

# MONTHS IN REVIEW

## MARCH / APRIL

*compiled by Robert McCreery*

**15/03**

- The Australian Government releases a discussion paper on reforming community living area land in the Northern Territory. The reforms aim to extend opportunities for voluntary leasing to help promote economic development and home ownership.

**21/03**

- The Government introduces legislation into Parliament which gives effect to the settlement agreement for the Jabiru native title claim, the longest running native title claim in the Northern Territory. The Jabiru claim area is situated within the World Heritage listed Kakadu National Park and includes the Jabiru township.
- Today is the seventh annual National Close the Gap Day. More than 140,000 people across Australia remind political leaders of their commitment to close the gap in health inequality. The Close the Gap campaign, Australia's biggest public movement for health equality, is a coalition of Australia's leading health and human rights organisations calling on governments to take action to achieve Indigenous health equality within 25 years.

**23/03**

- The Australian Government announces that it is supporting 25 new Indigenous ranger positions under the Working on Country program in the Northern Territory. The Indigenous Rangers Network program has grown from around 100 rangers to 680 rangers over the past five years; it is on track to reach a target of 730 Rangers by June 2015.

**27/03–28/03**

- The Queensland Government cuts funding to the controversial Cape York Welfare Reform Trial. The Trial began in July 2008 in the Cape York communities of Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge. The Government's decision is made on the basis that the trial 'has not delivered significant gains despite the investment of more than \$100 million of state

and federal funding since it began in July 2008'. The Federal Government remains committed to continuing its funding for the trial, citing an independent evaluation that found gains in the four participating communities are making a real difference to the lives of Indigenous people living in the Cape.

**04/04**

- The Australian Government announces that from 15 April 2013, it will introduce income management—for people referred for income management by state child protection authorities, people assessed by Centrelink social workers as being vulnerable, and people who volunteer for income management—in Laverton and the Ngaanyatjarra Lands in Western Australia. The Government consulted with Laverton and the Ngaanyatjarra Lands communities throughout October 2012, and reported that the vast majority of residents strongly supported the introduction of income management.

**25/04**

- Indigenous services personnel are remembered during ANZAC day ceremonies across the country. In Canberra an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commemorative Ceremony is held after the ANZAC Day Dawn Service to remember those Indigenous Australians who have served in the Australian forces since 1901. It is hosted by members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Veterans and Services Association Australia ('ATSIVSAA'), an Indigenous veterans advocacy group.

**26/04**

- Professor Megan Davis is re-elected to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. The Forum acts as an advisory body to the UN Economic and Social Council and provides expert advice on a wide range of Indigenous issues including economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights. When elected to the Forum in 2010, Professor Davis became the first Indigenous Australian to be elected to a United Nations body.