

# Newsletter of the APS Aboriginal Issues, Aboriginal People and Psychology Interest Group

## Australian Psychological Society

Editor: Kylie Cann, B Ed/B Psych MAPS Qld Psych Reg No. 1030520

September, 2005

### Update from the Convenor

Looking back over the year, I am absolutely amazed at what this Group has achieved. Our Website is up and running as a result of a lot of skilled work by Colleen Turner. We all owe her a big thank you.

The APS Conference will be different this year as a result of the Group's efforts. Marie Joyce has arranged an Indigenous welcome from the traditional owners, so we are filling a gap in our society's efforts to support reconciliation with indigenous Australia.

The day at Narana, an indigenous campus, where APS members have an opportunity to consult with indigenous leaders in health and education, is a major step in achieving the Group's objectives in raising awareness amongst the profession. Ailsa Drent has put a tremendous

amount of work into this. We must encourage colleagues to join us in this activity.

During the conference, Colleen Turner has organised a symposium covering the topics of family, wellbeing and education for Indigenous Australians.

Henry Briffa has organised a dinner at an Indigenous restaurant, Tjunabi, in Carlton where we all have the opportunity to sample traditional bush foods and to celebrate our activities as an Interest Group.

I have to give heaps of praise to Kylie who has been the ideal Interest Group Secretary and Newsletter Editor. Her interest, enthusiasm and initiative are largely responsible for the success we have achieved.

Our regular teleconferences have worked to maintain the Group's momentum. Thanks

to the entire Executive for hanging in there and pushing the work along.

The results of these efforts, when I look back over the year, have just been stunning. We have new members and are developing a high profile. It has come about through people being willing to share their knowledge, experience and contacts.

The Group has never lost sight of our primary purpose to raise the awareness of the issues and needs of Indigenous Australia throughout the profession. We have made a great start and the challenge is to maintain that momentum over the coming years.

I am really looking forward to celebrating our successes at the Conference.

**Kathleen Ellerman**  
Convenor

### Update from the Editor

Welcome to the third edition of the Newsletter of the Aboriginal Issues, Aboriginal People and Psychology Interest Group. In this edition, we focus on issues of Child Protection, coinciding with National Child Protection Week 4th–10th September. The aim of this newsletter was to explore some of the current research and historical perspectives relating to Child Protection, the Stolen Generation and resources for strengthening families.

The passing of Naidoc Week also provided an opportunity to recognise and celebrate the achievements of Indigenous members of

our communities and workplaces. This year's NAIDOC theme 'Our Future Begins with Solidarity' expressed Indigenous people's desire for a better future, a future to enjoy the same opportunities available to other Australians and live in a reconciled nation. According to the chair of the National Indigenous Council, Sue Gordon, this means that "we need to work out what we want our communities to look like in 20-30 years time" and "...work together now and focus on achieving results".

We are also excited to introduce a new addition to our newsletter entitled 'My Story'. It seemed

appropriate to introduce a section such as this as we encountered people from indigenous and non-indigenous backgrounds alike who had fascinating tales to tell of their experiences. In any case, the medium of story telling would appear appropriate in a newsletter dedicated to developing better professional understanding of our country's indigenous people. The current story provides a reflection from one of our very own members following a recent visit to Uluru and we look forward to sharing more stories with you in future editions. Your own contributions are more than welcome. I trust you will enjoy this edition. Kylie Cann

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**Invitation for Articles and Ideas:**  
**If you have ideas or suggestions for the committee, please contact us.**

# Child Protection—International Perspectives

## **The Seventh Generation: Bringing Hope to Aboriginal Children and their Families**

**By Kenn Richard, Executive Director, Native Child and Family Services, Toronto**

*Anishnawbe (Ojibwe) have an ancient prophecy that tells of seven prophets foretelling the future. The seventh prophet—or the seventh fire—told them of a time when a younger generation would regain the people's pride and greatness after a period of loss, tragedy and alienation. Many believe that this seventh generation has now been born. Excerpt from Voices for Children – Report – The Seventh Generation: Bringing Hope to Aboriginal Children and their families visit [www.voicesforchildren.ca.report-June2005](http://www.voicesforchildren.ca.report-June2005)*

### How are aboriginal children and youth are faring in Ontario?

I could give you a litany of all the things that are wrong, but instead, I am going to focus on a few things that are right.

