



THE
AUSTRALIAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
SOCIETY LTD

ABORIGINAL ISSUES NEWSLETTER 1998

Newsletter of the 'Aboriginal Issues, Aboriginal People and Psychology' National Interest Group of the Directorate of Social Issues of the Australian Psychological Society.

Editorial Committee: Pat Dudgeon, Harry Pickett, Ross Williams, Teresa Stevenson.

1. NATIONAL CONVENOR'S MESSAGE

Members,

I would like to extend a warm welcome to all new and existing members to the APS Interest Group on Aboriginal Issues, Aboriginal People and Psychology.

Currently our membership is about 420 psychologists and several community members and interested individuals. Once again, I urge those of you who haven't formally joined the Interest Group to consider staying with us. We have had a very exciting half year, with strong commitment to action by those members who attended our mini-conference in March. As a professional body, it is the responsibility of each one of us, to remain highly motivated and committed to keeping up the momentum ensuring that Indigenous content, perspectives and involvement maintain a high profile and priority within the discipline of psychology. Your continued involvement and support in this matter cannot be overstated.

2. MINI CONFERENCE ON INDIGENOUS STUDIES/PSYCHOLOGY COURSES.

As an outcome of the 1997 APS Annual Conference in Cairns, it was decided to hold a mini-conference to look at Aboriginal Studies in Psychology courses.

2.1 Survey.

Earlier in the year, a questionnaire was generated to gauge academic response to the following issues;

- . The current status of Indigenous content within Psychology courses.
- . Academic response to the issue of Indigenous content, and also to stimulate discussion in the area.

- . Obtain feedback on issues relevant to psychology departments throughout Australia.
- . To locate areas of expertise
- . To locate and facilitate networking of indigenous staff and indigenous consultants.
- . To locate departments that wanted assistance in the process of developing indigenous content within their psychology courses.
- . To facilitate the production of appropriate resources processes and strategies and to assist in the distribution of materials.

Thirty seven universities throughout Australia were sent questionnaires. Twenty universities responded, thus the following represents the current status of those respondents:-

2.2 The results.

12 (60%) of those universities responding include Indigenous cultural material in their undergraduate and post graduate curricula.

11 (55%) incorporate Indigenous material into other core units

1 university teaches Indigenous cultural material as a stand alone unite at undergraduate and post graduate level.

None of the universities responding teach Indigenous cultural material as a core unit at undergraduate or postgraduate level.

2 universities teach it as an elective at undergraduate level and one at post graduate level.

Teaching hours allocated to Indigenous studies.

10 (50%) answered this question. Of those responding, teaching hours at undergraduate level ranged from 2 to 29 hours. Postgraduate level ranged from 2 to 30 hours.

These statistics are quite startling given that over a four year undergraduate and six year post graduate the best we are currently able to donate to Indigenous issues is between 2 - 29 hours. These statistics are in serious need of address. This again highlights the under representation of Indigenous issues within the curricula of Psychology. Program co-ordinators will have to give serious consideration to incorporating core Aboriginal units into their programs, given the morbidity rates and status of Aboriginal mental health THIS IS NOT TOO MUCH TO REQUEST.

8 (40%) universities involved Indigenous staff or consultants in the development of this course material or units.

6 (30%) universities involved Indigenous staff or consultants in the delivery of this material.

2 universities involved the local Indigenous community in the development of their course material.

The majority of universities responding (70%) indicated that they would like a Practitioner's handbook to assist in the delivery of Indigenous cultural course content and expressed their interest at the prospect of a mini-conference to address the current status of Indigenous content in Psychology curricula.

2.3 The mini conference. Outcomes:

Consequently, in March of this year, we held a two day mini-conference at Curtin University of Technology Perth. This was a landmark meeting of psychologists to discuss Aboriginal issues in psychology. It was very well attended by the heads of departments and their representatives from Universities around the State - forty attendees to be exact. It was encouraging to see so many of our profession committed to positive action. The following outcome/action statements were generated from the group workshops:-

1. Promote Indigenous issues to all Psychology Departments and Universities as a whole (All attendees).
2. Investigate funding in order to develop teaching programs which are culturally appropriate and relevant. ACTION: Mr. Leigh Smith; Mr. Peter Wilson.
3. Set up a web page. ACTION: APS executive representatives.
4. Develop an e-mail list of the interest group. ACTION: Local interest group.
5. How to incorporate an academic teaching manual/handbook. ACTION: Ross Williams.
6. A clearing house for Indigenous materials which can be accessed by others. ACTION: Neil Drew (Edith Cowan University : [http\\www.cowan.edu.au/clearing house](http://www.cowan.edu.au/clearing%20house) and Chris Sonn: Curtin University of Technology).
7. A reference group e-mail. Action: All Psychology departments.
8. Network for communicating with Indigenous groups, and ensuring Indigenous input. Action: (Pat Dudgeon; Joyleen Koolmatrie; Darren Garvey).

