



PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2010

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: *Nillumbik Reconciliation Group acknowledges the Wurundjeri as the traditional owners of the land within the Shire of Nillumbik, and we pay our respects to their elders both past and present.*

AIMS AND PURPOSES

The NRG has focused this year on continuing to work with local community groups and the Shire to support an Indigenous presence in local events and activities.

The COMMITTEE

The NRG is an organisation which contributes very significantly to Reconciliation in our Shire. We can do this because we have a dedicated group of people who work together to make it all happen. The committee members for the past year have been: Jan Aitken, President, Don Brown, Vice President, Diana Warrell, Secretary, Sasha Trikojus, Treasurer and Newsletter Editor, Joan Pickard, Ann Curry and Pam Pedersen, Yorta Yorta Elder, Committee Members. There are other members too who are active and contributing to our projects: Kay Pitts has a special interest in the Gawa Trail, assisted by Peter Stirling, Jann Darvill is the Convenor of the Friends Group which is developing the Moor-rul Grasslands with the help of Jane Trikojus, Cheryl Mutch, Jan Aitken and Don Butcher. Graham Pritchard is an unfailing presence – his long service in Aboriginal affairs keeps us informed and mindful of our place in the history of reconciliation; Dorita Thomson and Janet Boddy's supportive interest is also appreciated; Elizabeth Kooroonya Savage is our Cultural Advisor.

We have met each month at the home of Don and Joan and thank them for their hospitality, which provides more than the room: supper is always a pleasant reward towards the end of the meeting – thank you Joan.

Don Brown and Joan Pickard: We are rather shocked and bereft with the departure of Don and Joan for retirement at a beautiful lakeside unit at Laurieton, on the north coast of NSW. Their contribution to the NRG has been imaginative, practical and reliable. Many of our initiatives have begun with an idea from Don or Joan. Together they initiated and managed the bush food stall and provided a venue for monthly meetings. Don's handmade portable flag pole has been invaluable; his art work created magnificent signs, and cards which over this year alone raised \$343. The beautiful model of a Case Moth – a case for reconciliation – went around to many schools where each class wrote a message of reconciliation on the wings. They are both artists who contributed to our successful art exhibition. I will personally miss their wise counsel and the knowledge that there was assistance and an ally when needed. Thank you, dear friends of NRG.

MEMBERS

We have 60 members of whom 16 are honorary members including Joy Murphy Wandin and Doreen Garvey Wandin (Wurundjeri Elders), and Aunty Dot Peters (Yorta Yorta and Yarra Yarra descendant) and Elizabeth Kooroonya Savage.

Members' subscriptions are a vital part of our income which pays for Public Liability insurance, newsletters, postage and other administration costs. Your interest in supporting NRG is also important – it gives encouragement and strength to the Committee.

PARTNERSHIP WITH THE SHIRE

Each year the Shire of Nillumbik provides funding for reconciliation activities. This is part of the action aspect of the Shire's Reconciliation Charter. We are hoping that a comprehensive action plan for Reconciliation will be drawn up by the Shire over the next year, and NRG's activities will be part of this plan.

