

# NGUKURR NEWS

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*Ngukurr News*

Published by the South East Arnhem Collaborative Research Project with assistance from Ngukurr CEC

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**Views expressed in Ngukurr News are not necessarily those of SEALCP**

## Farewell to Alex and Freda

After almost 30 years of respective service with the Department of Health and Community Services, Freda Roberts and Alex Thompson were farewelled at a celebration held at Ngukurr. The function was conducted by the Health Department and with the support of the Yugul Mangi Council and the Women's Centre which catered for this very special occasion. Freda and Alex were almost in tears as the people of Ngukurr came up and shook their hands and told them both that they had done a great job. Freda and Alex are also first Aboriginal Health Workers and both have been the most longest serving health workers in the Ngukurr and Katherine region. It was a very emotional but a happy day for them and their families.

Freda and Alex received letters from the health Minister, Jane Aagard and John Ah Kit, Member for Arnhem. Messages also came

from Edna Brooker, Dr John Hargraves, Emma Collins, Barbara Tynan, Dr DD, the Air Med staff from Katherine and from Sister Janet Fletcher. There were also speeches given by Gordon Nawundupi, Alan and John Joshua, Cherry Daniels, Betty Roberts, Hazel Farrell and Rev. Michael Gumbuli. Among the special guests attending were representatives from the Health Department, Communicable Disease staff from Katherine, Jack Little and workers from Katherine West Health Board, (Jack who has been a long time friend and colleague to both Freda and Alex is also retired), nurses who have worked with Freda and Alex in the past, traditional Aboriginal women dancers from Dagaragu and visitors from Numbulwar came especially for this event. The adult children and grandchildren of both Freda and Alex would like to thank everyone for supporting them both in the past.



## Letter to the Editor

On behalf of Canberra Grammar School I would like to thank your community for allowing your representatives Brenda and Phil Gibson and Norman and Benjamin Wilfred to accompany the body of work that is currently on exhibition in our Gallery.

The Wilfred brothers were exceptionally generous in their efforts at offering a small but rich insight into their culture through story, songs and dance in a whole host and range of mediums. The school is all the richer for their presence and if you could have experienced the delight on the faces of our very youngest students to our most senior students then you would know how fruitful such an excursion was.

The exhibition was a huge success. I think there are only 6 works unsold out of a total of 59. Any arts community would have to be ecstatic with the result. There was great interest from the Anthropology Department from Australian National University, AIATSIS, and the National Gallery who purchased Michelle Huddleston's *Runaway Bride* series of lithographs.

A huge thankyou to both Brenda and Phil Gibson, they worked tirelessly to bring the exhibition together. I am the Gallery director as well as a Visual Arts Teacher so it was a huge help to me to have both Brenda and Phil there. I don't know how we would have coped without Phil. He attended to many of the hanging and framing details, went to and from the framers, shopped for the opening night and was in bringing a body of work like this to Canberra, complementing the experience with the presence of two extremely talented men from your community. This made the whole experience invaluable for all of us here.

*Trevor Dunbar  
Gallery Director  
Canberra Grammar School*

## Katherine West Health Board visits Ngukurr

A party from the Katherine West Health Board will be coming to Ngukurr to talk to the community about their involvement with Ngukurr. The party will include Chairman Joseph Cox, Brian Pedwell, Deputy Chairman Norbert Patrick, Roselene Farquharson, Charlie Newry, Jack Little, CEO Kirk Whelan and Irene Fisher of Jawoyn Association.

## Art

The Ngukurr Art Centre has had many visitors over the past week. The visiting group from Methodist Ladies College in Melbourne really enjoyed their stay and spent lots of time meeting the artists and looking at the paintings. On Saturday a group of students from Canberra will be arriving – these young men want to spend time with the artists and have been invited to visit country with local people.

After three months of travelling around Australia visiting Aboriginal communities, Mike and Breeze Friend who come from Melbourne have finally reached Ngukurr. They are interested in looking at different Aboriginal paintings, cultures and learning ways about how Aborigines live in isolated areas compared to city life.

## Sport

During the School Holidays, Sport and Rec officer Owen Turner ran a wide range of activities for school children.

## SEALCP farewells Ngukurr at final meeting

The final meeting of the South East Arnhem Land Collaborative Research Project was held on June 25<sup>th</sup>. The meeting gave the researchers on the project the opportunity to thank the Ngukurr residents for their support over the last three years and to bring the community up to date with the research that had been conducted over the last six months. Most importantly, it also provided the opportunity for community members, representatives from Rio Tinto, the NLC and the Northern Territory government to talk about the future of the *Ngukurr News*. Presentations were made to the Ngukurr CEC and the Council to thank them for their assistance and to Daphne Daniels for her commitment to the project. The principal of Ngukurr CEC, Rena Tito commented that she thought that the project had been really important because it had given young people a voice.



*John Bern making a presentation to Rena Tito, Ngukurr School Principal*

Bruce Harvey, who chaired the meeting described the SEALCP project as a 'wonderful effort' he also commented that he hoped the *Ngukurr News* would continue and that it would maintain its current wide readership. Ben Scambary

who was representing the NLC offered Daphne Daniels paid work experience on *Land Rights News*, to increase her knowledge and skills of newspaper production. During the lunch break, Davis Daniels and his band *Tribal Vision* entertained the guests with a performance of the *Ngukurr News* song.

### **The future of the *Ngukurr News***

The most important business of the day was the afternoon session, which was devoted to discussion about the future of the *Ngukurr News*. John Bern talked about the funding that he had organised to keep the Ngukurr News going and said that the next stage would be to set the *Ngukurr News* up as a business, with an ABN and a bank account.

The community representatives at the meeting spoke very strongly about the need to keep the *Ngukurr News* going and they also said that it was important for the News to stay in the dongas that it currently occupies. Bruce Harvey said that Rio Tinto had made a commitment to hand over the dongas to the Council, and that Rio Tinto could not decide what was to be done with them. Some people at the meeting were worried that the Council may not support the *Ngukurr News* remaining in the dongas. The meeting resolved that the chair of the meeting, Bruce Harvey, should write a letter to Council, recommending that the dongas be kept for the *Ngukurr News*. All the people who attended the meeting signed the letter.



*Reference Committee attendees*

*Back Row:  
Bob Adams, Ray Hempel,  
Jeff Wilkie, Bruce Harvey,  
Ben Scambrary*

*Front Row:  
Anita Thompson, Daphne  
Daniels, Kate Senior,  
John Bern*

## **Music**

Davis Jnr Band, Tribal Vision, Lonely Boyz and TLynx were invited to the Elco Island three day music festival. While they were there the boys did some recording of the new songs as well as performing. Davis Band was invited to participate in the Garma Festival and will do more recording in the festival studio. A teenage band from Lajamunu arrived in Ngukurr as part of their tour. They performed at the Sport and Rec and Swimming Centre and accompanied a local school boys band.

