



# WELCOME TO OUR 1<sup>ST</sup> NEWSLETTER

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*We welcome all your suggestions - this newsletter is for all of us by all of us, so please share your thoughts with us.*



## Special Events

**QUEENSLAND** - 27th December - 1st January 2012

**WOODFORD FOLK FESTIVAL** - 87 Woodrow Road Country Valleys

The Woodford Folk Festival, an event of international standing, is held annually over six days and six nights from Dec 27th through to January 1st. More than 2000 performers and 580 events are programmed featuring local, national and international guests. This year the 7<sup>th</sup> festival of **The Dreaming** is being featured at the Woodford Folk Festival. The Dreaming, Australia's **International Indigenous Festival**, will be showcased in a special precinct within the Woodford festival where Indigenous music, theatre, talks and galleries will be featured.

**SYDNEY**- 8th January - 29th January 2012

**EVENTS AT BLACK CAPITAL** - 245 Wilson Street, Eveleigh

This January Sydney Festival, Carriageworks and the local community proudly welcome all Australians to *Black Capital*, a series of performances, seminars and exhibitions reflecting the diversity of contemporary Aboriginal practice, here in the heart of Redfern, in Australia's black capital.

Carriageworks in the heart of Redfern is the place to be for our **Family & Culture Day** on Sunday, January 8. The official opening ceremonies for *Black Capital* start at midday with a Welcome to Country, kicking off a colourful and fun-filled program of storytelling, music, art, performance and food.

**Time from 12-4pm Admission is Free**

Main entrance - Carriageworks - cnr .Codrington and Wilson Streets

## FROM 2011

August 2012 commemorates a significant 20 year milestone which acknowledged the descendants of the Blackbirding trade, the 1992 HREOC Report *'Call for Recognition'*. 1994 Bob Carr memorandum

<http://www.dpc.nsw.gov.au/announcements/ministerial-memoranda/1995/m1995-42>

Celebrations will be complimented with a number of exciting events yet to be announced for August 2012. Early next year from 6th to 9th April 2012 Bundaberg QLD will host the inaugural **Australian South Sea Islanders National Conference ("ASSINC")** addressing the needs of our community. Minister for Justice Ralph Regenvanu and the ni Vanuatuan Council of Chiefs will also be attending the four day conference. for more information Contact.... President [assi.pj@gmail.com](mailto:assi.pj@gmail.com)

*Have a Safe and Happy Christmas and Best Wishes for the New Year!*

*Emelda Davis*

**Join our Facebook members page**

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/assipj/>

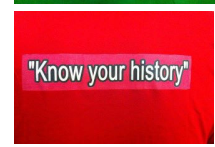
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*Send info to us at [assipj@gmail.com](mailto:assipj@gmail.com)*

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**FUNDRAISING 30.00 T-Shirts**

Bags and Caps coming soon



## Your Say

As a motivation to keep our eyes, hearts and minds on the issues that concern us and for the healthy development of the organisation, I am writing what I remember about reminding Port Jackson ASSIUC members and supporters pre and post Recognition to be aware of in organisations and the part we play in our own individual organisations, whether they be ASSI, Aboriginal, Ethnic or Mainstream...

By Patricia Corowa



The Australian South Sea Islander (ASSI) community made history this week, unanimously declaring that a dedicated national body was necessary to give a new push to Australian South Sea Islander affairs.

On Monday 17th October, the ASSI community brought together one of the biggest and most representative meeting of ASSI people ever, as they hosted a Vanuatu delegation that included a State Minister, parliamentarians and chiefs from Vanuatu and representatives from organisations (and individuals) working to reconnect the families whose descendants were brought to Australia as part of the Blackbirding trade. Delegates from all over the Australian Eastern Seaboard including Cairns, Townsville, Bundaberg, Mackay, Bowen, Hervey Bay, Sunshine Coast, Caboolture, Brisbane, Ipswich, Beenleigh, Gold Coast, Tweed Heads, and Sydney represented the ASSI community.

In an emotional and inspirational gathering, all parties presented a statement of intent towards the establishment of a national body to represent the interests of the disparate ASSI communities. The meeting resolved to hold a national ASSI congress in Bundaberg in Easter (6-9 April) 2012 to elect the executive of a new national representative body, with representatives from the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu to be invited.

The Monday meeting formed a part of a broader program of engagement between Vanuatu and Australian individuals and organisations, which also included:

- The chiefly ordination (in accordance with the customs of the Shepherds Islands) of Chief Colin Tarere, a Brisbane-based ASSI and community leader;
- A meeting of representatives from the Queensland Music Festival, the Vanuatu Government, Wantok Musik Foundation, Southern Cross University, Fest' Napuan Association, the Brisbane Multicultural Arts Centre and the Vanuatu Historical Council of Chiefs, where an agreement was reached to build a collaborative research project and musical production which could support and facilitate more sustainable relations and community development in both countries, especially around the issues of recognition and reconciliation;
- Visits to sites in southeast Queensland which hold historical significance for ASSI people. Even though the largest of the ASSI communities in Australia is in the Mackay, Rockhampton and Bowen areas, the Blackbirding "first fleet" landed in south-east Queensland and the first indentured labourers were set to work on Beausdesert's cotton plantations;
- Presentations of the Vanuatu coat of arms by the Vanuatu delegation to the Government of Queensland, on behalf of the Australian Government, and to the elders of the ASSI community in Australia.

