

CAIS NOTES



Prof. Lynette Russell

Director's Cut

Well the semester is over and we begin to think about what we achieved this year.

All in all it has been a year of great opportunities for us here at CAIS. Dr Liam Brady has moved on to the west and taken up an appointment at the University of Western Australia. Dr Amanda Kearney is to journey to Sydney where she joins anthropology at the University of New South Wales. Both will be missed but we are sure that they will go on to have wonderful careers and no doubt we will see them back in Melbourne from time to time. And besides now we have people to visit across the country! News about new staff members will be in the summer newsletter.

Barry Judd published his much anticipated book 'On

the Boundary Line'. I am sure everyone agrees this is a wonderful achievement and one of which he should be justly proud.

We took a day out in October to think about what we want to achieve over the next few years. All of the staff went to the Glen Erin Conference Centre in Romsey and we spent two days working through our ideas, hopes and aspirations. We certainly have a talented bunch of staff and if we pull off half of what we hope for we will be even stronger in the future.

Big changes are underway across the university after many years of CAIS gently pushing and prodding for some improvement in the university's Indigenous content. Watch this space for some really exciting developments

in the areas of graduations, celebrations and community involvement.

Over the last few years CAIS has worked very closely with Lynda Nicholson Wurundjeri champion in the area of Indigenous employment. Lynda has decided to seek new opportunities elsewhere in Monash so we will be shortly looking for a new person to take up this role.

So really 2008 was a year of change and stabilization, it has been an exciting year and one that we are keen to build on next year.

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Library News

Points of Interest

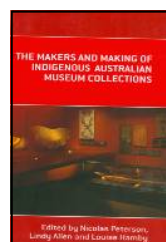
- ◇ A students reflection on her placement with HREOC
- ◇ Activities of student's social activities
- ◇ Community activities undertaken by Monash Indigenous Elder

The library has a number of new acquisitions purchased by Lynette Russell: "Archaeology as Political Action" and "The Makers and Making of Indigenous Australian Museum Collections".



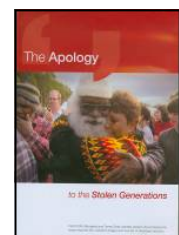
At the suggestion of Duncan Wright (PhD candidate), CAIS has purchased "Islands of Inquiry, colonisa-

tion, seafaring and the archaeology of maritime landscapes".



A DVD of the Australian Government's Apology to the Stolen Generation, delivered at Parliament House on the 13th February 2008, is now available in the Library. The

DVD was published by Reconciliation Australia.



The Library also has acquired the latest editions of the Human Rights Defender and Journal of Australian Indigenous Issues.

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Monash University Indigenous Students' Social Committee Update!

The Monash University Student Social Committee started up in late 2007 by a couple of undergraduate students desperate to create a social network for Indigenous students at Monash University. The Social Committee aims to create a social and academic support network for all current and past Indigenous students studying at Monash University. The Social Committee currently has 12 members which include students from Caulfield, Clayton, Peninsula, Gippsland campuses; as well as alumni and some Monash staff members.

The Social Committee is celebrating the end of its first year in operation. We are proud to say that we were able to host several events in 2008 which

included: a family day at Luna Park, a night out at the theatre to see Bangarra's "Mathina", and dinner at the restaurant Tjanabi. Special thanks to the staff at CAIS for helping to organize these events! We are excited to report that increasingly more students and alumni are contacting the Social Committee, and Face Book has played a key role in this process! Face Book has provided the Social Committee with an excellent way to network and keep people up to date with news and information. We are very proud of this achievement as we all know that it is quite difficult to get students and alumni together at the best of times!

We are looking forward to the final event of the year which is

the up and coming End of Year Catch Picnic at the picturesque Melbourne Botanical Gardens.

The Social Committee wants to say a HUGE thank you to everyone who attended events this year and we are looking forward to seeing more people at the events planned for the 2009 social calendar!



Some members of the Social Committee who attended the dinner at Tjanabi.

Reflections on my Aurora placement. Unfinished Business: A human rights approach to reconciliation by Laura Dortmans

What is it going to take for Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians to become a reality?

This was the question on my mind after five weeks as an intern in the Social Justice Unit at the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. The task I was working on for the duration of my placement had me thinking constantly about the concept of Reconciliation, about what this actually means and how it can come to be realised in our country.

I received this opportunity through the Aurora Project – a program that places Social Science, Anthropology and Law students with Native Title Representative Bodies and other relevant organisations around Australia during the summer and winter breaks. It has provided me

with a unique and invaluable experience which was both academically and personally rewarding. The short time I had with the HREOC was incredibly enriching and stimulating: I was continually encouraged to question, enquire and to seek out more information. Every day, through research and dialogue, I was engaging with the many and varied issues that impact the lives of Indigenous Australians and maintain the inequality and appalling standard of living experienced by a vast proportion of this minority population. As a result my views, opinions and perceptions have been significantly challenged and I have left the HREOC with a desire to continue learning. The focus of my task was to examine a human rights approach to reconciliation, exploring the idea that in addressing the human rights concerns of Indigenous Australians rec-

conciliation can finally be achieved. This realisation of reconciliation will involve creating an understanding of history, a commitment to partnerships built on trust and respect, and the recognition of the distinctive rights of Indigenous peoples so as to achieve equality and to enhance the quality of life for the Indigenous peoples of Australia.

The pursuit of reconciliation demands a long-term commitment to change involving several crucial factors – both symbolic and practical – which must be addressed simultaneously. A difficult and multi-faceted challenge is posed for our nation but the pursuit of reconciliation based on a human rights framework is certainly a realistic and attainable goal.

Laura will begin her honours year with CAIS in 2009.

