

# MICK DODSON: AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR 2009



Photo: National Australia Day Council

small part of the story of what he does – serving in a variety of challenging and highly sensitive roles at community level, with governments, the United Nations and in academia". It praised his pursuit of "justice and reconciliation through a process of education, awareness and inclusive dialogue with all Australians" which encourages respect between people of all cultures.

Soon after accepting the award, in his address at the **National Press Club**, Professor Dodson spoke about the interrelatedness of practical and symbolic measures to address Indigenous health, wellbeing and reconciliation. As Australian of the Year, he pledged to focus on education, committing to visiting schools around the country, consulting State and Territory governments and publicising pedagogic successes. He also mentioned his dedication to implementing the **ANU Reconciliation Action Plan's** equitable initiatives to create a culture and environment that offers the best chance of success at education and research.

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The ANU National Centre for Indigenous Studies congratulates its director, **Professor Mick Dodson AM**, for having been named **Australian of the Year 2009**. The National Australia Day Council, which administers the award said: "official roles tell only a

## recent and upcoming events

- **24–25 February 2009**  
Bateman's Bay – Indigenous Researchers Postgraduate Workshop
- **18 March 2009 4–5pm**  
Main Committee Room, Parliament House – Science Meets Parliament: Indigenous Australia & Science Forum  
Dr. Sarah Holcombe, NCIS Research Fellow: Facilitator

- **28–29 March 2009 (9:30–11:00am Sunday)** Braidwood  
Two Fires Festival Arts & Activism: Coming Together – Professor Mick Dodson: After the Apology
- **28 April 2009 5:30–6:30pm**  
Sparke Helmore 1, Fellows Road  
Professor Desmond Manderson: Indigenous People & the Rule of Law  
Co-hosted by NCIS & College of Law
- **10 June 2009** – Venue and time TBC  
Annual ANU Reconciliation Lecture & Launch of ANU Reconciliation Action Plan. Australian of the Year, Professor Mick Dodson

# FROM THE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Following his pledge at the National Press Club earlier last month regarding his time as Australian of the Year, Professor Dodson visited two ACT schools and is scheduled to tour schools of the Northern Territory with the Territory's Chief Minister, **Paul Henderson**, by the end of April.

He launched **Wanniassa School's Reconciliation Action Plan** and commended their innovative Achievement Centre, designed for children disengaged with learning. Having mentored young Indigenous leaders, Professor Dodson appreciated the primacy of individualised support provided by the Achievement Centre.

At Radford College, Professor Dodson was invited to address Year 11 and 12 history students who had been studying the Northern Territory intervention, the national apology to the Stolen Generations, treaties and the period of first contact. It was a rare opportunity for students to engage with one of the pivotal figures behind the influential **Bringing Them Home** Report, which

heralded a shift in the nation's awareness of its past relationship with Indigenous people.

At the invitation of the Norwegian government, Professor Dodson visited Karasjok (Norway) in March for a pre-session meeting of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues where he met Indigenous Saami people of the region, including President of the Swedish Saami Parliament Mr.

Lars-Anders Baer and Norwegian Saami Chair of the Permanent Forum in 2002, Ole Henrik Magga. Professor Dodson was appointed special rapporteur at the Sixth Session of the Permanent Forum with the theme 'Territories, Lands & Natural Resources' and will report under this mandate to the upcoming Eighth Session in May.

*Photo: Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Members in Norway*



## SCIENCE MEETS PARLIAMENT: 'INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIA & SCIENCE' FORUM

18 MARCH 2009 MAIN COMMITTEE ROOM, PARLIAMENT HOUSE

For 2 days each year, the federal Parliament lives and breathes science, gathering up to 200 scientists from around Australia along with federal parliamentarians for this **event**.