EVENTS

1. The year began with the Australia Day Citizenship Ceremony. The NRG organises the commencement flag raising which is held on the grassy slope just outside the entrance to the Community and Reception Centre. This year Mattie Weegberg played didgeridoo and Ian Hunter, Wurundjeri Elder, spoke of the weaving together of black and white cultures in his own life story. Ian's quiet wisdom and acceptance of life portray a reconciliation we would all hope to follow.
2. For two years NRG has sponsored an Aboriginal performer at the Eltham Town Jazz and Blues Festival on Australia Day weekend. Liz Cavanagh was there this year singing to an appreciative audience. Next year it is hoped that Dan Sultan may be able to attend. We are pleased that Eugene Ball, the Festival organiser, is totally supportive of the policy of inviting an Aboriginal musician to Eltham.
3. The Past Matters Festival, a partnership with Eltham Bookshop, is held late in May at the beginning of Reconciliation Week. This festival features Indigenous writers and others who have explored Aboriginal history, art and issues. The numbers attending this annual festival are increasing each year, indicating the urge for us to have a spiritual and cultural encounter with Aboriginal people and the enthusiasm for being informed and challenged. We are grateful to the Shire for financial support which also reflects commitment to the Shire's Reconciliation Charter.
4. The Meeting Place: Different Minds Different Hands is the title of the NRG Art Exhibition held at the Eltham Library Gallery under the Shire's Cultural and Arts Programme. The opening by Elizabeth Kooronya Savage was greatly appreciated by the large crowd who attended. In spite of the Library being closed there was a satisfying number of visitors who commented warmly. Our five artists were Don Brown, Janet Boddy, Joan Pickard, Ann Curry and Diana Warrell. We congratulate them on their interesting, challenging and beautiful work. During September, following two months in Eltham, the show will be on display at Mill Park Library. Twenty percent of sales to date, \$1650, has been donated to Worowa Aboriginal College.
5. Three book launches were held in the Gallery during the exhibition. Mick Woiwod launched his latest volume, *The Christmas Hills Story*; Rachel Shields, an Aboriginal woman, launched her beautifully illustrated story of *The Rainbow Child*, and Janet Boddy launched her book of poems, *Breathing My Hours*.
6. Worlds Matters Festival: While not a major partner with Eltham Bookshop in this festival held in October each year, NRG sponsors one session which showcases Indigenous biography and culture. This maintains our intention to promote an Indigenous presence in local events.

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

1. Newsletter: Sasha Trikojus edits five newsletters each year, including in them articles about current issues, reports from members and What's On information.
2. Website: Sasha is also our most efficient webmaster, updating the site as soon as there is new material available. Newsletters and information on events can be accessed.
3. Email information: Diana Warrell, our secretary, forwards a great deal of information about events in Melbourne, and articles concerning issues of current concern.
4. Wurundjeri Resource Kit: A popular publication originally written for schools but now widely sought by people and organisations within the Yarra Valley and Melbourne area. Available on disc at the cost of \$35 including postage. This year sales of the CD amounted to \$530.
5. Bush Food Stall: We are looking for a new convener for the stall and its stock of bush foods. It provides a source of income and a focus for interest in Indigenous matters at local festivals.

6. Reconciliation Eastern Metro: Each quarter, representatives from reconciliation groups in the Eastern sector meet in Ringwood at the Indigenous Gathering Place to share ideas for activities, news of support from Shires and to join in action taken on Indigenous issues. Diana, Ann and Jan usually attend these meetings.
7. Yarra Valley Indigenous History Tours: The tour begins with the Moor-rul Platform where Mick Woiwod speaks about the history of the Wurundjeri and the settlers. After a guided walk with members of NRG along the Gawa Trail we go to Yarra Glen and the Yarra Flats Billabong, site of the Battle of Yering where Mick tells the story of Jaga Jaga's escape. Then to Healesville and Coranderrk Cemetery with Auntie Dot Peters, whose parents lived on that reserve. The tour was so much enjoyed by girls from Catholic Ladies College that they have requested another trip this year. We are looking to extending an invitation to other schools in the future.
8. Jan spoke to the View Club in Greensborough about Indigenous history of the Yarra Valley and its continuing story in the despair and the triumphs in Aboriginal Australia today. She also launched the Australian Society for Native Plants Yarra Yarra Group's Native Plants Exhibition, bringing to mind the Aboriginal uses and stories which are stored in the sap of native plants.

CARING FOR THE LAND

We are mindful of the land of the Yarra Valley and its original owners, the Wurundjeri. The NRG cares for two areas of original bush.

