



NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

I am delighted to introduce the first e-newsletter for the ANU National Centre for Indigenous Studies.

The NCIS was established as a university centre in January 2005 and has a unique mandate to carry out and promote cross-disciplinary research in a wide range of areas of relevance to Indigenous Australians. The appointments earlier this year of two academic staff members, Dr. Sarah Holcombe and Jo-Anne Weinman, greatly enhanced the Centre's research capacities.

The Centre has developed a highly successful Indigenous Visiting Fellows program. Previously, Professor Paul Chartrand from the University of Saskatchewan in Canada visited NCIS between March and June 2008. In August, the Centre welcomed Megan Davis (Director of the Indigenous Law Centre, UNSW).

We appointed three notable academics as Adjunct Scholars: Dr. Lester Irabina-Rigney, Dr. Lisa Strelein and Dr. Patrick Sullivan.

NCIS has also recently become a

postgraduate enrolment centre with eight doctoral candidates and two Masters students.

We have engaged in national debates on diverse issues in Indigenous affairs, by holding forums that gather community events, researchers and policy-makers to discuss issues like recognising Indigenous peoples constitutionally, the Northern Territory intervention and the prevention of Indigenous family violence. NCIS also conducted research for an Issues Paper for the Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission about the new national Indigenous representative body proposed to be established within the next year.

Through this e-Newsletter, we look forward to sharing the Centre's research, the achievements of its members, and its engagement with policy and community outreach initiatives which we hope will deepen Australia's understanding of Indigenous cultures and histories.

Professor Mick Dodson AM

• 24 August 2008

National Archives 2008 Constitution Day Lecture Broadcast
Professor Dodson, Director, NCIS
'Big Ideas' program Radio National

• 25 September – 2 November 2008

Etched in the Sun
Prints made by Indigenous artists

• 2 – 3 December 2008

ANU Dialogue: Indigenous Peoples of the World Series
In association with the Embassy of the United States of America

– Prof. Robert A. Williams
University of Arizona

– Ass. Prof. Dalee Sambo Dorough
University of Alaska Anchorage

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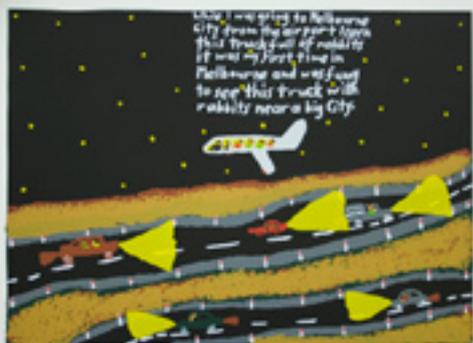
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recent and upcoming events

• **11 August – 5 September 2008**
Megan Davis, Visiting Fellow at NCIS
Director, Indigenous Law Centre
University of New South Wales

• **22 August 2008 12:45-2:00**
Guarding ground: a vision for a national Indigenous cultural authority
Terri Janke, NCIS PhD candidate
Presenting the 2008 Wentworth Lecture

*Left: Ian Abdulla Truck full of Rabbits
Silkscreen 2004 Basil Hall Editions*



SUSTAINABLE POLICIES DIALOGUE

BUILDING SUSTAINABLE POLICY FOR
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS IN AUSTRALIA



Stanner Room, AIATSIS

The NCIS collaborated with **ANU's College of Law** and the **Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies** to organise this inaugural event on 21 June 2008 for the nascent **ANU Centre for Dialogue**. The 'in-the-round' configuration in the Stanner Room at AIATSIS encouraged respectful debate and provided an ideal forum for the summit.

There was a wide cross-section of participants with a focus on Indigenous viewpoints. Invitees had considerable experience in the areas of Indigenous culture, health, housing, education, law, business and policy.

On the **agenda** were the polemical **Northern Territory intervention**, formally recognising Indigenous peoples including via constitutional reform, and a national Indigenous representative **body**. Optimal service delivery and governance models were also canvassed. The discussion sessions concluded with the feasibility and utility, both for Indigenous peoples and the Australian economy, of developing Indigenous entrepreneurialism.

A detailed report based on prominent issues that emerged from the **Dialogue** has been produced. Its executive summary will shortly be disseminated to relevant Indigenous peak bodies and to State, Territory and Commonwealth governments in the hope of informing achievable policy outcomes.