Members of the Vanuatu delegation included the Hon. Ralph Regenvanu, Minister for Justice and Community Services, MP's David Abel and Paul Telukluk, and Chiefs from the Vanuatu Historical Council of Chiefs. Also in the delegation were several individuals who have been working on an ad-hoc basis to connect members of the Vanuatu and ASSI families who were seeking restoration of the familial ties.

The Hon. Ralph Regenvanu, Minister for Justice and Community Services in the Vanuatu Government, expressed his and the Vanuatu Government's concern that, while many different relationships are now being forged between communities in Vanuatu and ni-Vanuatu descendants in Australia, there was no national representative body in Australia that could claim to speak on behalf of ni-Vanuatu descendants as a whole. Minister Regenvanu was invited to Chair the meeting, and in a rousing official opening, he said, "We need a nationally representative body that can talk with both the Vanuatu and Australian Governments to help build more sustainable relations that facilitate the needs for community development in both countries, including issues of recognition and reconciliation. You have all come here to work together. You have all come here for the same reason. Now is the time!"

Members of the Sydney-based "Australian South Sea Islanders (Port Jackson)" also expressed their views that a dedicated national body was necessary to give a new push to Australian South Sea Islander affairs. Ms Emelda Davis (Tanna descendant), said, "2012 is the 20th anniversary of the 1992 Call for Recognition and we need to revitalize ourselves on this momentous occasion. Our board has been working diligently and consistently refining our strategies with the support and lobbying of State and Federal Parliamentarians who have all embraced and endorsed our cause, including the securing of some seed funding from the City of Sydney towards development of our draft Strategy in 2010".

Shireen Malamoo (Aboriginal Kanak descendant from Tongoa), said, "This is about identity and recognition of our forefathers. We are now in the 21st Century and the footprints are still here. So many don't know of the Blackbirding era or that the primary industries, in particular the sugar industries, were built on the backs of Kanaka slave labor. The white Australia policy was bought in by the Labour Party of the day in the early 1890's sending back 7,000 odd. Historians have referred to it as a form of ethnic cleansing. Many were dumped up on the Torres Strait Islands in particular St Pauls and have been referred to as the 'forgotten people'. This period in Australian History has been buried".

ASSI member Lola Forester said, "Our kids need to know what it is to be a South Sea Islander, there is so much confusion out there as they know they are but not what it means".



## AROUND TOWN

For more information visit <http://www.theblackbook.com.au/whatson.asp>



### ACT

1 December 2011 to 14 September 2012

#### Bipotaim: Stories from the Torres Strait

Bipotaim: Stories from the Torres Strait is an exhibition of striking photographs, stories and objects about the lives, culture and identity of Torres Strait Islanders

3 December 2011 to 10 June 2012

#### Off the Walls

Off the Walls: Art from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Agencies 1967 - 2005 takes you into the world of Indigenous art, and the politics and history of a time of great change

### NSW

3 December 2011 to 24 December 2011

#### As You Like It

Featuring Trevor Jamieson and Casey Donovan, As You Like It turns out to be a terribly difficult play to describe. It's a ramshackle, gender-bending, pastoral romantic comedy

4 December 2011 to 23 December 2011

#### NSW: Strength to Strength

Boomalli artist group show end of year exhibition.

31 December 2011

#### New Years Eve Cruise 2011

Celebrate the New Year on Sydney Harbour with Tribal Warrior Association. Get on board the lead vessels for the Harbour of Light Parade

### WA

1 December 2011 to 31 January 2012

#### Yarns of the Heart

Over seventy exquisite handmade dolls that represent the lives and stories of their Noongar creators

### QLD

1 December 2011 to 11 January 2012

#### Kapu Kukuwam

Kapu Kukuwam', meaning 'beautiful hibiscus', showcases Sharon's artistic passion and strength as an Indigenous - Torres Strait Islander female artist. Her creativity and connection to culture has led her to work in several art forms including painting, collage, carving and sculpture.

1 December 2011 to 24 January 2012

#### Applications to study music at the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music (CASM) now open

Applications for study at CASM at Adelaide Uni in 2012 are now being accepted

### VIC

1 December 2011 to 12 February 2012

#### Tjukurrjtjanu: Origins of Western Desert Art

This important exhibition features 200 of the first paintings produced at Papunya in 1971 to 72 by the founding artists of the Western Desert art movement

3 December 2011 to 21 January 2012

#### Experiencing the Barmah: Creating the vision

The distinctive exhibition highlights images of the beautiful Barmah forest by artists from the region

3 December 2011 to 5 February 2012

#### Our Children, Our Future

An exhibition by Koorie children and youth that celebrates the strength, diversity and vibrancy of Victorian Aboriginal culture

### Apply to study music in South Australia

1 December 2011 to 24 January 2012

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