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NEWSLETTER No.2 Lane Cove Residents for Reconciliation April 2007

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A REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENT

On March 7 more than 120 people gathered at the Lane Cove Residents for Reconciliation meeting to listen to an **address by Craig Ashby**. This charming Aboriginal man from Walgett recounted for us the story of his progress through childhood where due to a considerable amount of wagging school he did not learn to read and write.

He was sent to Dubbo by his grandmother (his mother died when he was two). While there in Year 9 he suddenly heard of the program for Aboriginal boys at St Josephs College in Sydney. He applied and was accepted. He blossomed there in the support and companionship the school gave him.

He was allotted a tutor who, one on one, gave him lessons every night and he soon learned the magic of being able to read and write.

He is now in his second year at University studying to become a teacher having received two credits and two distinctions in his first year. His ambition is to return to his community and devote himself to doing all he can for them by way of education.. His address held everyone spellbound.

Craig is a wonderful role model for other Aboriginal boys and it was gratifying that students from St Joseph's, St Ignatius and Kincoppal were present including several Aboriginal boys and girls

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BRIDGE WALK

I decided to take advantage of Kerrie's offer to join the Indigenous walkers on the evening of the **Bridge's 75th Birthday Celebrations**. We all met near Milson's Point station, while we waited to commence the walk a couple of young chaps walked around with a bucket of clay and painted our face and/or arms. Banners were unfurled and flags etc. handed out. Folk from a number of different Reconciliation groups joined the throng of people. It was very overcast, as we walked up the road onto the bridge we were handed yellow caps with a tiny light in the centre. We halted at the first pylons: our leader, Uncle Max Eulo in traditional dress who was carrying a small log with smoking leaves, started a chant which was picked up by large speakers either side of the road, and smoke started pouring over us. The chant, supported by clap sticks, and smoke continued all the way across the bridge to the second pylons: folk moved slowly and walked in time to the chant, it was growing dark, coloured lights lit the arch as we moved along. The experience was like a walking meditation as one walked through a soundscape of chant and smoke under the great iron arch in the growing dusk. From the arms joining the southern pylons was hung a line of wind chimes which sang as we passed under them and away from the chanting. Everyone was relaxed and enjoyed themselves, especially the children. Looking back as we walked toward York St. there was a river of tiny lights moving over the bridge and dispersing into the city from the following crowds. It was such a marvellous experience and I'll remember it with pleasure for many years.----- *Cassie Thornley*

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As a subscriber to **NAISDA Dance College** I attended the launch of their new premises at Mt Penang and the College Graduation Ceremony.. The Diplomas and Certificates were presented by Hon George Brandis, Minister for Arts and Sport. 7 students had completed their studies and were awarded diplomas, 20 students received Certificates. It was an exciting day to see these Indigenous students achieving so much. Dances from NE Arnhem Land and Torres Strait Island of Badu were performed. NAISDA is a unique world class cultural organization providing excellence in Indigenous dance and performing arts, education and training, preparing its students to be enterprising, engage in life-long learning and to lead fulfilling lives. It was a privilege to be there.---- *Cate Turner*

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FILLING THE GAP Indigenous Dental Health Program

Filling The Gap is a successful, practical way of helping Indigenous communities. It is a program, which aims to address the serious shortage of dental practitioners in Indigenous communities. By recruiting dentists to work as volunteers for 1 to 2 weeks a year at the Wuchopperin Indigenous Health Centre, Cairns, Filling The Gap has made a big difference, Airfares, accommodation transport and registration with the Queensland Dental Board are all covered by the program. The dentists that have taken part so far, have found it a very rewarding experience.

