

# FROM THE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE



L to R: UC Vice-Chancellor Prof. Stephen Parker, Mick Dodson and UC Chancellor, Prof. Ingrid Moses Photo: Daniel Walding, AIATSIS Audio Visual Services

## WELCOME TO OUR FINAL NEWSLETTER FOR 2010.

Professor Mick Dodson returned from his Outside Studies Program leave in early November where he was based at the University of Notre Dame Broome

campus to conduct research for a book about the Rubibi Claim for the Yawuru people. On his return Professor Dodson has resumed his busy schedule of meetings, conferences and workshops.

On 5 November Professor Dodson was conferred with an Honorary Doctor

of the University from the University of Canberra in recognition of his distinguished contribution to Human Rights, Social Justice and Indigenous Affairs in Australia and overseas.

Professor Dodson attended the Inaugural National Indigenous Policy and Dialogue Conference: Indigenous Policy and Dialogue – New Relationships, New Possibilities held at the University of New South Wales on 18 and 19 November. In January 2011 he will speak at the Exploratory Workshop "International Trade in Indigenous Cultural Heritage" at the University of Lucerne in Switzerland and will also deliver a lecture at the University's Institute for Research on the Foundations of Law titled, *Dream Shields, Carpets and Crocodiles – Protecting Indigenous Knowledge and Intellectual Property – the Australian experience. The story so far.*

Finally the Director and staff of NCIS would like to take this opportunity to thank our readers for their interest and support over the course of the year and wish you all a happy and safe holiday period. See you in 2011!

## ANNUAL ANU RECONCILIATION LECTURE 2010

### In this issue

From the Director's Office	1
Annual ANU Reconciliation Lecture 2010	1
The Two Lakes ARC Project: A Research History of Lakes Mungo and Gregory	2
News Briefs	3
NCIS Profile: Katherine Aigner	4

Dr Kerry Arabena delivered a thought-provoking and ground-breaking ANU Reconciliation lecture to a packed audience at the National Film and Sound Archive on 11 November. Dr Arabena's lecture titled *Post-normal reconciliation lecture – using science to reframe the reconciliation agenda* looked at how principles of "post-normal" science can be applied to further reconciliation in Australia and how this "post-normal reconciliation" could enable society to better respond to complex, interrelated and global issues. The lecture finished with a performance by the Zenadh Kes Mari Torres Strait Island Dance Group. A copy of the lecture can be found by clicking [here](#).



# THE TWO LAKES ARC PROJECT: A RESEARCH HISTORY OF LAKES MUNGO AND GREGORY

CHIEF INVESTIGATORS – ANN MCGRATH (ACIH) AND PETER VETH (NCIS)  
RESEARCH ASSOCIATE – MICK DODSON (NCIS)

The Two Lakes Project will forge new approaches to writing deep-time history. For the first time, it will provide a history of the research carried out on the Indigenous peoples of two highly significant cultural landscapes: Lake Mungo and the wider Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area, and lakes in the southeast Kimberley. The Two Lakes Project brings together the synergies of a strong interdisciplinary team –



an historian and archaeologist with long experience of writing about cultural landscapes and their history – in collaboration with Mick Dodson who will provide critical input on governance issues. In 2006, a special workshop convened for the Australian Historians' Association Conference questioned whether it was possible to write a history of the past 60,000 years. Although calling for new approaches to deep

Time – Tom Griffiths pointed out that the long time-span presents obstacles for the historical imagination. Nevertheless, while there are many short histories of Australia, historian John Maynard called for the long history to at last be written. There are many different ways this might – and should – be done. We propose a project that combines the strengths, skills and

knowledge of history, archaeology and traditional custodial values. Our aim is to ensure that the greater part of Australia's chronology and human past will no longer be seen as a hazy epoch which is 'outside history'. Using two intensive regional studies, we will develop a peopled history of deep time that integrates Indigenous interest in, and contemporary narratives of, ancient pasts.

This project thus connects the recent post- 1960s history of Indigenous research agency with an enquiry into the deep history of human action. The story of the scientific study of these deep-time landscapes thus becomes a pathway into the deeper histories. One facet of the project will specifically research



scientific and personal narratives alongside Indigenous modes of historical practice – a study of changing historical consciousness and purposeful memory work. This project will make steps towards decolonising history with a view to national futures. We aim to present our findings in lively ways that link to present concerns, and that will powerfully address future audiences. This includes a persuasive and

accessible historical monograph, a range of scholarly journal articles, a scholarly interactive web-site with regular updates – including biographical and community materials that will address this national knowledge gap. Regional knowledge centres (server networks) exist at both locales at community level. Interdisciplinary synergies will lead to new approaches that offer breakthroughs across disciplines and cultures. This innovative project will not only assist in further breaking the binaries between Indigenous and non-Indigenous pasts, but will lead to new synergies between the disciplines of Australian archaeology and history in dealing with pre-British histories.



## NEWS BRIEFS

### FIFTH NATIONAL INDIGENOUS LEGAL CONFERENCE – EDUCATION: A WAY FORWARD

Fleur Adcock, a doctoral candidate at the NCIS, and Jo-Anne Weinman (Research Associate, NCIS) both presented at the Indigenous Lawyers Association's Fifth National Indigenous Legal Conference which was held in Canberra this year, jointly hosted by the ANU National Centre for Indigenous Studies and the ANU College of Law.

