

ABORIGINAL CO-ORDINATING COUNCIL



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17 APLIN ST OR PO BOX 6512, CAIRNS, Q, 4870.

PH (07) 4044 2999 FAX (07) 4031 2534 E MAIL acc@iig.com.au

Minister questioned over CSA Review funding

Queensland Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Development Judy Spence faced a tough question period at the Aboriginal Coordinating Council Full Council Meeting in Townsville last month.

ACC Chair Wayne Connolly said discussions with the Minister focussed on the review of the Community Services Act, scheduled for the coming months.

He said the ACC's Full Council Meeting offered the perfect opportunity for Aboriginal Community Councilors to question the Minister on funding arrangements.

"We had four Ministers attending this meeting and Minister Spence was in the first session with Housing Minister Robert Schwarten," he said.

"So we asked Ms Spence why the allocated funding was not sufficient to ensure all our communities will be properly consulted.

"The funding we asked for ensured all our communities, with their differing needs and problems across the whole state, would have the opportunity to participate in the process."

Other issues discussed during the week included housing, policing and other issues of importance to the DOGIT Community Councils.

"Always the biggest issue is housing and with that ties in health, education and infrastructure," Mr Connolly said.

"So on one hand it's been a big boost to our communities to have this infrastructure and maintenance program (announced by Minister Spence at the last council meeting) underway.

"Other things were policing and justice issues and a project on three communities on handing back control to the State Police.



Chair Wayne Connolly & Executive Director Peter Opio-Otim

"But the bottom line was we really needed to have our community people talking directly to the politicians."

The Meeting included sessions with:

- Minister for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Policy & Development Judy Spence;
- Minister for Public Works & Housing Robert Schwarten;
- Minister for Families Youth & Community Care Anna Bligh; and,
- Minister for Police Tom Barton

Major issues addressed included native title, the Review of the Community Services Act, a Five-Year Housing Plan, the transfer of Community Police to State Police and youth development issues including youth suicide.

FOR FULL REPORTS ON EACH OF THE MINISTERS SEE PAGES 4 & 5

Welcome, once again, to the ACC Newsletter. The name's pretty exciting, hey? The editor takes no responsibility - I did tell you about the prize for coming up with a name (\$150 and it's still there...) and I suppose I should confess I'm working on it as hard as you all are! This issue we look at the most recent ACC Full Council Meeting in Townsville as well as a profile of the Palm Island community. We also chat to a sporting hero or two. Contributions to the next newsletter on just about any topic are welcome and can be made by contacting the editor, Christine Howes, via the ACC office for deadline details.

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Work shop kicks off consumer program

ACC Consumer Affairs Liaison Officers have had their first two day work shop explaining what the program will be all about.

Consumer Affairs Officer Andrew Lewis said the workshop was a huge success.

He said the Consumer Awareness Program, called Training Through Better Buying, involved the appointment of a Consumer Liaison Officer based in the community who would become a focal point for people to come to for consumer advice.

"So those Consumer Community Liaison Officers who have been appointed came down to Cairns to attend the first two day introductory workshop," he said.

"That workshop just went through the program and explained to the Liaison Officers what their role would be, the role of the program and it covered areas they will need to be trained.

"It gave a good overview of what the whole program will be about."

He said the work shop involved a number of practical exercises aimed at introducing the role to participants.

"We went into some case studies which were examples of consumer problems that had arisen in the past, to use them as a bit of a guide or example," he said.

"And we also covered the background of the program, where the funding came from and we played games as well to make it a bit light and entertaining."

He said the group also took the opportunity to conduct an experiment in the actual market place.

"What we did was as a group we wrote down a list of questions we thought may be applicable in asking or applying for a \$20 000 personal loan for a motor vehicle.

"We selected three banks, a building society, a car yard and a credit union and they actually went out and spoke to a representative from each, contacted them and got some written information back.



"After that we put it all up on a board to review and see what variations we got.

He said the results were very interesting and had already given the Officers something to take back to the communities and use.

"A lot of them were very surprised about how friendly, open and welcoming some of the people

were and on the other hand there was one particular institution who said they were just too busy and to come back another day," he said.

"Regarding the findings, there was a \$5000 variance between the institutions for a five year loan."

He said the information the program would focus on was to give good pre-sale advice to both organisations and individuals in each community.

"It's all about having people get good information and a good understanding of what they need and the questions they need to ask before they buy," he said.

"And hopefully from that we'll get less of the need to seek redress or compensation."

He said there was also a focus on issues such as financial management and planning as well as warranties.

"Especially on a motor vehicle where there are conditions that the purchaser must meet to ensure that the warranty stays valid."

He said the next step was to travel around the communities "on the invitation of the councils" and to work with those communities on issues.

"After that we'll put together the first training program which will be on motor vehicles and that will also be taken out to the communities and used as a resource," he said.

"I've been doing this for six months now, travelling through the communities, and there are a lot of people there who aren't aware of what they're entitled to, so the whole program is just to generally make people more aware and also inform them of the kinds of questions to ask."