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Out and About—Diane Singh

2008—The International Year of Languages

Last July I had the opportunity to attend the University of Sydney's Indigenous Languages Institute Bayala Ngarala conference "Speak and listen in Dharug, the Sydney language". This was a 3 day conference, which was part of the broader twelve day LingFest 2008 conference.

The conference provided a useful forum for a wide range of people working in the area of Australian Indigenous language revival and focused on:

- ◇ language policy and planning
- ◇ languages and music
- ◇ Aboriginal languages sound systems
- ◇ grammatical aspects of Aboriginal languages
- ◇ issues of language revival and maintenance.

The conference was attended by a wide variety of people including students, language teachers, cultural centre workers and linguists.

Speakers included: Stan Grant Snr, Wiradjuri Linguist, Dana Ober, BA, Torres Strait Islander man, Kala Kawaw Ya Linguist and Ron Ignace, a Chief of the Skeetchestn Band, Secwepemc Nation and member of the Canadian Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures.



Acknowledgement of Country

On the 14th of June I presented an Acknowledgement of Country at the Japanese Studies Centre Auditorium preceding the fifth and final conference in a series called Negotiating the Sacred.

This series of conferences have been multi-faith, cross disciplinary and focussed on contributing to dialogue and exchange in a religiously pluralistic and multicultural society. The most recent session was: Negotiating the Sacred -v- Governing the Family.

Speakers included CAIS academics: Dr Gwenda Baker 'Divine intervention: The disruption of Aboriginal family life in Arnhem Land' and Dr John Bradley 'The things we dare to presume' Family, identity and country'.

Both John and Gwenda were later interviewed by Stephen Crittenden presenter of The Religion Report a guide to religious affairs in Australia and around the world. The program titled Aboriginal traditional life and kinship, St Mary's South Brisbane. "out of communion"? was aired on Wednesday the 20th August 2008.

To obtain a copy of the transcript, listen on line or download a podcast of the interview visit the following website:

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/religionreport/stories/2008/2340864.htm>

Diane Singh is a Yorta Yorta/Wemba Wemba woman from Victoria/New South Wales. Diane has been working on the Trust and Technology Project: Building archival systems for Indigenous oral memory with researchers from CAIS, the Public Records Office of Victoria, the Koorie Heritage Trust, Koorie Heritage Taskforce and the Australian Society of Archives, Indigenous Issues Special Interest Group.

Baz Luhrmann's film 'AUSTRALIA'

Lorraine Padgham

With so much hype about the new Baz Luhrmann film 'Australia' I was interested to gain an insight into what other people thought about the movie. From the vast range of comments posted on the internet <http://www.yourmovies.com.au> there was no consensus. Many stated the storyline was corny & predictable and much of the dialogue and theme was jingoistic. Others suggested Baz Luhrmann tried to cover too much material which caused the film to be very fractured with little opportunity for the full development of the lead characters.

With an average star rating of 3.5 out of 5,

the comments posted ranged from 'Brilliant', 'A Wonderful Epic About Australia', 'Powerful and Moving - A Must See', to '2.5 Hours of My Life Wasted!', and 'A Film as Barren as the Outback',

Film trailers suggested a 'classic drama that wrenched at the heart' but the film 'failed to explore important issues such as the Stolen Generation issue to any great depth and much of what was portrayed was inaccurate'. However despite a large number of negative comments, many commentators felt the cinema photography was exceptional and the acting of little Brandon Walters, who played Nullah a part Aboriginal,

part white kid, was to be commended.

I guess the only way I can assess this movie to go and see it for myself but I need to heed the advice from a number of commentators and see the movie without expecting too much and in that way I will be very pleasantly surprised.

Finally it was suggested that to get the most out of the film don't take it too seriously and don't over analyse it, just enjoy it for what it has to offer.

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CAIS Staff

- ◇ Two valued staff members have recently resigned from CAIS. Dr Liam Brady has accepted a position as Postdoctoral Fellow, School of Social and Cultural Studies (Archaeology), University of Western Australia and Peggy Swindle student recruitment has decided to investigate other career options.
- ◇ Kristel Keleher has accepted the full-time recruitment officers position. Under the management of Judith Cooke, the Indigenous Services Unit will focus on building connections with Indigenous VCE students and developing mentoring and academic support for students for the coming year.
- ◇ Dr Barry Judd has returned to Monash after managing the Indigenous Support Unit at Melbourne University for the past six months. Welcome back Barry.
- ◇ Carly Castlehow has accepted a position with the Office of the Vice-president (Advancement) at the Caulfield Campus. Carly will be greatly missed.
- ◇ Aja Smith a sessional tutor with CAIS received the Dean's commendation for teaching - citing excellent student support and commitment to student welfare, especially with international students.

Collage of Prominent Aborigines and Supporters



The CAIS Collage of Indigenous Heroes and Supporters

Who were the candidates for the collection of images representing prominent Indigenous Australians and their supporters? Administration staff worked together and drew up a

list of names of likely candidates. Those represented included people past and present who had made a substantial impact on Australian society in education, medicine, the arts, social justice and politics. Many people are familiar with names like David Gulpilil, Ernie Dingo and Evonne Goolalong-Cawley but how many people know Noel Tovey the former principal dancer with Sadler's Wells Opera and an acclaimed choreographer, William Barton a leading didjeridu player and composer who performs with Sydney Symphony Orchestra or Denis Non an important Torres Strait Islander artist. These were

some of the lesser known Aborigines who had gained world recognition.

The activities of non Indigenous people who actively assisted Indigenous people have also been acknowledged. The Centre wanted to pay tribute to the contribution people like Frank Hardy, Paul Kelly and the late Fred Hollows made towards improving and highlighting Indigenous conditions.

The collage will be mounted at CAIS and should cause people to pause and think and reflect on the capabilities and current plight of Indigenous Australians in today's society.