

ABORIGINAL CO-ORDINATING COUNCIL



NEWSLETTER VOLUME I, NO 4: NOVEMBER 1999

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Call for rental arrears moratorium

ACC Chair Wayne Connolly has called for a moratorium on community rental arrears for the start of the new millennium.

Mr Connolly said with American President Bill Clinton considering a similar plan for outstanding debt in third world countries, it was only fair.

"We should call on the Australian government as we enter the new millennium to wipe all these housing debts for the indigenous people in this country who are still living in third world conditions," he said.

"People are still going to pay their rents but we could wipe the slate clean as we enter the new millennium."

He said the arrears would be just one of the many issues to be considered by the ACC Full Council Meeting in Cairns next week.

"Rental arrears are a major concern because the government is calling on us to address our rental issues otherwise they're going to cut back on funding," he said.

"But they themselves haven't been accountable for the Welfare Fund and under-award wages."

Mr Connolly said he had also called on the Queensland government to consult widely and listen to the community before implementing a proposed Cape York plan aimed at breaking the welfare cycle.

He said the plan would also be an issue at the Full Council Meeting.

"I can honestly say that our communities will not give it full support until they're consulted and it's not going to work in our communities until all the details are fully explained," he said.

He said many councils were looking for answers about the details of the proposed plan.

And he also said the Community Services Act Review was still very much on the agenda.

"We're still concerned about the level and availability of funding to ensure community consultations are properly carried out," he said.

"We've had to revise our entire strategy to fit around a tighter budget and as a result there are no solid outcomes in terms of the review at this stage."

He said another issue likely to be under consideration at the Full Council Meeting was Alternative Governing Structures and how they might account for problems brought about from native title processes.

"I think AGS is in process on some communities already because that was the structure Hopevale put in place and that was the reason they got their native title determination," he said.

He said he would like to see determinations or agreements reached in all the ACC communities.

"It will be a little different in every community but I think they also need to take into account the atrocities of the past where many traditional owners were taken from their country and put

on reserves and they're now living on traditional country belonging to other traditional owners.

"I'd call on all our communities to understand that we are all native title holders from somewhere in Queensland or Australia, every one of us, and native title will always be an issue I believe until there's agreements put in place with all our communities that are acceptable by all parties."

He said other issues for consideration at the Full Council Meeting would be the possibilities of four-year-terms for Councils, the forthcoming election in March 2000 and youth issues.



ACC Chair
Wayne
Connolly

Welcome to the final issue of the ACC Newsletter for the century ... millennium, even! It has been a busy couple of months for most councils as well as the ACC. ATSI elections have taken place, there are many, varied and some new issues are on the agenda as councils are starting to prepare for the forthcoming ACC Full Council Meetings and in the not-so-distant future, their own elections next year. If you have any articles or pictures for the next newsletter please don't hesitate to contact the editor, Christine Howes on 0419 656 277 or via the ACC Offices in Cairns.

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Wujal Wujal wins 'elbow room'

A new block of 54 hectares added to Wujal Wujal will give the community "some much needed elbow room" says Queensland Premier Peter Beattie.

"This is a growing community and the Labor Government is giving the people some much needed elbow room with a 54 hectare block of land which was a freehold property adjoining Wujal Wujal," he said.

"The purchase of the station, known as Luddens, will enable the people of Wujal Wujal to plan for a long-awaited new sewerage system, as well as new housing."

He said Wujal Wujal, with a land area of 1094ha, was Queensland's smallest Deed of Grant in Trust Aboriginal community.

Council Chair Agnes Walker said the move was good for the community.

"We can look down the track and start purchasing more land so people

can move out of the community and live in their homelands," she said.

Premier Beattie said the World Heritage environment and steeply sloping terrain had restricted housing and infrastructure development.

"The Government's action has secured Wujal Wujal a healthier, growing future," he said

The Premier paid tribute to the Minister for Transport and Member for Cook Steve Bredhauer for working hard to secure the extra land for the community.

"Mr Bredhauer has pushed the Wujal Wujal case long and hard, and we as a Government have responded," Mr Beattie said.

Negotiations for the purchase were carried out by the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Development.

Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy Judy Spence said DATSIPD had also set aside \$2.6 million for a new sewerage system.

Get ready GST!

The ACC and other organisations are gearing up to be ready for the introduction of the new Goods & Services Tax (GST) in June next year with a work shop to be held before the Full Council Meeting in Cairns next week.

ACC CEO Peter Opio-Otim said the introduction of the GST would see Councils involved in a whole new area of tax collection and compliance where they have very little practical experience.

"It is important therefore that ACC Councils fully understand the impact of the GST and the general issues affecting them, and to plan well in advance," he said.

"It is for this reason that the ACC together with the Local Government Association of Queensland, KPMG Accounting Firm and the Australian Tax Office will be mounting a GST work shop for all DOGIT Councils to help deal with the issues at both strategic and operational level.

"Up to 40 participants are expected to attend the GET READY GST work shop in Cairns before the Full Council Meeting on Monday 15 November."

Budget continues shift from 'welfare model' - Spence

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders will reap the benefits of more than \$100 million in spending by the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Development as it strengthens community partnerships and strives to reduce disadvantage, says the Beattie Government.

Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy Judy Spence (pictured) said the Department (DATSIPD) had a new strategic approach to spending its \$102.1million budget.

"In 1999-2000, DATSIPD will continue moving away from the welfare model," Ms Spence said.

"It will concentrate on delivering essential infrastructure and services, and will press ahead with initiatives designed to redress injustices dealt against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by past Governments."

