

# MONTHS IN REVIEW

## NOVEMBER

*compiled by Robert McCreery*

**01/11**

- The West Kimberley Regional Prison—A \$150 million prison specifically designed to reduce re-offending among Kimberley Aboriginal offenders—is officially opened. The prison which is based at Derby, WA, is designed to house 120 male and 30 female prisoners. The campus-style facility, designed in consultation with the local Aboriginal community, will operate recognising Aboriginal cultural, kinship, family and community responsibilities, as well as spiritual connection to land.

**02/11**

- The Tasmanian Government releases the draft Aboriginal Heritage Protection Bill 2012. The new Aboriginal heritage laws will under-go a six-week consultation process. The State Budget provided \$780,000 in 2012-13 to help assess, protect and manage Aboriginal heritage in Tasmania, by drafting new legislation.

**03/11**

- Victoria's legal community celebrates the first decade of the incorporation of the Tarwirri—Indigenous Law Students and Lawyers Association of Victoria—in Melbourne. Tarwirri's members provide invaluable support to Aboriginal Victorians in the legal profession. Today, Tarwirri has over 90 members, including over 50 Aboriginal and Torres Islander law students, barristers, solicitors, academics and graduates.

**08/11**

- The Australian Government releases draft minimum standards for Alcohol Management Plans, which are designed to help improve safety for Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory. The introduction of stringent minimum standards for Alcohol Management Plans is part of the Government's Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory package.

**13/11**

- Sherwin Iron Limited and the Northern Land Council come to an agreement on the terms under which Sherwin may mine the Roper River Iron Ore Project, which is located 500km southeast of Darwin. Sherwin still faces a number of regulatory requirements before receiving final Governmental approval.

**14/11**

- Social Justice Commissioner, Mick Gooda, calls for the ongoing debate in the media about the definition of Aboriginality to stop: stating that 'it is not up to the media, politicians or academics to define whether a person is Aboriginal or not', and, 'that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples represent diverse communities and reflect the ancient histories of this country as well as contemporary Australia'.

**20/11**

- Determination is reached with consent of all parties in the Eastern Guruma Part B native title determination, which resolves the native title claim of the Tom Price town site. It is determined that Guruma People hold non-exclusive native title rights in parts of Tom Price.

**22/11**

- Dr Tom Calma is named the Australian Capital Territory's Australian of the year. Dr Calma has dedicated the last 40 years to improving the lives of Indigenous Australians. The former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner has been leading the campaign to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.
- With the support of the Federal Government, Senator Rachel Siewert, the Australian Greens spokesperson on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, brings the Low Aromatic Fuel Bill 2012 before the Senate. The Bill gives the Federal Minister the ability to mandate non-sniffable fuels in designated areas, in instances where this is deemed necessary after full and proper consultation with the community. Despite sustained efforts to end it, petrol sniffing is still persistent in some areas of Australia. The adverse impact of petrol sniffing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and communities is particularly well documented.

**23/11**

- The Queensland Government in cooperation with the Federal Government invites Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and groups involved in the sustainable use of dugong, turtle and marine resources to apply for a range of grants. The grants funding is available in recognition of the need to ensure Traditional Knowledge about sea country is maintained to benefit all Traditional Owner groups across Queensland.

27/11

- 47 recommendations from a review of the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* (NSW) are tabled in the NSW Parliament. Among the recommendation are proposals on housing, land claims, regulatory powers and incentive models. The tabling of the report will be followed by a wide ranging consultation process with the Aboriginal Land Council network and other key stakeholders in early 2013.

28/11

- The Australian Government introduces the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Recognition Bill 2012 into Parliament. The Bill includes a statement of Parliament's commitment to pursuing constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It contains a sunset date of two years, which sets a clear timeframe to build towards change and ensures the focus remains on the ultimate goal of constitutional recognition.

29/11

- The Tax Laws Amendment (2012 Measures No. 6) Bill 2012 is introduced into Parliament. The new laws clarify the income tax treatment of native title benefits.

30/11

- Social Justice Commissioner, Mick Gooda, with the Australian Human Rights Commission, launches his 2012 Social Justice and Native Title Reports in Sydney. The reports look at a range of developments that have occurred between 1 July, 2011 and 30 June, 2012. A key theme of both reports is what constitutes effective governance in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

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