



# Annual Report 2004

## Chairperson's Report

### Peter Lewis

#### Administration/Management Committee Issues

At last year's AGM the following people were elected to the Management Committee: Peter Lewis (Chair), Maurice Ferdinando (Treasurer), Ken Blackman (Secretary), Tim Harding (Public Officer), Sue Ferdinando, Elinor Dilley, Kate Gillespe-Jones, Peter Harvey, Graham Ring and Gary Harper. Matt Bell and Angus Frith were co-opted and Basil Varghese continued to serve as Brotherhood of St Laurence liaison. Since then Sue and Maurice have resigned.

Changes in ANTaR's staff team include Brigid Anderson replacing Fiona Young as Office Coordinator; Frank Hytten continuing as the Fanning the Flames (FtF)/Talking Treaty Project Manager; Paul Miller was engaged to develop the ANTaR Vic website; Clare Land and Megan Evans joining Frank and Brigid in the Fitzroy office as FtF Community Development project workers; and regional staff on the FtF project are Jim Barritt (Bairnsdale), Gary Lucas (Warrnambool) and Jan McCalman (Swan Hill).

We need to acknowledge the amazing efforts of the staff in increasing ANTaR Vic's effectiveness as an organization working in solidarity with Indigenous peoples. As you will see from Basil's FtF Report, the staff have provided ANTaR with a solid base for further developing our reconciliation and solidarity based strategies.

We also thank and pay tribute to Peter Harvey for his role as Groups Co-ordinator, Ken Blackman for merchandise, work on grant submissions, insurance and countless hours of volunteer time, Tim Harding for moderating the native-title egroup and his work as Public Officer, Kate Gillespie-Jones, Rosemary Rule and Ken and the Communications Subcommittee, Graham Ring and the Policy Subcommittee and all our volunteers/members who are active in so many ways.

The Brotherhood has continued to provide free office space, computers and assistance with basic overhead costs as well as assisting us in fundraising. Basil has been intricately involved in our work – not only at the level of liaising with the Brotherhood and attending Management Committee meetings - but also as Chairperson of the Fanning the Flames Sub-Committee.

#### ANTaR Vic Activities In 2004

##### *Political Activities*

ANTaR Vic has made various media releases on ATSIC, the Yorta Yorta joint management agreement, cultural heritage and native title issues. We have met with the Victorian Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on two occasions and presented him with our land justice strategy document. We also made a submission (thanks to Ken and others) to the Senate Inquiry into ATSIC.

We ran a successful Come Together concert to support the Yorta Yorta and were present at the signing of the Yorta Yorta /State Government Joint Management Agreement in Echuca.

##### *Restore Indigenous Voice Campaign*

This has been our major political activity for this year and involved various stages. When the Federal Government, announced that it was going to abolish ATSIC, ANTaR Vic worked tirelessly in solidarity with the Indigenous community to attempt to restore Indigenous voice. The first stage of the campaign was to have the ALP block the legislation in the Senate. Through the efforts of ourselves and others the ALP sent the legislation to a Senate committee. This was NOT assured, as the ALP reportedly feared that if they blocked or otherwise allowed the legislation to become a focus of attention, it would be used by the Coalition to create unsubstantiated fears, create a climate of vilification and social division.

A broad background paper was prepared to give people an argument, based on 'principles,' to use to understand our position and to use when talking to others. A shorter flyer – a call to action – was also prepared for more immediate use. We assisted with the writing of a petition (initiated in NSW by an Indigenous Activist) to ensure that it had to be tabled in the Senate. Several sample letters were written to assist people wishing to write letters and several letters and petitions were completed and sent to Latham, Howard, the press, Victorian Senators and others. A 'How to talk to your politician and the press' kit was also prepared by a volunteer for distribution to local ANTaR and Reconciliation Victoria groups – and anyone else who might want one. We also prepared a free postcard for distribution in cafes across the State – attempts to go National were not successful, with National ANTaR and various other State ANTaR's not being happy with various aspects of the process and the text.

We decided to try to mobilize at both the 'peak body to Ministers and Senators' level and the 'go-direct-to politicians and press' grassroots strategy. This

was intended to get as many individuals and localized groups as we could to ring, visit and write (primarily) to Victorian State ALP Senators, to ensure that the ALP take a principled stand on this issue.

To achieve this we contacted the following 'categories' of agencies at the local level and where possible and appropriate, at sector 'peak body' level as well as individuals.