Native Title support from Local Government

The Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) played a pivotal role in gaining the presence of native title speakers at the most recent Full Council Meeting in Townsville last month..

LGAQ representative Marisa Menin said information about Attorney-General funding for native title was

also sent to all the ACC councils from the LGAQ late last year.

"Another part of what we did at the LGAQ was to ask for some assistance to hold some native title information sessions throughout the state," she said.

"And part of that submission was to set some money aside so we could have some representation at the

ACC Full Council Council meeting.

"So Councillors had the opportunity to get some information about native title and also to ask questions."

Ms Menin said she was lucky enough to secure representation from both the state and commonwealth governments.

FULL REPORTS ON PAGES 6 & 7

Pride of Wujal

A young footballer and athlete is set to become the pride of Wujal Wujal following his success for the second year in a row in rugby league team selection.

Steve Renouf's retirement from the game may or may not have left a gap but either way his shoes will likely one day be filled by someone of Bradley Creek's talents.

Creek said he admired Renouf and supported the Broncos despite living in north Queensland.

The 14-year-old has just won a place, for the second year in a row, on the under-16s school boys side in the Cairns Junior League.

The team will play off for a chance to be in the North Queensland team in Townsville next month with members there having a shot at the Queensland Schoolboys side.

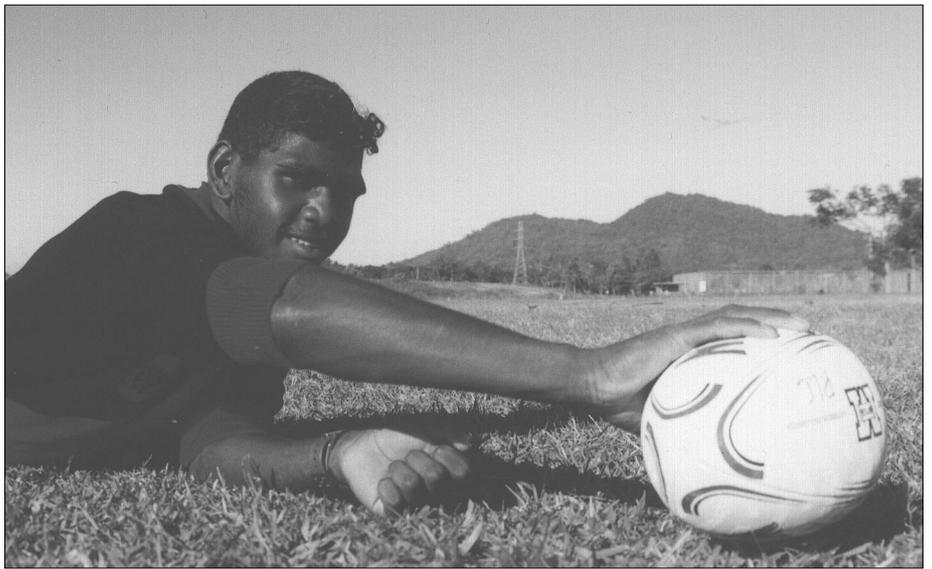
Last year Creek made the Queensland team, played centre and scored three tries in the national event held in Canberra.

Creek said he played every Saturday with all his friends and enjoyed a game at Wujal Wujal when he had time off from boarding at the Peace Lutheran College in Cairns.

"I spend about two days a week training and I spend every day from 5 until 6 running around doing sports skills and listening to our coaches," he said.

"We hang around together as a team, talk to each other and joke around with each other."

Despite being touted by teachers as an outstanding track and field athlete,



Creek said his first love will always be rugby league.

Peace Lutheran College Coordinator Sports & Physical Education Phil Doecke said Creek had always demonstrated he was going to be an "outstanding" athlete.

"Just physically speaking he's got a fine athletic build whether it be basketball, Australian Rules, soccer or track and field but the area Bradley's really excelled in has been his rugby and it'll be interesting to see how far he progresses in that," he said.

"He's very fast, has a good temperament, good attitude towards his sport, very competitive, he's a very focused sort of fella and he's very keen to listen to his coaches."

"He has a great deal of potential for going on and going on and going on, and if he's coached through, he'll be a very very fine sportsman." Mr

Doecke said last year Bradley also won local sponsorship for a number of track and field events.

Qualified Coach & PE Teacher Kim Kotzur said Creek had also represented Queensland in his age group for relay and 100m running events.

"I think he's got potential to probably go all the way, really, he's got the right build, he has got the right temperament, and he's got great character, not too much fazes him, he's very relaxed," he said.

"It is a difficult thing when you get a kid coming from the bush, out of a community setting, and then taking them into the highly competitive track and field scene in Australia.

"People like Cathy Freeman and Kyle VanDerKuyp have been able to make the jump across and I think if we can link Bradley in he can go a fair way with it."

NQ Cowboys look to remote areas for new talent

The North Queensland Cowboys have initiated a 'Cowboys Challenge' to remote area communities across northern and central Queensland.

