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# MONTHS IN REVIEW

## NOVEMBER–DECEMBER

Compiled by Kate Bonser

**05/11** • First Nations people fight for their cultural right to fish on the New South Wales southern coast as abalone divers are prosecuted under interim access arrangements while the state government labours over the formulation of Aboriginal fishing rights. Wiri man Tony McAvoy, Australia's first Indigenous silk, will defend the native title rights of the Indigenous divers facing poaching charges.

**09/11** • Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Tanya Plibersek, appeals to the state parliament to continue to provide funding for the Aboriginal Legal Service's Custody Notification Service ('CNS') in New South Wales and the ACT, whose funding was due to cease at the end of this year. The CNS was set up in response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. The federal government has since stepped in to fund the service until 30 June 2019.

**10/11** • Fifteen legal services and domestic violence organisations across Australia call on Attorney-General George Brandis to repeal laws permitting victims of family violence to be directly cross-examined by their former partners in the Family Court of Australia.

- Australia's treatment of Indigenous people is criticised at the United Nations Human Rights Council session in Geneva.

**11/11** • The High Court of Australia rules that the Northern Territory's controversial 'paperless arrest' laws introduced last year are valid in *North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency Ltd v Northern Territory* [2015] HCA 41, dismissing NAAJA's attempt to repeal the laws.

- A new poll by Recognise reports that over 80 per cent of Australians would vote in support of constitutional recognition.

**12/11** • Former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd donates \$100 000 to fund a new position at the Australian National University to help meet Closing the Gap targets aimed at addressing Indigenous disadvantage.

**18/11** • Wiradjuri man Roy Ah-See is elected Chair of the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council, the largest Aboriginal organisation in Australia.

**20/11** • Traditional Owners of the northern Flinders Ranges are outraged as Adnyamathanha country is shortlisted by the federal government for a national nuclear waste dump.

**21–22/11** • First Nations representatives attend the third Gathering of Nations in Old Parliament House, with the agenda focused on

memorandums of understanding to support stolen generations, declarations of independence and treaties.

**23/11** • The coronial inquest into the death of Yamatji woman Ms Dhu while in police custody last year commences in Perth. The inquest has since been adjourned, to recommence March 2016.

**24/11** • At the Federal Court sitting in Borroloola, Justice Mansfield formally recognises the native title rights of the Mambaliya, Wuyaliya, Rrumburriya and Wurdaliya people over 23 500 square kilometres of pastoral land in the Gulf of Carpentaria.

- Northern Territory traditional owners meet with federal Environment Minister Greg Hunt to ask for an emergency heritage listing for Watarrka National Park in Kings Canyon in Australia's central desert, where a mining company wants to explore for oil.

**26/11** • The Indigenous Imprisonment Symposium, organised by the Law Council of Australia, is held in Sydney. The Chief Justice of the South Australian Supreme Court voices support for adopting a 'justice target' to address Indigenous incarceration.

**27/11** • It is reported that the Queensland government proposes to extinguish the native title rights of Traditional Owners of the Galilee Basin by issuing a freehold lease to Adani Mining for part of Moray Downs to commence development on the \$16 billion Carmichael coalmine. Whether the native title claim will be upheld is yet to be determined by the Federal Court.

**02/12** • According to a Productivity Commission report, the federal government will not meet the majority of the six Close the Gap targets set in 2008.

**04/12** • The Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations group request a transfer of water to Traditional Owners under the proposed Murray Darling Basin Plan, to acknowledge dispossession.

- The annual Social Justice and Native Title report says Indigenous people with a disability are among the most disadvantaged in Australia.

**07/12** • Malcolm Turnbull and Bill Shorten announce the Referendum Council. Co-chaired by Patrick Dodson and Mark Liebler and consisting of 14 other members, the Council is charged with overseeing the next steps towards a successful referendum to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia's Constitution. ILC Director Professor Megan Davis is one of the Council members.