1. Local ANTaR Vic and Rec Vic Groups;
2. NGO Peaks (via VCOSS) and Service Delivery NGOs (head offices);
3. Activist Agencies
4. Faith Communities (in particular churches at regional and local levels – our contact with other Faith Communities is limited and is something to work on in the future);
5. 'Ethnic' Communities Councils (peak bodies, local government area based and individual agencies);
6. Local Government (Peaks and individual local Government Authorities – LGA's);
7. Universities (Vice chancellor and Indigenous support unit levels and academics and students as possible);
8. Unions (at State level and individual union responses);
9. ALP (Federal Senators, MPs and Victorian State members, in that order and the Petition);
10. Greens and Democrats (party policy level)
11. Your Voice (the newly formed Indigenous led party that aims to support and further the rights of all marginalized people);
12. National and Inter-State ANTaRs;

The second stage was to encourage individuals and various NGO bodies to make submissions to the Senate Inquiry. Again we note many submissions were made through our efforts.

The third stage was the election itself. In particular the focus was on encouraging NGOs and Parties to make positive statements during the election. A key tool was a second postcard which encouraged people to Vote One for Indigenous Health. We also gave support to Your Voice candidates and worked with Refugee Action Collective to get the Greens and the Democrats to sign onto a pledge with Richard Frankland to work for Indigenous self-determination and health, rights for asylum seekers and an Australian Bill of Rights. Howard Tankey (Whitehorse Friends for Reconciliation) generated two statements and gained 38 NGO and 27 Local Government rep signatories, promoting Indigenous issues as part of the election campaign.

In addition to individuals mentioned above, we have had a small but very active group of volunteers, without whom this campaign would not have happened. They have made literally hundreds of phone calls to elicit action from NGOs, individuals, ANTaR and RecVic groups, etc. The BSL have lent us the time and expertise of their communications team as well as an additional worker at one day a week, secretarial support via the Executive Officer's PA and lots of other general support and cooperation.

Many thanks are due to the volunteer efforts of Frank, Megan, Clare, Brigid, Howard, Eleanor Dilley, VCOSS, NGO's, LGAs, the BSL staff and many many others who have assisted in the campaign. Also thanks the Indigenous people and organizations that have offered their opinions and time.

#### *Partnerships*

We have maintained and/or initiated partnerships by attending:

- the Victorian Sorry Day Committee to help out with Sorry Day
- the Board of Reconciliation Victoria (ANTaR Vic Chairperson)
- Board meetings, teleconferences and annual gathering of ANTaR National
- Local Government Aboriginal Advisory Groups

#### *Future Plans*

2005 will see the final year of our FtF project and so much work will need to be done to ensure our future as an organization post-FtF. With the demise of ATSIC we will need to find ways of facilitating Indigenous Voice and no doubt will continue to support the Your Voice movement and other initiatives from the Indigenous communities of Victoria and beyond.

## **Local Groups**

Networking meetings were held every 2 months this year to bring together representatives from local groups and to promote mutual learning and support in their work. Groups Co-ordinator Peter Harvey worked with Anne Carroll of Rec Vic to jointly convene and chair the meetings as part of ANTaR's Memorandum of Understanding with Rec Vic. Attending once or more during the year were representatives from 18 local reconciliation groups.

Many ANTaR local groups are oriented to Local Government, working to promote community education and recognition of Indigenous presence and history within these areas. Some groups have

been successful in entrenching flag-raising at annual events such as Sorry Day and NAIDOC, others have worked with their local council on Reconciliation commitments and policy/action plans.

Most groups stage an annual or new major event each year, including exhibitions, picnics, writing competitions, murals, gardens and tree-planting, resource and healing trails, historic markers and a Reconciliation Service. Information dissemination and awareness-raising by groups include producing resource kits for schools, as well as newsletters. Regular activities such as heritage walks and film nights have been initiated or continued this year.

Some local groups also try to maintain a presence via stalls or activities at community events and festivals, considering this an important way of keeping reconciliation alive and visible.

Some groups are struggling to maintain/build membership, many looking at Indigenous membership and/or connecting with the local Indigenous community in some way. The Whitehorse Friends for Reconciliation forum in 2003 resulted in a boost in membership for that group, and the *Sit Down At My Table* dinners (with Megan Evans - FtF) also proved a valuable way of connecting with local Indigenous people for most of those groups who participated.

