell their stories to the Townsville community at large, in all its diversity.

Reconciliation... healing of the nation...

- By Claire Cottone,
Multicultural Development Officer

Interagency Meetings

youth affairs network qld

current as at August 2005

Regional Queensland

Bundaberg and District Youth Forum

Contact: Anne McWhirter
Bundaberg community Development Inc
PO Box 2252, Bundaberg Q 4670
Ph: 07 4153 3066 Fax 4151 1813
Email: annem@bcd.org.au
Meets the second Tuesday bi-monthly from 9.30-11.30am at Impact Make Your Mark, 106-108 Bargara Road Bundaberg..

Cairns Youth Service Network

Contact: Ray Barrett, Youth Development Officer
PO Box 359, Cairns Q 4870
Ph: 07 4044 3031 Fax: 07 4044 3830
Email: r.barrett@cairns.qld.gov.au
Meets last Thursday of month at Cairns City Library, Abbott Street, Cairns.
Contact Ray for times for meetings as they alternate.

Central and North Burnett Community Services Network

Contact: Andrew Crowthers
Monto Neighbourhood Centre
Ph: 07 4166 1733 Fax: 07 4166 1061
Email: cdom@cybertown.com.au
Contact: John Sharp
Mundubbera Community Development
Ph: 07 4165 4690 Fax: 07 4165 3143
Email: mcda@burnett.net.au
Meets first Monday of the month 10am-3pm (venue changes).

Central West Youth Network

Contact: Peter Clark
Anglicare Longreach
PO Box 102, Longreach Q 4730
Ph: 07 4658 0431 Mobile: 0409 053 304
Email: pclark@anglicarecq.org.au
Contact Peter for further details.

Emerald Shire Youth Council

Contact: Melinda Knox, Youth Development Officer
Emerald Shire Council
PO Box 21, Emerald Q 4720
Ph/Fax: 07 4982 0540 Mobile 0427 820 540
Email: youthofficer@emerald.qld.gov.au
Meets monthly.

Gladstone Combined Youth Interagency

Contact: Andrea Hughes
Gladstone City Council
PO Box 29, Gladstone Q 4680
Ph: 07 4976 6300 Fax: 07 4972 6557
Email: andrea@gladstone.qld.gov.au
Meets first Wednesday of the month 11am
PCYC, Yarroon Street, Gladstone.

Hervey Bay Youth Sector Workers Network

Contact: Sue Lawler
Hervey Bay City Council
PO Box 5045, Hervey Bay Q 4655
Ph: 07 4197 4330 Fax: 07 4197 4303
Email: suel@herveybay.qld.gov.au
Meets last Tuesday of each month 10.30 am.
Contact Sue for venue.

Innisfail Community Sector Network

Contact: Community Services Officer
Ph: 07 4030 2253 Fax: 07 4061 6005
Email: cs@jsc.qld.gov.au
Meets fourth Thursday of every second month 1pm at Parish Centre, Rankin Street, Innisfail.

Mackay Youth Connection & Network Inc

Contact: Amanda Sulter
Mackay Youth Information & Referral Service
60 Victoria Street, Mackay Q 4740
Ph: 07 4957 7949 Fax: 07 4957 7637
Meets third Tuesday of the month 11am Mackay City Council.

MICAT (Mt Isa Combined Action Team)

Contact: Mellise Anderson, Secretary
Ph: 07 4744 4843 Fax: 07 4745 4573
Email: mellise_anderson@health.qld.gov.au
OR Contact: Mark Polsen
Ph: 07 4743 0400 Mobile 0428 430 400
Email: pcyc.yth@bigpond.net.au
Meets twice per school term. Contact Mellise or Mark for details.

Rockhampton Youth Interagency Network

Contact: Silja-Jade Henaway
Department of Communities
Ph: 07 4938 6753 Fax: 07 4938 6757
Email: siljajade.henaway@communities.qld.gov.au
Meets third Friday of the month 9.00-11.30 am (venue changes).

South Burnett Community Network

Contact: South Burnett, Community Development Worker
PO Box 300, Kingaroy Q 4610
Ph: 07 4162 5711 Fax: 07 4162 121
Email: sbcdp@bigpond.net.au
Meets second Tuesday of the month 10am-12 noon at Wondai Council Supper Room.

South West Youth Interagency

Contact: Nicolette Lowe, South West Healthy Communities Program
PO Box 689, Charleville Q 4470
Ph: 07 4654 3055 Fax: 07 4654 3022
Email: ahpo@swwhcp.org
Meets 10am the third Thursday of each month at Charleville Neighbourhood Centre.

Sunshine Coast Youth Workers Forum

Contact: Ryan McGaw, Youth Services Trainee,
Caloundra City Council
PO Box 117, Caloundra Q 4551
Ph: 07 5438 0488 Fax: 07 5438 0377
Email: t.shine@caloundra.qld.gov.au
Meets quarterly. Contact Ryan for details.

The Youth Network NQ Inc

Contact: Clea Alcorn
Ph: 07 4775 7138 Fax: 07 4725 6970
Email: clea.alcorn@smithfamily.com.au
Meets third Thursday of the month 9-11am at B103 at Pimlico TAFE.
NB The May meeting will be same time third Thursday but will be held at Connors Café in the City.

Toowoomba Youth Organisations Network (TYON)

Contact: Ed Bradbury, Education Qld
PO Box 38, Toowoomba Q 4350
Ph: 07 4616 9111 Fax: 07 4616 9100
Email: Edward.Bradbury@qed.qld.gov.au
Meets periodically. Also runs an email discussion and announcement list. Contact Ed Bradbury for details.