Fleur's presentation was entitled *Does the Rhetoric Match the Reality? The Role of the UN Human Rights Council's Special Procedures in Protecting Indigenous Rights*. It outlined some of the broad praise directed at the special procedures, explored their role in relation to indigenous peoples and highlighted some of the constraints that act against their effective functioning.

Jo-Anne's paper, *Saami Rights in International Law*, examined the

legal requirements for demonstrating Saami indigenous identity and the implications these had for land rights and language rights in Norway. Comparisons were then drawn with the status of these rights at international law in instruments such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Nordic Saami Convention.

### NCIS POSTGRADUATE RETREAT

NCIS held its second workshop for Indigenous higher degree by research students at Bateman's Bay from 28 to 30 Nov 2010.

The workshop was attended by 40 invited participants, among them Indigenous postgraduates from a range of disciplines and postgraduates working in Indigenous studies from NCIS and other centres across The ANU. Also attending were staff on supervisory panels and selected invited speakers such as Professor John Maynard (Adjunct Professor at NCIS),

Asmi Wood (ANU College of Law) and Phyllis Williams (Cultural Collections, National Archives of Australia).

Some of the aims of the retreat was to foster the exchange of information, help progress research themes, provide critique and feedback and create space for Indigenous research at The ANU.

### NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON RECONCILIATION ACTION PLANNING

The first National Workshop on Reconciliation Action Planning was held at the ANU in November. The workshop was attended by over 70 Indigenous and non-Indigenous leaders in higher education was co-hosted by Reconciliation Australia. It was an initiative of the ANU Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), one of the first plans to be endorsed in the higher education sector. Participants were able to discuss and share their reconciliation experiences at the workshop and Professor Dodson reflected on the progress and challenges with reconciliation action planning at the ANU.

## NCIS IMAGES

Participants at the NCIS post-graduate retreat, Bateman's Bay



L to R: Tom Calma, Ara Creswell, Mick Dodson, Toni Bauman and Prof. John Maynard at the Honorary Degree ceremony at the University of Canberra

Photo: Daniel Walding, AIATSIS Audio Visual Services



## NCIS PROFILE:

Over the last 13 years I've worked as a historian, filmmaker and ethnologist with cultural Elders and Knowledge Holders around Australia on issues of cultural/political/environmental heritage. I've also lived and worked in Rome and Berlin before returning to ANU as a Masters by Research candidate. My thesis consolidates longitudinal research on matri-archal knowledge holders in northern NSW looking at issues of authenticity, agency, conflicts of interest and transmission of culture in the post Mabo environment. For the last 2 years, I've worked part time at the National Museum of Australia under Senior Curator and Indigenous Advisor to the Director, Margo Neale. This has been a wonderful opportunity to work with other communities around Australia.

In October 2009, I used previous contacts in Italy to connect with the newly appointed Director of the Vatican's Ethnological Museum, Father Nicola Mapelli. This resulted in a collaboration between the Ethnological Museum and the National Museum of Australia with an exhibition at the Vatican, *Rituals of Life The Spirituality and Culture of Aboriginal Australians through the Vatican Museums Collection* in October 2010, to coincide with the canonisation of Mary MacKillop.

Father Mapelli (Dr of anthropology and archaeology) who worked for 10 years as a missionary with tribal people in southern Philippines was asked to take up the responsibility of re-opening the Museum (which had been closed on and off for the last 40 years). Encompassing an enormous space of

### MASTERS CANDIDATE – KATHERINE AIGNER



*Katherine Aigner with Father Nicola Mapelli and Lucy Barack (seated), a descendant of one of the artists in the "Rituals of Life Exhibition"*

over 7000 square metres with 40 000 objects sent to the Pope from around the world for a missionary exhibition in 1925, he discovered 300 pieces from Australia, mainly from the Tiwi Islands and the Kimberley area of Western Australia.

Treating these disconnected objects as active agents and believing culture is a doorway to reach other people, in August this year he made an unprecedented effort and travelled to Australia to visit the communities who had sent their art works to the Vatican almost 100 years ago. He wanted to give voice back to those communities and ask permission to show the objects again. Travelling to the Tiwi Islands, Kalumburu and New Norcia in WA, I joined him from the National Museum to document this journey. We took images of the objects to the communities and discussed them being on display. I filmed these interactions and footage from this tour was used in the exhibit: Pedro Wonaeamirri, for example, said he felt sad that the old Pukumani poles were so far away but happy that they were now being used as cultural ambassadors where people

from all over the world could learn about Tiwi culture.

Father Mapelli wanted to create a "living Museum that can talk about the present people, their problems, aspirations, desires, artistic creativity... by displaying them here at the Vatican, we are showing that their culture is really important..."



next to the Sistine Chapel, from the works of Michelangelo and Raffaello... giving proper value to the cultures ... for us every artistic form is important because it's an expression of the human spirit."

As commissioned works, in some cases the artists names were recorded, so during this journey back to the community, we were able to find photos and even film footage of them as well as meet their descendants who were themselves artist today. The most fascinating piece in the collection was a 'Wandjina song cycle' by 'Muiron' – 13 pieces of slate painted with ochre. We found colour footage of the artist leading a ceremonial dance at Kalumburu mission. Interest in his art re-invigorated interest in his life around the community with people remembering him as 'Big Paul' because of his height, and as a champion stone point maker. He was also a leader in the Christian world with the monks. Ironically, he continues as a cross-cultural teacher today, 100 years later with his work on display at the Vatican... inviting viewers to consider a dynamic and creative encounter between Aboriginal spirituality and culture and Christianity.