

# CAIS NOTES



Prof. Lynette Russell

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## Director's Cut

Our first semester has come to a finish and the academic staff are busily preparing for semester two. It is often a time at CAIS when things look quiet but this illusion is quickly shattered when you peep into the staff's offices to spy mountains of essays and exams ready to be marked. It was an eventful semester, we have a very vibrant culture at CAIS, and for a while there it seemed like we had something special on every week.

As part of our NAIDOC celebrations we held our inaugural Elders day, something we intend doing annually. If the enthusiastic numbers of elders are anything to go by it is

obvious that the Koori community is keenly interested in higher education as a way forward, especially for the young.

In June Dr John Bradley, Dr Barry Judd and Dr Shannon Faulkhead and I travelled to Minneapolis to attend the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association's conference. As we flew over the midlands of American and up towards the prairie that stretches to Canada we were reminded of the cultural and geographic diversity of the United States of America. Our session was extremely well received and resulted in several invitations to visit Canadian and American universities to talk about our wonderful Centre and

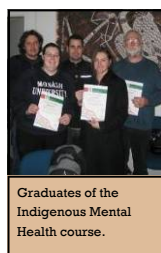
all it has achieved. It seems our reputation continues to grow.

Our recruitment activities continue unabated and we are all very optimistic that we are on the crest of significant increases in our numbers of students. The energies of our recruitment officer Kristel Keheler inspire us all, and any prospective students should make themselves known to her as she will do everything she can to smooth the pathway to university study. At the postgraduate level Monash University has committed to two highly prestigious scholarships, known as the Monash Indigenous Research Awards. These will be advertised widely (including on our web site).

## Points of Interest

- **Brown Bag Seminar 2nd semester schedule**
- **Film review 'Samson and Delilah'**
- **Academic Staff Activities**
- **Presentation to Professor Richard Larkins on his retirement**
- **Latest PhD graduate**

## Indigenous Mental Health



Graduates of the Indigenous Mental Health course.

Congratulations to our first students and staff member who have completed the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Men-

tal Health First Aid (AMHFA) course!

This is the first time this course has been provided to students and was held over a period of five weeks on Friday afternoons. It is hoped that this course will provide students with the skills required to recognise and provide assistance to, until

help arrives, someone who may be suffering from a number of illnesses ranging from Depression, Anxiety, Psychosis and Substance Use Disorders. We plan to facilitate this training once a semester so all students from 2nd year onwards will have the opportunity to participate.

**Well done everyone!**

## Inaugural Elders Day 16 July 2009

Over 100 Elders and guests attended the inaugural Elders Day held on Thursday 16 July in the Robert Blackwood Auditorium at Monash University. The event scheduled to coincide with NAIDOC celebrations reflected the NAIDOC theme for 2009 – *Honouring our Elders and Nurturing our Youth*, and was instrumental in bringing together Indigenous Elders from communities around Victoria and members of the University's Executive Council.

Mr Bill Nicholson, a Wurundjeri Elder, warmly welcomed everyone with an informative Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony which was



Gali Gurruwiwi  
Banumbirr – Morning Star  
Poles 2007-8  
natural earth pigment on  
wood with bush string,  
bees wax and feathers  
Monash University  
Collection, purchased  
2009  
Photo: John Brash

followed by a traditional response from Mr Gali Yal-karriwuy Gurruwiwi.

Mr Gurruwiwi, a traditional Aboriginal (Yolngu) Mala Leader and Galpu clan representative, travelled from Elcho Island to officially present the sacred feathered ceremonial Morning Star Poles (Banumbirr) to Monash. The Morning Star Poles will become a permanent part of the Monash Collection.

After official speeches, Prof. Colin Bourke chaired a lively discussion with Elders to ascertain their thoughts and insights into how Monash might engage with local communities and better serve Indigenous students in the future. The discussion brought forward a number of useful suggestions which will be presented to Monash Council for discussion. Mark Olive, aka the "Black Olive" and



Mr Gali Gurruwiwi.

Australia's high profile Indigenous chef, prepared the lunch treating the Elders to the 'vibrant colours and earthy tastes of ancient outback flavours'.

The day concluded with an informative tour of the Monash Indigenous garden conducted by Dr Beth Gott an Honorary Research Fellow from the School of Biological Sciences and founder of the Indigenous garden.



Dr Beth  
Gott con-  
ducting the  
Indigenous  
garden tour

It was generally agreed that the inaugural Elders Day was a huge success. Many look forward to the continuation of the event and the promise of a valuable relationship being sustained between Monash and the local Indigenous communities.