Warwick Youth Network

Contact: Pam Burley, Community Youth Worker
PO Box 26, Warwick Q 4370
Ph/Fax: 07 4661 7166
Email: pburley@warwick.qld.gov.au
Meets quarterly (dates change) at McCarthy House, Warwick Base Hospital, Locke Street, Warwick.

*To keep our records current please notify YANQ of any changes to your details

Interagency Meetings

youth affairs network qld

South-East Queensland

current as at August 2005

Brisbane Inner Urban Youth Interagency

Contact: Gerard Dowling
Ph: 07 3407 0207
Email: gerard.dowling@brisbane.qld.gov.au
Meets 10-12 noon first Wednesday of the month.
Contact Gerard Dowling for details.

Caboolture Youth Area Network (YCAN)

Contact: Kim Reid, Caboolture Shire Council
Ph: 07 5420 0342 Fax: 07 5420 0350
Email: reidki@caboolture.qld.gov.au
Meets third Wednesday of every month 12.30-2.30pm at
Caboolture Shire Council, Level 3, 33 King Street, Caboolture.

Gold Coast Youth Network

Contact: Sylvia Roylance or Jennifer Owen-Holmes,
care Gold Coast Youth Services
PO Box 740, Burleigh Heads Q 4220
Ph: 07 5572 0400 Fax: 07 5575 2607
Email: gcyouth@bigpond.net.au
Meets last Wednesday of the month 10.30am-12.30pm at Robina
Uniting Church, Community Complex, 4 Greenwich Court, Robina.

Inala Youth Interagency (LARGEFLY)

Contact: John Rigsby-Jones, Inala Youth and Family Support Service
PO Box 141, Inala Q 4077
Ph: 07 3372 2655 Fax: 07 3372 2710
Email: john@iyfss.org.au
Meets 12 noon second Thursday of the month at Centrelink Office,
2nd Floor, Wirraway Parade, Inala.

Ipswich Youth Interagency Group

Contact: Annette Schoone, Youth Community Development Officer,
Ipswich City Council
PO Box 191, Ipswich Q 4305
Ph: 07 3810 6656 Fax: 07 3810 6741
Email: ASchoone@ipswich.qld.gov.au
Meets first Tuesday of the month 12.30pm at
Ipswich Health Plaza, Bell Street, Ipswich.

Life's Worth It – Sandgate

Contact: Sophie Morson
Ph: 07 3835 1409
Meets 3-5pm first Tuesday of every second month at
Sandgate Community Hall, 153 Rainbow Street, Sandgate.

Logan Youth Interagency Network

Contact: Francis Mills, Youth Planner, Community Services,
Logan City Council
PO Box 3226, Logan City DC 4114
Ph: 07 3826 5029 Fax: 07 3808 0014
Mobile: 0411 658 065
Email: francismills@logan.qld.gov.au
Contact Francis for details.

Mt Tamborine & Beaudesert Region Interagency

Contact: Community Development Officer
PO Box 572, Beaudesert Q 4285
Ph: 07 5541 3762 or 5541 4391 Fax: 07 5541 3654
Mobile 0408 413 762
Email: cdo@gil.com.au
Meets first Wednesday of every second month 10am at Blue Care,
Duckett Street, Beaudesert.

Northern Gold Coast Interagency

Contact: Veronica Cox (Studio Village)
Ph: 07 5529 8253
Email: svcc@tpg.com.au
Meets last Tuesday of every month 11am-1pm at Studio Village
Community Centre, 87 Village Way, Studio Village

Pine Rivers Youth Service Providers Network

Contact: Mark McCormack, Community Development Officer, Pine
Rivers Shire Council
Ph: 07 3889 7027 Fax: 07 3889 7287
Email: mark.mccormack@pinerivers.qld.gov.au
Meets second Monday bi-monthly 2-4pm at
Unit 4A, 199 Gympie Road, Strathpine.
(Pine Rivers Shire Council Community Development office).

Redcliffe Youth Service Providers Network

Contact: Darren Dallinger, Redcliffe City Council
Ph: 07 3283 0217 Fax: 3283 0269
Email: Darren.Dallinger@redcliffe.qld.gov.au
Meets second Wednesday of every second month 3pm at
Redcliffe Area Youth Space.

Redlands Youth Network

Contact: Courtney Gillot, Youth Support Worker,
Redland Shire Council
Ph: 07 3829 8233 Fax: 07 3829 8891
Email: courtneyg@redland.qld.gov.au
Meets third Monday of the month 3-4.30pm at
Redlands Health Service Centre, Weipin Street, Cleveland.

Service Providers Action Group for Youth

Contact: Steve Hutchinson (Picabeen)
Ph: 07 3354 2555 Fax: 07 3355 4222
Email: info@picabeen.org.au
Contact Steve Hutchinson for meeting details.

Tweed Shire Youth Network

Contact: Gerina Appo (St Joseph's Community Centre)
Ph: 07 5524 7566
OR Jessica Walker (The Family Centre)
Ph: 07 5524 8711
Meets first Wednesday every second month. Rotating venue.

Zillmere Youth Organisations Network (ZYON)

Contact: Brett Roland
Ph: 07 3269 0044
Email: brett@jabiru.org.au
Contact Brett for meeting details.

*To keep our records current please notify YANQ of any changes to your details