9. Staff development workshops through APS. Action: Heather Gridley.
10. Develop a list of contacts within each Psychology Department. Action: Neil Drew /Ross Williams.
11. Compile a list of Indigenous Psychologists.
12. Develop alternatives in regards to issues of assessment. Action: Ron Downey/Port Hedland mental health services.

The feedback from respondents was very positive, and it evoked a range of positive and emotional responses in the attendees.

The following narrative and poem was received from a non indigenous psychologist and highlights the personal impact that the conference had on those in attendance.....

I agreed to attend a conference would address an Aboriginal psychology, not knowing the ramifications that this would have on me. The conference began, with little thought of how it would end. How it would impact on the people present, how it would impact on family life, professional life, indeed on me as a person. An identity crisis was sparked by a simple question asked by an Aboriginal elder..... "your Scottish, what clan do you belong to". A simple question you may think. One Aboriginal people readily address and think nothing of. It threw me, I had to think!!!! I'm used to being asked "where are you from?" "what soccer team do you support?" "What religion are you?" etc.,etc.,

Here I was 12,000 miles from my homeland, and this Aboriginal elder was educating me on the structure of the Scottish Clan system. Indeed, he addressed me as a white Aboriginal, reminded me of my past, informing me its relevance in my presence. "its part of who your are today" he stated. It was my privilege to be taught quite a lot during that weekend. I learned, along with the others about Forgiveness, I learned about culture, I learned about respect, I learned about diversity. Indeed, I learned quite a lot. In my nine years of academic instruction, one could say I learned more about the human condition in that one weekend, more to enhance my education, my spiritual development, to enhance the psychologist and the person I thought I knew was me. For that I say thank you. I am sure I speak for the others in attendance as I sensed the depths of their emotion also.....

*Blessings to the messengers that conveyed a message to me
The message about who I am, and the importance of spirituality
Poetry was read and stories were told
Greetings exchanged between young and old
Academics came from all over this land
Discussing how to teach psychology with an Aboriginal hand*

*Heads were **SCRATCHED** and ideas scrambled to the fore
Discussing how to make Aboriginal units part of Psychology's core
All this was done with motivation a big part
Sparked by Aboriginal stories recalled from the heart*

*As a student and practitioner, I urge you heads of school to take
heed*

*Go back to your departments and commit to this deed
We can never take back the wrong that we've done
**RECONCILIATION MUST NOT BE JUST A WORD ON YOUR
TONGUES.***

As you can see it was a very busy weekend with a strong and overwhelming commitment to action by respondents - **now it is time for ALL OF US to get behind this and put it into action** as we still have a long, long, long way to go.

3.0 APS PSYCHOLOGY PRACTITIONERS HANDBOOK

Over the past twelve months, the National Interest Group along with Curtin University of Technology's Centre for Aboriginal Studies, Curtin Indigenous Research Centre and the School of Psychology, has been busy cultivating and collating a "Psychology Practitioners handbook for working with Indigenous peoples". The hand book is intended to address the practicalities of working in Indigenous settings and with Indigenous people. This has been a very arduous task, with a lot of thought and research going into the compiling of this much needed book. It will cover historico-cultural issues; social justice issues; ways of working with Aboriginal people; a critique of therapeutic models - what therapies work best - what doesn't; alternative therapies; community issues - working with communities; information on cultural contacts and networks; AND THE LIST GOES ON. This book has generated much excitement amongst our profession, and promises to benefit students and practitioners from psychology and other disciplines. We hope to launch this new handbook at the APS conference, **SO PLEASE PROMOTE THIS BOOK WITHIN YOUR DEPARTMENTS, TO YOUR COLLEAGUES, EMPLOYERS, ETC., ETC.,**

We would also appreciate input from Indigenous and non-Indigenous practitioners, researchers and academics who have experience in working with Indigenous clients and with Indigenous groups and communities. Your comments, suggestions, contacts or other information and resources you think may be helpful in the development of this book are welcomed.