Aboriginal kids seem to be doing progressively better, especially in the area of education. There are more kids in high school than there used to be and there are more kids attending college and university. This is important because not too long ago, the Federal Human Rights Commission told us that a native child in Saskatchewan, for example, had a greater chance of going to jail than of graduating from university.

Improvements in the education arena lead to improvements in other areas of life. The pace of getting here has been tortuously slow, but these gains are significant.

There is also considerable promise associated with the devolution of services back to aboriginal people. It is a fundamental responsibility for adults—and communities of adults—to look after kids. The aboriginal sector understands this well and has been fighting for years to bring control of significant institutions that have an impact on aboriginal children, back to aboriginal communities.

Right now if you are the parents of an aboriginal child and live on a reserve, you will probably receive all your child and family services, including child protection, from an organization under the control of your own community. Here in Toronto, we finally have the only off-reserve native child and family service in all of Canada and there is evidence that kids are already doing better as a result.

Control of our institutions is extremely important. In Toronto, for example, we took control over child welfare. We did have to force the issue in court—pointing out that the government was funding Catholic Children's Aid and Jewish Children's Aid, so how could they in good conscience deny the aboriginal community that same right? They finally designated my agency as a Children's Aid Society.

*...there are currently between 22,500 and 28,000 aboriginal children in the care of the Canadian child welfare system – three times the numbers that attended residential schools in the 1940s. First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, 2002*

The important thing is that we now have a policy that recognizes off-reserve aboriginal people. The government was concerned that if they designated Native Child and Family Services as a children's aid society it would open the floodgates to other communities with large aboriginal populations such as Windsor and Thunder Bay.

We also have an aboriginal school called First Nations School. My agency alone runs four day nurseries that are really aboriginal head start programs for aboriginal kids. There is an aboriginal legal service and Anishnawbe Health, which is pioneering the merging of traditional and contemporary approaches to medicine.

When I first became the director of my agency in the late 1980s, much of what we have accomplished today was only dreamed about over coffee at Fran's Restaurant. Now we have a significant aboriginal infrastructure in this city. It's still taking shape, it's still forming, and not everything is good, but when you look at Anishnawbe Health, Native Child and Family Services and the others that I've mentioned, we are beginning to knit together an aboriginal-specific infrastructure of services that I think will do a lot to move our community forward.

To me, that is self-government in its purest sense and this is what I mean by community building. Our elders have taught us that only when you can birth your babies, marry your young people and bury your dead are you a community.

Toronto's experience is not unique. Winnipeg and Vancouver have similar dynamics; in fact, Winnipeg is way ahead of the game. They've established an Aboriginal City Hall in an old CP Railway station and it's quite a sight. I think the system is recognizing that it may not have served aboriginal children well and there is almost a desperation to finding approaches that will be effective. Fortunately, desperation sometimes leads to very creative and innovative partnerships!

## Websites & Publications of Interest

### Stolen Generation

#### **Bring them Home**

[www.austlii.edu.au/au/special/rsjproject/rsjlibrary/hreoc/stolen](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/special/rsjproject/rsjlibrary/hreoc/stolen)

This report is a tribute to the strength and struggles of many thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people affected by forcible removal. We acknowledge the hardships they endured and the sacrifices they made. We remember and lament all the children who will never come home.