Major new initiatives funded in this budget include:

- \$5.8 million over two years, to begin replacing and upgrading mainland community councils. A report condemned the condition of chambers in four communities (Mapoon, Woorabinda, Bamaga and Lockhart River), which are potentially a hindrance to good governance;
- \$25.4 million over three years, to compensate former Government employees who were underpaid on racist grounds between 1975 (when the Racial Discrimination Act came into force) and 1986;

Ms Spence said the Government would also continue delivering essential infrastructure to isolated communities, and to foster grassroots initiatives that succeed in reducing community crime and violence.

"Local Justice Initiatives, which have a track record of reducing the number of young people coming into



contact with the criminal justice system, will continue to receive strong Government support," she said.

"The total expenditure for the Local Justice Initiatives Program will be \$1.2 million for 1999-2000, which includes an additional \$0.25 million.

"This Budget, the last for the century, underlines how far Queenslanders have advanced in recent years in their attitude towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples."

Excellence by all reports

The ACC has received another "very good" audit report, says Chair Wayne Connolly.

Mr Connolly said all staff were to be congratulated for their efforts.

"I would congratulate our Chief Executive Officer Peter Opio-Otim, Accountant Gerry Massey and our staff for a job well-done," he said.

Mr Massey said the ACC was commended for its high standard of financial management.

"We're very pleased with it, it was lots of work but we've got a good team and everybody's happy," he said.

"It's a real pat on the back for the third year running."

MEANWHILE Kowanyama Community Council has addressed one of the problems identified in previous audit reports with construction of a purchasing store hoped to be completed in time for the wet season.

Kowanyama Administration Officer Robbie Sands said building was already underway.

"Our current purchasing store has been a criticism of the auditors for the last three or four years and the council is addressing that problem now by building the complex," he said.

"The audit criticism was for stock control but the new building will redress that."

AND the ACC's Annual Report will be available for Councillors at the Cairns Full Council Meeting says ACC CEO Peter Opio-Otim.

Mr Opio-Otim said the report highlighted some of the major achievements of the ACC during the year of review.

"I think there are two areas of interest," he said.

"One area is the consolidation of the current areas of interest to the ACC as in housing, womens' issues and internal audits.

"The other area I think to highlight is the new work of the Operations & Maintenance Project, the ACC newsletter and new training projects we have undertaken."



ACC Chair Wayne Connolly & Chief Executive Officer Peter Opio-Otim

Council buildings go-ahead

The replacement of four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander council buildings deemed to be most urgently in need will go ahead through a \$5.8 million funding commitment from the Queensland Government.

Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy Judy Spence said the Government would fund new chambers in three Cape York and one central Queensland community.

"The Labor Government is responding to an urgent need for new chambers in Lockhart River, Bamaga, Mapoon and Woorabinda," Ms Spence said.

"A review of these facilities found they breach the Building Code of Australia and the Workplace Health and Safety Act."

Ms Spence told a Parliamentary estimates committee hearing today that the Government and the people of Queensland are demanding higher standards of accountability from Indigenous councils.

"We cannot expect councils to run the communities from unsafe, ramshackle headquarters," Ms Spence said.

She said the new building at Mapoon, near Weipa on the west coast of Cape York Peninsula, would be particularly significant.

"Mapoon people have never had a fully-fledged community council, al-



Woorabinda Council Chair Archie Sullivan and Council Clerk Trevor Horan - with renovations underway

though for years they have been campaigning for one," she said.

"The Labor Government is amending legislation to enable them to elect a council for the first time next year.

"Rightfully, that council will now be able to look forward to a decent home - instead of a donga, which is the only available option at present."

Ms Spence also said DATSIPD had secured \$1.4 million from this year's Budget for the new building at Woorabinda.

The existing building, dating to the 1950s, breaches workplace health and safety standards and the Building Code of Australia, she said.

"It lacks disabled access, the floor is unsound and no non-Indigenous council would be expected to call it home.

"The new chambers will be a source of pride for the community, and fitting headquarters for Woorabinda's elected leaders.

"Good leadership is essential if Indigenous communities are to be strong and cohesive."

Kowanyama court house community-owned

A brand new court house about to be opened in Kowanyama will make a big difference to the community, says Administration Officer Robbie Sands.

Mr Sands said the new court house would be traditionally opened later this month and officially opened by Justice Minister Matt Foley early next month.

He said the community had been involved in all aspects of the development of the new complex, from art work to apprenticeships.

"Q-Build and the Department of Justice involved some of the local people in the art work displayed there in the actual building so that's good," he said.

"And we had four of our local apprentices working with the contractors who will now revert back to our local carpentry gang."

He said for the last two years the community had been forced to use a training centre as a court house.

"The new complex has got rooms where offenders can give statements to their solicitors in private where as before it used to be out in the open and other people could hear what they were talking about," he said.

Mr Sands said there were many other positive changes brought about by the new centre.

"Our Community Development / Justice Officer Dellis Gledhill will be based there and the community by-law courts will be able to be run from the complex," he said.

"The council will benefit as well, we'll be holding justice group meetings out of the building.

"We also had five community members do a JP / magistrates training course and they are now qualified to run the court with two of them able to sit on the Magistrate Court bench."

He said the courses had been initiated by both the Kowanyama Justice Group and the Department of Justice.

New court for NPA but hopes for airport still under question

In a bid to encourage indigenous participation in the Queensland justice system, residents of the far north of Cape York Peninsula are being urged to play a major role in the construction of a new court house in Bamaga.

The court house will service the Northern Peninsula Area communities of New Mapoon, Injinoo, Umagico, Seisia and Bamaga.

Attorney-General Matt Foley, together with Chief Judge Patsy Wolfe, Chief Stipendiary Magistrate Di Fingleton and departmental officers involved in the project visited Bamaga last September to hold discussions with NPA residents about the design and use of the building.

Mr Foley said residents would be encouraged to take ownership of the project and discussions would be held on the contribution of public art, the use of the building by the Community Justice Group and the naming of the complex.

"With court hearings presently held in a room of a metal clad demountable building, with a total absence of public facilities, the need for a new court house at Bamaga is evident," he said.

