



PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2012

At our last AGM we were weary and despondent with a reduced work force so we decided to adopt a holding plan. We have not sent out newsletters and have not asked for membership dues. However, the year has brought a number of developments to the group and there is a surge of interest and enthusiasm to meet these new demands.

Key developments:

1. **THE COMMITTEE:** Diana Warrell remains a consistently responsible Secretary without which no organisation survives. Sasha Trikojus has been an invaluable and expansive Treasurer, so skilled at making grant applications that we have received four this year. Graham Pritchard has given loyal support to reconciliation as our Vice President. Committee members have been Jann Darvill, who takes responsibility for the Moor-rul Grasslands, Ann Curry (until July) has looked after the Bush Food stall, and Paul Byrne-Moroney (since May). While all committee members have specific areas of responsibility, each has contributed to the activities of the group.

Our thanks to Ann for her support and encouragement over the years of her membership of the committee. Her artistic flair and wry humour are missed.

2. **MARG WOIWOD:** Funeral Thursday 30 August. Marg was a sterling supporter of reconciliation through her constant and loyal support for NRG. Our sympathy to Mick and their family and our fondest remembrances for Marg who attended every function and meeting, bringing thermos tea and cake and biscuits, who was a close and warm friend to many of us and an indefatigable assistant to Mick in all his reconciliation writings and projects. NRG was able to give a eulogy for Marg at her funeral.
3. **THE GAWA TRAIL:** We received two grants for the Gawa Trail. A \$1100 was given by Melbourne Water for the development of a guide booklet in consultation with Indigenous advisors re plant uses and cultural information in order to increase the number of people with sufficient knowledge to conduct school excursions around the trail.

Your Community Heritage Grants provided \$5500 for replacement of the plaques along the self-guided walk. The existing plaques are faded and stained, barely legible. The new ones will be of laminated recycled plastic giving better opportunity for illustrations and information.

Members continue to hold clean up sessions at intervals with support from the Shire if needed. Tours were held in NAIDOC WEEK in partnership with Edendale and with members of the Shire's Department of Arts and culture.

4. **BIRRARUNG AND CORANDERRK DATABASES:** Mick Woiwod, our Patron and a prolific writer of local history, compiled his wealth of references regarding the Wurundjeri history pre and post settlement, and the history of the Coranderrk Aboriginal Reserve in Healesville, into two data bases. These have been published in

both hard copy and with searchable CD discs. Their printing was financed by Bruce Nixon of Tarcoola Press. A *wilam naling* grant of \$2500 from Public Record Office Victoria, funded the production of the CDs and enabled complimentary distribution to local libraries, reconciliation groups, historical societies and school libraries. Yarra Plenty Regional Library Officer Liz Pidgeon was of vital assistance in this project. This resource, valuable to both Wurundjeri and non Indigenous people, was launched by Joy Murphy Wandin at the Eltham Library. Joy honoured Mick's contribution to Wurundjeri history and reconciliation by giving him a Wurundjeri name: Murrup Ngooloo - Spirit Words.

5. **WARRANTYTE RESERVE COMMEMORATION ROCKS:** A project that has been on Mick's mind for several years is a commemoration of the Warrandyte Aboriginal Reserve, which spanned two areas crossing the Yarra at Warrandyte around the mid nineteenth century. In partnership with Jim Poulter of Reconciliation Manningham and others, and working with the Wurundjeri Council, a rock with plaque will be placed on Reserve land on adjacent sides of the Yarra. It is expected that the launch of the plaques will take place next year in conjunction with the Coranderrk Festival, which is being organised by a committee of the Wurundjeri Council. The Robert Bridgford Trust of the Nillumbik Shire provided a grant of \$2000 for this project.
6. **MOOR-RUL GRASSLANDS:** Jann Darvill is the Convenor of the Friends Group which works on the weeding and planting and restoration of grassland at the Moor-rul Platform at Garden Hill in Kangaroo Ground. This Reconciliation Grassland remembers the predominant vegetation of the area pre settlement and the Wurundjeri heritage.
7. **RECONCILIATION EASTERN METRO:** Every quarter, the reconciliation groups of the eastern metro region meet to share information and ideas and to unite in working with Aboriginal people associated with Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place.
8. **RECONCILIATION VICTORIA and ANTaR:** NRG attends the Local Groups meetings held bi-monthly and supports campaigns. Current issues are concern for the Stronger Futures Legislation and its impact in relation to the UN Charter of Indigenous Rights, proposed Constitution changes and referendum, ways of working with local government, and using the media.
9. **WEBSITE:** As webmaster, Sasha maintains our site with current information and a wealth of past newsletters and other items.
10. **E-MAIL NOTIFICATIONS:** Diana maintains a stream of notifications concerning Aboriginal events and articles. These provide information for those who want to know what is happening, what can be thought about, and what can be attended.
11. **FLAG RAISINGS:** In partnership with the Shire of Nillumbik, NRG organised the Australia Day flag Raising at the commencement of the citizenship ceremony at which Aboriginal Elder John Baxter from Mullum Mullum spoke.
12. **PAST MATTERS:** Our partnership with Eltham Bookshop for the annual Past Matters Festival of Indigenous Writing has flourished. Thanks to Meera Govil for her wonderful initiatives and organisation we had a majority of Aboriginal writers on the programme and a great sense of working together and of confronting reconciliation.
13. **BUSH FOOD STALL:** For about three years now we have sold bush food products at our information stall at events such as Past Matters and World Matters. Ann Curry has managed the Bush Food orders and stored the stock and has been the major support in servicing the stall with help from other committee members.

