



NATSICC NEWSLETTER

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council

March 2018



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Culture on show at Youth Leadership Gathering

From 6 - 10 December 2017, NATSICC hosted a group of young Catholic Leaders in Sydney.

These young Aboriginal men and women were nominated by their communities because they have shown leadership qualities and a commitment to their faith and Culture.

Joined by the delegates from the Wadeye and Tiwi Island groups, our leaders came together as one

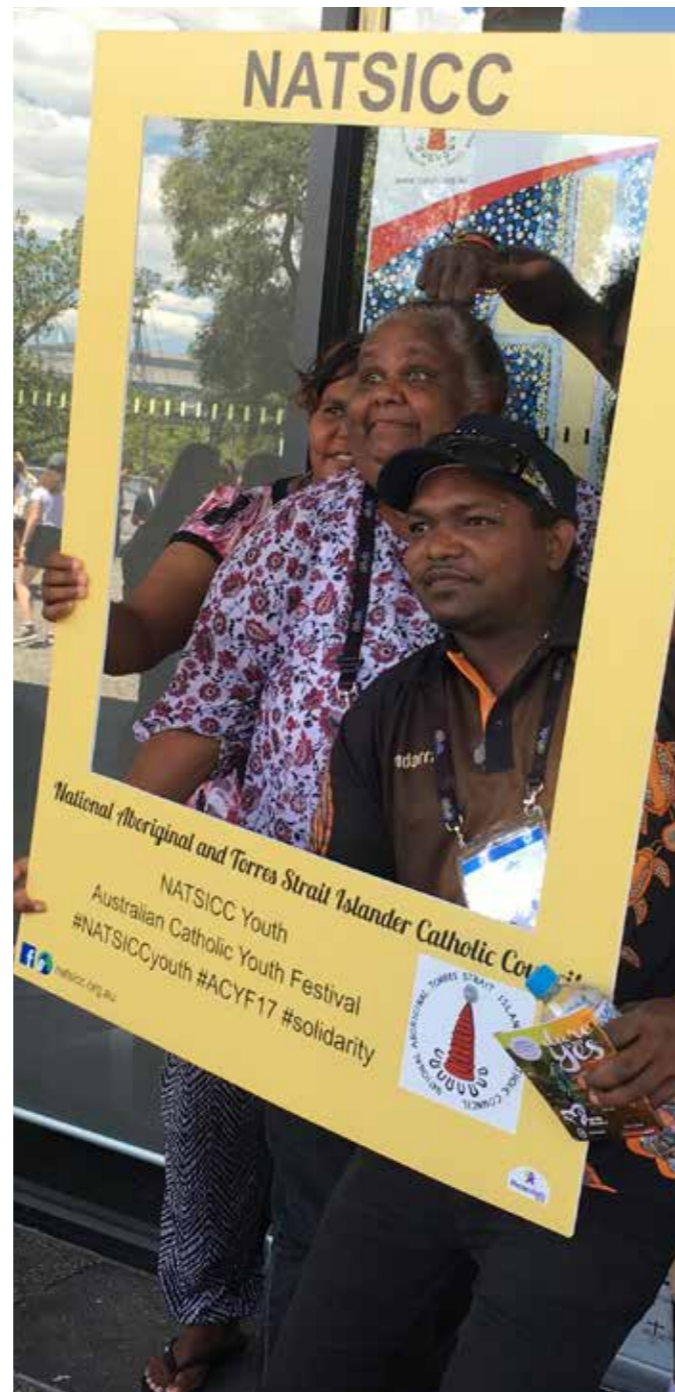
and used the festival experience to grow in faith and build their capacity as role models.

The Gathering took place alongside the 2017 Catholic Youth Festival - a 20,000 strong collection of young Catholics celebrating faith at Sydney's Homebush Stadium.

More photos and the accompanying story are on the following two pages.

2017 NATSICC Youth Leadership Gathering - Sydney, NSW.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leaders came to experience the presence of Jesus in the big city, but left touching the hearts and educating non Indigenous participants. In doing so, it was obvious that we have more similarities than differences.....



"ACYF 2017 has been the most informative and rewarding time in my career as an Indigenous Education Worker. Representing NATSICC (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council) has allowed me to meet a variety of new people which has given me many experiences and resources to bring back to my students at Mt St Patrick College.

In each workshop I attended, the speakers gave me a whole new insight on to their topics respectively which allowed me to gain a broader and more opened view of the Catholic Faith. I was astounded by the large number of people, all from different cultures and backgrounds gathering for the same thing. It was overwhelming the passion these people had for what they believe in and inspired me to take a similar grasp on my career as an Indigenous Education Worker, something I am very passionate about.

Seeing everyone come together to sing and praise Jesus in the form of the host was truly breathtaking and certainly fit the theme for the year, "Open horizons for spreading joy".

Going back now about to start the new year, I plan to take back the knowledge and resources I have gained to my students and encourage them to not only spread joy within their lives but to find something they are passionate about and stick at it, because its then truly amazing things can happen."