"The State Labor Government has moved to address this need through the



Injinoo Chair George Ropeyarn

construction of a new court house and police station complex.

"However, what makes this project special is the determination of the State Government to involve local residents in the project.

"It is hoped the public art component of the project, for example, artwork in public areas of the facility, will involve the work of indigenous artists from the region."

Mr Foley said the new court house, costing almost \$740,000, was expected to be completed by mid-December, after the start of construction in June.

Two apprentices from the area

are currently working on the site.

The court will include a public waiting area, registry office, interview room, multi-functional courtroom for use by the Magistrates Court and the Community Justice Program, a magistrate's chamber, clerk's office, prisoner holding cell and a conflict resolution area.

The facility also will include disabled access.

"Involving the community in the project will result in more appropriate use of the facility," Mr Foley said.

MEANWHILE Injinoo Chair George Ropeyarn says his requests for an upgrade of the Bamaga Airport are still apparently falling on deaf ears (reported in the August issue of the ACC Newsletter V1 No3).

"I'm still pushing for that terminal building," he said.

"I've already given a plan to the ACC and I'm hoping for a resolution at the Full Council Meeting to support it.

"We've got upgrades of the road, infrastructure and water but when it comes to tourism everyone is coming through the airport, but we've still got that shaky old building there."

Negative media reports 'unfortunate' - Spence

Negative media coverage of Woorabinda has been dubbed "unfortunate" by Minister for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Policy and Development Judy Spence.

Ms Spence said the people of Woorabinda were working hard to make their community more functional and self-reliant, as were other communities across the state.

Two recent initiatives by the Government and Community Council have been ignored by media.

"At Woorabinda, a team of the Departments is working to ensure that Government services are deliv-

ered on the community's terms, and that any work we begin is sustainable and linked to training and jobs," Ms Spence said.

The two initiatives were reopening the community swimming pool and funding for the continued development of Black Boy out station.

"Woorabinda Pool is not a luxury, it is a necessity," Ms Spence said.

"Swimming in chlorinated water has been linked to improved skin and eye health.

"The alternative swimming spot for Woorabinda children is a lagoon infested with toxic blue-green algae."

She said DATSIPD had found the initial \$70,000 required to reopen the pool.

"And the heads of a number of Departments are thrashing out ways to ensure Woorabinda children will be in the swim for many summers to come," she said.

She also said Black Boy out station was an important grassroots response to petrol sniffing and other problems among young people in Woorabinda.

"Recent funding of \$60,000 from DATSIPD enabled Black Boy to continue helping the kids of Woorabinda," she said.

Access to ambos takes coordinated strategy

Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are to be given greater access to ambulance services, Emergency Services Minister Merri Rose has announced.

Ms Rose said that more than \$2 million had been earmarked in the 1999-2000 State Budget for new ambulance stations and staff residences in Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander communities.

"New ambulance stations costing around \$500,000 each will be built on Palm Island and at Doomadgee," she said.

Ms Rose said the Budget initiatives were part of a QAS

strategic plan to improve ambulance service delivery to indigenous people living in isolated areas.

As part of that plan, the QAS recently established an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Coordination Unit to enhance pre-hospital care to those communities.

The unit, while based in Cairns, will operate Statewide. It will develop and implement a comprehensive policy framework to provide ambulance services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and to increase employ-

ment and career opportunities for indigenous people with the QAS.

Strategies to attract ambulance officers into more isolated communities have started to pay off, with staff va-



Weipa Napranum Ambulance Officers show keen youngsters what it's all about at the Croc Eisteddfod earlier this year.

cancies in rural and remote Queensland reaching their lowest level in years, Ms Rose also told Parliament last month.

Coordinating Unit Coordinator Paul Elliot said several communities had been targeted as part of the overall strategy of the Unit.

He said there was a range of issues the Coordination Unit was set to look at.

"We're also looking at establishing a policy for the employment of indigenous people and we look at service delivery in rural and remote communities," he said.

"But we're also looking at injury prevention and first aid within remote communities, language information management systems, reporting on the incidence of prevalence of illness and injury, and a program for delivery of cross-cultural awareness training."

He said targeted communities included **C h e r b o u r g**, Woorabinda, Palm Island, Weipa Napranum, Yarrabah and Cooktown.

"At the present time there is a station being built on Palm Island which should be operational by the end of this year, and we have established a station on Mornington Island," he said.

"We are looking at doing something on Doomadgee within the next financial year and of course on communities across the Cape York Peninsula.

"At the present time we're doing a service plan of the Cape York communities to see what QAS needs to do in terms of linking these communities together, that's happening right here and now."

He said anyone interested in the activities of the Coordination Unit or becoming an Ambulance Officer were welcome to call him on 4052 3264.

Focus on Funding / Grants...

Natural Heritage Trust fund will bring 'a lot more money' to Cape - Environment Officer

Funding for natural and cultural resource management is available once again through the Cape York Natural Heritage Trust (CYNHT) Plan via the Cape York Regional Advisory Panel (CYRAP), says ACC Environment Officer Rowan Foley (pictured right).

The CYNHT Plan is an integrated regional plan that seeks to tackle major conservation and land management issues on the Cape York Peninsula.

Up to \$40m from the Natural Heritage Trust has been provided to implement the Plan which relies on the support of Peninsula residents and was based on the overall outcomes of the Cape York Peninsula Land Use Strategy (CYPLUS).

Mr Foley said there were 10 strategies for achieving the goals of the Natural Heritage Trust in the region.

"If people can address their application to one of those 10 strategies then a lot more money will come into Aboriginal communities," he said.

"So if communities want funding for projects related to rangers or land management and cultural resource management then they can apply through the CYRAP process."

He said it was most important to keep applying for the funds even if groups or communities have been turned down previously.

