



Message Stick



The bi-monthly Magazine of the

The Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress

Our Mission: The UAICC is made up of ordinary people who do extraordinary things with God promoting the wellbeing of Indigenous Australians through: Holistic Evangelism, Justice, Transformation and Empowerment.

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Western Australia
*Congress members
at World Council of
Churches in Brazil*



As I look back at the months of February and March I am uplifted by the inspiring achievements being accomplished by Indigenous people across this nation. The UAICC's holistic approach to ministry is reflected in all we do. Our congregational activities and various community response programs are purposely designed to affirm our unique Indigenous spirituality and God given talents. They are providing the bridges that are enabling Indigenous people walk over their fears and doubts and to embrace with full confidence and vigor, the challenges that lead to a more fulfilling, wholesome and prosperous life.

New South Wales
*Aunty Sue Blacklock
Graduates*

Increasingly, Congress is being unified in its approach to its ministry activities and this is being reflected in our regions sharing and exploring avenues and measures to affect positive change on a greater level.

NRCC
*New partnership
placement
forges links*

Just some stories within...the 9th Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Brazil provided Congress with an avenue to share the Australian Indigenous struggle with audiences from across the world. We thank Cheryl Lawson and Roberta Stanley for their attendance as Indigenous observers as this significant event. Congress congratulates Sue Blacklock on her Theology graduation and look forward to her contributions in the coming years. The Pilgrim Presbytery of Northern Australia and the Northern Regional Council of Congress (NRCC) has inducted the Rev. Dr. Tim Bose into a new exciting partnership placement. We pray for its continued success. 'Living Waters' CDEP maintains its position as one of North Queensland's most progressive ATSI organisations through the diverse range of Indigenous employment initiatives it has developed. Closer ties are being forged between Congress South Australia and Victoria and we look at the traditional Aboriginal activity of 'Muttonbirding' on Tasmania's Big Dog Island.

South Australia/Victoria
*Wandu Yapa
Holistic Ministry*

In closing we offer our respect and deepest condolences to Pastor Bill Hollingsworth (Chairperson of National Elders Council) whose son, William Hollingsworth Jnr, passed away recently. We pray that the strength and will of God carries Pastor Bill and his family through this difficult time.

Tasmania
*Muttonbirding on
Big Dog Island*

Rev Shayne Blackman
National Administrator
Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress



CONGRESS MEMBERS AT WCC IN BRAZIL

On the 8th – 25th February 2006, Cheryl Lawson from Western Australia and Roberta Stanley from Queensland attended the 9th World Council of Churches (WCC) held at Porto Alegre in Brazil. As Indigenous observers of Congress they made valuable contacts and shared the achievements and challenges of Indigenous Australians to a wider audience. They attended a pre-assembly of Indigenous youth and an Indigenous women's workshop to discuss contemporary issues affecting the first peoples of various nations.



Cheryl Lawson from Australia (left) and Jennifer Koinante from Kenya reflected on the similar challenges and achievements they faced as Indigenous women living in two very different countries.

Cheryl said of her experience "The Lord opened my eyes to His world, he was knocking on my door and I stepped out in Faith. My spiritual walk deepened with the Lord, as he showed me the world through his eyes. As we all came together as one at this event we found that what we are going through here, is what other's are suffering in the same way. Only through the love of God can we continue to do his work and make positive changes.



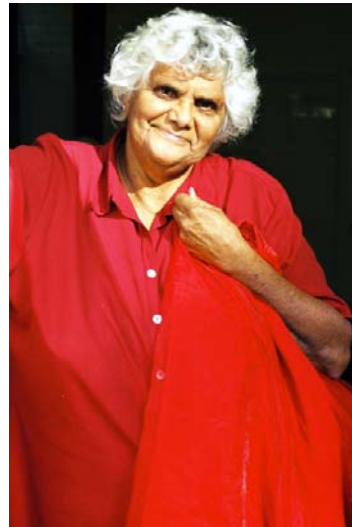
Cheryl Lawson, Graham Mundine, Roberta Stanley and Bishop Mabo at the 9th Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Brazil.