Mackenzie Togo - NATSICC Youth Delegate



NATSICC Cultural Centre



NATSICC worked with the festival organisers, Catholic Mission and the Bible Society to provide a multi use space that provided the Aboriginal delegates with a place to escape the crowds and noise of the festival whilst educating and informing the thousands of festival participants. The space managed to achieve this balance only because of the hospitality, confidence and enthusiasm of the Aboriginal delegates.

Of the 20,000 festival goers, a good proportion visited the Cultural Space over the 3 days. Activities

included painting using traditional symbols, being 'painted up' by the Wadeye group, learning about Language groups and viewing Richard Campbell's iconic Stations of the Cross artwork.

Living Pope Francis' call to engage with each other, many cultures intertwined and stories of country, culture and spirituality were shared - particularly at the Language Map display. The participants took great joy in sharing the stories of their homelands and communities whilst forming friendships and building mutual respect.



Aboriginal and Islander Catholic Ministry Poster Series

In your State and Territory, there is very likely an Aboriginal and Islander Catholic Ministry (AICM). Perhaps its located in a nondescript house in a city backstreet ,where the lounge room doubles as the reception area, or part of a bustling Parish centre. Either way, you will still be greeted by a smiling face and a hot cup of coffee.

Everyday these ministries, with the help of committed volunteers, work tirelessly to support the spiritual and physical needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in their community.

Their works are a physical representation of the Catholic Principle of Subsidiarity. The Ministry programs, events and activities are formed and shaped by those that are experienced in the issues and challenges of those they serve. The variety of services that are offered are as varied as the needs of the people. Homework clubs, assisting in the development of RAP's, visiting juvenile Justice Centres, line dancing for health and wellbeing,

budgeting courses and saying Mass in remote communities are just a small cross section of the works being done every week.

These highlighted examples, and all others, are borne out of a deep Catholic faith and love for one another. Jesus is at the core of all AICM's and his love and care for us is manifested in their works and in the regular Masses celebrated in these Ministries.

The AICM poster series has been created to showcase the local efforts and programs that are making a vast difference in communities across Australia. Each poster contains the activities, Mission Statement and contact information of an AICM.

The NATSICC poster series debuted at the Australian Catholic Youth Festival in Sydney and they can be downloaded for use in Dioceses and classrooms at www.natsicc.org.au.

10th ANNIVERSARY OF THE APOLOGY

The 13th of February 2018 marked the 10th Anniversary of the Federal Government's apology to the Stolen Generations.

WHO ARE THE STOLEN GENERATIONS?

The 'Stolen Generations' are the generations of Aboriginal children taken away from their families by governments, churches and welfare bodies to be brought up in institutions or fostered out to white families. Removing children from their families was official government policy in Australia until 1969. However, the practice had begun in the earliest days of European settlement, when children were used as guides, servants and farm labour. The first 'native institution' at Parramatta in 1814 was set up to 'civilise' Aboriginal children.

It is not known precisely how many Aboriginal children were taken away between 1909 and 1969, when the Aborigines Welfare Board (formerly the Aborigines Protection Board) was abolished. Poor record keeping, the loss of records and changes to departmental structures have made it almost impossible to trace many connections.

Almost every Aboriginal family has been affected in some way by the policies of child removal. Taking children from their families was one of the most devastating practices since white settlement and has profound repercussions for all Aboriginal people today.

MARKING THE ANNIVERSARY

NATSICC has created a page at the NATSICC website dedicated to the 10th Anniversary which houses a number of resources and comments from Catholics, including Fr Frank Brennan, Bishop Eugene Hurley and NATSICC Chairperson John Lochowiak.

In his reflection on the Anniversary, Fr Frank Brennan urges us to capitalise on the presence of the four highly talented Aboriginal leaders in the National Parliament on the journey forwards. He summarised the day in 2008 - *"The nation is all the better for an apology which was graciously offered by both sides of Parliament and graciously received by the stolen generations and their many supporters ten years ago."*

The following resources are available for download / viewing via the NATSICC website:

- An Interview with NATSICC Chairperson John Lochowiak on the progress of Closing the Gap following the Apology (<https://youtu.be/4Dg3mSIY4no>)
- A joint Statement from NATSICC and the Bishops Commission for relations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- A Parish kit by the Perth ACM
- A number of historical documents and statements from the Catholic Church
- Information from the Healing Foundation

Visit the Resource hub section at www.natsicc.org.au to access the Apology page.





ABORIGINAL ARTIST PRODUCES ICON IMAGE FOR YEAR OF YOUTH

ALICE SPRINGS ARTIST AMANDA GOREY HAS PRODUCED 'CHRIST OUR JOY' - AN IMAGE THAT WILL BE SEEN BY HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF YOUNG CATHOLICS Across 2018 - THE YEAR OF YOUTH.

The image (left), which will be central to the celebration and prayerful discernment of local Australian communities throughout the Year of Youth, will be unveiled at the Youth Festival. The image is titled Christ our Joy and was painted by artist, Amunda Gorey in Alice Springs.