"That's the most important thing, some communities have put in already and got knocked back early on so they just left it, but that's not the best way to go about it because CYRAP will actually look at it again," he said.

He said assistance with applications and/or further information was available through either himself at the ACC or Balkanu Indigenous Land Management facilitator Jim Davis.



The CYNHT Plan outlines 10 strategies for achieving the goals of the Natural Heritage Trust on Cape York Peninsula:

- 1. Managing natural resources**
- 2. Enhancing Cape York Protected Areas**
- 3. Controlling feral animals and weeds**
- 4. Heritage site management**
- 5. Land rehabilitation**
- 6. Assessment of natural and cultural values**
- 7. Cooktown Interpretive Centre**
- 8. Cape York community grants**
- 9. Rare & threatened species assessment & recovery**
- 10. Making it happen**

Pormpuraaw funded to celebrate elders

Pormpuraaw Community Council will hold an event to celebrate and recognise the contribution of older persons to the community, with the help of International Year of Older Persons funding says Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy Judy Spence.

The Council received \$5,000 funding to hold the celebration, which will transfer cultural knowledge through craft-making and story telling and will be held at the end of this month.

The grant was made in the second round of special funding from the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Development.

Pormpuraaw Acting CDEP Project Officer Sitika Satui said the one-off funding was for two days of activities aimed at developing an appreciation

throughout the whole community for the knowledge held by elders.

"We'll have a kup murri which includes preparation, arts and crafts, photographic displays and we'll have old people making and weaving bags, grass skirts, painting and all the traditional crafts for everyone to see," she said.

"And we have a drawing and writing competition for the school kids where we will ask them to record story telling from the older people and draw pictures of what they think the story is about."

She said there would also be traditional dancing, disco, choir performances and a thanksgiving service.

"The idea was to get everyone in the entire community involved in celebrating this special year for the older per-

son," Ms Satui said.

"The hope is to bring that sense of togetherness in the whole event, celebrating the older person as well as family, children and people on the whole."

She said the funding application was sent in because they had thought 'why not?'

"They made the offer so it was there for the taking I guess, and it all goes towards offering something different for the older people," she said.

"We hope something meaningful would come out of it, not only in terms of the traditional arts and crafts but for all the things out in the community you don't have to go and pay money for.

"They're out there, they get them and prepare it so they can see it can be done."

Doomadgee funding to explore justice alternatives

The Doomadgee community will be able to focus on keeping its people away from the mainstream justice system following a grant of \$51,352 from the Queensland Government.

Queensland's Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy Judy Spence said Doomadgee's Aboriginal Community Council would use the money to explore ways of dealing with offenders, without resorting to the criminal justice system.

"I understand that possible alternatives include upgrading an outstation where offenders could carry out

community service orders," Ms Spence said.

"This funding, from the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Development, is part of the Labor Government's commitment to supporting community initiatives aimed at reducing contact between Indigenous people and the law."

"These grassroots initiatives can help slow the unacceptably high rate of incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people."

The funding is drawn from DATSIPD's Local Justice Initiatives Program.

Teaching scholarships up for grabs

The Beattie Labor Government has launched 20 scholarships valued at up to \$20,000 for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people interested in a teaching career.

Education Minister Dean Wells said the new scholarships were part of the government's plan to create a teaching workforce that was more reflective of its client base, and to provide employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

"We want Indigenous people to be trained to work as fully fledged teachers in their own communities, and for them to provide important cross-cultural experiences for non-Indigenous

students," he said.

He said the scholarships would provide financial assistance for students to complete a Bachelor of Education at a Queensland university.

"Scholarships for successful applicants entering a four year Bachelor of Education are valued at a maximum of \$20 000," he said.

"Scholarships for successful applicants commencing a post-graduate two year Bachelor of Education are valued at a maximum of \$10 000."

Mr Wells said that scholarship holders were guaranteed employment with Education Queensland after the satisfactory completion of their course.

"Employment is conditional to the scholarship holder maintaining teacher registration and being willing to be employed in any geographical location in Queensland. "

He said the scholarships were available for students currently in year 12, current employees of Education Queensland, non-school leavers and post-graduate students.

Mr Wells said students could get further information by telephoning 323 79984 or 323 71307 or via the internet at <http://www.qed.qld.gov.au/workdept/wprk.htm>

He said applications closed on Tuesday, November 30, at 5:00pm.

Focus on Hopevale...

Successful bidding help community enterprise

Building and enterprise are almost constant features of the Hopevale community landscape with recent achievements including a new child care centre, inventory stores building and nine new houses.

Hopevale Council Clerk Tim Jaffer the Council was also not adverse to trying for outside projects which won them a major water infrastructure project about 18 months ago.

"We've got the big water infrastructure program happening which is going to link-up a bore field program to our reservoir sites," he said.

"Hopevale Council won the contract to construct the reservoir sites, do the earth works and build the road to the reservoir site."

He said the project would include a pipeline running into the community from about 15km to the east and linking up with the community's reservoir.

"And any remaining amount of money out of that infrastructure program we'll put into housing and other developments within the community," he said.

"You know we're happy to go with things like this, if large amounts of money are coming into big projects then we'd like to think that we could put in a bid to win some contracts.

"We've been quite successful at that".

He said CDEP plays a role in all employment outcomes for the community with 417 people out of about 1600 residents participating.

"CDEP plays its role in all employment outcomes in Hopevale whether it's to complement apprentice wages or CDEP gangs that are involved in cleaning or fencing or anything to do with any job sites," he said.

He said the community was presently involved in a number of new enterprises.

"We have a new inventory stores building which will be used to manage all ingoing and outward going goods and to complement a management system we have in place up here at the Council Chambers and administration office," he said.

"We also have a new child care centre being built, we have nine new houses being built for the community people, and a slaughter house as well as some reservoir tanks under construction.