As well as sharing project ideas and strategies on working with schools and local governments, the groups networking meeting was a place for discussion of Reconciliation: What is it? Who is it for?' and 'Supporting and Identifying Indigenous Voices'.

### **Clare Land Attending Networking Sessions on behalf of Fanning the Flames**

### **Treasurer's Report**

It is with great pleasure that I provide members with my first report as ANTaR's Treasurer.

You will notice significant changes in the financial reports included in this year's annual report. The new approach reflects the requirements of the Victorian Associations Incorporations Act, under which all associations with receipts and revenue of more than \$200,000 must comply with various Australian Accounting Standards. As you will no doubt see from the Statement of Financial Performance, ANTaR has significantly passed this milestone during the financial year.

The information in this annual report is summarised from the full financial report, which now runs to 8 pages. The full financial report is available on request.

I am indebted to Brigid Anderson, Jonathan Lee and others at the Brotherhood of St Lawrence for their hard work through out the year completing reconciliations and reports. Their assistance in pulling together the financial report has been

## **AUSTRALIANS FOR NATIVE TITLE AND RECONCILIATION (VICTORIA) INC. REG NO - A0036961C**

### **STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2004**

	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>Revenue from ordinary activities</b>	<b>200,076</b>	<b>107,668</b>
Employee benefits expense	22,417	16,657
Merchandise expense	(7,390)	5,130
Project expense	166,553	77,232
Other expenses from ordinary activities	15,289	6,213
<b>Expenses from ordinary activities</b>	<b>196,870</b>	<b>105,232</b>
<b>SURPLUS FROM ORDINARY ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>3,206</b>	<b>2,436</b>
<b>TOTAL CHANGES IN EQUITY</b>	<b>3,206</b>	<b>2,436</b>

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2004**

	2004 \$	2003 \$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Receipts from members, supporters, subscribers and customers	17,037	16,648
Receipts from grants	151,768	85,428
Receipts from merchandise sales	3,368	5,085
Borrowing costs paid	(637)	(721)
Payments to suppliers, contractors and employees	(183,786)	(135,937)
Interest received	263	507
<b>NET CASH USED BY OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>(11,987)</b>	<b>(28,990)</b>
<b>Net increase/(decrease) in cash held</b>	<b>(11,987)</b>	<b>(28,990)</b>
Cash at the beginning of the financial year	18,698	47,688
<b>Cash at the end of the financial year</b>	<b>6,711</b>	<b>18,698</b>

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION  
AS AT 30 JUNE 2004**

	2004 \$	2003 \$
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash assets	6,711	18,698
Receivables	59,066	31,426
Inventories	9,169	-
Other	872	-
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>75,818</b>	<b>50,124</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>75,818</b>	<b>50,124</b>
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Payables	12,165	-
Provisions	10,323	-
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>22,488</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>22,488</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>53,330</b>	<b>50,124</b>
EQUITY		
Retained surplus	11,103	50,124
Reserves	42,227	-
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>53,330</b>	<b>50,124</b>

invaluable, especially considering the very tight timelines for completion.

It has been yet another challenging year financially as ANTaR struggles to increase unrestricted revenue to levels required for the long-term strength of the organisation and the requirements of the Community Support Fund Grant.

Disappointingly unrestricted revenue streams such as donations and memberships are down by \$86 and \$1,026 on last year, while growth in restricted ANTaR's financial position remains tenuous with accumulated reserves of \$53,330 as at 30 June 2004, predominantly made up of the restricted project reserve of \$42,227. This reserve represents project funds received in advance that remain unexpended at the end of the financial year.

Retained surpluses have been drawn down during the year leaving only \$11,103 in unrestricted funds available to fund future activities.

In closing I thank all ANTaR's committed and passionate supporters who tirelessly give of themselves and their finances to ensure the goal of delivering a more just and fair Australia for all may become a reality.

**Signed**  
**David Edwards**  
**Treasurer**



*Sit Down at My Table: Port Philip Citizens for Reconciliation*

## **Fanning the Flames of Reconciliation**

### **Basil Varghese**

### **FTF Committee Chairperson**

While ANTaR Vic has been immersed in campaigning against the abolition of ATSIC, in responding the subsequent Senate Inquiry and in the lead up to the Federal election, ANTaR staff have had to keep their roles as activists as separate as possible from their paid roles which are defined by the FtF Project's aims and guidelines. This has in effect meant a very large amount of volunteer working being done by all staff to support the work of ANTaR Vic. Having said that, this report is about the work of the FtF Project.

