



## Justice • Rights • Reconciliation

### NEWSLETTER November/ December 2022

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; lands and waters stretching from the north and Kalaw Kawaw Ya in the Torres Strait, to the west and central regions with Kalkadoon People [Mt Isa], to Iningai People [Longreach], to Bidjara People [Charleville], to the south with Yugambeh People [Gold Coast], and Butchulla People [K'gari] and all those Nations beyond and between these. 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.

#### **The Change of Year**

We hope all our members and friends had a happy Christmas and New Year period and wish you all a very good year to come. 2022 has been a big year. We now have a government more committed to improved relations with and better outcomes for First Nations and, hopefully, to genuine self-determination. At the same time, across the country, rates of incarceration and of deaths in custody as well as other forms of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue. Help us to work to ensure that the reality of life for First Peoples meets the government rhetoric of a country where First Nations people and ways of being are truly respected, valued and learnt from. Many deeply respected and loved Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members have passed away over 2022, leading to great sadness. The cultural resilience, resurgence and renewal that many of these figures championed, however, whether in high profile ways as national leaders or within their own immediate communities, lives on and continues to grow.

In 2023, among other activities, we plan to hold discussions and circulate information to help understanding of the Voice referendum. We also plan to support truth-telling at the local level.

#### **Voice**

The referendum on including reference to a Voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Constitution looks set to be held in the second half of 2023. We plan to hold information and discussion gatherings during the year to help prepare for this important event. *Please help us to ensure that a referendum is successful, and that it works to enable fundamental self-determination for First Nations.*

There has been criticism of the Voice to Parliament as too vague. There is, however, a detailed report prepared by Professor Marcia Langton and Mr Tom Calma for the previous government and released in December 2021. While there will be variations to the model they proposed as a result of future

consultation processes, it remains a substantial basis on which to build. A short overview and review of the report can be found at:

<https://aph.org.au/2022/03/review-of-the-the-indigenous-voice-co-design-process-final-report-to-the-australian-government/>

## Queensland Path to Treaty

As noted previously, the Queensland Path to Treaty Commitment was signed by by Dr Jackie Huggins AM and Mr Mick Gooda, Co-Chairs of the Treaty Advancement Committee, and the Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk and Minister Craig Crawford in August 2022. An Independent Interim Body has now been established to help shape the next steps. The Independent Interim Body is to undertake three tasks:

- To work with local communities to design and hold local truth telling activities about Queensland's often violent history, and to draw on bodies such as art galleries, museums and libraries to help in this challenging but essential process;
- Along with the Queensland Government, to co-design the First Nations Treaty Institute and the Truth Telling and Healing Inquiry;
- To explore community readiness for a treaty and what communities might seek in a treaty.

The body has 10 panel members, led by co-chairs Ms Cheryl Buchanan, a Guwamu woman and leading publisher, playwright, author, teacher and dancer and Dr Sallyanne Atkinson AO, well-known and popular former Lord Mayor of Brisbane. The full list of panel members can be found at

<https://www.qld.gov.au/firstnations/treaty/independent-interim-body>

The State Government held a series of community consultations over December to 'understand current views, feelings and behaviours of Queenslanders towards the Path to Treaty'. Some of the ANTaR Qld Management Committee members participated in the consultation held in Ipswich on 13 December. For this round of consultations, however, there had been no visible information or advertising circulated. We found out about this consultation process almost by chance. As a consequence of this lack of information, there were only 6 people participating, 3 associated with ANTaR Queensland. While it was a valuable conversation, it is a mystery why there was so little advertising of the event. The Murri grapevine is very active, there are many Murri organisations and networks as well as many non-Indigenous organisations which could have spread the news, and social and traditional media are there to be used. At the very least, this experience underlines that the Government needs a reliable communications and information strategy for Treaty.

## 26 January – Survival Day

How are you going to mark 26 January this year? There are a range of possibilities.

The annual Survival Day **Rally** and March starts at Queens Garden, 144 George Street, the City, between 8 and 9am and moves on to Musgrave Park. ANTaR Qld will be helping out.

**Balaangala** is holding an event at 4pm in the Balaangala garden space in Yoorala St. The Gap.

**Benarrawa** is holding a gathering at the bronze canoe, near Simpsons Playground at the end of Graceville Ave., Graceville at 7.15 for a 7.30 start. Bring a mug and a plate of food to share.

There are other gatherings to look out for!

Or you might read, listen to or watch one of the many excellent accounts of Australian and Queensland history and the ongoing suffering and injustice rooted in this still unreconciled history.

## Woodford Folk Festival

ANTaR Qld joined with the Sunshine Coast Reconciliation Group and Tony Foley (formerly of the Australians for Reconciliation project) to hold a Reconciliation Stall and Truth-telling Theatrette at the Woodford Festival this year at the Jinibara Centre. The theatrette held rolling showings of the excellent SBS documentary series, The First Australians, and the stall offered books, information sheets and conversation. There were lots of great conversations and the documentary was a big hit,

with many people seeing all 7 episodes over several days. Some left crying. The documentary is available on SBS On Demand, and is well worth watching if you haven't seen it.

In three separate events, Minister the Hon Linda Burney, head of the Cape York Corporation Mr Noel Pearson, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, activist Mr Les Malezer and Queensland Deputy Premier Mr Steven Miles also discussed Voice, truth-telling, treaty within the state, self-determination and reconciliation. The Woodfordia website will have the speeches available on their website in the next few weeks. We will provide a link when it's available.

One of the outstanding performances of the Festival was **Spinifex Gum**, a musical collective based in Cairns and around the First Nations ensemble the Marliya Choir, but drawing also on Briggs, the Cat Empire, Paul Kelly, Lyn Williams and Deborah Brown and delivering an extraordinary and powerful combination of great music, dance and serious protest. If you haven't already, definitely listen to or watch this collective.

### **Ablaze: the True Story of the First Aboriginal Film Maker.**

ANTaR Qld held a showing of the film **Ablaze: the True Story of the First Aboriginal Film Maker** on 20 November. It is a truly powerful and well-made feature documentary profiling the story of activist, entrepreneur and film maker, William Bill Onus. It was such a great film we are planning to hold another showing in the new year.

### **Membership Renewal and Donations – Kylie at the Office - 0401733359**

If you would like further information on any of our activities please go to our [ANTaR Qld Webpage](#) (currently being rebuilt) and, if you have not already done so, please join our [ANTaR Qld Facebook](#). On several occasions we have mentioned the need to have more people involved in our activities. If you have an interest or would like further information, please explore our website at: <http://antarqld.org.au/> and renewing your membership is as easy as clicking [here](#).

*Thank you to all our members and your families and friends for all your support this year and wishing you well-being, good health and good energy in the coming year.*

*In this year of a referendum on Voice, please help us to ensure that you and those around you are informed, that the referendum passes, and that Voice leads to genuine, positive and profound change for First Peoples and so ultimately for all Australians in a country where justice, rights and reconciliation with First Peoples are respected.*