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS REPRESENTATION

Since the abolition of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, there has been a lack of any representative national body for Indigenous Australians. The Australian government has committed itself to establishing a new body. In July 2008, NCIS academics contributed research to a **paper** commissioned by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Tom Calma, discussing issues in creating such a body and ensuring its sustainability.

Its release by HEROC preceded a series of nation-wide **consultations** currently being undertaken by the commonwealth government through its Department of Families, Housing,

Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

The issues paper explicitly refrains from proposing any model for the formulation of the new body but draws attention to lessons that may be learnt from previous and current examples of peak Indigenous Australian bodies as well as international mechanisms for representing Indigenous peoples at the national level in Canada, the United States of America, Sweden and New Zealand. Lastly, it canvasses options for ensuring sustainability in the new body.

A **community guide** and **summary** are available from **HREOC's website**.



ETCHED IN THE SUN

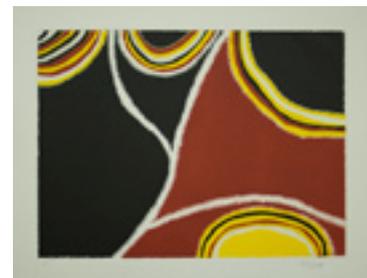
Working with the ANU Drill Hall Gallery and Basil Hall Editions in Darwin, the NCIS will host a major exhibition of graphic works on paper produced by Indigenous artists from remote and urban communities. Well known and respected curator, Djon Mundine, has been invited to curate the exhibition which will be accompanied by a scholarly catalogue.

Etched in the Sun demonstrates the skill with which Indigenous artists continue to adapt to new media and the extraordinary results achieved in collaboration with leading Australian printmakers.

The exhibition runs from 25 Sept. to 2 Nov. 2008 at the ANU Drill Hall Gallery, Kingsley Street, in Acton.

*Below left: Kathleen Petyarre
Mountain Devil Lizard 2006 Etching 50x50cm
(The Australian National University Art
Collection)*

*Below: Freddie Tims Purnululu Picaniny Gorge
Etching 1999 Basil Hall Editions*



RESPECT IS THE NEW BLACK: BUILDING ON OUR NATIONAL APOLOGY



Lawrence Cram, Mick Dodson,
Mick Bin-Bakar & Stephen Bottomley

Each year NCIS, in collaboration with the ANU College of Law and Reconciliation Australia, presents a lecture delivered by a distinguished Australian to promote reconciliation between

Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

This year Mark Bin-Bakar, a member of the Kimberley Stolen Generations community and the man behind multi-media personality Mary G, drew on his many talents to deliver a thought-provoking and entertaining lecture, conveying his personal and often painful attempts to increase cultural awareness of the social inequalities Indigenous peoples encounter.

Mark's approach of breaking it up with a song was inclusive. His song that his mother wrote was very emotive. I was quite humbled and honoured that story was shared with me.
- Dean Finnigan



Mark Bin-Bakar

To hear and view the lecture, click [here](#).

EARTH MIRROR / ESPEJO DE TIERRA



Juan Paulo Huirimilla Oyarzo and
Roxana Miranda Rupailaf

Espejo de Tierra/Earth Mirror: An Anthology of Chilean Mapuche and Australian Aboriginal Poetry highlights the links between these two Indigenous cultures conveyed through poetry and art. Distinguished poets, Roxana Miranda Rupailaf and Juan Paulo Huirimilla Oyarzo, conducted a reading from the bi-lingual anthology at an event jointly hosted by the Embassy of Chile and the NCIS on 30 April 2008.

The reading celebrated the vibrant Indigenous traditions of Chile and Australia, and provided rare insight about the Mapuche, a largely unknown culture despite being the biggest Indigenous group in Chile. The place

of legend and the importance of land and nature in both cultures evoked striking connections.

H.E. Mr José Balmaceda, Ambassador of Chile, called the anthology "a meeting of two cultures, of two ancestral worlds whose richness of words, shapes and colours should not only cause us pride, but also give us a reason to share this heritage."

The impassioned readings by Rupailaf and Huirimilla were well attended, and followed by a reception at the Sparke Helmore building with Chilean wine and delicacies provided by the Embassy.



PREVENTING FAMILY VIOLENCE

On 10 and 11 April 2008, the NCIS conducted a national forum bringing together researchers and policy-makers working in the area of preventing Indigenous family violence.

