

MONTHS IN REVIEW

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER

compiled by Gemma McKinnon

03.11 🌱 In an address to the National Press Club the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Mick Gooda committed himself to achieving a successful referendum in 2013 to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Australian Constitution.

04.11 🌱 The Australian government lodges its human rights report to the United Nations Human Rights Council for periodic review. The report highlights the government's apology to the stolen generations, its efforts to 'close the gap' between the life expectancy of non-Indigenous and Indigenous people as examples of its human rights achievements.

05.11 🌱 MP Shayne Neumann is selected to chair the House of Representatives Standing Committee for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (ATSIA). Indigenous Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin has called for the ATSIA committee report into the high level of involvement of Indigenous juveniles and young adults in the criminal justice system.

08.11 🌱 Prime Minister Julia Gillard announces that the Australian Government will establish an expert panel to work towards including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in the Constitution. The panel will include Indigenous and community leaders, constitutional experts, and parliamentary members. It is said the panel will consider how best to progress constitutional recognition of Indigenous people, and provide possible options on the nature of the amendment that could be put to the Australian public at a referendum.

14.11 🌱 NSW Planning Minister Tony Kelly announces Myall Creek Station, the site of the massacre of 30 Aboriginal men, women and children, as heritage protected. The site is 23 kilometres north-east of Bingara in north-western NSW and significant to the Wirrayaraay and Kamilaroi peoples of the area.

17.11 🌱 Independent Aboriginal MP Allison Anderson speaks out against a national referendum to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Constitution, stating it is a diversion from real issues devastating communities and would not make any tangible difference to Indigenous people's lives.

18.11 🌱 The House of Representatives Economic Committee's inquiry into Queensland's wild rivers laws held its first public hearing in Canberra. The federal government announced the inquiry in September, and will examine the legislation and Opposition Leader Tony Abbott's private members bill. The committee is to report back to parliament in March 2011.

19.11 🌱 Minister for Lands, Tony Kelly sealed a landmark Native Title agreement regarding 400 hectares of land in Tuncurry on the NSW mid-north coast. The Lakkari Traditional Owner Aboriginal Corporation

signed the agreement in return for a payment of \$10 million over the next 30 years, for the development of housing on the land as well as naming rights for the area to make sure the cultural significance is maintained.

23.11 🌱 The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill was introduced in Queensland, proposing additional leasing and land transfer arrangements for Indigenous communities to provide a range of options hoped to suit the needs of various communities throughout the state. If passed, the bill will allow Indigenous communities to appoint existing community groups to manage land.

24.11 🌱 Aboriginal men march through Alice Springs to support White Ribbon Day, a national campaign calling for the end of violence against women.

🌱 The family of Cameron Doomadgee came to a settlement with the Queensland Police Service bringing a sense of closure following the man's death in custody on Palm Island in 2004. The family's solicitor stated that the family is pleased with the outcome and are happy that this stage of the process is over and that they can move on with the rest of their lives. Details of the settlement remain confidential.

25.11 🌱 A cemetery once attached to an Aboriginal mission at lower Daintree in far north Queensland has been returned to the region's Kuku-Yalanji people. The Cairns Regional Council has approved a subdivision that will allow farmer, Alan Quaid, to return the cemetery to traditional owners who were previously denied access to the site containing 200 graves.

04.12 🌱 The Board of Indigenous Art Code Limited was formally constituted at its annual meeting and the Code's promotional centrepiece was launched. So far, 28 dealers, one artist, and four support members have volunteered to abide by the code, a number considered embarrassingly low by some participants in the \$500 million industry.

08.12 🌱 Descendants of the residents of an Aboriginal mission on the Atherton Tablelands in far north Queensland say they are looking forward to a lease handover that will secure their future on the land. The community signed a lease giving them formal ownership of the 1,600 hectare area. Mona Mona spokeswoman Glenis Grogan says they eventually want to be self-sufficient on the land.

🌱 The Federal Court travelled to the Newhaven Wildlife Sanctuary, to hand down an historic native title consent determination. The Australian Wildlife Conservancy holds the lease for the sanctuary but says it has had a long working relationship with the Warlpiri-Luritja traditional owners. The Central Land Council says the consent determination is important because it recognises that Aboriginal laws and customs still hold a place of importance in today's society.