What we are asking you to do, to support this program is to get the word out to all the dentists you know. For more information visit the website www.fillingthegap.com.au

Filling the Gap, 12 Woodside Avenue, Burwood NSW 2134

Phone 0403 131 410 (Gael Kennedy) 0418 208 755 (Uri Windt) Email info@fillingthegap.com.au

THE GURINGAI FESTIVAL 2007

The Guringai Festival is a celebration of Aboriginal heritage and culture - which is the oldest continuous culture in the world. The Festival commenced in 2001 on the Northern Beaches and is now celebrated across Northern Sydney by Local Councils, Reconciliation Groups, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organisations, schools and communities. This annual Festival aims to raise awareness of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Northern Sydney and to promote Reconciliation, friendship and a shared love for the land, Guringai land – our home.

The Guringai Festival runs from Sorry Day (26 May), through Reconciliation Week (27 May - 3 June) and through to the end of NAIDOC Week (mid July). This year the Official Festival Launch will be hosted by Ku-ring-gai Council at St Ives Shopping Centre on Thursday 24 May at 7pm. Free event - All Welcome

Festival Brochures detailing over fifty free community events will soon be available from Local Councils & Libraries. Listed below are five Festival events in which LCRR is involved:

*** Thursday 31 May: 10.30am – 12noon: Free**

Lane Cove Council & Lane Cove Residents for Reconciliation:

The 11th Annual Lane Cove Children's Voices for Reconciliation:

Music, drama and dance by schoolchildren celebrating Reconciliation Week

Lane Cove Plaza, cnr Longueville Rd & Burns Bay Rd, Lane Cove Contact: Faith Wieland 9911 3594

*** Tuesdays 5, 12, 19 & 26 June: 7.00 for 7.30pm – 9.30pm**

Lane Cove Residents for Reconciliation:

'Aboriginal Spirituality – Steps to Connecting to Country'

A four session course presented by Ainwan/Gamilaroi/Darnginjung woman Oomera Edwards.

Total cost: \$50 (payable in advance) Bookings essential....Closing date Tuesday 29 May.

Senior Citizens' Centre, 180 Longueville Rd, Lane Cove

Contacts: Kerrie McKenzie 9428 1197; Cate Turner 9428 2905

*** Thursday 21 June: 7pm – 9.30pm: Free**

Northern Sydney Region Reconciliation Network: Public Forum: 'A Sorry State of Affairs'

In 2006 the UN released a damning report on Australia's treatment of Aboriginal People. Why have governments failed and what should they do to address this situation? Come & have your say!

The Dougherty Centre, 7 Victor St, Chatswood

Contacts: Sharni Jones 9926 6975; Kerrie McKenzie 9428 1197

*** Tuesday 26 June: 10am – 11am: Free**

Lane Cove Council & Lane Cove Residents for Reconciliation:

The 11th Annual NAIDOC celebrations in Lane Cove

Performances by Descendance Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Dance Theatre with input by Hunters Hill High & others.

Lane Cove Plaza, cnr Longueville Rd & Burns Bay Rd, Lane Cove. Contact: Faith Wieland 9911 3594

*** Monday 2 – Monday 23 July: During Library Hours: Free**

Lane Cove Library & Lane Cove Residents for Reconciliation:

NAIDOC Week Children's Exhibition

Exhibition of schoolchildren's art, poetry & stories on the theme of NAIDOC.

Lane Cove Library, 139a Longueville Rd Lane Cove. Contact: Chris Brimble 9911 3634

Kerrie McKenzie

Dr. Anita Heiss, Wiradjuri writer, poet, social commentator,

will be speaking at WAIG (25 Stokes St - Lane Cove) on Monday 18 June, from 10am – 12 md.

She'll be talking about her latest book, 'Not Meeting Mr Right,' and on writing in general.

All Welcome

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2007 commemorates many anniversaries: 50 years of NAIDOC; 40 years since the 1967 Referendum;

35 years since the establishment of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra; 20 years since the setting

up of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody; 15 years since the High Court's Mabo

Decision overturning the legal myth of 'Terra Nullius'; 15 years since Paul Keating's Redfern Park Speech;

10 years since the launch of the Bringing Them Home Report ...

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Newsletter printed by courtesy Lane Cove Council

Editor, C Turner