Members of the Cowboys Development team addressed a meeting of Council Clerks from Aboriginal Communities under the Aboriginal Coordinating Council with an idea which would see 18-21-year-olds travel to Townsville for two day training camps and to play warm up matches before Cowboys NRL games.

ACC Executive Director Peter Opio-Otim said both rugby league and sports in general was an area which needed to be developed by Aboriginal communities and councils.

He said the ACC Council Clerks were very much enthused with the offer from the Cowboys.

"It will help to build up a stronger spirit and interest in

one of Australia's most popular sports," he said.

NQ Cowboys Indigenous Reference Group Chair Noel Gertz said it was a project they had been working on for sometime.

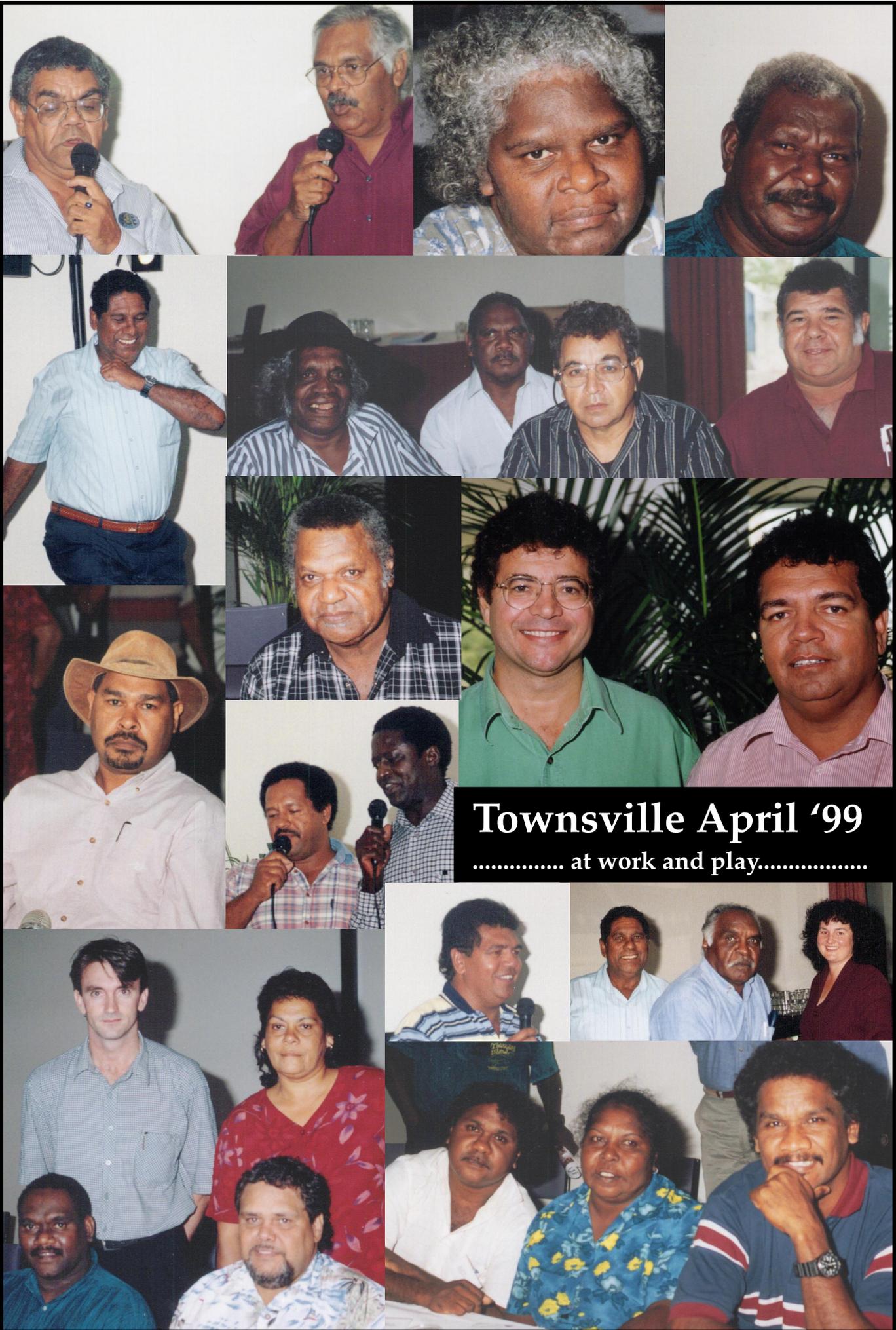
"There has also been a number of youth development camps and Cowboys staff have been available to go out and support the All-Black Carnivals," he said.

He said the full board of the Cowboys had approved a three-year plan which would involve much more than playing football.

Mr Opio-Otim said the scheme would definitely encourage the emergence of young, talented indigenous persons into a new arena of rugby league.

"We may be hoping to see more indigenous faces at the national level if this project becomes a success.

"It is something we should be proud of."



Townsville April '99

..... at work and play.....