### Child Protection

#### **Understanding Kinship Care**

This project was funded by and conducted in collaboration with the Association of Child Welfare Agencies. This recently completed project attempted by qualitative and quantitative methods to contribute to knowledge about kinship care. It explored both 'top down' perspectives from policy documents and statistics and bottom up perspectives from practitioners, carers, young people and parents. Completed report available from ACWA or visit [uws.edu.au/schools/ashs/sjsc/SJSC\\_projects.htm](http://uws.edu.au/schools/ashs/sjsc/SJSC_projects.htm)

### Education

#### **Torres Strait Books**

[www.torresstraitbooks.com.au](http://www.torresstraitbooks.com.au)

#### **Indij Readers for Little Fullas, for Big Fullas**

[www.indijreaders.com.au](http://www.indijreaders.com.au)

#### **Sandtraks: Pathways to celebrating indigenous culture**

[www.sandtraks.com](http://www.sandtraks.com)

### Reconciliation

[www.scholastic.com.au/schoolzone](http://www.scholastic.com.au/schoolzone)

#### **Working with Indigenous People with a Disability**

<http://www.wired.org.au/>

### Culture

#### **Multicultural Affairs**

[www.premiers.qld.gov.au/about/maq/index.htm](http://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/about/maq/index.htm)

#### **First People's Project—Global Art Exchange**

[www.learn.ogr.au/fp](http://www.learn.ogr.au/fp)

### Mental Health

<http://auseinet.flinders.edu.au/Auseinet>

#### **Harmony Day (21st March)**

View the 2005 Vice-Chancellor's oration delivered by former Governor General Sir William Deane at the University of Western Australia. Institute of Advanced Studies. Visit <http://www.ias.uwa.edu.au/>

#### **Sorry Day (26th May)**

<http://www.alphalink.com.au/~rez/Journey/>

#### **Mabo Day (3rd June)**

<http://www.atsic.gov.au/events/Mabo/default.asp>

#### **Recognition of Traditional Owners**

[www.reconciliation.gov.au/welcome.html](http://www.reconciliation.gov.au/welcome.html)



#### **Welcome to Country**

[www.reconciliation.qld.gov.au/recognition.html](http://www.reconciliation.qld.gov.au/recognition.html)

## Child Protection—International Perspectives Continued

### Is there hope?

Our generational teachings say that the seventh generation will be the generation that moves indigenous people forward. This current generation of young people is in fact the seventh generation from that prophecy and I am interested to see what they can accomplish. I have been privileged to work with many young and talented aboriginal kids who are thoughtful, bright and committed to moving forward.

A generation ago, we walked away from our aboriginal heritage, because there was no currency in it. Names were changed. People said, "Oh I'm native, but I don't really relate." Today's kids are telling the world, "I'm aboriginal and that's a good thing." I see lots of kids who are committed to getting through university, becoming lawyers and working in the aboriginal context. There is a sense of community service and an understanding that problems will only be resolved when aboriginal people themselves start taking control of things.

I think it will take a while to stop blaming the white guy for everything and begin to build our own capacity. Don't get me wrong, I blame the white guy for lots! But there comes a time when we have to realize there are some good white people out there too and we need to

work together to do things like build high schools for street kids so that we have fewer kids in jail and more kids in community college who can establish themselves as the leadership of a new generation.

### A final message to young aboriginal people

Stay in school and find a way to give back to a community that really needs the help of the healthy. I think the life of aboriginal Canada reflects two realities. One is the rapid urbanization of aboriginal kids who find it easy to move to the city and forget who they are. It is my hope that these kids can take advantage of the resources offered in the city and will grow to become all that they can be and ultimately give back to the native community. They are the seventh generation and can provide the leadership that will make a difference. The other reality is, unfortunately, those who are locked in a cycle of despair and addictions who never seem to be able to break free. While the movement for healing has helped some of these folks, it will take time--generations even--before such cycles are broken. At the end of the day, it is up to the young leadership to find creative ways to heal the wounds of the past and to create hope for the future.