"The image tells the story of young people in the current landscape of our Australian Church as they journey toward Christ. It is a story of rich diversity and great joy," said Malcolm Hart, Director of the Australian Catholic Bishop Conference's Office for Youth.

Ms Gorey was identified by the Australian Catholic Youth Council for her use of vibrant colour which depicts youthfulness and the joy that is central to the spiritual focus of the Year of Youth. Her previous work has also shown a depth of spirituality that is authentic to our Australian tradition.

'Christ our Joy' is rich in symbolism, tradition and meaning. It depicts the diversity of young people through the use of varied colour, shaped and sized dots. Some are gathered in communities, others more isolated. Some are closer to God or the cross, others further away. The central figures are Jesus and Mary against a cross. They point to the Resurrection as the source of our Joy. Jesus extends a hand toward his Mother Mary, and with her to the Church; with his other hand, he points them all to his Father-God.

"Everyone will see, feel and sense the painting differently. Each is valued as our stories and experiences are different," Ms Gorey said.

It is hoped that all communities of faith will find inspiration in this image as they respond to the invitation to a Year of Youth.

Caritas and First Australian Partners release joint statement on subsidiarity.



Twelve organisations, committed to advancing the wellbeing and rights of First Australians, have released a joint statement on the principle of subsidiarity as it applies to Indigenous Affairs, accompanied by an artwork by Tom E Lewis, founder of Djilpin Arts Aboriginal Corporation (NT).

seek the wellbeing of First Australians, to commit to this important principle.

Subsidiarity is a key Catholic Social Teaching principle which underpins all of Caritas Australia's work. It holds that decisions are best made by the people most affected by them. Caritas Australia and its First Australian partners are calling on the Federal, State and Territory governments and all religious institutions, service providers, not-for-profit organisations and businesses, which work with and

The jointly developed Statement asks that Indigenous community members are allowed to take the lead in creating and implementing policy that affects their lives; that they develop formal partnership agreements, ensuring an understanding of the importance of cultural values and knowledge, when programs are implemented across health, education, employment and other areas. John Lochowiak, the Chair of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council (NATSICC) said, "Subsidiarity compels us to realise that the people closest to, and most affected by, the issues are the ones best placed to address them, with the help of the Government" The artwork accompanying the Statement, entitled, 'Mimis Dancing under the Southern Cross', is a limited edition etching by Tom E Lewis which features spirit creatures, or 'Mimis', dancing under the Milky Way around the Southern Cross.

year_{of} youth

OPEN NEW HORIZONS FOR SPREADING JOY

Because of her, we can!

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SUNDAY 1 JULY 2018



Artist: Richard Campbell

NATSICC has decided to use the same theme as NAIDOC week for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday celebrations - *Because of her, we can!*

Our Mothers, Sisters, Aunties, Grandmothers and Daughters have been, and continue to be the thread which holds our families together. They have fought for justice, reconciliation and social change.

Women form the backbone of communities across Australia. This is particularly true for Aboriginal and Islander Catholic Ministries. Women are at the forefront of these community driven organizations designed to meet the spiritual and physical needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics.

QUOTE FROM JOHN ON THE IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN

It is time for us to celebrate and embrace the role that women play in our Ministries, our Church and our families. The Resource kit which NATSICC produces to assist Schools, Parishes and

communities to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday will highlight the women in our Church and community by providing Liturgy resources, stories of faith, prayer suggestions and youth activities.

Following on from the success of last year, multi media resources will again be available to allow Parishes and schools to engage with the more tech savvy students and congregations. Powerpoint presentations, videos and youth activities have been a successful addition to the resources and have seen a large increase in the online downloads of the Resource kit.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday Resources will be available at www.natsicc.org.au in May. Hard copies are sent out to every School and Parish in Australia. Should you require a hardcopy, please contact the NATSICC Secretariat is happy to organise postage.

Deacon John Bosco Celebrates 10 Years



On 3 August 2018 Deacon John Bosco Tipiloura celebrated ten years of ordination in the presence of Bishop Eugene Hurley at Wurrumiyanga, Bathurst Island. Mass was offered for the deacon in the presence of his family, friends and members of the community who came to offer their support and congratulations at this proud moment. During mass we were honoured to hear part of his life story and the events which led him to begin the journey towards the diaconate. It is evident that his life has indeed been transformed by the power of God.

I have been privileged to work with Deacon John Bosco for almost three years and have found him to be a most faithful man to God and the life of the Church here at Wurrumiyanga. His contribution is invaluable and from a priest's point of view it is wonderful to work as a team with a married deacon.

Deacon John Bosco Tipiloura was part of a founding group of men and women who began the practice and art form of pottery on the Tiwi Islands. Naturally this pottery was beautifully decorated in Tiwi design with many pieces that were created specifically for use in the church that bear the initials JBT on the base. This includes chalices, patterns, and cruets (the small vessels that hold the water and wine used during mass).

