

Minutes of Annual General Meeting

27 October 2007

Father Tuckers Room, Brotherhood of St Laurence,

1. Acknowledgement of traditional owners

Jill Webb acknowledged the Wurundjeri people as the traditional owners of the land on which we are meeting.

Jill also welcomed people to the AGM, and acknowledged the work of Megan Farmer, placement student at ANTaR, who created the *DVD Reconciliation: what is your part* which was shown to open the AGM. Jill also acknowledged the work of Michelle Reiner, also a placement student who has produced a discussion paper on the Victorian Human Rights Charter and its significance for recognising Indigenous peoples' rights in Victoria, also being launched today.

2. Present and apologies

Chair: Jill Webb

Minute taker: Jacinda Kleidon

Present: William Robson, Helen Gourlay, Pam Tankey, Howard Tankey, John Browning, Isla MacLeod, Ros Bull, David Crawford, Verdine Crawford, Julie Kun, Julien Lewis, Muriel Mathers, Margaret Johnson, Helen Bennett, Jill Webb, Rosemary Rule, Marnie Myall, Rob Lewis, Anne Aston, Angus Frith, Chrisie Warren, Diana Collier, Paul Miller, Noel Belfraze, Russell Anderson, Barbara Hadkinson, Albert Critchley, Keith Stodden, Ben Moone, Eva Jones, Maree N'Diaye, Genevieve Cutler, Rob Oke, Peter Lustig, Kate Nelson, Emlyn Jenkins, John Smith, Virginia Burns, Clare Land, Alan Hardie, Rachel Hardie, Peta Price, Betty Corlett, Chris Adams, Roger Sharp, Anna Gaskill, Ian Spalding, Peter Lewis, Kate Oldaker, Kate Gillespie-Jones, Katharine Davies, Ken Davies, Jacinda Kleidon, Frank Hytten, Matt Bell, Andrew Gunstone

Apologies: Sid Spindler, Julia Spindler, John Burke, Pat Kun, Jenne Perlstein, Richard Wynne, Ro Bailey, Keith Gove, Lucy Nelms, Aislinn Martin, Rose Szulc, Judith Jones, Ken Blackman, Jen Rose, Margaret Bradley, Roy Bradley, Lin Morrison, J. Pashley, Karl Koffey, Ruth Palamountain, Michelle Reiner, Mary Dixon, Ruth Palamountain, Eleanor Dilley, Richard Harcourt, Alison Harcourt, Jennifer Strauss, Judith Jones, Bishop Philip Huggins, Aislinn Martin.

3. Minutes of previous AGM

Motion: That the meeting accepts the minutes of the 2006 AGM, 27 October 2007.

Moved: Peter Lewis

Seconded: Diana Collier

Carried.

4. Chairperson's report

Jill Webb reported that events over this past year have put Indigenous issues firmly back on the agenda, including the 40th anniversary of the '67 referendum, the 10th anniversary of the *Bringing Them Home* Report, celebrated 50 years of NAIDOC, and 10 years of ANTaR Victoria. And, after ten long years, the Gunditjmarra Native Title claim was finally settled.

Jill emphasised the opportunity that these events have created for Indigenous issues to be promoted, both in celebrating the richness of Aboriginal culture and heritage, and also reminding us just how much unfinished business there is. And the recent invasion of the Northern Territory and the discriminatory legislation that slipped through Parliament with minimal opposition is a sharp reminder of the escalating injustice and racism experienced by Aboriginal people.

Assimilation and paternalism increasingly guide both policy and action at the federal level. Self determination is now said to have failed, despite having never been properly implemented or adequately resourced.

Australia has refused to sign the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples, and the discriminatory and racially based legislation that accompanied the Northern Territory intervention demonstrates just how urgently we need legal recognition and safeguards to protect the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Jill summarised how ANTaR Victoria has responded to all of this. Last year we held the *White Blindfold* event, encouraging us as non Indigenous people to explore how our attitudes and behaviours perpetuate and reinforce the ongoing racism and disadvantage in this country. Our treaty scroll continues to travel the state, and Adelaide, gather thumb prints and a commitment to work towards treaties and agreements. We launched the *Get Real* Campaign outlining how we as non Indigenous people can work in solidarity alongside priorities set by both the Victorian Traditional Owners Land Justice Group and Victoria's State-wide and Peak Indigenous NGO's.