Roberta said of her experience "For me personally and spiritually it was good to see God at work in all different parts of the world and in the lives of Indigenous people. The Indigenous struggle in other parts of the world helps me appreciate what we have in Australia but also the road we need to travel. When God is in control of a nation the people rejoice".



AUNTY SUE BLACKLOCK THEOLOGY GRADUATION

Indigenous elder Sue Blacklock has shown what can be achieved through diligence and dedication to a goal. The well respected role model recently graduated with a Diploma of Theology after a long and challenging course of study. Mrs Melvina Mackey from Nungalinga College presented Sue with her Diploma of Theology at a graduation ceremony held in Tingha, NSW on the 10th December 2005.



Sue Blacklock has graduated with a Diploma of Theology from Nungalinga College.

In attendance were over two hundred family and friends who affectionately refer to her as Aunty Sue. Special guests included Dr. Dean Drayton the President of the Uniting Church in Australia, Mrs Tina Rendell (Director, NSW Board of Mission), UAICC members from NSW, and other members from the Uniting Church and the local Tingha community.

Congress is very proud of Sue and her accomplishment and the potential the diploma brings in influencing positive change to the lives of Indigenous people.

INDIGENOUS YOUTH LEADERSHIP CAMP

From the 9th-13th January 2006 a cultural youth camp encouraging Indigenous leadership potential was hosted by Congress NSW at the Copeton Dam, 35km west of Tingha. Activities included worship, language classes, bead making, canoeing, and touch football. Everyone also enjoyed swimming and the waterslide with friends from About FACE attending. Our gratitude to UAICC Tingha and we look forward to the next youth camp which is to be held in Lennox Head.



Nurturing Indigenous youth leadership is a priority for Congress.



NEW PARTNERSHIP PLACEMENT FORGES LINKS

On Wednesday the 8th February 2006, the Pilgrim Presbytery of Northern Australia and the Northern Regional Council of Congress (NRCC) inducted the Rev. Dr. Tim Bose into a partnership placement. Rev Dr. Tim Bose will be active in congregational ministry in the Nhulunby region for approx. 75% of his time and with the NRCC for the remainder.

The purpose of Rev. Dr. Bose's placement is in part, to work with ministers in the Arnhem area to develop a process of theological reflection about their ministry practice. This will include making some biblical studies material available over the regional radio networks through the radio service provided by the Aboriginal Resource Development Services (ARDS) – the community development arm of Congress based in the Northern Territory.



Rev Felicity Amery, Rev Dr. Tim Bose and Rev Mawunydjil Garawirtja.



The joyous occasion was marked by singing and fellowship.

The induction of Rev. Dr Tim Bose was a blessed occasion marked by the special presence of attendees from the Galiwinku and Yirrkala congregations who came and sang during the service. NRCC Chairperson, the Rev. Mawunydjil Garawirtja expressed the excitement about the growing partnership and the new fruitful links being formed between people. Scriptures were read in a number of different languages in support of the new ministry possibilities that lay ahead.



'LIVING WATERS' A MODEL OF INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT

The Living Waters ATSI Corporation operating at Gordonvale has been committed to providing employment and life enriching pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. The organisation has strong links with Congress through the church at Gordonvale the 'Eternal Life Fellowship'. The congregation has a core group of about 12 people from Living Waters that worship at the Church.

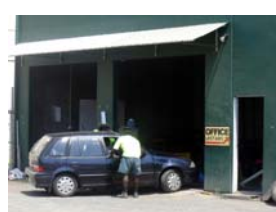
Through CDEP, Living Waters has established various employment producing initiatives that are enabling Indigenous people to seek information, secure employment and progress into leadership roles. These include:

'Wichetty Woodworks' sells furniture made by participants. Participants are also enrolled in a retail skills course to enhance their selling skills through Cairns and District Regional Group Training.



Orchid Valley Plant Nursery runs nursery courses to CDEP participants to grow and sell orchids. The program has 10 participants a fortnight.