Providentially, a few weeks before we celebrated the 10 years of ordination a storage shed for the old mission garage was demolished and inside were found a set of cruets made by Deacon John Bosco. Thought gone forever they were cleaned up and used for the anniversary mass.

Currently there are only three Aboriginal deacons in Australia which contributes to the significance of this joyful milestone. So we congratulate you on this achievement and be assured of the thoughts and prayers of people all over the country. May God continue the good work that is taking place in you.

Article by Fr Pat Mara msc

Stations of the Cross

Painted by John Dunn



On Sunday, 19th November 2017, the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Melbourne (ACMM) unveiled a stunningly beautiful addition to their Thornbury headquarters.

The ACMM had been able to commission John Dunn, a KuKu Yalanji man from North Queensland, to create the incredibly beautiful pieces of art. John was on hand to uncover each station, one by one. As they were unveiled, John paralleled his life story to the stages of Jesus' journey to our eternal salvation.

With a mixture of traditional and contemporary elements, John Dunn's 'Stations' join Richard Campbell's (NSW) and Miram Rose's (NT) versions as acclaimed Aboriginal depictions of Christ's journey to crucifixion.

“

I was honoured to attend the unveiling of the Stations of the Cross at the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Chapel in Thornbury on Sunday. It was one of the most moving celebrations I have ever experienced. The artist, John Dunn shared a story of his personal journey at each station as he unveiled them one by one.

Each stage was punctuated with a prayer for reconciliation and some very moving music. John's story is one of dislocation and challenges, beginning with his discovery at 10 years of age, that he was one of the stolen generation. Archie Roaches song, "They Took the Children Away," was included at that stage. John paralleled his story with the steps Jesus took carrying the cross. People who helped him along the way included his friends and his mother and birth mother, just as Jesus had help carrying the cross. As Jesus fell, so did John. He described times in his life, when relationships failed and he made mistakes.

At the final station as Jesus was buried, John reflected on being nurtured and loved by his family and friends and a future of hope. His obvious pride in his creation of this timeless art work, gave me the sense that he has a new beginning. It was a very emotional ceremony, with many people shedding tears. My final thoughts on the experience were that it's important for us to remember the long term, generational impact of our past treatment of our First Australians. The final song was "You've got a Friend."

I know our Aboriginal brothers and sisters do have friends in our society today. Many were there on Sunday. I'm sure John felt the empathy and respect in the room.

MICHELE ARMSTRONG
JUSTICE & OUTREACH -COORDINATOR AQUINAS COLLEGE

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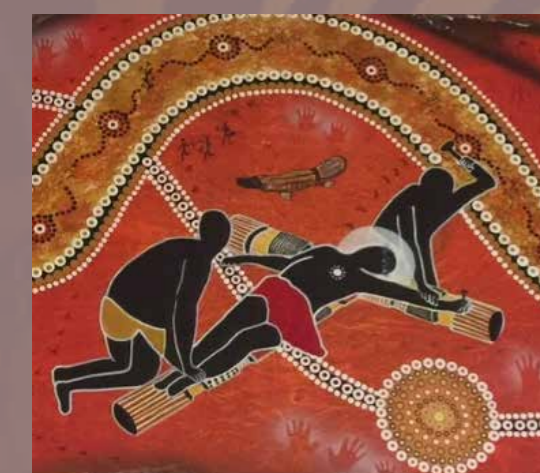
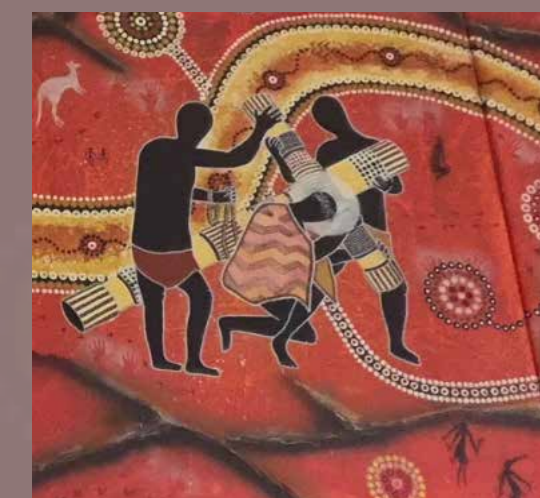
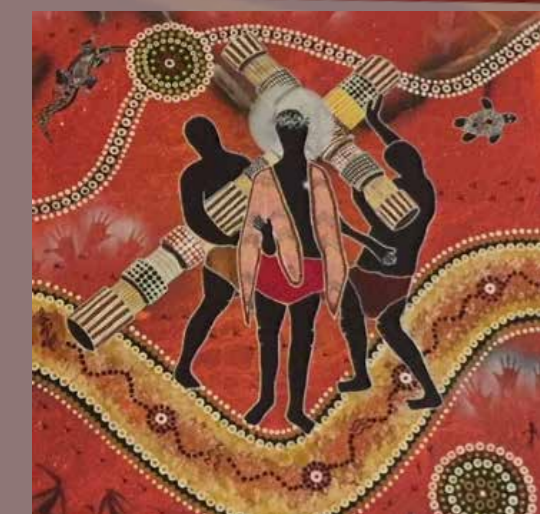
Aboriginal Stations of the Cross

Card Set \$15.00 per set of 14.