## Health

### The Need For Ethnic Donors

The Australian Red Cross Blood Service needs Indigenous Australian & Ethnic Donors to join the Australian Bone Marrow Donor Registry (ABMDR). For Donors to be compatible matches for patients, they must have identical white blood cells. Compatible white cells are only found in people of the same racial background. Along with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Indigenous Australians), there are many diverse ethnic commu-

nities living in Australia. We would welcome and strongly urge people from all of these communities to join the ABMDR. This would assist in finding donors for our Indigenous Australian & other Ethnic background patients. It is unlikely that these people requiring a bone marrow/stem cell transplant would find a donor in a registry that is made up of 97% people of North European descent.

For details of what's involved and how to enrol visit  
<http://www.abmdr.org.au/enroll.htm>



### Books: No No The Little Seal by Sherri Patterson and Judith Feldman

The gentle story of a little seal who learns to stay safe, say 'No' and tell. NoNo has a secret, but it makes him feel scared and mixed up inside. Is it wrong to tell? Who can he tell?

Although the subject of sexual abuse is sensitive, children and adults alike will be captivated by the truly magical illustrations and the dramatised audio CD of the story and songs. Originally published in

1986 by Random House, here is the long awaited, wholly revamped version of this classic that never trivialises abuse but engages the reader in finding new and hopeful possibilities. Bursting with messages of self-belief and what it means to be truly strong inside, this storybook can give even very young children the confidence and reassurance to stay safe, say 'No' and tell. Includes a guide for parents, educators and other carers of children.

Available from St Luke's Innovative Resources  
[www.innovativeresources.org](http://www.innovativeresources.org)  
ISBN: 0 9580188 3 9

St Luke's Innovative Resources also stocks a range of anatomically correct, hand-crafted cloth dolls. Miagma dolls are widely regarded as the most beautiful and sensitively-made dolls for building conversations about sexuality. The dolls come in male and female pairs of different ages with a choice of skin tones.

### Videos: "My Mother My Son" Directed & Written by Erica Glynn, Produced by Penny McDonald Distributed by RONIN Films Email [orders@roninfilms.com.au](mailto:orders@roninfilms.com.au)

*My Mother My Son* is the story of an Aboriginal mother and daughter, both victims of the stolen generation, who embark on a journey to regain custody of Kymmy's young son Rowland (Mona's Grandson). They are determined to shed the baggage from their past and take control of their own lives and by so doing break the cycle of dispossession, broken families and broken homes.

Their objective is not an easy one. What starts as a hopeful journey becomes littered with physical obstacles that conjure reactions to unresolved issues from their past. The suppressed guilt, feelings of blame, abandonment, anger, failure and low self-esteem that they bear within themselves and towards each other. All stored and unspoken, awaiting for decades a catalyst to unleash themselves.

One of the main themes of the drama is that of morality and questions of right and wrong and how systems of judgement do not exist independent of context and perspective. Raised in missions and state wards, both Kymmy and Mona have in many ways internalised the value system and moral codes of a white class and culture that continues the reality of their poverty and victimisation. To go against it is their only hope.



# Current Issues—Child Protection

When working with families in relation to issues of child protection today, it is very important that historical perspectives are taken into account. The following extract from the *Bringing Them Home* report provides insight into the effects of forcible removal and reminds us that the impacts of the removal policies continue to resound through the generations of Indigenous families. The overwhelming evidence is that the impact does not stop with the children removed. It is inherited by their own children in complex and sometimes heightened ways.

## The Effects

**Why me; why was I taken? It's like a hole in your heart that can never heal.**

*Confidential evidence 162, Victoria.*

**Actually what you see in a lot of us is the shell, and I believe as an Aboriginal person that everything is inside of me to heal me if I know how to use it, if I know how to maintain it, if I know how to bring out and use it. But sometimes the past is just too hard to look at.**

*Confidential evidence 284, South Australia.*

- Evidence to the Inquiry presented many common features of the removal and separation practices. Children could be taken at any age. Many were taken within days of their birth (especially for adoption) and many others in early infancy. In other cases, the limited resources available dictated that the authorities wait until children were closer to school age and less demanding of staff time and skill. Most children were institutionalised more typically with other Indigenous children and with primarily non-Indigenous staff. Where fostering or adoption took place, the family was non-Indigenous in the great majority of cases.

