



Hopefully school groups such as this one from Wangetti, north of Cairns, will soon be regular visitors to the Yarrabah Menmyny Museum. Also pictured (leaning in on the left there) is Museum Curator Roy Gray with the Yarrabah Dancers in front. For the full story see page 10.



## This could be you!.....

If you live on Cherbourg, Yarrabah or Woorabinda communities your picture may already be here. For the next two or three issues of the (as yet unnamed) Aboriginal Coordinating Council newsletter we will be focussing on all our communities. If you have some pictures of local workers, events, sporting competitions or just something special happening, make sure you put them aside to be published - maybe even on this page. All letters, contributions, stories and photographs will be considered. The next newsletter will once again take a close look at the forthcoming Full Council Meeting and focus on the Palm Island Community. After that....it could be you and your community. And, don't forget to think of a name to be in the running for a \$150 prize!

# ABORIGINAL CO-ORDINATING COUNCIL

NEWSLETTER VOLUME I, NO 1: APRIL 1999

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## Councillors to face 'hard issues' at April Meeting

Discussions at the April Full Council Meeting of the Aboriginal Coordinating Council will focus on preparing to review the Community Services Act, a five year housing proposal and other 'hard issues' says Aboriginal Coordinating Council Chair Wayne Connolly.

Mr Connolly said meetings with Minister Judy Spence had confirmed funding would be available for the ACC CSA Review Committee to go ahead - but there were provisos.

"The Minister has now made the commitment for a limited number of people on the review panel," he said.

"We had initially thought to have as many of our people involved as possible and we also wanted to try and workshop it in all the communities.

"One of the things the Full Council Meeting will have to look at now is how we can do the review in way that is fair to all our people, where ever they may be."

He said the other major issue for discussion was a new housing proposal.

"The Five Year Capital Works Plan for DOGIT Communities will make a big difference to most of our communities," he said.

"Always the biggest issue that comes up is housing and with that ties in health, education and infrastructure.

"So it's been a boost to our communities to have this infrastructure and maintenance program underway (announced by the Minister last October).

"That will help train community people to look after infrastructure in their communities."

He said other issues included policing and justice. "There will be a Review of Policing in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and there will be project on three communities to hand control to the State Police.

"Most of our communities support this but feel there should be some kind of career structure involved for our Community Police so they'll be fully trained.

"Many of the State Police are reluctant to address issues they see as a Community Police problem which is why we feel it's important to have both working together at both levels."

He said the ACC they had invited a number of Ministers to attend the April full council meeting in Townsville.

"We've already confirmed the Minister for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Policy and Development, and the Housing Minister and Police Ministers," he said.

"I think it's good for our communities to get together and talk directly to the politicians because over the years they've been sending out their bureaucrats and they're not really the ones who make the decisions.

"We need to have community people talking directly to the politicians.

"So we'd like those who will be coming to the Full Council Meeting to think about the issues they want to bring to the table because it's important for us to turn their ideas into resolutions so they can get full support."



ACC Chair Wayne Connolly

**WELCOME** to Volume One Number One of the Aboriginal Coordinating Council's (yet-to-be-named!) Newsletter. This issue features the first in our series of community focus pages from ACC community councils across the state. Inside...the latest news from the ACC's Cairns office, Infrastructure project pilot communities chosen, Woorabinda dancers set sights on Sydney 2000, Yarrabah market garden gets underway & Cherbourg enterprises continue to expand. We hope you enjoy reading this issue, pick up lots of ideas and look forward to our editor Christine Howes focusing on your community soon. By the way, the prize for coming up with a name for this newsletter has become \$150. If you can think of a suitable name by the April meeting the money may well be yours!



# Infrastructure, environment and buying covered by new ACC staff members

Three new staff members at the Cairns ACC offices have been appointed to take care of a variety of issues of concern to community councils. Pictured below are Rowan, Brad and Andrew. Their portfolios are as follows.

## Infrastructure pilots to go ahead

The new infrastructure project, announced at October's full council meeting, is underway with the announcement of the five ACC communities to pilot the scheme.

ACC CEO Peter Opio-Otim said they would be Woorabinda, Hope Vale, Wujul Wujul, Pormpuraaw and Kowanyama.

Coordinator of the Infrastructure, Operations and Maintenance Project Brad Pinches has already started to put the project together from the ACC's Cairns offices.

"The program is to work out an asset management system for infrastructure in the communities and to encourage the communities to operate and maintain their own infrastructure," he said.

"It involves the training of technical staff from the community to operate and maintain the water supply, sewage and solid waste systems and also to manage the maintenance side."

He said the project would ultimately mean the communities were less reliant on outside contractors.

"The communities themselves will be in control of



New ACC staff members Rowan Foley (Environment Officer), Brad Pinches (Coordinator, Infrastructure, Operations & Maintenance Project) and Andrew Lewis (Consumer Affairs Officer)

their own budgets," he said.

"The idea is to develop an asset management system so they can plan and schedule for maintenance.

"It's important that the communities accept the program enthusiastically and maintain a strong commitment throughout the next three years," he said.

"This is particularly important because if the project is demonstrated to be successful in the pilot communities then ultimately the aim is for the remaining communities to undergo the same funding."