Aboriginal Catholic Ministry is a place of spirituality, gathering and challenge.
Original Collection at
434 St Georges Rd
Thornbury

To order email: Sherry.balcombe@cam.org.au



Aboriginal & Islander Catholic Ministries

Baabayn Aboriginal Corporation

WORKING IN WESTERN SYDNEY, BAABAYN IS WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY TO ACHIEVE POSITIVE OUTCOMES AND BRING THE WORD OF GOD TO THE PEOPLE.

Australia's largest concentration of Aboriginal people lives in Western Sydney. Baabayn was founded in 2012 to support Aboriginal people in the Mount Druitt, Blacktown and Penrith areas of Western Sydney.

We connect with individuals and families in a culturally appropriate way. We value the importance of welcoming them into an environment where there is freedom to express needs and difficulties.

By listening to their needs we are able to provide care, services and support that help individuals and families to heal from past traumas. We have a strong knowledge of the community and very extensive contacts both locally and further afield. We are constantly strengthening our presence in Western Sydney.

Our main purpose is to support our people in healing from the past and building towards the future. We work as a group to support individuals; we turn no one away; and we seek to build our people's pride in who they are, their sense of belonging, and their sense of connectedness to community and culture.

Core Aims

* Nurturing of local Aboriginal people's confidence, self-esteem, spirituality and knowledge of their culture.

* A supportive, healing, low-stress environment for Aboriginal people.

* Support for Aboriginal people who want to network and link up lasting partnerships to help us support our people more effectively.

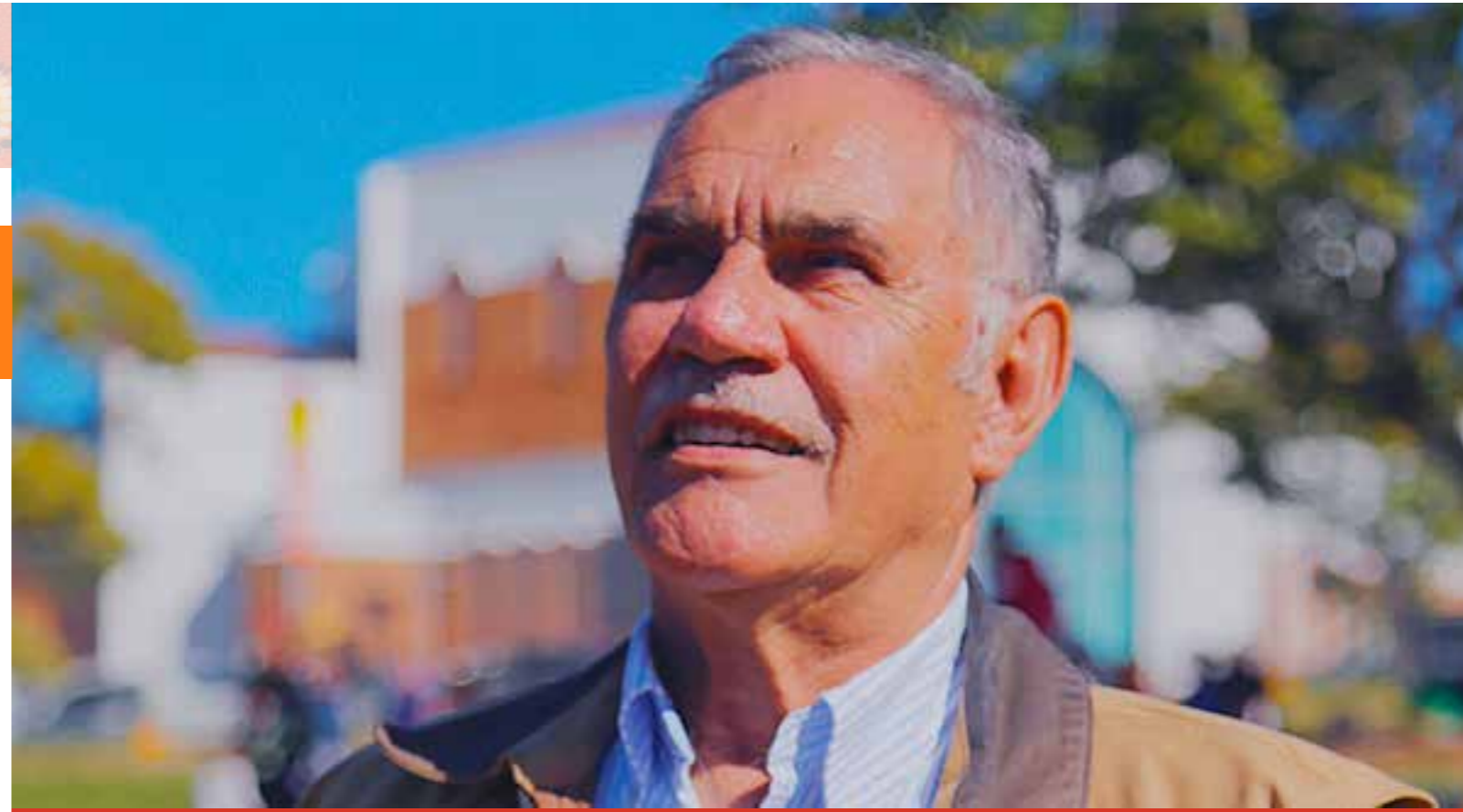
* Assistance and advocacy for people who are struggling in their dealings with government departments, etc.