**Dr. Sarah Holcombe**, Research Fellow at the NCIS, facilitated the 'Indigenous Australia & Science'

hour-long forum which dealt with methodologies for engagement, opportunities and challenges for Indigenous people in science. Panel discussants included representatives from the Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre, the Cooperative Reserach Centre for

Aboriginal Health, the Commonwealth Scientific & Industrial Research Organisation and the Australian Insitute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

For more information, please visit the **Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies' website**.

## NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS CONSULTATION

The federal government launched a public consultation process, run by an **independent committee** supported by the **Attorney-General's Department**, to gauge people's views about human rights and the ways they may be safeguarded. The government has stated that it considers this an issue of national importance for all Australians. All submissions (due 15 June 2009) will be documented in a report the government considers when developing its national human rights policy.

The NCIS's submission, coordinated by Research Associate, **Jo-Anne Weinman**, will identify legislative options that offer rights the maximal protection possible, short of constitutional entrenchment which is outside the Committee's terms of reference.

The consultation is concerned with these 3 questions:

- Which human rights and responsibilities should be protected and promoted?

- Are human rights sufficiently protected and promoted?
- How could Australia better protect and promote human rights?

The Centre encourages all interested individuals and organisations to seize what might be a once-in-a-generation opportunity and make a submission to the Committee, however brief or detailed. **Community roundtables** are being held around Australia to inform and assist.

## INDIGENOUS RESEARCHERS POSTGRADUATE WORKSHOP

**24-25 FEBRUARY 2009 BATEMAN'S BAY** Postgraduates and panel members travelled from the Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia and as far as Ireland to participate in this inaugural **workshop**, an initiative which the **ANU Reconciliation Action Plan** seeks to institute as an annual event.

Its key aims were to foster a network of Indigenous researchers and to focus on issues relevant to Indigenous research and researchers.

There were presentations by ANU faculty such as Professor Ann McGrath (Australian Centre for Indigenous History) and Professor

Mick Dodson, as well as by Indigenous scholars, including Professor Lester-Irabinna Rigney, Dr. Lisa Strelein (both adjunct scholars of the NCIS) and Kerry Arabena (Australian Institute of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Studies). Postgraduates outlined their research and methodology and theoretical concerns they had about their Masters and PhD theses.

*Below: Attendees at the Workshop*



## NCIS PROFILES

### ADJUNCT: PROFESSOR LESTER-IRABINNA RIGNEY

Irabinna, from the Nurrunga and Kurna peoples, is Director of the Yunggoendi First Nations Centre for Higher Education & Research at Flinders University and a member of the Research Advisory Committee at the Australian Institute for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Studies. He is a well-renowned educationalist and authority in the area of indigenist research methodologies, languages and knowledge transmission. Irabinna became an Adjunct Scholar of the NCIS in 2008.



*Professor Lester-Irabinna Rigney*

His co-edited book, *Sharing Spaces: Indigenous & Non-Indigenous Responses to Story, Country & Rights*, is the most current Australian text detailing the impact of Indigenous and non Indigenous race relations on education, a highly contested space. Irabinna's research interests include Indigenous epistemologies, research ethics, intellectual and cultural property rights and postcolonial theory.

### POSTGRADUATE STUDENT: JAMES EVANS

James is an Indigenous Australian lawyer who has practised over the last 15 years in Australia, New Zealand and the Republic of Ireland. As a litigation partner, he concentrates on commercial and civil litigation and has

acted for a range of clients including financial institutions, government agencies and insurance companies. James is also a fully accredited Mediator through the Mediation Forum of Ireland. He currently holds the position of Secretary of the Ireland Australia Business Association.

He holds a Bachelor and Master of Laws, the latter of which dealt with areas of commercial and insurance litigation. His PhD thesis with the NCIS centres on alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.



*Postgraduate student James Evans*

## NCIS IMAGES >>>

### PHOTOS FROM RECENT EVENTS

*Clockwise from top: Professor Dodson at Radford College; NCIS MPhil student Rex Granites Japanangka; Staff & students at the Workshop; Professor Dodson at Wanniasa School*