contact: Kaleil Merren on 0417 175817
Fax: (08) 9451 3132
email. pmerrenk@cc.curtin.edu.au

In addition, we will be continuing our activities in facilitating the formation of further regional groups of the Interest Group. Preliminary negotiations are underway with the following New Regional Interest Groups looking hopeful:-

Cairns - Mark Millard and colleagues
South Australia - Yvonne Clark " "
Broome - Wendy Casey " "

Jim McCallum in Sydney would like to get some members together in Sydney, and establish a more active unit. For interested parties, **please contact Jim on (02) 995' 3 7301 Fax (02) 9953 8257.**

4.0 APS ANNUAL CONFERENCE: MELBOURNE

Enclosed is again an Integrated program and schedule of what is being presented at this years Annual Conference in Melbourne 1998.

"MEETING THE APS COMMITMENT TO THE
UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLE
1994 - 2004"

Dates:	Cultural Visit Conference	Mon 28 Sept to Wed 30 Sept Wed 30 Sept - Sun 4 Oct 1998.
Venue:	Cultural Visit Conference	Camp Jungai Aboriginal Conference Centre. Dallas Brookes Centre.

Mon 28 Sept to Wed 30 Sept
(2 nights)

CULTURAL VISIT

Pre-conference visit Camp Jungai Aboriginal Conference Centre in the hills near Eildon.

Hosted by the 'Aboriginal Issues, Aboriginal People and Psychology' APS Interest Group - organiser Ross Williams, Victoria University of Technology.

Fee includes return bus travel from Melbourne, accommodation, meals and all activities. Activities will include music, local bush tucker, an introduction to the history and culture of the local Aboriginal people and a campfire dinner. Tennis courts, canoeing on the lake, gym, sauna and spa

Cost: \$210 (full-time student/APS Students \$140) - payment through Conference Registration process. (Please indicate any special dietary requirements).

Will have you back mid-afternoon Wednesday in good time for you to check in with your accommodation and attend the Conference Registration (5.00pm) and Welcome Reception (6.15pm).

Note: Departure and other details will be forwarded to you upon receipt of your APS Conference Registration with prepayment for the Cultural Visit.

Wed 30 Sept 6.15pm 7.15pm
WELCOME RECEPTION
Cultural Welcome

Friday 2 Oct. 9.30am - 1.30pm
WORKSHOP 5
Reuniting Aboriginal Families.

Ross Williams, Victorian University of Technology
Carolyn Briggs, Koorie Elder, Melbourne
Linda Lethbridge, Koorie Psychologist, Tasmania
Joyleen Koolmatrie, Nunga Psychologist, Perth.

Friday 2 Oct. 2.00pm - 4.00pm
FORUM Psychology and Aboriginal Issues.
Chairperson: Patricia Dudgeon, National Convenor APS Interest
Group 'Aboriginal Issues, Aboriginal People and Psychology'

Indigenous shared case management: a process for ways of working together.
Wendy Casey, Kimberley Community Drug Service
Joe Roe, Pinikarra/Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service.

Practical and Professional Issues and Recent Developments in Psychological Testing with Aboriginal Australians: South Australia
Yvonne Clarke, Family and Community Services, Adelaide
Glenis Forrester, Chief Clinical Psychologist, Family and Community Services, Adelaide

On the Group Psychology of Apology.
Ross Williams, Department of Psychology, Victorian University of Technology

Counselling with the Stolen Generations
Rosemary Wanganeen, Counsellor, 'Sacred Site Within' Healing Centre,
Adelaide.
Joyleen Koolmatrie,

Aboriginal Perceptions of Psychologists.
Warrick Arblaster, Aboriginal Affairs Department, Melbourne.

Frid 2 Oct 4pm - 6pm

SYMPOSIUM

Prejudice and Racism: Psychological Perspectives.
Convenor: Kate Reynolds, Univ Adelaide.

Includes the following presentations with a focus in Indigenous Australians,
and others:

*Trivialisation, Rationalisation and Denial - Alive and Kicking in Indigenous
and Cross-Cultural Discourse.*

Darren Garvey, Counselling and Mental Health Program, Aboriginal Health
Unit, Centre for Aboriginal Studies, Curtin University.

Hanson and Howard: the Wik/Native Title Debate.
Mark Rapley, Murdoch University

BOOK LAUNCH

**APS Psychology Practitioners Handbook: for working with Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander People**
- arrangements to be advised.

Frid 2 Oct 6.00pm - 8.00pm

INTEREST GROUP AGM

Frid 2 Oct 8.00pm - 'till late

INTEREST GROUP DINNER To be arranged by the Interest Group.