## 'Samson and Delilah' wins a Canne Film Festival award

The five stars given to this film by both Margaret Pomeranz and David Stratton from ABC's 'At the Movies', was a sure indication that this film was something special. The film recently screened at the Canne Film Festival won the Camera d'Or prize for a first film at the festival by its Aboriginal director Warwick Thornton.

For Aboriginal director Warwick Thornton, Samson and Delilah was his first feature film as writer/director although he has had a number of successful short films and an impressive career as a first class

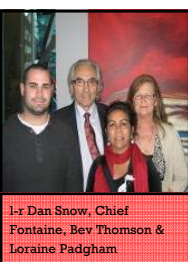
cinematographer. His film revolves around the developing relationship between a petrol sniffing teenager and a young girl who is forced to care for a frail and aging grandmother. Played by two first time actors from central Australia, (Rowan McNamara and Marissa Gibson), the film is a tale of young love in a small impoverished Indigenous community. Warwick Thornton's film steadfastly looks at the problems of violence, substance abuse and poverty which are inextricably linked to Indigenous communities in outback Australia.

The film which is both beautiful and

heart breaking, focuses debate on the living conditions of the Indigenous people of Australia and is considered to be comparable to the best films made about Indigenous Australians in the past by well established non-Indigenous filmmakers including Fred Schepisi's *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*.



## Lunch with Chief Phil Fontaine



l-r Dan Snow, Chief  
Fontaine, Bev Thomson &  
Loraine Padgham

On 26th May (Sorry Day) Dan Snow, Bev Thomson, Diane Singh and Loraine Padgham were invited to attend the Melbourne City Council's 'Sorry Day' lunch with the Canadian National First Nations Chief, Phil Fontaine. The lunch was

hosted at Tjanabi, Federation Square, where guests were tempted with a choice of traditional foods.

Chief Fontaine was visiting Australia to present the Keynote Address at Yulkuum-Jerrang: 2nd Indigenous Economic Development Conference at the The Sebel in Albert Park. After lunch, Chief Fontaine outlined the struggles and achievements of the Canadian First Nations in their plight to receive an Apology from the Canadian Government. On June 11 2008, Chief Fontaine as National Chief representing the

Assembly of First Nations, Canada, accepted that Apology from the Canadian Prime Minister, Stephen Harper. As one of the victims of that abhorrent scheme, Chief Fontaine described the background to this momentous achievement and the difficulties faced in achieving the full recognition. Unlike Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's 'Sorry', the First Nations received an Apology in addition to a promise to compensate all victims with a lump-sum 'Common Experience Payment' payable to every living survivor of the 'Residential Schools Program' - the Canadian 'Stolen Generation'.

## Introducing Dr Jane Carey and her research

**Research Project Title:**  
'White Plague: Settler Colonialism and the Politics of Population, 1837-2000'

The project Jane is researching seeks to illuminate the relationship between two processes essential to the creation of settler societies within the British Empire: the attempts to eliminate Indigenous populations; and the concurrent propagation of a white population to replace them. Jane's hypothesis is that the often radical separation between scholarly treatments of these two population 'problems' has resulted in part from a lack understanding of 'whiteness' as a racial category, and has obscured the racial basis of anxieties about white/settler populations. Situating these anxieties in relation to the concurrent

efforts to displace and contain Indigenous peoples, whether through violent conflict, annexation, segregation, assimilation or 'biological absorption', throws these racial foundations into sharp relief. The project will be organised around the four major 'population panics' that have consumed settler societies from the mid-nineteenth century: the Indigenous population 'problem'; immigration; the declining (white) birth rate; and broad concerns about health and hygiene. Tracing both the historical trajectories and the continuing effects of these population imperatives, Jane's research offers a new model for understanding the operations of 'race'. Commencing with the 1837 Report of the Select Committee on Aborigines in British settlements and concluding with the continuing late-twentieth century efforts to contain and con-

trol Indigenous peoples and controversies over 'illegal' immigrants, the research will demonstrate how settler societies are still organised around protecting the privileges of whiteness. Where many historical studies have suggested the continuing impact of colonialism on the present, Jane's work seeks to directly demonstrate these connections.



Dr Jane Carey

### GIFTED TO CAIS



The new CAIS meeting room (R102) was the perfect place to relocate the Indigenous artwork on loan from the Monash Gallery. It was also an ideal location to display a wonderful photograph donated to CAIS by Rita and Charles Bagossy. The photograph taken by Mr Brian Cassey features two three year olds, Tamisa Yunkaporta and Trento Pootchemunka from Aurukun, Qld. with a 'joey'.

CAIS was also the recipient of a wood spear and digging stick donated by the Pedersen family of West Heidelberg. These artefacts were given to the Pedersen family by Aboriginal hitch hikers travelling across the Nullarbor in the 1970s. CAIS welcomed these gifts and will endeavour to put them on public display within the Centre.

