

# CAIS NOTES



Prof. Lynette Russell

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## Director's Cut

Welcome to CAIS first community newsletter. Even though it is already May it seems as though the year has just begun. We have lots of interesting things planned for 2007, including a particularly special series of events around NAIDOC. We will again host the William Cooper Lecture, I am delighted to announce the presentation will be delivered by Linda Burney NSW MP, at the Monash Conference Centre, Wednesday 4th July 2007.

Teaching has occupied most of the academic staff over the past months and our support staff are continuing to develop a number of innovative programs for the Indigenous student cohort. This year

we increased our numbers of Indigenous students by 25%, so we are not only delighted but invigorated by the developments we have in place. One particularly exciting development will be a Men's Business Group to be run by Richard Frankland, Gunditjmarra. Richard is an AFI award winning film director, a former Royal Commissioner (RCADIC), play write, novelist and political activist. Richard has agreed to come on board and conduct some cultural mentoring, a prospect which we are all very excited about.

Other news so far this year includes Dr Liam Brady post-doctoral fellow who won Faculty's Mollie Hollman award for best thesis.

Earlier this year Dr Liam Campbell was awarded a PhD for his work with the Walpiri. Liam was supervised by Dr Liz Reed who should also be congratulated for this effort. Unfortunately for us last year Liz retired from CAIS, and is still very much missed by all her friends and colleagues. But we wish her well in her new pursuits.

The Eggleston Library goes from strength to strength and the delightful Bev Thomson and Carly Castlehow are eager to assist anyone who would like to use our resources. Come in and meet them and look over our collections.

## Points of Interest

- The Centre is currently developing a Cultural Tour of the Melbourne and Metropolitan area that will be offered to student's of Indigenous Studies in 2008. Tour will include significant Kulin nation sites.
- NAIDOC celebrations  
This year CAIS will celebrate NAIDOC during 1st week of 2nd semester. A diverse program is being developed.

## News



Dr Jane Lydon, research fellow, and her partner Tim Hoffman welcomed a

new addition to their family with birth of Dasheil, a brother for Roy. Congratulations to all.

A fine looking lad, a bit smaller than his brother at 7 pounds 8 oz (3.4kg).



Dashiell James Lydon

## CAIS NOTES

## New Library Resources

The library has recently purchased a number of new books and DVD's to add to the collection.

'*Disciplining the Savages, Savaging the Disciplines*', by Professor Martin Nakata.

'*Social Determinants of Indigenous Health*' edited by Bronwyn Carson, Terry Dunbar, Richard D Chenhall and Ross Bailie. This book offers a systematic overview of the relationship between the social and political environment and health of Indige-

nous Australians.

'*A History of Victoria*' by Geoffrey Blainey takes the reader from



the time Aboriginal people could walk across Bass Strait to the present day.

Recent DVD/Video acquisitions may be of particular interest to followers of Australian Rules Football include '*Marn Grook*', '*Black*

*Magic*' and '*Buffalo Legends*' which focus on Aboriginal sportsmen and Aussie Rules Football.

Also of interest was the recent purchases of the four episodes of '*Women of the Sun...25 years later*' which are a useful resource for discussions related to Australian Aboriginal Women.



## Community Notice

This year CAIS will celebrate NAIDOC during first week of semester two. A draft program is currently being established with the assistance of the steering committee assembled to organize events.



Formal Acknowledgement of Country, a Smoking Ceremony and other activities are expected to raise awareness at the University. A performance by the Dandenong Bunjil Dancers, Grant Hansen's Big City Combo, the screening of Indigenous films, demonstrations of basket weaving and

possum skin cloak making and a general knowledge Indigenous quiz broadcast throughout the Campus Centre by Radio Monash will contribute to the weeks events.

The difficulty experienced in sourcing a mediator has precluded the Centre from holding the proposed Hypothetical debate. However this maybe pursued at a future date.



Sherryn Antonopolous (Taungurung)  
—one of the CAIS possum skin cloak designers and stitchers.

## Where Are They Now?

Meena Singh never thought she would practise law but a position as Indigenous Research Associate with the Federal Court whetted her appetite. 'It was just after Tampa, so it was a really exciting time to be in court,' said Meena. 'Justice Kenny was my mentor and gave me great encouragement.' In March 2003, Meena, a member of the Yorta Yorta / Wemba Wemba communities, began her

Articled Clerkship with Victoria Legal Aid, Broadmeadows office. She was admitted to practice twelve months later and now works for Victoria Legal Aid, Human Rights and Civil Law Service. 'The clients are so rapt with what we are able to do for them, even if it's a seemingly small piece of work like helping with a letter or a form.' Meena's greatest satisfaction has been helping refu-

gees from Iraq and Somalia get protection visas. 'It means you've had a hand in their life,' she said.