* Healing through art and crafts.



Mission Statement

We Aboriginal Elders founded Baabayn because we believe that by providing a place of healing, where Aboriginal people connect with culture and have a strong sense of belonging we will be able to recover from past traumas, regain our self-esteem and realise our potential



Councillor in Focus - David Miller (QLD)

In Each edition of the NATSICC Newsletter we introduce you to a NATSICC Councillor. Councillors are appointed by their own States and Territories and fulfill their roles on a voluntary basis. To get in contact with your State/Territory Councillor, visit the 'Your NATSICC' page at www.natsicc.org.au.

This month we are very pleased to be able to share the story of the newest Councillor on NATSICC - Queensland's David Miller

David Miller joined the NATSICC Council in 2017 as the Queensland representative following the illness of Evelyn Parkin. As the QLD proxy, David and Evelyn worked closely in the previous year which allowed for a smooth transition. David is an Elder from Gangalu - Rockhampton, QLD.

In his own words, David summaries his participation and various roles:

My Local involvement in the Aboriginal Community of South East QLD in the following areas:

- Murri Ministry Office
- Centacare Archdiocese of Brisbane 23 years.
- AICC QLD 23 years.
- Natsicc 23 years.
- Srs of St Joseph - Canonization of Blessed Saint Mary MacKillop - Aboriginal Rep from S.E. QLD Rome.
- Srs of St Joseph Aboriginal Planning Committee, Sydney.
- FAIRA- Foundation of Aboriginal & Islander Research Action, Brisbane
- Bracken Ridge Parish Council member also Eucharistic Minister for the Parish Community.
- Member at the Social Justice and Peace Commission
- Aboriginal Catholic Elder for Australian Catholic University
- Former member for QLD Churches together
- Director for Kurbingui Youth Development, Brisbane.

As you can see I am very much involved in the Church agencies and community. Looking forward to working closely with the Natsicc Team and with the Australian Bishops. I also acknowledge the extensive work of Mrs Evelyn Parkin, Bishop Joseph Oudeman and the NATSICC committee members.

Next 10 years must deliver more for Indigenous Australians

IN FEBRUARY 2018 NATSICC AND THE BISHOPS COMMISSION FOR RELATIONS WITH ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES ISSUED THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT TO MARK THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FEDERAL APOLOGY TO THE STOLEN GENERATIONS.

Darwin Bishop Eugene Hurley and the chair of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council have lamented the slow progress – and lack of progress in some cases – in the 10 years since then-Prime Minister Kevin Rudd delivered a national apology to Indigenous Australians.

On February 13, 2008, Mr Rudd apologised for the treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the policies that caused pain, trauma and suffering for those peoples. It was hoped it would usher in a new age for relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and help “close the gap” on a range of measures, including health, education, employment and incarceration rates.

But a decade later, NATSICC chair John Lochowiak says the trauma that had been experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples has an intergenerational impact, which means many of the indicators of closing the gap have not been met, while others have widened.

“We must continue to heal and continue to strive for better outcomes for our people,” he said.

“We hoped that the apology would bring us closer together with non-Indigenous Australians. Recent things like the argument around moving Australia Day shows that we still have some way to go.”

Bishop Hurley, chairman of the Bishops Commission for Relations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, says despite significant efforts, Indigenous Australians are over-represented in prisons, struggle to find suitable housing and out-of-home care, and experience racism on a daily basis.

“The Church wishes to reaffirm and record our commitment to continue the healing process for the benefit of victims of the unjust policies of the past, to support the just needs of Indigenous people today and to contribute to the quest for national reconciliation,” Bishop Hurley said.

He said the apology and the anniversary of it are a symbol of hope.

“We must build this hope for a better future by ensuring that in full consultation with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, practical steps are taken to address the grossly entrenched disadvantages many of our First Nations brothers and sister endure every day. Now is the time to move forward and live out the promises made 10 years ago.”

Mr Lochowiak also recalled the optimism that flowed from the apology 10 years ago.

“On that day, it felt as if all Australians were as one,” he said. “I want that feeling to continue and for all of us to work together to so that when the 20th anniversary of the apology comes, our people are living longer, gaining a better education and living to our full potential.”