A team of Hopevale CDEP workers help prepare for the 'Golden Oldies' dance, part of the week of activities celebrating Hopevale's 50th Anniversary Celebrations

"We have a plan to build a bakery to sell local bread as well."

He said the present round of housing construction was funded by the Five-Year-Plan

"But we were pretty disappointed with the five-year-plan," he said.

"It's there but it's a skimpy amount of money that we've received even though it's being well-used.

"The amount of money we're getting out of the next five years, we'll probably spend in the next 18 months.

"We have a comprehensive construction program where we build our own houses and cut our own blocks here at the block works.

"We build our own blocks and make our own pavers and the community really benefits just to see that.

"They're a great bunch of lads down there and they're really having a go."

Mr Jaffer also said it was a "dream" of the council to build a sporting complex for both social and health reasons.

"We know that because of the costs of such a large project, there's not too many departments or funding agents to be found but we'd love a big swimming pool, an athletics track and a stadium type of facility where people could go and enjoy themselves with indoor basketball or cricket," he said.

"Hopevale and other remote communities miss out on these things, but it's really imperative if people are concerned about Aboriginal health and social well-being that they should seriously think about funding these sorts of facilities in communities."

He said some activities on the community were assisted by royalty monies from the nearby Cape Flattery Silica Mine.

"The Cape Flattery royalties has helped more in filling the short fall from the State and Federal government funding," he said.

"But we're not talking huge amounts of money that allow the community to do the things we wish to do but it has come to good use, it builds houses and we utilise it to help people got through training.

"Of course this year we've used a lot of it for our 50th anniversary celebrations, quite a lot of it, it's a week-long event so there's been an amount of money we've put into that over the last few months on wages and hire."

50th celebration draws 2000 visitors

A week of celebrations marked 50th anniversary celebrations by the Hopevale community which experienced an influx of 2000 visitors says Chair Lloyd Bambie.

Visitors participated in an extensive program of events including a street parade, rodeo, all-blacks junior and senior sports, family fun days, an internet cafe, sideshow rides, Karaoke, a golden oldies dinner dance and memorial services marked the occasion as well as a performance by Coloured Stone and a surprise visit from Yothu Yindi.

Mr Bambie said Hopevale had a 50-year history to be proud of.

"In 1942 our people were forcibly removed and sent to a strange land," he said.

"In 1949, after seven full years of fighting the government to return, the first group of men were sent here to commence preparations for the establishment of Hopevale.

"We recognise that 50 years ago there was nothing here except plenty of spirit and a will to succeed and today what we have is a modern community.

"I urge you all not to forget the hard work that original team had endured.

"Without our old people, without their spirit, determination and perseverance we would not have this beautiful community today."

Young people were urged to be involved in the com-

munity by one of two surviving members of the original working team returned from Woorabinda in 1949.

Respected elder Jimmy Hart said the spirit of the community was still important.

"You wouldn't think that people had the will power or were willing to build this up and do everything and it's still going now," he said.

"We've done our bit, the old people have done their bit and that's the most important."

He said he was pleased the community was celebrating.

"This week was great, we're very happy about it and I don't think I'll forget it or even my family will forget it," he said.

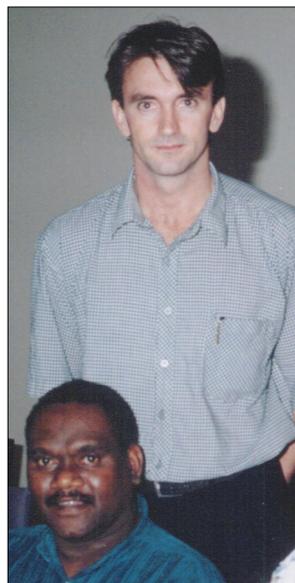
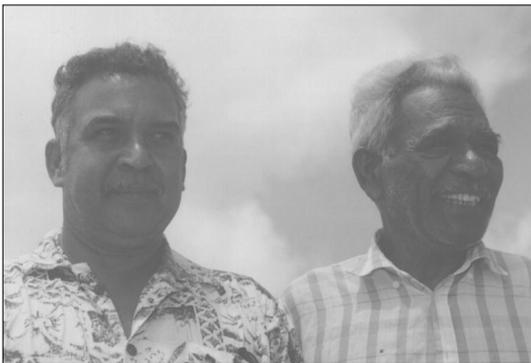
"I'd like to remind young people nowadays and in years to come to keep building this mission up and to become the back bone of this mission.

"Young people should get together and talk about it, make a stand like the old people did about the way your life is lived."

Official launch MC Victor Gibson said the purpose of the celebration was recognition and remembrance.

"The purpose of this celebration is in the recognition and remembrance of our people who were removed from Hope Valley to Woorabinda and returned," he said.

"Today we don't need tears of sorrow, we're going to celebrate tears of joy."



New NSW Senator takes time out for Woorie

NSW Senator Aden Ridgeway recently attended a meeting of more than 40 people in Woorabinda as a member of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation.

He was there to hear their views on the Draft Document for Reconciliation.

Senator Ridgeway said he had a particular interest in hearing the views of Central Queensland residents in a personal attempt to hear as wide a range of views of the Draft Document as possible.

Earlier on the same day Senator Ridgeway told a public meeting at the Central Queensland University he would prefer to be remembered as a 'reconciliationist' rather than a republican.

He said he had always understood the difficulty of being both Aboriginal and Australian as well as the cultural gap between the two.

It was difficult to exist as one person and combine the two sets of politics and attributes which resulted, he said.

He also told the meeting indigenous grievances went deeper than party considerations, an important factor in his new roles as Indigenous & Industrial Relations



spokesperson for the Australian Democrats.

The Senator referred to his maiden speech as well as his role in the development of the preamble and what was now known as the Motion of Regret.

He said during his maiden speech he had wanted to set a clear direction for government as well as presenting a clear vision of where indigenous people were going.