'Rags to Riches' is a second hand furniture store that buys and sells stock through garage sales, auctions, and the donations from people.



The Lawn Mowing Business has a client base of over 300 people in a geographic area from Babinda to Cairns and also provides a rubbish removal service which no doubt will be in demand by many residents in the tragic wake of Cyclone 'Larry'.

Other initiatives include the **Good Samaritan Community Centre** which administers emergency relief funds provided by the Department of Families to people in dire need. QLD health also use the centre for flu vaccinations, baby clinics etc. **'Bindaba' Arts and Crafts Centre** sells a diverse range of made items from Indigenous artifacts to clothes and jewellery.

All businesses have been set up to conduct training, but also to identify and nurture Indigenous leadership. Darryl Tranby is the CDEP Coordinator for all businesses.



'Living Waters' CDEP Business Coordinator, Darryl Tranby.



WANDU YAPA HOLISTIC MINISTRY



Congress South Australia and Congress Victoria are working in close collaboration to share ideas to develop their own holistic ministry initiatives. Wandu Yapa is the incorporated body of Congress in South Australia and is an Adnyamathana word meaning "The Good Road." The Adnyamathana people lived in the Flinders Ranges north



Vince Ross (Chairperson Congress Victoria) and Rev Ken Sumner (Chairperson Congress SA).

east of Port Augusta. Wandu Yapa was formed in 1991 to assist members of the Regional Council in SA to advance the holistic aims of the ministry of Congress.

The Annual General Meeting of Wandu Yapa

was held in Adelaide in early February, and was chaired by Congress SA chair Rev. Ken Sumner.

Learning from each other...

At the AGM we were blessed by the message of our guest speaker, Mr. Vince Ross, Chair of Congress in Victoria. Through a PowerPoint presentation, Vince told the story of Congress in Victoria, highlighting the work of Narana Creations at Geelong, and the strategies involved in "The Circle of Learning."

Congress members were impressed with the facilities at Narana, and were eager to know how these had been developed. Vince encouraged SA Congress to develop its own plans to meet the present and future needs of its ministry locations. Involving all stakeholders in this process is an important part of this development and was an important message as Congress SA works to develop its own strategic plans for the next 10 years.



Vince Ross delivers a powerful presentation on how Congress Victoria developed its holistic ministry activities.

Narana and "The Circle of Learning" are apt examples of how Congress in Victoria has developed its holistic ministry for Indigenous people.



'MUTTONBIRDING' ON BIG DOG ISLAND

Each year during March a question bobs up in conversations around Tasmania's Aboriginal community, "Goin' 'birdin' this year ol' coe?" This year, for the first time in 38 years, one of Congress' Elders is saying, "Yes!"

Elder Connie Wrankmore's children were quite young the last time she went to one of the Bass Strait islands to catch muttonbirds – a traditional Aboriginal activity. "I'm excited about it. It's like going home," said Connie. "Going back onto a bird island is something special. I used to go to Babel when I was younger so this'll be my first time birding on Big Dog.

Aunty Connie will be helping out in the kitchen, cooking meals for the seven or eight birders with her old friend who owns the shed. There are eight or nine sheds on Big Dog with some sheds working to a catch quota each day and another available for school groups to visit so the young ones can learn this important part of this Indigenous community's cultural life.



Tasmania's Big Dog Island continues to play an important role in the traditional Aboriginal activity of 'Muttonbirding'.

"We used to have a spoonful of the oil everyday, which helped keep diseases away," says Connie, "Horse trainers put it in feed and rub it onto joints for their horses, so it's very good for them."

So what's the best part about going birding according to Aunty Connie? "I like getting back to the land, our culture and catching up with people who are still birding. I really like the hearts; they are beautiful to eat when they are cooked on skewers over a fire."

Sharing in the community cultural life is an important part of Congress ministry and we pray for all the birders and their families over these next couple of months.

Contact and Subscriptions

Message Stick is produced and distributed bi-monthly both in electronic and hard copy format by the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress. Please forward this and future editions to parties that may be interested in the work, challenges and achievements of Congress. We encourage your feedback for future editions.

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