- Because the objective was to absorb the children into white society, Aboriginality was not positively affirmed. Many children experienced contempt and denigration of their Aboriginality and that of their parents or denial of their Aboriginality. In line with the common objective, many children were told either that their families had rejected them or that their families were dead. Most often family members were unable to keep in touch with the child. This cut the child off from his or her roots and meant the child was at the mercy of institution staff or foster parents. Many were exploited and abused. Few who gave evidence to the Inquiry had been happy and secure. Those few had become closely at-

tached to institution staff or found loving and supportive adoptive families.

- The Inquiry was told that the effects damage the children who were forcibly removed, their parents and siblings and their communities. Subsequent generations continue to suffer the effects of parents and grandparents having been forcibly removed, institutionalised, denied contact with their Aboriginality and in some cases traumatised and abused.

- It is difficult to capture the complexity of the effects for each individual. Each individual will react differently, even to similar traumas. For the majority of witnesses to the Inquiry, the effects have been multiple and profoundly disabling. An evaluation of the following material should take into account the ongoing impacts and their compounding effects causing a cycle of damage from which it is difficult to escape unaided. Psychological and emotional damage renders many people less able to learn social skills and survival skills. Their ability to operate successfully in the world is impaired causing low educational achievement, unemployment and consequent poverty. These in turn cause their own emotional distress leading some to perpetrate violence, self-harm, substance abuse or anti-social behaviour.

## Upcoming Training Opportunities & Conferences

### 40th Annual Conference - Melbourne 2005 Post Conference Excursion

The APS interest group on Aboriginal People, Aboriginal Issues and Psychology invites you to join us for a cultural gathering

On : Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2005  
At: Narana Dreaming, Grovedale.  
Theme:

**"CREATING HEALTHY PARTNERSHIPS"**

*The Aboriginal Interest group of the APS is keen to promote conversation between Indigenous Communities and psychological communities about how we can work together for the benefit of Indigenous Australia. This gathering is one such conversation that we hope will promote others and be a step towards valuable working relationship. Please join us for Workshops, keynote presenters, music, art, craft, gardens, gallery/shop, food, dialogue.*

From: 10.00am - 5.00pm  
Bus leaves Melbourne, Cnr Bourke and Spencer Sts; 10.00am Returns 5.00pm

Cost: \$75.00 (Incls. All costs, transport, lunch and afternoon tea.)  
Numbers limited. Bookings close September 16th  
Bookings: Alex Bignell, APS Office.  
Email: a.bignell@psychology.org.au.

## Research—National Perspectives - Upcoming Training Opportunities

**Our Interest Group is very proud to showcase the following guest speakers and their research at the upcoming conference of the Australian Psychological Society.**

### **Well being and the importance of family for Indigenous Australians**

**TURNER, C. (Australian Psychological Society)**

[cturner@ixa.net.au](mailto:cturner@ixa.net.au)

This Symposium explores the meaning of family for Indigenous Australians. If psychologists are to understand the aetiology of indigenous clients, they have to see the systemic issues that lie behind disadvantage. Papers include a preview of the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children –and how that national study is including key concepts of family and community into its data collection. A second paper outlines the inverse relationship between family violence in Indigenous Families in Tasmania and well being and safety for family members, the paper outlines an innovative healing program being developed in collaboration with an existing program in South Australia. The final paper addresses research into the relationship between the education system, the needs and expectations of indigenous children and their families and how psychologists might better meet those needs and expectations.