John Lochowiak was interviewed on the Apology and shares his views on the ongoing impacts and progress in the past 10 years -

www.natsicc.org.au/federal-apology---10th-anniversary.html

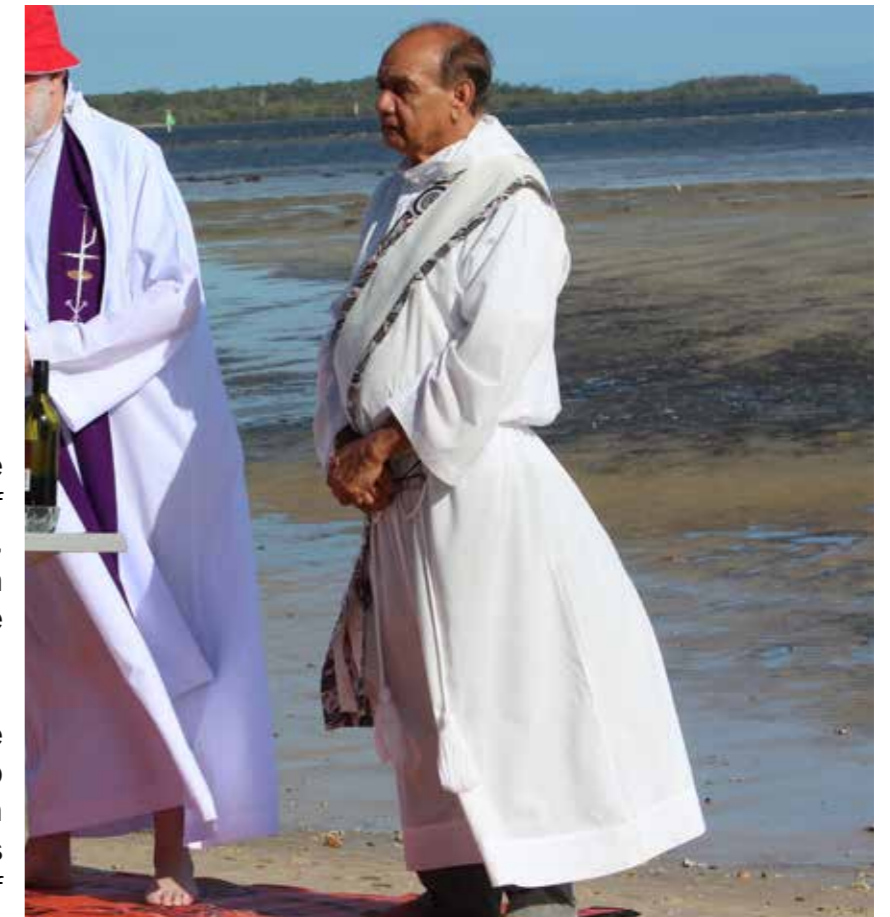
“I want that feeling to continue and for all of us to work together to so that when the 20th anniversary of the apology comes, our people are living longer, gaining a better education and living to our full potential.”

INDIGENOUS CONNECTIONS GETS ITS WINGS!

There are approximately 400 people living in Coen - which is at the centre of the Cape York Peninsula. Of those 400, Deacon Ralph Madigan and the team from Indigenous Connections have baptised at least 24.

Every month during the dry season, the team - consisting of Fr Rob Greenup and Gertrude Davis travel the 500km to Coen to celebrate Mass. These visits have become a very important part of the lives of Coen Catholics.

Pope Francis has placed a strong emphasis on mission and it is clear the Deacon Ralph, Fr Rob and Gertrude live their mission to share the word of God tirelessly. The wet season, however, produced a challenge to living this mission. The road between Mareeba and Coen is often closed due



to flooding. Unlike Jesus, their Holden Colorado does not have the ability to traverse the flooded roadways. During those times, Fr Rob traveled by air to the people of Coen - the cost of which Indigenous Connections could not absorb meaning that visits may have needed to be cancelled during ‘the wet’.

Through a seemingly blessed series of coincidences, Fr Rob wrote to NRL superstar Jonathan Thurstan, co owner of aviation company Skytrans. Thurstan, 2018 Queensland of the Year, made the decision to provide free fares for Fr Rob during the wet season, and in doing so, maintained the link between Catholic Communities in Far North Queensland.

Along with the help of several other supporters, Indigenous Connections will continue to support and serve the people of Far North Queensland.

We also hope that they will continue to attend the NATSICC Gatherings, Retreats and Assemblies so that the wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Community can benefit from their experiences and stories.

For those that are interested in learning more about Indigenous Connections, a poster has been created which showcases their work and provides contact details should you want to touch base. Simply visit the NATSICC Website and look for the ACM Poster Series under the ‘Programs’ tab.





Aboriginal Young People Celebrate the Spirit ...

Stand tall, stand proud, stand strong, stand still ... and know yourself always

Joyously celebrate the fruits and gifts of the Spirit

Bear the determination of the spirit of our people in your voice with passion

Love one another and spread the message of Gods peace and love

Share the spiritual richness of our ancestors with all others

Faithfully carry the Aboriginal Message Stick with pride and honour

So dreams and hopes will be guided and fulfilled by the Creator Spirit
and so ...