He also said the High Court decision known as Mabo should never have caused the outrage it did, nor should it have been relegated to a question of property rights.



Woorabinda Council Clerk Trevor Horan with NSW Senator Aden Ridgeway and Council Chair Archie Sullivan

Legal Aid services improved

Indigenous women living in remote communities who become victims of violence will have greater access to legal services and the justice system through a Legal Aid Queensland strategy launched by Attorney-General Matt Foley in Cairns last month.

Under the strategy, Legal Aid Queensland will specifically target indigenous communities on Cape York Peninsula, Palm Island, Cherbourg and Woorabinda.

"This strategy is about turning

back the tide of violence against women in our society," Mr Foley said.

"It will focus on educating women in remote indigenous communities about their legal rights and empowering them to use the justice system to protect themselves and their children.

"It will assist indigenous women who have been victims of sexual assault, domestic violence and other forms of assault to gain access to specialist legal assistance in a cultur-

ally appropriate way and to access information about support services, including criminal injury compensation.

"The Cairns office delivers outreach legal services to people living throughout Far North Queensland via a network of Legal Aid specialist services, preferred suppliers, community legal services and community agencies," he said.

"It ensures all people living in Far North Queensland have access to the justice system."

LGAQ address speaks for democracy

ACC Chair Wayne Connolly recently attended the annual Local Government Association of Queensland conference where he had the opportunity to address delegates on the conference theme, Fertilising Democracy at the Grass Roots. As the current term for Councillors draws to a close and the new millennium looms, parts of his speech are pertinent for reflection on the role of the community councils. The following is an edited version of sections of the address

The theme for this year's Conference is important to us for at least three reasons.

First, it is a clear reminder to all of us of the need for continued improvement in everything we do in our society.

One area where we can still do a bit more is in the area of citizenship participation and involvement in all aspects of our community life.

After all, we are talking about democracy which has been properly defined as Government by the people, for the people and of the people - a form of government in which sovereign power resides in the people as a whole and is exercised, either directly by them, or by the elected representatives.

Our people must therefore be given the opportunity to exercise their democratic rights.

We therefore need to think in terms of how we can extend the frontiers of democracy in our communities.

The second implication of the conference theme is much more specific to our local government.

It is a good reminder to us of how important local government is to our people.

Local government is the sphere of government best placed to initiate and apply broad democratic practices.

Our citizens relate more closely to our local governments than the State or Federal governments.

What then can local government do to become the beacon of democratic process in our communities?

Finally, the theme implies there are internal as well as external pressures to our grass roots democracy.

Otherwise, why bother to fertilise it?

The frontiers of responsibilities for Aboriginal Community Councils extends well beyond the areas of roads, rates and rubbish.

Indeed, Aboriginal Councils perform functions that literally cover all activities of a community people, from the cradle to the grave.

The challenges therefore that have been placed on our Councils are enormous.

This is important if we are talking about fertilising democracy at the grass roots.



ACC Chair Wayne Connolly

In essence, we are talking about democratisation of the entire process on our communities, not just a political process.

Given that, what steps have Aboriginal Community Councils taken to fertilise democracy at the grass roots level?

We have taken two types of actions - one is specific and the other general.

As a way of trying to provide a long lasting sustainable base for democratic practices we have adopted a view that the best strategy towards keeping democracy alive is to ensure that our young

people of today who are tomorrow's leaders get to know and understand the working of the democratic process.

To this end, the Aboriginal Coordinating Council will be embarking on an educational strategy primarily aimed at the children in schools under the heading School Awareness Council Program.

Citizenship, like everything else, must be learned.

Another important strategy the Aboriginal DOGIT Councils have adopted in trying to fertilise democracy at the grass roots has been to encourage the devolution of power to our many varied and disparate groups.

The Aboriginal Coordinating Council also has regular full council meetings where our elected leaders meet and share experience in a variety of areas including empowering our people.

This process of cross-fertilisation is yet another mechanism that both ACC and the LGAQ should continue to build on so as to strengthen the network of democracy among the councils.

We have so much to learn and so much to share among ourselves.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Aboriginal Community Councils, we wish all local government councils every success in the next millennium.

May God bless us as we grow from strength to strength so local democracy can remain forever over us and brings fruits of this powerful form of government to all our community residents.

Focus on ACC Projects...

Justice / women focus for community work

Community justice groups are catching on, says ACC Community Justice and Womens' Issues Officer Gwen Schrieber (pictured).

Ms Schrieber said while not all communities have got justice groups, those that do are finding they are making a difference.

"In Hopevale, for example, there's a justice group which works very closely with the elders on that particular community where they try to keep the young ones out of prison to stop them from re offending," she said.

"Before the offenders go to court the young ones are sent to the elders to try and work out a solution so they are kept in the community instead of going through the judicial system.

"This has worked very well for that community and they've been in operation for the last couple of years."



But she said it was important to keep in mind that all communities were different.

"In Kowanyama they work slightly differently to Hopevale and it's the same for Palm Island," she said.

"But it's working, there have been positive outcomes and they want to continue with it providing they can run it in a culturally appropriate way because as far as the government is

concerned customary law has not been endorsed yet.

"But by bringing in our elders, they can really discipline the young ones and they are starting to take notice of that which is helping."

She said her role was primarily to support and guide groups as it was under her Womens' Issues portfolio.

"My role with womens' issues at the moment is to encourage women to have regular check ups because a lot of our diseases are preventable and we need to get that message across," she said.

"It's not only to help them but to help the rest of the community."

Ms Schrieber said her job allows her to spend time in communities which she really enjoys.

"I really enjoy it because I'm there at the grassroots level and every time I go into the community there's something different," she said.

Projects for youth and community underway

Consultations for developing strategies and community plans to deal with self-harm prevention are the current focus of ACC Youth Development Officer Mercy Baird (pictured).