### **Strengths and challenges – working towards family well being in Tasmania**

**BURCHILL, M.,. (Australian Institute of Family Studies)**

[Marlene.Burchill@aifs.gov.au](mailto:Marlene.Burchill@aifs.gov.au)

This paper focuses on Indigenous Families in Tasmania and presents some insights gained from working with Aboriginal families and Aboriginal organizations and mainstream services that provide assistance to Aboriginal families in Tasmania. The current project was the second phase in a consultation process to develop and then implement an Action Plan for preventing and reducing Family Violence in Aboriginal communities in Tasmania. An important and explicit assumption of the project was that all Aboriginal people are affected by past government practices which have left a wake of generational devastation that continues to interfere with many Aboriginal family's abilities to move forward and to share in opportunities. Aboriginal people across Tasmania were invited to attend one of three two-day forums conducted across Tasmania. The aim of the forums was to present a model for training of Aboriginal workers in preventing and reducing family violence within a community based context. The forums were based on a curriculum developed in SA and adapted to community needs in Tasmania. The training focused on "well-being" rather than "family violence" and required honesty and a conscious "letting go" of past treatment. Many participants reported they found the training challenging and confronting. It is anticipated that an important outcome of this trial will be the introduction of "Family Well Being Programs" for Aboriginal community members within the TAFE system in Tasmania.

to: a) evaluate the self-concepts of Indigenous secondary students; b) identify Indigenous students' aspirations; c) elucidate Indigenous students' perceptions of barriers faced in attaining their aspirations; and d) compare and contrast the pattern of results for Indigenous students ( $N=517$ ) to results for non-Indigenous students from the same schools ( $N=1151$ ). Indigenous students displayed statistically significantly lower academic (school, maths, verbal) self-concepts, and aspirations in comparison to non-Indigenous peers. Indigenous students also rated 9 potential barriers with significantly higher scores compared to non-Indigenous students. The results of this investigation and the recommendations to the Commonwealth emanating from this study provide a potential turning point for strengthening Indigenous Education. This paper focuses particularly on the implications of the findings for career education, family counselling, and psychological research.

### **Turning Indigenous secondary students' educational disadvantage around: How psychologists can begin to make a real difference**

**CRAVEN, R. (University of Western Sydney)**

[r.craven@uws.edu.au](mailto:r.craven@uws.edu.au)

All Australian governments for decades have acknowledged that Indigenous students are the most disadvantaged Australians based upon a plethora of objective indicators including education, which predates life opportunities. Australian psychologists serving in a diversity of vital roles (e.g. school counselling, clinical psychology, academic research) have failed to adequately address this situation. This presentation summarises the results of a study commissioned by the Department of Education, Science and Training that was designed to: a) evaluate the self-concepts of Indigenous secondary students; b) identify Indigenous students' aspirations; c) elucidate Indigenous students' perceptions of barriers faced in attaining their aspirations; and d) compare and contrast the pattern of results for Indigenous students ( $N=517$ ) to results for non-Indigenous students from the same schools ( $N=1151$ ). Indigenous students displayed statistically significantly lower academic (school, maths, verbal) self-concepts, and aspirations in comparison to non-Indigenous peers. Indigenous students also rated 9 potential barriers with significantly higher scores compared to non-Indigenous students. The results of this investigation and the recommendations to the Commonwealth emanating from this study provide a potential turning point for strengthening Indigenous Education. This paper focuses particularly on the implications of the findings for career education, family counselling, and psychological research.

## Professional Development

### **We'd like to collect your views on P.D.**

While it might still be something of a long term goal, I'd like to begin to generate some discussion about what future role this interest group might take in assisting to further develop the capacity of its members to work with indigenous communities.

Recently I learned that the psychoanalytically oriented psychologists (POPIG) interest group in Queensland held a presentation entitled "The Local Spirit".

From what I understand the presenters of "The Local Spirit" worked on the irony that while Freud and Jung were influenced by anthropological studies of Australian aborigines, Australian indigenous culture seems not to influence present day Australian psychoanalytic practice.

I don't know that other therapeutic modalities have managed to engage more of the local spirit, though narrative therapists can claim to be more home grown.

In my experience, the POPIG in Melbourne have reliably delivered high quality professional development that is very affordable. I am sure this is true of a number of APS interest groups in a range of different states. Is professional development something the interest group should be working towards?