## Presentation Platter for Retiring Vice Chancellor Professor Richard Larkins

With the recent retirement of Vice Chancellor, Prof. Richard Larkins, CAIS organised a commemorative platter designed by Wathaurong Glass, to be presented to Prof. Larkins as an appreciation of his commitment to Indigenous education and research at Monash University. The platter was inscribed with the CAIS logo and the words: 'Presented to Richard Larkins - In honour of his dedication and support of the Centre for Indigenous Studies, Monash University' represented the high esteem CAIS held for Prof. Larkins.

Prof. Larkins' successor Prof. Edward Byrne AO, former Vice Provost (Health) University College London, commenced his appointment as Vice Chancellor, Monash University on 1st July. His stated objective for Monash was to build on the outstanding work carried out by Prof. Larkins and his team, and ensure the University con-

tinues to make the fullest possible contribution to the social, economic, cultural and environmental well-being of communities in Australia and across the world.

CAIS looks forward to a long and fruitful relationship with Prof. Byrne and a continuation of the good work undertaken by Prof. Larkins within the Indigenous Community.



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## Supporting Indigenous Communities

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

## Academic Staff Activities

- ◇ Dr Jane Lydon recently returned from two months in Europe conducting research in European photographic archives holding images of Indigenous Australians.
- ◇ Prof. Lynette Russell, Drs, John Bradley, Barry Judd and Shannon Faulkhead travelled to Minneapolis to present at the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association conference
- ◇ Duncan Wright (PhD student) is co-lecturing 'Indigenous Heritage in the Contemporary World' during 2nd semester with Dr Stephen Pritchard.
- ◇ Dr Jane Carey recently visited NZ to research the history of racial policies and movements and to examine archives relating to the White New Zealand League and the eugenics movement.
- ◇ Dr. Karen Hughes has been working in SA, researching aspects of women's cross-cultural encounters in the Lower Murray region. In September Karen will be travelling to Spain to deliver a paper at the European Association for the Study of Australia conference. The paper focuses on events surrounding a reported suicide of a nurse on the Point McLeay Mission in the 1920s.
- ◇ Dr Shannon Faulkhead recently attended the Archival Education Research Institute in LA and co-presented with Dr Joanne Evans (Melbourne University, eScholarship Research Centre (ESRC) / Monash University, Centre for Organisational and Social Informatics (COSI) and Frank Upward (Monash University, Centre for Organisational and Social Informatics (COSI)).
- ◇ Dr Chris Hallinan was recently appointed an Adjunct Research Associate to CAIS working in association with Dr Barry Judd.

## Congratulations to Shannon Faulkhead



Shannon Faulkhead, a Koorie woman from Mildura, recently completed the requirements to be awarded her PhD. Shannon's thesis entitled 'Narratives of

Koorie Victoria' was accepted by the Monash Research Graduate School Steering Committee on Tuesday 19th May 2009 and will be conferred at a Graduation Ceremony on 22 October 2009.

Working in association with Prof. Lynette Russell, colleagues from the Faculty of Information Technology and project partners, Shannon worked on the Australian Research Council Linkage Project, 'Trust and Technology' <http://www.infotech.monash.edu.au/research/centres/cosi/projects/trust/> that focused on enabling Koorie

communities to archive oral memory, and to engage with existing government and institutional archives on their terms.

Prior to returning to study, Shannon worked from 1994 to 2003 for The Koorie Heritage Trust Inc. <http://www.koorieheritagetrust.com/>, in various capacities ranging from Librarian to Chief Executive Officer.

Shannon has recently taken up a position within the Centre as a Research Fellow working with the Gunitj Mirring Traditional Owners and the Lake Condah Sustainable Development Project (LCSDP) <http://www.lakecondah.com/> on community archiving. With Prof. Russell, Prof. Sue McKemish and LCSDP, the Project has successfully obtained \$190,000 over two years from an ARC Discovery Indigenous Researchers Development grant, and \$28,000 from AIATSIIS grant 2009.

### FOR YOUR DIARY

- ◇ Brown Bag Seminars  
12-1pm Burchill Room, Bldg.68  
Clayton Campus

#### Wednesday 5th August

Dr Jane Carey - *Whiteness, Eugenics and "Miscegenation" in NZ and Australia: Some Preliminary Observations.*

#### Wednesday 2nd September

Dr Denise Cuthbert - *Sorry business and yet more sorry business: Reconciling the politics of black and white 'stolen' children in contemporary Australia*

#### Wednesday 7th October

Dr Shannon Faulkhead. *Topic TBA*

- ◇ Ms Wendy Saunders, CAIS Finance Officer, will shortly be engaged in the 2010 budget discussions with John Rivett, Business Manager, Faculty of Arts.