From supportive activity on Invasion day, NAIDOC Week, Sorry Day and in relation to the demolition of ATSIC, to pro-active work with the Yorta Yorta people, Local Government Aboriginal Advisory Groups and the issue of Stolen Wages, our year has been busy, successful and forward looking. The employment and 'induction' of the FtF staff in Melbourne and with our partner organizations in regional centres, the bedding in of the ANTaR Vic website and the development of a wide range of projects intended to engage the general public, speaking gigs (mainly service groups, schools and faith groups), education opportunities at festivals and conferences and not least the work of building ANTaR Vic as a strong and vibrant organisation have added to the range of tasks, effort and success, not least through the recruiting, supporting and efforts of a very wide range of volunteers and students and the supportive engagement and work of a few CoM and Sub-Committee members.

Below, individual staff reports offer a thumbnail sketch of the work being done by each person. Brigid Anderson, the ANTaR office coordinator who works one day a week for FTF, has reported separately.

### **Frank Hytten**

### **Coordination and Community Development**

### **Melbourne**

This has been a very big year in both the roles I occupy – as Coordinator of ANTaR Vic and the "Fanning the Flames of Reconciliation" (FtF) Project. I feel as if ANTaR Vic has 'come alive'. The FtF Project has injected staff time, talent and an unprecedented level of activity. It has been an exhausting, challenging, fantastic ride; and absolute privilege and pleasure to have worked with the people of ANTaR over the last twelve to eighteen months. My role has been largely to support and

guide staff activity – always supporting staff interests and talents, of which there are many; to conceptualise and maintain the FtF Project and the boundaries between the project and the work of ANTaR Vic, while ensuring that the work we do supports the work of and furthers the presence, efforts and aims of ANTaR Vic. Where we have been involved in ‘campaign’ work, it has always been clear that our role is to inform, educate and activate the non-Indigenous community, in support of Indigenous people and as guided by them.

I have also been actively involved in seeking out and talking to a wide range of groups, presenting at conferences, writing papers and running workshops wherever possible. Liaising with a number of local Government Aboriginal Advisory Groups and/or Council officers, faith and other Reconciliation focused groups, Indigenous people and organisations, Government officers and the Minister and numerous others has also occupied my time and energy. My work has focused on the smooth working of the FtF Evaluation, our relationships with the BSL and CSF, trying to develop long term fund raising opportunities and trying to learn from the past to focus on ANTaR Vic future – especially, post FtF staff availability. The only thing I have not really worked on at all over this time, much to my dismay, is my PhD!



NAIDOC in the Park: Eugene Lovett

### **Megan Evans** **Fanning the Flames of Reconciliation Projects Melbourne**

The first phase of the *Sit Down At My Table* project (Arts Victoria, Artist in the Community Funding) began in May, resulting in eight dinner parties across Victoria involving nearly 100 people. Megan worked with ANTaR groups who hosted dinners in their homes inviting Aboriginal people to eat with them. Two of the dinners were held by Local

Government, the City of Yarra and Wyndham City Council, attended by the Majors and Councillors. The conversations over dinner about reconciliation were filmed, providing inspiration for Indigenous playwright John Harding to write a play based on the characters, views and interactions. This play forms the second stage of the project: *Second Helping*, to be performed in North Melbourne Town Hall during NAIDOC Week 2005. *Second Helping* has been partially funded by City of Melbourne Arts Funding. Extra funding is currently being sought.

*NAIDOC in the Park* was a multicultural celebration of NAIDOC week, for and by the people at the Collingwood Housing Estate, involving approximately 500 Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. The day-long celebration involved the launch of the local ‘BEEM Artists’ mural in the underground carpark at the estate, feasting and dancing at the flats. The co-ordinating committee brought together many groups of people and services to support the event, including Homeground and North Yarra Community Health Centre, City of Yarra, the Office of Housing, Centrelink, Collingwood Neighbourhood House, Jesuit Social Services, Collingwood College and ANTaR members.

*Woven Histories* involves two artists, Gayle Madigan who is Indigenous and Megan Evans who is non-Indigenous, collaborating on an ephemeral public artwork as part of the Eureka 150 festival in Ballarat. The artistic collaboration symbolises Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives on the Eureka Stockade, often remembered in ways which ignore the place of Indigenous land and culture. The community is invited to participate by creating a blanket made of leaves from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous trees. A Reconciliation picnic and ceremony will be held on the final day of the festival.