Increasingly we are developing our campaigns in partnership with other organisations, giving our work a much stronger voice. It is these alliances we continue to build and strengthen that will enable us to effect significant change in the longer term. More recently we have developed and launched the *LISTENup!* campaign with a very clear message; that any response to Aboriginal disadvantage and the violation of rights must be based on listening to Aboriginal and Islander voices.

Jill emphasised that it is not just listening, it's also being willing to open our hearts to the strength, courage and hope Aboriginal people continue to offer, as well as the frustration, anger and despair experienced and voiced by Aboriginal people all over this country.

And that if we are to be a truly reconciled and honourable nation we need a radical change. If we are prepared to listen, Aboriginal people will tell us what is needed: So, being prepared to listen and take all of this on board is not a simple task. There not one single Aboriginal voice, but several key messages seem to consistently emerge-

- The principle of self determination is critical to any long term solutions.
- Connection to land and culture is critical
- Legal recognition and constitutional change is essential, more than acknowledgement in the preamble, we need the rights of Aboriginal and Islander people enshrined in the body of the Constitution.
- Solutions based on evidence rather than politics,
- Resources must be provided based on true need.

Jill referred to what Andrew Gunstone might call a return to substantive reconciliation, a return to the core issues, away from the distracting debate about whether Reconciliation should be symbolic or practical

ANTaR's real strength as an organisation is the passion and dedication of our staff, volunteers, the Committee and our members and supporters. Jill thanked ANTaR Victoria's staff - Jacinda, Paul and Huong; the many volunteers and students who make it possible for such a small organisation to do so much; and this past year's Committee- Peter Lewis, Frank Hytten, Jen Rose, Angus Frith, Clare Land, Julie Kun, Matt Bell, Basil Varghese and Rae Perry. And most importantly, thank you to all our members and donors, especially our regular donors. Our financial security in the longer term will depend on you our supporters and our capacity to expand our membership and supporter base.

A special thank you was given to the Brotherhood who continue to provide us with office space and significant ongoing support in a variety of ways, and to everyone who has contributed to the work of ANTaR Vic over this past year in working towards land, justice and reconciliation.

Listen up campaign

Peter Lewis presented the Listen Up campaign message, and some background behind the campaign, beginning with why the campaign was started.

The passing of the Howard Government's Northern Territory Emergency Intervention Bills demonstrates there is a crisis in Aboriginal and Islander policy formation and implementation. The bills roll back Aboriginal and Islander self-determination, land rights and the Racial Discrimination Act. They enact a national policy framework that works against Aboriginal and Islander children, families and communities. There is no evidence base for these actions. The Labor Party's complicit response means that Indigenous rights are under serious threat.

So the LISTEN Up! Campaign was formed, which is a coalition of concerned organisations and individuals seeking a better response to Aboriginal and Islander disadvantage; a response based on listening to Aboriginal and Islander voices, communities and services. Key Indigenous leaders have been consulted on all our materials and strategies.

LISTEN Up! looks to the future for both Aboriginal and Islander communities and the nation as a whole. It is clear that there is a need for commitment from politicians and policy makers to key principles which recognise Aboriginal and Islander voice, Aboriginal and Islander rights and Aboriginal and Islander led services and programs. We are therefore calling on organisations, political parties and candidates to make a pledge to the LISTEN Up! principles and actions for the advancement of Aboriginal and Islander people.

There is a clear need for an immediate response and a long-term development plan to address issues of Aboriginal and Islander disadvantage which lead to poor health, suicide and child abuse. The LISTEN Up! actions seek a return to respectful and decent approaches to both immediate and long term needs.

The Principles of our LISTEN up! Pledge are:

Land and how Aboriginal and Islander rights and connection to land is fundamental to achieving better social, health, wellbeing and economic outcomes for Aboriginal and Islander people.

Investments in Aboriginal and Islander culturally-based solutions and community-controlled services and programs to tackle issues of Aboriginal and Islander disadvantage.

Self-determination as the foundational principle for engagement with Aboriginal and Islander communities and as the basis of policy formation and service delivery.