### Meena's Story

I started my Law Degree in 1996 at Monash University, after finishing my Arts Degree at Melbourne University, with major in History. My mum and two sisters had been at Monash, and knew the great support that

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## cont'd Where Are They Now?

MOSA (now CAIS) provided to Indigenous students. When I finished my course in mid 1999, I decided that I wanted to get as far away as possible from the Law, so ran away to the United Kingdom for two years. I worked as an Office Manager in an accounting firm and then in the Mayor of London's transport service department. When I returned to Melbourne at the end of 2001, I took up a position with the Federal Court of Australia as one of the Indigenous Research Associates. This was a great way to get back into the Law and get involved in areas of native title, migration and corporations law.

A fellow Indigenous graduate from Monash University, Tina Takagaki, got me interested in doing my articles with Victoria Legal Aid, which was where she had done her Articles. I started as an Indigenous Articled Clerk with Victoria Legal Aid in March 2003. After Articles, I was able to get a position with the Criminal Law Division of Victoria Legal Aid but after six months moved into the Human Rights and Civil Law Service where I am still working. I've worked as a Duty and Case Lawyer across the areas of

m i g r a t i o n (refugee) law, mental health, tenancy and social security and anti-discrimination. Recently I took up a position as In-House Advocate, basically a Barrister, so I do appearance work in the Courts and Tribunal.



Meena Singh outside Supreme Court after being admitted in March 2004

## Research in the Torres Strait—Duncan Wright

In 2005 I started research, working as part of a large project started by Drs. McNiven and David in the Western islands of the Torres Strait. After close consultation with the Goemulgaw (Mabuyag islanders) it was decided to excavate four of the main 'old villages'. It was hoped that this would offer insight into the emergence of Mabuyag as a residential island, while also helping to establish the chronology for Western Island settlement.

Almost two years into my candidature I have spent around four months

on Mabuyag and spent a lot longer thinking about it. Mabuyag is about as far north as you can go and still be within Australia. Indeed I'm told



that on clear day Smoke can be seen rising from Papua New Guinea. It quickly became clear

that for everything that could be learnt sitting sweating at the bottom of a pit, spending time with the fantastic community made things a lot more fulfilling. At one stage we were camping at one of the old villages at the back of the island. I was told with great relish that large numbers of spirits (or dogai) lived on this side of the island and so I would probably not come back. I was lucky enough not only to escape the spirits

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## WHAT'S COMING UP

Linda Burney MP will be delivering the third Biennial William Cooper Memorial Lecture to be held at the Monash Conference Centre on Wednesday 4th July commencing 6.00pm.

In 2003 Linda was elected as the Australian Labor Party member for Canterbury. Linda Burney is currently the Minister for Trading, Youth and Volunteering - the first Aboriginal person to be appointed as

a minister in NSW.

Linda is of Wiradjuri descent and a member of the Stolen Generation of Aboriginal children, who first met her father when she was 28 years old.

She has been engaged since the mid-1980s in the New South Wales Aboriginal Education



Linda Burney

Consultative Group and has been involved in the development and implementation of the first Aboriginal education policy in Australia. Linda was later the Director-General of the NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs and in 2006 she was elected National Vice President of the Australian Labor Party.

For further information contact CAIS.

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## Supporting Indigenous Communities

[www.arts.monash.edu.au/cais/](http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/cais/)

## Conference Activities

Barry Judd is attending a Social Science International Conference in Hawaii early June and in early July a Leisure Studies Association Conference at the University of Brighton in the UK.

Amanda Kearney will be presenting a paper at the Heritage and the Environment conference at Sabhal Mor Ostaig, Isle of Skye mid June.

Late July and early August, Lynette Russell will be presenting a paper at the Berlin 2007 International conference Law and Society in the 21st Century at Humboldt University and Melville Society 6th International Conference, Szczecin, Poland.

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## Cont'd Research in the Torres Strait—Duncan Wright

but also to sit each evening with the traditional owner who would educate me in the form of stories and songs. I also got the opportunity to go out one night hunting dugong with three young guys from the island.

Tui told me how they were able to navigate by the stars – oh yes and also by using giant flashlights! For a funeral on the island I volunteered to help with the grave digging (well it seemed I had the qualifications) and half to my surprise found myself doing just that and taking part in what was a very moving and beautiful ceremony. In short when you stepped over into 'island time', leaving behind the hectic academic life in Melbourne you learned a lot.

Back in Melbourne I am now sorting through and radiocarbon dating materials excavated from sites around

the island while at the same time trawling through early Missionary records. All being well I plan to finish at the end of 2008.



**Mask**, 19th century  
Torres Strait Islander people; Australia,  
Torres Strait, Mabuiag Island  
Turtle and clamshell, wood, feathers, resin,  
seeds, paint, fiber; W. 25 in. (63.5 cm)  
The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collec-  
tion, Purchase, Nelson A. Rockefeller Gift,  
1967 (1978.412.1510)