Although this important issue has dominated national media since the federal intervention, the framework for reporting is overwhelmingly negative. Through a two year project initially supported by the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, the NCIS identified numerous stories from around Australia of successful community initiatives combating Indigenous family violence.

The forum aimed to inform the development of a national research strategy to combat violence by exchanging information about successful community-based programs that drew on Indigenous knowledge and experience, and about how to further engage with local practitioners as well as consolidate and coordinate research in the field.

NCIS PROFILES

VISITING FELLOW: MEGAN DAVIS

Megan Davis, an admitted legal practitioner of the Supreme Court of the A.C.T., is the Director of the Indigenous Law Centre at the University of New South Wales. She is also a PhD candidate at the Australian National University, and currently a visiting fellow of the NCIS.

Areas in which she publishes include Indigenous public law issues, in particular constitutional reform and democratic theory and governance, and rights at international law. A current project, *Unfinished Business*, examines extra-parliamentary democratic representation for Indigenous peoples.

Her PhD analyses how Indigenous



Visiting Fellow: Megan Davis

women fare in liberal democracies, and is also the subject of an Australian Research Council grant. While visiting at the Centre, she intends to conduct research for her doctorate.

POSTGRAD STUDENT: SOPHIA CLOSE

Sophia Close is an AusAID Peace, Conflict and Development Specialist who

advises on conflict-affected areas within the Asia-Pacific region. She was one of the Centre's earliest PhD students.

Her main research interest is Indigenous self-determination, a topic of particular relevance in the current national climate given the impending creation of an Indigenous national representative body and endorsement of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Her analysis extends to how Indigenous governance is affected by development practice, conflict management and prevention. Sophia mentions her appreciation for having "a friendly team of people to draw on at NCIS who provide solid guidance and a wealth of support."

ONGOING >>>

CANNING STOCK ROUTE

Partners: Western Desert Lands Aboriginal Corporation, Kimberley Land Council.

As Chief Investigator on the project, Deputy Director of NCIS, Prof. Peter Veth is researching Indigenous uses of the 1700km Western Australian track. By chronicling rock art and contemporary sites of significance, the project aims to protect restricted sites and cultural artefacts of immeasurable value from theft, damage and neglect through the creation of the first comprehensive interpretive strategy and management plan in the region.

INDIGENOUS ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

Partners: Northern Territory National Resource Management Board, Terri Janke and Company Pty Ltd and Jumbunna House of Learning, UTS.

Developing Indigenous cultural and intellectual property protocols (guiding principles and practical advice) for culturally appropriate management of Indigenous ecological knowledge. This includes reviewing current legislative and administrative frameworks in light of international best practice models.

ANU RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

Partners: Reconciliation Australia, United Ngunnawal Elders Council, ReconciliACT, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Elected Body, Australian National University.

Prof. Mick Dodson chairs a cross-campus working group that also includes student and community representatives. It aims to create a university-wide plan with measurable commitments and timeframes to implement strategies for promoting reconciliation and improving Indigenous education, research, employment at ANU as well as its community outreach initiatives in respect of Indigenous issues.

FOOTPRINTS IN TIME

Partners: Department of Families and Housing, Community Services, Indigenous Affairs.

Prof. Mick Dodson has been the Chair of the Steering committee of the major research project 'The longitudinal study of Indigenous children' from its inception. Dr. Sarah Holcombe also sits on the committee and the newly formed sub-committee to develop qualitative data management protocols.

INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Partners: Commonwealth Scientific & Industrial Research Organisation.

Prof. Mick Dodson is the co-Chair of the Indigenous Engagement Strategy steering committee established by CSIRO in 2006. CSIRO recently held their inaugural national Indigenous science and research roundtable in Broome where it was established that standard Indigenous knowledge and intellectual property protocols need to be developed if CSIRO is to ensure appropriate benefit sharing with Indigenous peoples. Dr. Holcombe sits on the newly formed sub-committee to develop these protocols.

DESERT KNOWLEDGE CRC (DKCRC)

Partners: Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research.

Dr. Sarah Holcombe has been engaged with the DKCRC as a researcher since its inception in 2003. Along with colleague Dr. Will Sanders (CAEPR), she is part of the core project 'Sustainable Desert Settlements' and is undertaking ongoing field research in Anmatyerr country north of Alice Springs, in the Ti Tree region, for which the DKCRC supports a field research component.