## Helping the buyer beware

Training for better buying is a mjr theme of the ACCs new Consumer Affairs Officer Andrew Lewis.

Mr Lewis said his role was to provide consumer awareness education to all 14 DOGIT communities as well as the Shire Councils of Aurukun and Mornington Island, and Old Mapoon.

He said the important thing about his role was to help people not to get "ripped off", to plan for their purchase and to understand how credit facilities work.

But he also said he would not be operating as a buying service.

"The idea is to empower communities so the whole program will be self-sustaining in years to come," he said.

"The program will be directed to the councils, families and individuals as well as to school children especially young adults in the last year or two of their schooling.

"At the start of it we will issue all the communities and liaison officers with a resource kit which will be built up over the three years of the project," he said.

He said the program would also focus on the roles of consumer advocacy organisations.

He said one of his first tasks would be to raise awareness of the program within the communities.

"The focus at this stage is also to collect information from across Australia and Queensland and to disseminate that information to the councils.

"The other focus we have is to work with the communities and councils in appointing liaison officers so we can start to do the work I've mentioned."

# Community plan on the way

Cherbourg Council is looking forward to the publication of a Community Development Plan which will take them to the year 2004.

Council CEO Warren Collins said consultants have been selected and started in March.

"We're pretty excited about what might come out of the report," he said.

"We've got some ideas of what should be in there but we're certainly interested in what might come out as new initiatives.

"One of the areas that we're certainly interested in is the small business area which we can hopefully get local people interested in and help set them up."

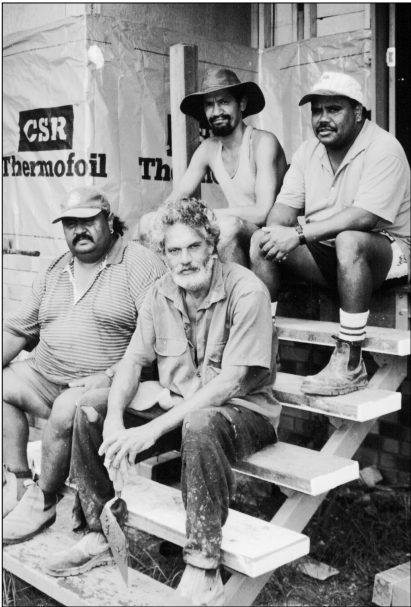
He said it all tied in with the Council's CDEP program.

"That's partly what CDEP is all about - trying to get people off the CDEP and into their own employment but the only way we can do that here is through business enterprise," he said.

"One of the main areas is that business area and council wants to focus on is training.

"And that includes existing enterprises, some of which are operating quite well now but we believe there's room for improvement there as well.

"We're in a position where if someone's idea looks like it's going to be a 'goer' we'll put resources in that area."



One of the many groups of CDEP workers, apprentices and supervisors to be found hard at work on any given day in Cherbourg

## Move to new shed will expand joinery operation

The Cherbourg joinery plays an integral role in construction and renovation around Cherbourg.

Manager Chris Roberts said the main focus of production was kitchens.

"Our mainline of production is kitchens for the new house program as well as the ongoing maintenance program," he said.

"Our sidelines basically range from junior league football trophies right through to coffin manufacturing so we do cover a vast array of products for the council."

He said staff at the joinery were looking forward to moving into a new shed to be built with the assistance of the Cherbourg Council within the next few months.

"We've just been granted a new shed so we're getting a brand new complex built for us and hopefully that will allow us to get back into the wider community supplying the Burnett," he said.

"We are looking at producing bench tops and colonial topped fence palings and also contract timber dressing and moulding for the local area."

Mr Roberts said the Council had been supportive of

the venture.

"Council actually supported this program right through from the time this idea was first mooted," he said.

"I think it's great that the Council got behind the venture and really pushed it along for us.

"We would never have been successful with our application for the new shed without their support and backing and Council is also able to benefit by utilising the current building for other areas."

He said most of the joinery's work was presently for the Council.

"Basically any joinery requirements for this community are done here," he said.

"We are getting so much more work coming out of Cherbourg there isn't really a need to go looking for work elsewhere.

"But with the new shed, better facilities and more staff we hope to go back out on the road a little bit to hopefully bring some more money into the community."



Much of the construction work around Cherbourg is in renovation - here is another group of workers extending a back deck

## Environment Officer concerns 'broad'

Environment Officer Rowan Foley says he will be working with Councils to look at environmental health as well as land and sea management issues.

"It's pretty broad at the moment and I'm hoping to narrow it down a bit to about half a dozen specific areas," he said.

"Overall I'm hoping to look at a broad, regional agreement type of process.

"Hopefully there can be some kind of broad agreement for north Queensland, central Queensland will be different again and there is the model there provided by CYPLUS although the other communities may be on a more individual-type basis.

"At the Full Council Meeting I'll be looking to take some direction and advice from the Chairs at that time."

## Construction builds on apprenticeship and training focus

More than 30 new apprentices are being trained up in various areas of construction around Cherbourg.

Construction Coordinator Jack Watson said they had tried to cover all aspects of the work at hand.

He said all the incentives were there.

"The right incentive for the jobs we have to do especially in earth moving, trucks, scaffolding, storage space are there," he said.