I recently attended an outstanding two day workshop with Ellert Nijenhuis and was pleased to meet other psychologists with an interest in trauma & dissociation and in working with our indigenous community. We found ourselves talking about the need for a peer support network.

One way of obtaining P.D. within the APS is the use of supervision or peer support groups. In addition to learning opportunities, peer support/supervision groups would help with inter-agency communication. Is this something our members might be interested in? Might the interest group also help with cross-cultural training workshops delivered by experienced indigenous community educators? And, what else ?

We'd like to you to join with us and have a bit of a yarn with us about your P.D. ideas. Email Henry Briffa [hbriffa@ozemail.com.au](mailto:hbriffa@ozemail.com.au) so that the committee might begin to plan for the future.

# My Story by Peggy Mary Kam Fung Lee (MAPS)

## A Magical Experience at Uluru-

When the wake up call came through in the early hour of the morning at 4 am, I wanted to get ready for the tour to pick me up at 4.30 am, but I could just manage to drag myself up to be in the front foyer at the appointed time.

This was my second day in Uluru and the previous day I went to walk on the King Canyon rim walk. It was practical hiking to test my own cardiac health especially at the cardiac arrest steps.

It was raining heavily as I boarded the bus at 4.30 am at the foyer of my hotel. It was dark, cold and wet. I thought there would be no visible sunrise at Uluru that morning. The commentator announced that we were lucky as only 2% of the tourists were able to witness the rain. I was told that in the desert it hardly ever rained. It happened on that day the heaven opened up and bestowed rain one third of the total amount of rain for the whole year.

We travelled towards the national park and passed the practicalities of inspection for the entry tickets from the rangers at the gate without any drama. As we were approaching the big magical Uluru, a sense of wonder; the feelings of elation; joy and awe rose from the pit of my stomach in the PRESENCE of this magical place. I did not try to stop and analyze my feelings (being a psychologist?) Tears just started pouring down on my face.

The beauty and the magic of the gigantic “Rock” were caught in the rain, in the semi darkness and its unspoken power penetrated into my soul. I found the roots of eastern and western culture melt within my psyche at this arid desert land in the midst of bountiful rain at the centre of Australia. This is the magical moment I have experienced and had the privilege to become close and personal with this traditional Aboriginal culture which is one of the most primitive cultures.

Cross- cultural boundaries fused and emerged into one of joy and wonder.

I walked with three other travelers around the base of Uluru in the soft rain and wind. It was a cold wet morning, I was half flying with my umbrella and tied my coat on my neck so at least the top part of my body was warm. (some of the red-coloured puddles of water were up to my knees).

As I walked around the magical ancient land, water falls fell from this multiple colour huge rock on to the red desert sand. The spectrum of colours burst forth on the rugged and smooth face of this Ancient reference land. The contrast of dark brown, pink, black, red and soft green to brilliant green on the various vegetation were like the finale of exciting tunes in the orchestra which played their songs of the traditional owner of the land in the centre of Australia.

The stories of the elders of Aboriginal the creation stories were told on the following visits at the surrounds of Uluru as they explained that as the traditional owners of the land; they preferred to use ‘creation “ together with the word dreaming or dreamtime instead just using the word‘ dreaming’.

As I touched the base of some of this magical rock with my hand, I found the “root” of my own culture even in the foreign land far away from my own home land. As the day broke, the silence and quietude and the stories of the ancestors echoed to my own ancestral spirits across all cultures, boundaries, race colors and languages.

I felt I am truly blessed and I love to share this joy with all the people who appreciate the magic of wonder in this rich bountiful land – Australia.