1. The Gawa Wurundjeri Resource Trail is on Watson's Creek just past the Café and Alma Road on the Yarra Glen Road. The information plaques describe the different uses of plants growing there. The bushland and Watson's Creek provide a quiet and reflective place in which to feel Aboriginal presence. Kay Pitts with the assistance of Peter Stirling has kept an eye on the trail and there have been a couple of NRG clean ups. The rain over winter has revitalized the drought-stricken bushland and promoted a surge of growth which is very pleasing. A recent researcher found evidence of phascogales in this woodland.
2. The Moor-rul Reconciliation Grassland is a half acre of native grassland protected with rabbit proof fencing next to the Moor-rul Platform on Kangaroo Ground Hill. Jann Darvill is Convenor of the Friends Group which is weeding and planting with the intention of recreating native grassland. Seed was collected from Kangaroo Ground Cemetery and propagated at Edendale. Already some native ground plants are emerging as weeding provides freedom from invasive pasture grasses. We are pleased to have advice and support from Tim Krasevac from the Shire's Environmental Works Department.

HURSTBRIDGE FOOTBALL CLUB

It was interesting to hear from HFC of their involvement with the Tiwi Island Football Club and its Tigers. For six years they have sponsored Tiwi youth to come to Hurstbridge and play with their teams during the season. They have also sent some of their members to play in the Tiwi finals. Mick Higgs, with whom we spoke, said that local people are delighted to meet and know Aboriginal people – so there is a great movement for Reconciliation at work in Hurstbridge. NRG will be in touch with Mick and the club, supporting them during the footy season next year.

NEXT YEAR 2011

We will continue to work with other community groups to support an Indigenous presence in events and activities in Nillumbik. We look forward to working with the Shire in the development of their Reconciliation Action Plan, following the adoption of their Reconciliation Charter.

We also need some more members who are able to be actively involved so that the tasks are spread and the work is enjoyable and productive. Contact Diana or myself if you can offer some time and energy: Diana 9439 8565, Jan 9439 0342.

Jan Aitken
President, September 2010



Nillumbik Reconciliation Group Inc Financial Statement for end of financial year: 30 June 2010

INCOME		EXPENDITURE	
Cash at Bank 1 July 09	\$1,233.54	Nillumbik Shire Council tied grants:	
Nillumbik Shire Council tied grants:		- Hurstbridge Football Club	\$4,000.00
- pp Hurstbridge Football Club	\$4,000.00	- Past Matters Festival	\$3,130.00
- Past Matters Festival	\$3,300.00	Other Nillumbik Shire Council events	
Nillumbik Shire Council operating grant	\$2,500.00	Bush Food purchases	\$971.20
Bush Food sales	\$873.50	Jazz Festival sponsorship	\$1,000.00
Subscriptions	\$700.00	Other events expenses	\$487.50
Fundraising cards	\$343.00	Public Liability Insurance	\$878.45
Resource Kit CD-ROM	\$530.00	Other administration expenses	\$201.00
Donations	\$163.10	Newsletter expenses	\$264.35
Books	\$22.16	Carried forward	\$2,732.80
	\$13,665.30		\$13,665.30
ASSETS		LIABILITIES	
Cash at Bank 30 June 2010	\$2,732.80	Liabilities as at 30 June 2010:	
Petty Cash Float	\$50.00	- NSC: Hire Edendale for "Past Matters"	\$170.00
Bush Food stock in hand (value as at 30/6/10)	\$463.50	Members' equity	\$3,226.30
Personal PA amplifier (estimated value)	\$150.00		
	\$3,396.30		\$3,396.30

Nillumbik Reconciliation Group has had a successful year, during which it raised significant funds in addition to the various generous grants from Nillumbik Shire Council. These included membership subscriptions and donations, cards donated by Don Brown, the Bush Foods stall operated at events by Don Brown & Joan Pickard, and sales of the CD-ROM version of the Wurundjeri Culture Resource Kit.

NRG again sponsored the Liz Cavanagh band at the Eltham Jazz and Blues Heritage Festival in January. This gives us the opportunity to reach a wider audience than those who may attend other events, through an information table and bush food stall. Negotiations are under way for NRG to again sponsor an Indigenous performer at the festival in January 2011.

The Past Matters Festival received a reduced grant from the NSC so we were unable to afford the hire charges for the Community Centre. Nevertheless, Edendale provided an intimate venue and the festival was a great success.

Paid membership of the group has been declining, although complimentary distribution of the Newsletter generally results in the need for a print run of 100; the Newsletter is also available for download from the website.

Sasha Trikojus, Treasurer 09-10
15th September, 2010