14. **NRG AND OXFAM:** At a joint meeting, Robin Gardiner and Sasha Trikojus spoke about their work for Indigenous Community Volunteers. Robin worked as manager for the stores in three communities; Sasha made films of children building clay figures and telling their Dreamtime stories. Both talks were illustrated and gave some insight into Aboriginal Community life in northern Australia.
15. **NILLUMBIK SHIRE COUNCIL:** NRG enjoys a significant partnership with the Shire Council. Currently, Anna Maio has served as CDO and has been enormously helpful. She has been responsible for organising flag raisings, and also for inviting Mick to speak to a well attended meeting of Council staff about his databases. The Council provides generous financial assistance to us for the Past Matters Festival and supports us through an annual grant as needed. In kind support is given by Tim Krasevac from Environmental Works at the Gawa Trail and Moor-rul Grasslands.
16. **THE FUTURE: 2013 AND BEYOND:** I am hopeful that we can find a larger committee for the coming year so that we can have small groups of people focussing on a project and achieving progress in it. There are several works in progress funded by grants. These must be completed over the next year.

There are also issues for reconciliation to confront. While the referendum has been deferred it has not gone away and there is much to be done to educate the community before a poll is held. Local reconciliation groups have a significant roll in this. And there are issues of Indigenous Rights which I would like to see NRG addressing more openly. There is the possibility of engaging Aboriginal speakers, making links with schools where there is a growing interest in Indigenous issues, and working with Council to have a more expansive NAIDOC celebration for our community. We all have ideas and if there are more of us working together in an expanded committee then much more can be achieved and enjoyed.

2013: Bring it on!



Nillumbik Reconciliation Group Inc Financial statement for year to 30 June 2012

INCOME		EXPENDITURE	
Cash at Bank 1 July 2011	\$4,109.06	Past Matters Festival	\$3,599.00
Nillumbik Shire Council grants:		<i>wilam naling</i> : Databases project	\$2,852.15
- Past Matters Festival	\$3,599.00	Bush Food purchases	\$146.35
- Robert Bridgford Trust grant	\$2,000.00	Other administration expenses	\$136.73
<i>wilam naling</i> Small Grants Scheme	\$2,500.00		
Melbourne Water grant	\$1,100.00		
Your Community Heritage Grant	\$5,500.00		
Bush Food sales	\$197.10		
Subscriptions	\$200.00		
Donations	\$21.00		
Resource Kit CD-ROM	\$215.00		
Databases books & CDs	\$270.00		
Plaques	\$30.00	Carried forward	\$13,006.93
	\$19,741.16		\$19,741.16
ASSETS		LIABILITIES	
Cash at Bank 30 June 2012	\$13,006.93	Liabilities as at 30 June 2012:	
Petty Cash Float	\$50.00	- Robert Bridgford Trust grant	\$2,000.00
Bush Food stock @30/6/12 (approx cost value)	\$200.00	- Melbourne Water grant	\$1,100.00
Personal PA amplifier (estimated value)	\$100.00	- Your Community Heritage Grant	\$5,500.00
		- Database sales pp Mick Woiodod	\$270.00
		Members' equity	\$4,486.93
	\$13,356.93		\$13,356.93

The Nillumbik Reconciliation Group Committee started the year with fairly low expectations due to the considerable pressures on just a few active members. However, when Mick Woiodod got us involved in the publication of his *Coranderrk & Birrarung Databases*, and we managed to get government funding for the production of CD-ROM versions and postage to ensure maximum distribution, this became one of the most important reconciliation events of the year in Wurundjeri country.

Mick also initiated another project: to install commemorative plaques on the site of the short-lived Aboriginal Reserve (now Pound Bend) in the mid-nineteenth century – this project has been funded by Nillumbik Shire's Robert Bridgford Trust and will be completed early next year.

The Committee had decided that with reduced operations it should concentrate on its most important assets for involving young people in the Indigenous history of the Shire: the Gawa Trail, Moor-rul Grasslands and their association with our Wurundjeri Culture Resource Kit. Nillumbik Shire assisted with a reprint of an updated brochure for Gawa, but the markers for self-guided tours were in very poor condition – in some cases almost illegible.

An added difficulty was a shortage of guides to conduct school tours of the two areas. However, during the year we received a grant from Melbourne Water – to produce a Guides' Guidebook to ensure that those conducting tours have an adequate knowledge of native plants and Wurundjeri culture – and a grant from Your Community Heritage of the federal Department of the Environment to replace the plaques. Both these projects should be completed during the remainder of this financial year.

Sasha Trikojus
Treasurer, 2011-12