*Peggy Lee runs a private practice in Chatswood, NSW and is a registered psychologist with the NSW Registration Board. In addition, she holds memberships with the Australian Psychological Society, the Australian College of Clinical Psychologists and the Australasian Traumatic Stress Studies. She is fluent in English, Cantonese and Mandarin. She holds a special interest in understanding cross-cultural perspectives.*



## Australian Psychological Society

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### APS ABORIGINAL ISSUES AND PSYCHOLOGY INTEREST GROUP

We are now on the web!!  
[www.psychology.org.au/aiapp](http://www.psychology.org.au/aiapp)

## ABOUT THE APS ABORIGINAL ISSUES AND PSYCHOLOGY

### INTEREST GROUP

The APS has been involved in indigenous issues since the 1960s, when a Queensland Group became active with submissions to government on secondary education, child welfare and Aboriginal welfare. The original Group for Aboriginal Issues, Aboriginal People and Psychology was established primarily as a way of assisting the small number of indigenous members to the Society to network and to promote discussion of social issues with non-indigenous members. The APS interest group re-formed in 1992. The full history of this group is set out in Sandra Billard, Heather Gridley and Colleen Turner, 'Report from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and Psychology Interest Group of the Australian Psychological Society', *Bulletin*, Vol. 16, No. 4, August/September 1994, pp. 23-24. The Committee recognises the vast representation of indigenous tribes and clans across Australia and seeks ongoing input and guidance from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The interest group is concerned with promoting best psychological practice for working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The interest group currently has 155 members.

Source: Cook, S (2000) *A Meeting of the Minds: The Australian Psychological Society and Australian Psychologists*. APS, Melbourne. (Provided by Alex Bignell and Henry Briffa)

## Call for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Members of the APS

As an APS Interest Group focussing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues, we are naturally concerned that the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members are heard and attended to.

We believe that we have 16 or 17 indigenous members in the Interest Group and the APS. But we don't know for sure! So, the Interim Executive is very keen to hear from any members who would like to contribute to and guide our deliberations. One way to do that is to join the Committee.

There are other ways of making a contribution, through providing advice and insights or through identifying resources that the Committee may follow-up.

In consultation with the APS Conference Organising Committee, one of our major objectives has been to co-ordinate some key-note speakers and workshops for the Conference this coming September in Melbourne who will be able to raise issues and awareness and give guidance to Psychologists who may work with indigenous children, adults or communities.

So, we need all the help we can get. Interested? Give Kath Ellerman-Bull a call at Kids Help Line ((07) 3369 1588 or email her at

[Kathleen@kidshelp.com.au](mailto:Kathleen@kidshelp.com.au).



Walking Together  
Working Together

### Quote

**"Do not wait for leaders: do it alone, person to person. Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies."**

Mother Teresa



# AN INVITATION



*The APS Interest Group on Aboriginal People, Aboriginal Issues and Psychology invites you to attend our interest group dinner at Tjanabi restaurant on*

*Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> September from 8:15 pm*

*Following the Social Issues Public Forum, this evening will provide an opportunity to mingle with new and existing members of the interest group. Please register Pre-Conference by emailing [kcann@tsv.catholic.edu.au](mailto:kcann@tsv.catholic.edu.au) or at the conference by adding your name to the registration form at the information desk by no later than 5 pm Wednesday. .*



Welcome to Tjanabi - Melbourne's All Australian Restaurant.

At Tjanabi [formerly known as the Flamin'bull Restaurant] we bring together the best of Australian cuisine; Australian Game Meats [Kangaroo, Crocodile Emu and more]; Quality Australian Steaks, Lamb, Pork and Poultry; fresh Australian Seafood; and fresh Australian native produce [native Australian fruits and herbs]. Our menu is designed to provide you with a "Taste of Australia" - drawing upon quality Australian produce and new workings of old Australian favourites. Tjanabi provides a great Australian atmosphere, whether it be for overseas visitors, corporate groups functions or if you are just seeking that special night out.



Tjanabi  
121 Lygon Street  
Carlton 3053  
Phone: 03 93491174  
Email: [info@tjanabi.com.au](mailto:info@tjanabi.com.au)

*Entrees range from \$10 - 16  
Main meals range from \$24 - \$32  
Fully Licensed*

This event will be followed by the Annual General Meeting, to be held on Friday 30th September from 1-2 pm. All are welcome to attend.