Speaking on the ACC's regular radio spot on Bumma Bippera Media (4C1M) in Cairns, Ms Baird said the ACC was one of the coordinators for the Far North Qld Youth Development Project.

"This project is funded by the DFYCC and basically my role is to consult with communities

about developing plans to support them in youth suicide prevention strategies and the other major project is supporting and developing community plans for self-harm prevention and juvenile justice issues," she said.

"I started in August and I've been to five communities so far, Doomadgee, Mornington Island/Normanton, Pormpuraaw, Kowanyama and Hopevale.

"With those communities I've been talking to councils, community justice workers, health workers and all the service providers.

"We've also had forums with youth themselves to dis-



cuss their issues and how we can work together.

"We also have discrepancy funds to give to the communities and some of that is being used to develop community plans which will include economic development.

"It's about putting in projects there also where young people can be employed so we're developing alternative activities for jobs and career such as developing outstations.

"We have a reference group made up of government and non-government organisations including Families Youth & Community Care, Qld Health and Apunipima.

"We're getting all the people we can involved because it's too hard to do it by ourselves so we're tapping into a lot of departments where we can pool our resources and really make it work.

"It's a challenging project which goes over three years and we want to make sure it's going to be very comprehensive, effective and will have a lasting effect on the communities."

Focus on ACC Projects...

Talent spotting goes with Consumer Affairs job

Spotting some unlikely talent has been an unexpected bonus during the filming of a series of consumer awareness videos on communities says ACC Consumer Affairs Officer Andrew Lewis (pictured).

Mr Lewis said he has spent much of the last few months writing up the first program on purchasing a motor vehicle for the Training for Better Buying Resource Kit as well as organising and filming a pilot video.

"The Resource Kit so far explains what a consumer is and the eight basic rights of consumers as adopted by the United Nations," he said.

"It then goes into program one which is on motor vehicles."

He said there were 12 sections within the motor vehicle purchasing program, each of which would be accompanied by a video segment which runs for an average of 10 minutes.

"We applied to the government through the Auctioneers & Agents Fidelity Fund for some monies to make a video so community members can see their own people acting out the message for them as well as seeing the written material," he said

He said the Grants Officer for the Office of Fair Trading, who administer the Fund, had asked for a pilot video before the complete video project was given the go-ahead.

"So we hope there will be a video produced for each of the sections under buying a motor vehicle," he said.

He said the pilot video featured three sections from the Purchasing a Vehicle program: Choosing a Car to Suit Your Needs; Getting a Price Guide From the Market Place and How to Find a Car to Buy.

Mr Lewis said filming and editing the 31 minutes of finished product had taken about four weeks to complete.

"We spent the first three weeks in New Mapoon, Yarrabah and Cherbourg, and the fourth in Brisbane editing and filming the presenter who was Bill Thaiday," he said.

He said the response from the community had been "really good" and each of the segments had used local people from each community.

"We had three people in New Mapoon, two people at Yarrabah and three at Cherbourg," he said.



"I asked the Community Consumer Liaison Officers (CCLOs) to organise the actors who were pretty enthusiastic, although some of them were a little bit shy and unsure about talking in front of a camera until they got used to it.

"There was a good story from Cherbourg where we filmed Choosing a Car to Suit Your Needs.

"They decided to go onto the street and have a look at some of the types of vehicles there are available to buy and the local paddy wagon drove past.

"While they were absorbed in checking it out the policeman put the siren on and it scared the daylight out of them.

"You could see them jumping on the video and we tried to incorporate that in the final package but we couldn't fit it in there, unfortunately."

He said while they were filming in Cherbourg two representatives from the Office of Fair Trading came to watch the filming and ended up pitching in with writing and holding cue cards for the actors.

"They were impressed with what was done and didn't quite know how much was involved until they saw what we were doing," he said.

He said the completed pilot would be presented to the Full Council Meeting in Cairns next week.

"Hopefully that will do a couple of things, it will show appreciation for the communities who have participated in it but will also encourage those are not yet on board the program to find and appoint their CCLOs," he said.

He said all CCLOs needed to be on board by early next year to attend a work shop planned for distributing the Resource Kit.

"There's some communities who haven't yet appointed their Community Consumer Liaison Officers which is due to several things including lack of funding for those positions at this stage," he said.

"So we're trying to assist the councils to encourage people on CDEP to be involved.

"It's a bit hard to determine how much time will be involved, because it depends to a fair degree on the amount of assistance required by the community."

For more information call Andrew at the ACC in Cairns.

Forces at work on literacy / numeracy skills to help ensure promotion

A symposium for Workplace Literacy for Army Reserve Indigenous Soldiers in far north Queensland examined ways to boost indigenous personnel promotion within its ranks recently.

Of concern to the symposium was research which had shown not only that indigenous Australians were under-represented in the Armed Forces but also that promotion was difficult due to inadequate numeracy and literacy skills.

The symposium was attended by a number of training and other interested bodies including DETYA as well as the ACC Infrastructure, Policy & Development Manager Ted Wymarra and Training Officer Rosemary Anderson.

"There are many Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people involved in the army but a lot of them can't go any further because of their literacy and numeracy skills," Mr Wymarra said.

"So although many of them can do the job, they can't actually put that on paper when they go to sit on exams."

He said the meeting looked at ways of developing specially designed courses to assist in as many

ways as possible.

"We were all there with one thing in mind, to try and develop some solutions as far as improvement in the literacy and numeracy skills area are concerned," he said.

He said the problem could be eased through the development of pre-entry or bridging course through TAFE.



*ACC Manager Infrastructure,
Policy & Development
Ted Wymarra*

"We also thought of the buddy system to offer support and also to look at role models," he said.

"At this stage the Battalion in Townsville has 200 indigenous soldiers but there's only one Lieuten-

ant and the rest are Sergeants or Corporals.