(Note: There are no Independent Papers at this year's conference).

**CONTACT PERSON for
APS CONFERENCE ABORIGINAL PROGRAM:**

Teresa Stevenson
Aboriginal Health Unit. Centre for Aboriginal Studies
Curtin University of Technology
Kent St, Bentley WA 6102.
Phone: (08) 9266 4292 Fax: (08) 9266 2888

5.0 FAREWELL AND SUMMARY.

Finally, it is my intention at the end of this year to go on Study leave. Therefore, officially, this is my last newsletter. I will be nominating local Interest Group Convenor Ms. Joyleen Koolmatrie, Tumberwarrin Ngangalli Wuri an Indigenous Psychologist in Western Australia, as my successor. I wish you all well in the future and **URGE YOU AGAIN TO CONTINUE THE PRESSURE AND KEEP UP THE MOMENTUM WITHIN THE DISCIPLINE AS WE HAVE COME TOO FAR TO LET IT ALL FALL BY THE WAY SIDE.**

Patricia Dudgeon.
National Interest Group Convenor.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN INTEREST GROUP

Hello Everyone,

The Aboriginal Interest Group has held meetings once a month this year at the Centre For Aboriginal Studies, Curtin University. The meetings have included guest speakers whose names and topics are listed below:-

March: Michael Wright - Reconciliation - Working in the Mental Health Field.

April: Tracy Westerman - The SAIF Program. Working with sexual offenders.

May: Mr. Sam Dinah - The Health Status of Aboriginal Men. Health Dept. W.A.

June: No meeting

We are currently in the process of negotiating with some very interesting speakers which we hope will present to you over the next six months.

To all local interest group members - the numbers each month are diminishing. However, I urge you to keep the first Wednesday of the month in your diary. It is important that we keep this network going, and make a commitment to attending these meetings on a regular basis. Your **input is much desired and appreciated.**

Joyleen Koolmatrie, Local Convenor.
Tumberwarrin Ngangalli Wuri.
PH: (08) 9354 9771 FAX: (08) 9354 9772

VICTORIAN SECTION REPORT

A small committee of Ross Williams (convenor), Kerri Kershaw and Pam Loughnan has been organising activities this year - any Victorian Section members interested in getting involved this year or next would be very welcome to contact Ross on 93971531 or 9376 8489.

Meetings:

Kerri Kershaw spoke at the February meeting on her experiences working with Aboriginal prisoners in Bendigo and Barwon prisons. She read poetry sent to us by a prisoner and outline special programs introduced for Koorie prisoners.

At the May meeting, Dr. Jane McKendrick of the University of Melbourne's Research Unit on Indigenous Mental Health, Education and Research spoke on the provision of mental health services to Aboriginal people in Victoria. Jane has been practising and researching in this field for many years.

A joint meeting of the APAIP Interest Group and the Gay and Lesbian Interest Group will be held on June 22nd at the Victorian Aboriginal Women's Centre, Lonsdale St., focusing on the experiences of gay and lesbian Koories.

Other forthcoming meetings include a talk by Warrick Arblaster on his research into Koorie perceptions of counselling and a presentation of a new information pack prepared by ARBIAS (Alcohol Related Brain Injury - Assessment - Accommodation - Support). The pack has been prepared for people working with Koorie clients and includes a short video on assessment procedures.

WORKSHOPS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES.

The International Council of Psychologists will be holding its 56th Annual Convention in Melbourne in August and a workshop on reuniting Aboriginal families will be conducted by Carolyn Briggs, Linda Lethbridge and Ross Williams. This workshop has already attracted interest from overseas visitors, reflecting the extent to which Aboriginal issues are receiving publicity in foreign media. The workshop will be repeated at the APS conference in October.

The Victorian section is also organising a two-day cultural visit to the Aboriginal Conference Centre, Camp Jungai, just prior to the APS conference. Camp Jungai is a 2 1/2 hour bus trip from Melbourne in the Rubicon Valley near Lake Eidon and

we hope that Interest Group members attending the conference will be able to fit this in - talks, walks, music round the campfire, canoeing, kangaroo roasted in a pit - all this and a chance to catch up with each other in an unhurried atmosphere. Pam Loughnan found this for us and the Victoria University students in Ross' Aboriginal People and Psychology unit have already had a great weekend up there. Jump AT IT.

Ross Williams (Convenor) Victorian Section.