



Justice • Rights • Reconciliation

NEWSLETTER March 2023

Dear Friends,

Acknowledgement of Country

ANTaR Queensland acknowledges all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as traditional custodians and as peoples who have cared for the land and waters of what is now called Queensland over countless generations. We acknowledge the violence and pain inflicted by colonization and by continuing colonial structures and approaches and recognize that sovereignty has never been ceded. We offer respect to the Elders of the past, with a history over thousands of years, to those present today and those emerging, and to all the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who continue to care for country and culture often in the face of great obstacles.

With sadness, we pay tribute to the great old man, leader of his people, giant of his country, fighter for self-determination, justice and treaty and inspiration to all Australians, Mr Yunupingu, who passed away on 3 April.

The Referendum

In what promises to be a hugely important moment for this country, the wording of the proposed change to the Constitution has now been released. It is:

In recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia:

1. There shall be a body, to be called the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice;
2. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice may make representations to the Parliament and the Executive Government of the Commonwealth on matters relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
3. The Parliament shall, subject to this Constitution, have power to make laws with respect to matters relating to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice, including its composition, functions powers and procedures.

And a Yarning Circle on the Referendum – 16 April

You are all invited to a yarning circle on Voice and the Referendum to be held on **Sunday 16 April at 1.30 at the TLC Building, level 2, 16 Peel Street, South Brisbane** with **Maurice Serico** facilitating. Maurice is a member of the Gubbi Gubbi people of the Sunshine Coast and is chair of the Balaangala reconciliation group in The Gap. He has worked in Indigenous affairs since 1980.

Light refreshments will be available. A donation would be appreciated.
There is limited parking at the site.

There are many websites where you can check out reliable information about what is being put forward in the referendum. One is available on [this link](#). [ANTaR Qld Facebook](#) also frequently posts information and various perspectives.

ANTaR Queensland supports a Yes vote in the referendum as part of our support for Voice, Treaty and Truth as steps towards full recognition and self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. But we also understand that there are valid reasons why some First Nations people do not support Yes. We respect this response. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples need, and have a right to, much more than an advisory voice. We see a grass-roots based representative mechanism in the constitution as a first step that with treaty and truth-telling could be a powerful tool in truly ‘reframing the relationship’ between First Peoples and non-Indigenous Australians and transforming the country.



A Sea of Hand Yes installation at the Albert Street Uniting Church on 25 and 26 March.

Queensland Path to Treaty

On 15 February the Queensland Premier introduced the Path to Treaty Bill 2023 into the Queensland Parliament. This is an incredibly important moment in Queensland’s history and will require a great deal of consideration by all Queenslanders.

The Explanatory Notes states:

The Path to Treaty is a shared journey between the Queensland Government, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Queenslanders – a key reform with the ultimate goal of negotiating a treaty or treaties that will reframe and strengthen the relationship between Queensland’s First Nations and the wider community.

The Explanatory Notes describes the objectives of the Bill as being to establish:

*a First Nations Treaty Institute to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to develop and provide a framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to prepare for and then commence treaty negotiations with the Queensland Government; and
a Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry to inquire into, and report on, the effects of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.*

This signals the beginning of a long but critically important process for all of us as the possibility emerges of a treaty between the State of Queensland and various Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and Nations. Of course, it has all sorts of implications as well as an opportunity to tell the real story of Queensland's history.

This is only a beginning. You can access the relevant documents at:

Path to Treat Bill at: <https://tinyurl.com/4n9wrur6>

Path to Treaty Explanatory Memorandum at: <https://tinyurl.com/5dke77ye>

Subscribe to Treaty News at: <https://www.qld.gov.au/firstnations/treaty/get-involved>

Along with ANTaR National and the Australian Lawyers Alliance, ANTaR Qld prepared a submission on the draft legislation, which can be accessed along with other submissions on <https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Work-of-Committees/Committees/Committee-Details?cid=165&id=4236&t=p>

Let's Chat

Integral to both the debates around the National Referendum on Voice and to the recently announced Treaty in Queensland is the imperative to engage in Truth Telling. By any measuring rod a daunting, challenging, confronting but nevertheless utterly essential task if Australia and Queensland are to move forward with a sense of generosity and decency about our real past. Given the massive nature of the undertaking, ANTaR Qld has decided to attempt something both doable and meaningful at an individual and locational level. Accordingly we have decided to spend this year simply exploring and chatting about the histories and stories of where each of us live. In short, a more personal and locational way to engage the bigger questions before us.

To begin with we want to share this poem from a Congregation of the storytellers at a funeral of Soweto children:

We have entered the night to tell our tale,
To listen to those who have not spoken
We, who have seen our children die in the morning,
Deserve to be listened to.
We have looked on blankly as they opened their wounds.
Nothing really matters except the grief of our children.
Their tears must be revered,
Their inner silence speaks louder than the spoken word;
And all being and all life shouts out in rage.
We must not be rushed to our truths. Whatever we failed to say is stored secretly in our minds;
And all those processions of embittered crowds,
Have seen us lead them a thousand times.
We can hear the story over and over again,
Our minds are numbed beyond the sadness,
We have received the power to command;
There is nothing more we can fear.

To assist we have asked Greg Manning and Darryl Bellingham to contribute some brief, thought provoking pieces to the Newsletter. Greg may be known to many for his past engagement with us on bus trips around Brisbane looking at the history of various well-known sites. Darryl has a long history in engagement with social justice and is inspired by the way in which storytelling is bound in country, culture, and language.

Greg Manning – Mt Gravatt

Anyone residing in South East Queensland is familiar with the Mount Gravatt as both a suburb and a small hill. It was named Mount Gravatt after Lieutenant George Gravatt who was the commander of the Moreton Bay penal colony from May to July 1839. Click the links to find out more about Gravatt and wonder about what other names might exist.

Lieutenant George Gravatt spent just 3 months of his life within sight of this hill.

Lieutenant Gravatt is [listed among the officers](#) 'left dead ... [in Scinde](#)'.

The 28th Regiment, including Gravatt and Cotton, were [re-deployed in 1842](#) from Port Jackson to Bombay, and then to Scinde, where their regiment was ravaged by Cholera.

It is not our task to rush the Traditional Custodians of the various Sovereign Nations into disclosing their names for this or any other landform. In the meantime, we can know our own story. What we do know is that we have kept the [redcoats](#) on the hills.

Daryll Bellingham - Experiments in Truth Telling

Since 2000 I've been collating and publishing a chronological list of history information about the Aboriginal Curfew Boundaries in Colonial Brisbane called *'The History of the Boundary Street Curfew'* at <https://www.storytell.com.au/boundary.html>

I have been assured that it is a useful resource for activists, other local historians and community members. The main beneficiary however is probably me. I have learnt so much about colonisation, the impacts on the local Aboriginal nations, racism, the curfew and how it was set up and policed, the different attitudes of white immigrants.

I see it as one sort of Truth Telling - 'here are some facts; the Curfew did exist; this was said in Brisbane; etc'.

We could do with a lot more 'non-judgemental truth telling'. Curfews and Curfew Boundaries existed all over Australia. Massacres did happen. Some immigrants did their best to reduce the effects of invasion on Aboriginal people.

Why not pick a local issue and publish your own record of the history? The [N.L.A. Trove](#) newspaper database makes local history easy. Encourage truth telling.

Need assistance or want to talk over an idea? Contact me at austories@gmail.com

Daryll Bellingham

If anyone wants further information or is interested in working on Treaty and Truth Telling please contact us on **0401733359** or office@antarqld.org.au