"So we'd like to boost that figure as well as boosting recruitment."

He said another role for the ACC was assisting with cultural awareness training.

"There will be some cultural awareness workshops conducted by Rosemary Anderson for the army who also said they would rely heavily on the ACC to access the DOGIT communities," he said.

"So I think cultural awareness will be the first thing for these instructors and for the officers so they fully understand what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are all about."

Mr Wymarra said it was clear the Defence Forces genuinely wanted to recruit more indigenous people as soldiers.

"It was very very interesting because the army did mention they was very pleased with the way indigenous soldiers conducted themselves and that they had learned a lot from them as far as living out in the bush," he said.

"They said some of the things they know would put the bush tucker man to shame."



ACC Chief Executive Director Peter Opio-Otim meets with Australian Defence Force personnel to discuss the issues

ATSIC Election Results for Qld

ATSIC Election Results have been declared and will shortly be finalised after the period allowed to lodge objections. Some ACC Councillors have also committed themselves to their Regional Councils and are indicated by an asterisk (*). For more information call your local ATSIC Office.



Region Ward Candidate

Brisbane Brisbane Metro Ian Delaney
 Brisbane Brisbane Metro Colin Dillon
 Brisbane Brisbane Metro Robbie Williams
 Brisbane Brisbane Metro Matilda Bani
 Brisbane Brisbane Metro Herb Bligh
 Brisbane Brisbane Metro Les Malezer
 Brisbane Ipswich and South Coast Cecil Fisher
 Brisbane Ipswich and South Coast Patricia Thompson
 Brisbane Ipswich and South Coast Steve Mam
 Brisbane Ipswich and South Coast Graham Dillon
 Brisbane North Coast Russell Doctor
 Brisbane North Coast Karen Collins
 Cairns Cairns Mary O'Shane
 Cairns Cairns Terry O'Shane
 Cairns Cairns Barclay Miller
 Cairns Cairns Merv Ah Kee
 Cairns Cairns Raymond Wallace
 Cairns Innisfail Rae Kelly
 Cairns Innisfail Jean Walker
 Cairns Tableland-Douglas Lionel Quartermaine
 Cairns Tableland-Douglas Gordon Gertz
 Cairns Tableland-Douglas Lance Riley
 Cairns Yarrabah Wayne Connolly*
 Cairns Yarrabah Percy Neal
 Cooktown Aurukun Dereck Walpo
 Cooktown Aurukun Alison Kornamyuh Woolla
 Cooktown Cape York Robbie Salee
 Cooktown Cape York Dick Namai
 Cooktown Cape York Eddie R Woodley
 Cooktown Coen Rodney Daniel Accoom*
 Cooktown Hopevale Nakia Armand Harrigan
 Cooktown Hopevale Gerhardt Pearson
 Cooktown Kowanyama Lawrence Foote
 Cooktown Kowanyama Thomas Hudson*
 Mount Isa Burke Murradoo Bulanyi Yanner
 Mount Isa Carpentaria Shirley George
 Mount Isa Mornington Roger Kelly
 Mount Isa Mornington Susan Sewter
 Mount Isa Mount Isa Pattie Lees
 Mount Isa Mount Isa Warren King

Region Ward Candidate

Mount Isa Mount Isa Ron Page
 Mount Isa Mount Isa Noel Sarmardin
 Mount Isa Mount Isa Richard Percy
 Mount Isa South East Elaine D McKeon
 Mount Isa South East Jason Raymond Connolly
 Rockhampton Gladstone Heather Toby
 Rockhampton Gladstone Peter M Savage
 Rockhampton Longreach Mark Dancey
 Rockhampton Rockhampton David Wragge
 Rockhampton Rockhampton Bob Blair
 Rockhampton Rockhampton Maleeta Richards
 Rockhampton Rockhampton Michael White
 Rockhampton Wide Bay Frances Gala
 Rockhampton Wide Bay Colin A Johnson
 Rockhampton Wide Bay Christopher Chapman
 Rockhampton Wide Bay Vera Webber
 Rockhampton Woorabinda Steve Kemp
 Roma Cunnamulla Ray Robinson
 Roma Roma Wayne Baker
 Roma Roma Randall Taylor
 Roma Toowoomba Gary White
 Roma Toowoomba Garry Martin
 Roma Toowoomba Jean Suey
 Roma Toowoomba Grace Weatherall
 Roma Toowoomba Walter McCarthy
 Roma Toowoomba Stephen Hagan
 Roma Wondai Bert Button*
 Roma Wondai Clarissa Malone
 Roma Wondai Sammy Joe Murray
 Townsville Charters Towers Nicole Huxley
 Townsville Ingham Abe Muriata
 Townsville Mackay Beverley Cummins
 Townsville Mackay Ian Appo
 Townsville Mackay Russell Belleair
 Townsville Mackay Eddie Smallwood
 Townsville Palm Island Alfred Lacey
 Townsville Palm Island Sylvia Jeanie Reuben
 Townsville Townsville Jenny Pryor
 Townsville Townsville Genua Hore
 Townsville Townsville Angie M Akee
 Townsville Townsville Helen Akee



The ACC recently organised for representative from the First Nations Credit Union, Sharon Atchison Firebrace, to visit the Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Community to explain something of what they were about to Chair Agnes Walker (pictured). The meeting was also attended by Councillor and Community Consumer Liason Officer Marie Creek. First Nations, based in Shepparton, Victoria, is the first indigenous run credit union in Australia and will place an emphasis on educating its customers in better ways of managing their finances.

Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Members NSW Senator Aden Ridgeway and Sally Gould recently visited Woorabinda for a meeting to discuss the Draft Document for Reconciliation. As a former-nurse Ms Gould was particularly interested in meeting (and being photographed with!) staff and friends of the community's newly built hospital.