*Black on White* is an exhibition of works by Aboriginal artists commissioned to represent non-Aboriginal people using photography, to be held in the Centre for Contemporary Photography in Melbourne in 2005. The artists are asked to engage in the questions of how the project of representation shapes the viewer and how Aboriginal people see non-Aboriginal as the other. The following artists have confirmed their participation: Brook Andrew, Leah King Smith, Lisa Bellea, Ricky Maynard, Mervyn Bishop, Brenda Croft, Jenny Fraser, Dianne Jones, Gayle Madigan, Vernon Ah Kee, Darren Swift. Tony Birch will write the catalogue essay. Funding is currently being sought.

The *launch of the Your Voice campaign* was an opportunity to create a vision for a reconciled Australia and support the call for Indigenous representation in the political system. This project involved designing and producing a high-profile event that brought together a group of prominent Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to create an image of a new identity based on the influence of Indigenous culture. Following speeches, Jida Gulpilil and his dance troupe gathered over 100 people from the crowd to participate in this original Indigenous dance as a symbol of an Australian identity based on the 500 Aboriginal Nations. The media reported 500 people attended the event. It was reported in *The Age*, on SBS and on ABC Stateline, as well as in other smaller print media.



*Launch of the Your Voice campaign:* Jeff McMullen with Jida Gulpilil and dance troupe

*The Gift* project, planned for 2005, is a special cultural event, a dinner party extraordinaire, based on a parable of unknown origins. It would be a high profile event involving a renowned chef and 30 guests, 15 of them non-Aboriginal people from a variety of influential positions in the community, policy writers, media executives, politicians, opinion makers. The other 15 would be leaders from the Victorian Aboriginal community. The guests experience the act of giving as a gift in itself and are compelled to interact in a way outside the comfort of usual individualised habits.

*The Yarra Park Signage* project, initiated by the Batman ANTaR group, aims to have an acknowledgment of country sign erected at the entrance to the Yarra Bend Park. This project has involved assisting in the negotiation between Parks Victoria, Batman ANTaR and the Wurundjeri.



*Woven Histories:* Maquette for the ephemeral public art project

### **Clare Land Community Development Melbourne**

Since joining ANTaR on the FTF project in February, 2004 Clare has been working on a variety of activities, with a focus on working with students and young people. This has included developing cultural awareness workshops, recruiting and working with volunteers (particularly media and communications students), supporting new student groups and raising awareness about cultural heritage and repatriation. She worked as a member of the ANTaR team on the Restore Indigenous rights campaign, to build the public meeting, develop the 'principled response' and join with the Greens and Friends of the Earth in organizing a bus to the Canberra rally. Clare has also been a resource person for information about land justice, treaty/sovereignty, and cultural awareness.

Drafting media releases and letters to government has formed part of her work in the policy and media area. Clare acted as ANTaR Vic's media spokesperson regarding the dispute between the British Museum, Melbourne Museum and the Dja Dja Wurrung over their two barks and emu figure.

Seeking to work with organisations to support and encourage engagement with 'reconciliation', Clare drew together the Western Young People's Independent Network (a group of young people of refugee and migrant backgrounds), Museum Victoria's Immigration Museum and Bunjilaka and Dulin, the Young People's Mentoring Project, as partners on an anti-racism project connecting Indigenous, refugee and newly arrived migrant young people with young people from longer established immigrant and Anglo communities. The

group received funding from the DIMIA Living in Harmony initiative, with activities to take place from March next year. She has networked on behalf of ANTaR to connect with people working in the Indigenous rights/equity areas, such as the Victorian Trades Hall Council and OXFAM. Also in 2005, Clare hopes to work with local ANTaR groups to promote awareness of local history.

Alongside her FTF work, Clare has worked with Robbie Thorpe to start up a new 'historically informed' current affairs radio show on 3CR. This was soon picked up as a simulcast to 3KND, and goes national over the summer months via the National Indigenous Radio Service. This volunteer work is particularly important to Clare as a way of being in touch with and broadcasting the voices of community people and activists about current affairs and the history of the struggle. Tune in on 855AM or 1503AM 11am-12pm Fridays.

**Jim Barritt**  
**Community Development**  
**East Gippsland (Bairnsdale)**

A major function for Jim has been to nurture and support the establishment of Re-Igniting Community East Gippsland Inc. (RICEG), the local ANTaR group. Initial acceptance and involvement of RICEG within the community has exceeded the group's wildest dreams, with the official launch of Relgniting Community in June successfully demonstrating that RICEG had arrived and meant business. FTF support has resulted in organisational development, developing community links and networks as well as reconciliation initiatives.