Treaties and agreements as the way forward to restore the rightful place of Aboriginal and Islander communities.

Evidence- based solutions to the issues of historic and current day dispossession and disadvantage.

National representation to restore Aboriginal and Islander voice to provide policy and program advice to the Federal Government in a form determined after consultation with Aboriginal and Islander communities.

We will be making this a focused campaign, particularly once we know who the new Federal Government is.

Peter encouraged people to read and sign the pledge online.

Question: How to get more Indigenous voices heard?

Answer: Voices have certainly been out there including Alf and Muriel Bamblett and Olga Havnen, but difficulty is being heard in the media. The LISTENup! campaign has been consulting with SNAICC, of which Muriel is Chair. Another issue is that Indigenous are so busy – they are not always able to be available for media and public events.

5. Acknowledgement of Volunteers

Jacinda Kleidon, Office and Volunteer Coordinator, thanked the many many volunteers who have contributed to ANTaR's work over the past year, particularly those who have come in regularly and consistently to the ANTaR office, along with the very hard work that the ANTaR Vic committee of management have put in on a voluntary basis.

Jacinda and Jill acknowledged Peter Lewis for his long-standing volunteer commitment to ANTaR Victoria over the past 10 years including his role as Chair and Committee member. Peter's work is now acknowledged on ANTaR's "roll of honour" which states "ANTaR Victoria gratefully acknowledges the outstanding contribution of the following people towards Land, Justice and Reconciliation". The inaugural recipients were Sid and Julia Spindler, recognised at ANTaR's 10th anniversary celebration in April.

6. Financial report and statement

Jill Webb acknowledged Frank Hytten's work as Treasurer over the past year, and that he will be stepping down from the Treasurer's role, but will rejoin ANTaR Victoria's Committee as co-opted member as representative of Reconciliation Victoria.

Frank presented the financial report, and presented the 2006-07 annual financial statement. He reported on need for new income; although our regular donors have increased since last year, many more are needed if we are to fund our work properly. ANTaR Vic's income from National ANTaR fundraising campaigns have increased, although the content of these campaign messages has been the subject of internal discussion. ANTaR Victoria currently employs three part time staff, Jacinda Kleidon, Office Coordinator 4 days per week; Paul Miller, Web and IT support, 1 day per week; Huong Ngyuen, bookkeeper since August 07, 1 day per fortnight). ANTaR Victoria needs grant income from charitable trusts, but the fact that we don't have Deductible Gift Recipient status makes this very difficult. Obtaining government funds and money is also problematic as ANTaR's campaigns are critical of government when necessary.

Frank also acknowledged the ANTaR volunteers who assist with the VAYSAR football and netball carnival each year, and how appreciated these volunteers are by VAYSAR and by the carnival host communities.

Question: Please clarify the amount that was raised through fundraising

Answer: \$3089

Question: Is the national ANTaR fundraising campaign money distributed around states?

Answer: Yes, it is distributed around the states proportionately according to overall population of each state. And regular donor funds are also distributed to the State or Territory ANTaR within which the regular donor lives. National ANTaR does keep a proportion of the money raised in order to cover their own costs for managing this considerable process.

Frank explained that Public Liability insurance still available to registered ANTaR groups and can be accessed by contacting Jacinda Kleidon in the ANTaR office.

Motion: That the meeting resolved to accept the financial statement for the year ending 30 June 2007.

Moved: Frank Hytten
Seconded: Peter Lewis
Carried.

7. Election of Committee and Office Bearers

Jacinda, acting as electoral officer, declared that nominations for the committee were received from:

Jill Webb (Chairperson)
Angus Frith (Public Officer)
Brigid Anderson (Treasurer)
Peter Lewis (Secretary)
Julie Kun
Clare Land
Russell Anderson
Chrisie Warren
Matt Bell
Jenne Perlstein

The Chair declared positions filled and welcomed committee members, and acknowledged co-opted committee members:

John Smith
Frank Hytten – Reconciliation Victoria representative
Jen Rose – Youth Affairs Council Victoria representative
Basil Varghese – Brotherhood of St Laurence liaison

Meeting concluded at 11:50am, followed by lunch.