Rejuvenate young Aboriginal ambassadors and leaders ... and

Celebrate the Spirit

1 Timothy 3: 1-7

Melissa Brickell 2008

Copyright NATSICC 2008



Service to Community Awards

Celebrating and recognising the efforts of those involved in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ministry



Download nomination forms at www.natsicc.com.au

Australia Day - A day to celebrate?



Image: Missionaries of the Sacred Heart Australia

Victorian NATSICC Councillor and ACM Melbourne Coordinator Sherry Balcombe shares her thoughts on Australia day and explains why the date needs to be changed.

In January 1788, the First Fleet carved through the water of Botany Bay. It marked the birth of British colonisation and left an indelible impact on Australia's Indigenous peoples.

Almost two and a half centuries later, Australians are finalising their plans to commemorate the arrival of British rule, reflecting on what it is to be Australian and pondering the values and pastimes that have shaped modern Australia. It sounds ideal to some and harrowing to others.

For as long as Australia Day has been recognised (it only became a national public holiday in 1994), it has been met with debate and resistance. In Melbourne the debate has continued to intensify, with three Melbourne councils—Darebin, Yarra and Moreland—recently voting to abandon Australia Day celebrations. Newly elected Victorian Greens MP, Lidia Thorpe, received death threats after she suggested Australian flags should be flown at half-mast on the day.

Sherry Balcombe, coordinator at the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry of Victoria, says moving the day would not be 'a radical step or breaking of tradition.' Sherry, who is of Olkola and Western Yalanji descent, points out that while she is proud to be Australian, she is unable to celebrate.

'There are strong views within our Aboriginal communities and the reconciliation movement that the date represents the beginning of an unlawful invasion that has had devastating impacts still being felt today.'

'There's no question we should celebrate our nation but not on the current date,' she says. 'It should be a day for all Australians—Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal—to re-examine this country's true history and work together to create a new identity.'

'An identity informed by truth and understanding and one that acknowledges the richness that Aboriginal culture and knowledge contributes to this great nation of ours.'

'It's more important than ever to honour the traditional unity of god and First Nations people.'

As Australia approaches the 230 anniversary of the First Fleet's arrival, it is distinctly clear there remains a turbulent wake that continues to distress and divide many Australians. For some, Australia Day represents national identity. For others, it's a reminder of the intergenerational, echoing harm inflicted on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples since 1788.

Article by Toby Ward - Media and Communications Office, Melbourne



"Honor her for all that her hands have done, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate." Proverb 31

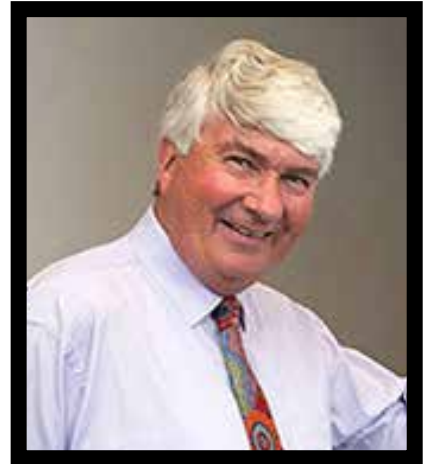
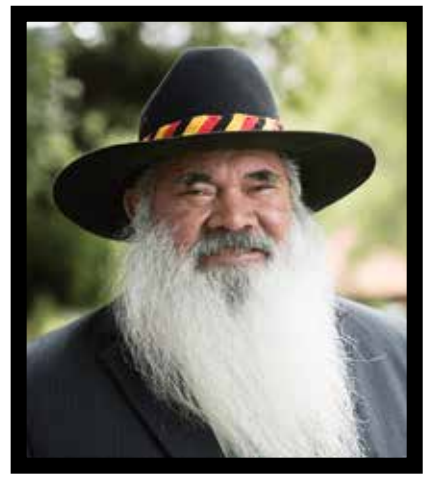
Our Mothers, Grandmothers, Sisters, Aunties, Daughters - women form the backbone and foundation for our being. On the 8th of March we recognized their contributions and strive towards equality and justice.

The International Women's Day Committee called for Australians to #pressforprogress and gender parity for all people. It was a strong call to motivate and unite friends, colleagues and whole communities to think, act and be gender inclusive.

NATSICC stand alongside our 7 female Councilors and all the women in our lives. We call for our communities to stand in Solidarity with all women and strive to address the injustices and challenges that are placed upon them.



In March 2018, surrounded by her wonderful family and friends, NSW Elder and former NATSICC Chairperson Elsie Heiss was honoured as a Dame of the Order of St Gregory. Papal Honours are in recognition of services provided to the church and to society. Congratulations to Elsie from all of us here at NATSICC!



**STRONG FAITH.
STRONG YOUTH.
STRONG FUTURE.**

NATSICC ASSEMBLY, PERTH 1-5 OCTOBER 2018

<http://www.natsicc.org.au/2018-natsicc-assembly.html>