The crowd watching the VAYSAR Carnival presentation and closing ceremony

Jim committed significant time and energy to the VAYSAR Senior Victorian Aboriginal Football Netball Carnival as one of its coordinators, providing effective support to the Carnival host

organisation, Gippsland East Gippsland Aboriginal Cooperative Ltd. who were not able to provide the resources to manage this event. RICEG members took on a significant workload, from planning and organising to the coordination and hard work over the three days of the Carnival. This ensured the Carnival was an exceptional success and provided a unique opportunity for RICEG to develop a strong network and show their competence within the local community.



Part of the VAYSAR Carnival organising committee

While only funded for 1 day a week, Jim also managed to work as a member of the local Aboriginal Cooperative's NAIDOC week organising committee, as well as supporting RICEG participation in the International Day of Disability and Commonwealth Games 'Getting Involved' local committees; assist with organising the NAIDOC Week Ball; develop a document to properly acknowledge the Gunnai Kurnai people for issue to local organisations and East Gippsland Shire Council; and to attend Fanning the Flames evaluation workshops in Melbourne.

**Gary Lucas**  
**Community Development**  
**Warrnambool**

Gary works at Community Connections, a welfare service provider working in partnership with the Brotherhood of St Laurence for Fanning the Flames.

Some of Gary's work has been to strengthen links between local Koori and non-indigenous communities and individuals – this has involved visits to local Koori cooperatives; participating together in cultural events; organizing reconciliation study circles; supporting reconciliation initiatives at the local TAFE College.

Gary has received continuing support and direction from district Reconciliation and Treaty Supporters (RaTS) in approaches to all levels of government to improve recognition of Koori culture and history, and to give Kooris a greater say in running their affairs.

One of the highlights of the year was the unveiling of a six section mural painted by two Koori artists. The event brought together representatives of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous community, schools, local government and police. The event received coverage on television and in the local newspaper.

A commitment has been made to employ Koori people at Community Connections to give them experience in the welfare sector, and to then support them with mentoring when they undertake courses at South West TAFE. It is hoped that this might flow on to other organizations.

Gry is on the organizing committee for the 10th Tararer Indigenous Music Festival planned for mid-March 2005 in Warrnambool.

**Jan McCalman**  
**Community Development**  
**Swan Hill**

Jan has worked with her staff team at the Murray Mallee Training Company to progress a multi-faceted service and reconciliation agenda this year. MMT has recently secured a series of meetings with the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and the first will be an opportunity to present the regional strategy for the next 3 years regarding Indigenous young people. This has involved drawing together partners and various stakeholders including crime prevention, health, education, local government and employment/training. MMT has also initiated a project and garnering support from the local Federal Member to supply Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander flags to local employers of Indigenous people.

MMTC also worked with the management team for the highly successful Croc Festival: 2,800 people attended over the 2 days, including schools from NSW, SA, Victoria and Tasmania. The event enjoyed local and state media coverage and very positive feedback from the local community including hospitality and retail sector.

A major local issue has been the de-funding of the co-op and mainstreaming of services. This has had a huge impact on the community. MMTC hosted a community meeting and pursued discussions with various groups including Victorian Communities, DEWR, and Premier and cabinet about where to go from here. MMTC also provided office accommodation for some co-op staff and a meeting room for the Elders.

Other activities have included the Night of Respect and Recognition (awards night, late November); the Swan Hill Rural City Council finalizing its protocol that recognizes the "original custodians of all land and waters within the municipality" to be used at official functions; hosting an Indigenous Woman's health forum coordinated by the Royal Woman's Indigenous health unit; building Project Pathfinder and the KoorienetWorks/Kurrura Employment strategic plan.

**Conclusion**

It has been a privilege and honor to be connected to the FtF project; it has achieved a lot as you can see from the thumbnail sketch of the work that has been done by the workers concerned. I think the project has shown, imagination and courage embedded with a strong sense of service to pursue the goals of the project. I am proud to say that this project attempted to "walked the talk" or to put it in another it is attempting 'to be the change they seek' to quote Gandhi. One should never underestimate this aspect of "becoming the change we seek" because this has been the drawing power of great social movements. At the end of the day it is the status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait people in the political, economical and cultural life of our nation.