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 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.

**In this issue**

**Mick Dodson: Australian of the Year 2009**

**Recent & 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

**From the Director’s Office**

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**National Human Rights Consultation**

**Indigenous Researchers Postgraduate Workshop**

- 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
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-sessional 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

FROM THE DIRECTOR’S OFFICE

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

For more information, please visit the Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies’ website.
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 Kaurna peoples, is Director of the Yunggorendi 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.

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.

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 Wanniassa School