

Months in Review – September/October

Compiled by: Chiara Lawry

3.09

More than 100 Indigenous and non-Indigenous men and boys joined the 'Stop the Violence' march through Alice Springs as part of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress's campaign against domestic violence.

8.09

The NSW Premier Kristina Keneally introduced the Constitution Amendment (Recognition of Aboriginal People) Bill 2010 to formally recognise Aboriginal people in the *NSW Constitution Act 1902*.

13.09

Prime Minister Julia Gillard reinstated the position of Indigenous Health Minister after being criticised for removing the position. MP Warren Snowdon is re-appointed.

18.09

A group of Indigenous people led by 73-year-old activist Pat Eatock commenced legal action under the *Racial Vilification Act 1996 (SA)* against *Herald Sun* columnist Andrew Bolt, over two columns he wrote last year – 'It's so hip to be black' and 'White is the new black'.

25.09

Lyll Munro filed an injunction in the NSW Land and Environment Court to stop the sale of the Moree oval, also believed to be an Aboriginal burial ground. The oval is the planned site for the development of a Big W store.

28.10

Ken Wyatt Liberal MP, the first-ever Indigenous Australian elected to the House of Representatives, gave his maiden speech in Federal Parliament.

30.09

The Gillard Government announced that it will refer the issues surrounding the Queensland Government's *Wild Rivers Act 2005* to the House of Representatives Economics Committee for inquiry. The inquiry will also look closely at the full range of issues affecting Indigenous economic development in Queensland, the operation of environmental and industry regulation and the native title system. The Committee will also review Tony Abbott's proposal to overturn Queensland's wild rivers law.

The NSW State Government announced the rollout of circle sentencing to regional centres in Moree, Ulladulla, Wellington and Coonamble and the western Sydney suburb of Blacktown. The expansion is in response to requests by Aboriginal community justice groups. In all circle courts, the offender, their peers, the magistrate, victim and Aboriginal elders sit in a circle for a hearing to determine a rehabilitation plan and provide advice on sentencing.

1.10

Indigenous barrister Tony McAvoy was awarded the first Indigenous Legal Professional of the Year award.

08.10

The Federal Court of Australia handed down three consent determinations recognising the Jirrbal people's rights over almost 100 000 hectares of land near Ravenshoe, Queensland, including land in the Tully Falls National Park.

11.10

WA Police Commissioner Karl O'Callaghan referred the issue of multiple tasering of an Aboriginal man in August 2008 in the Perth Watch House to the Director of Public Prosecutions, to consider whether police officers who tasered the man should face criminal charges.

18.10

The Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) successfully purchased the Ayers Rock Resort, near Uluru, for \$300 million. The ILC will partner with Anangu traditional owners to manage the enterprise, and give tourists a more authentic experience on country.

19.10

The Report of the Board of Inquiry into the Child Protection System in the Northern Territory, *Growing Them Strong, Together*, was released, containing 147 recommendations. The damning report said the inquiry had uncovered an 'enormous and chronic backlog of investigations', with nearly 1000 children identified as at risk. The report blames chronic housing shortages, overcrowding, chronic unemployment, and health and education issues for the problems swamping child protection authorities.

The remote community of Yandeyarra was the first Aboriginal community to sign a Housing Management Agreement with the Federal Department of Housing. The agreement is designed to enable the Department of Housing to provide new capital investment and legally empowered property and tenancy management services to the communities.

21.10

Aboriginal leaders gathered in Tamworth, in north-west New South Wales, to criticise the Murray–Darling Basin Authority for failing to consult Indigenous Australians when compiling its guide to the draft Basin Plan. Around 50 delegates from 20 Indigenous nations told the Authority it had ignored their cultural requirements for water.

Legal proceedings commenced in the Western Australian Supreme Court to stop Woodside Petroleum from clearing vegetation at James Price Point in Western Australia's Kimberley region as part of plans for a gas hub.

22.10

The NSW Government passed a motion for the Aboriginal flag to hang permanently in the Legislative Assembly of State Parliament.

The Gunaikurnai Aboriginal people won native title rights to almost a fifth of Victoria's Crown land in a landmark agreement signed in Gippsland. The deal is the first signed under Victoria's *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010* and brings to an end a 13-year native title court battle.

24.10

An estimated six million Australians watched 13-year-old Madeleine Madden's televised address to the nation, calling for Indigenous Australians to be offered better job opportunities.

26.10

The Bill to formally recognise Aboriginal people in the *NSW Constitution Act 1902* has received the final assent of the NSW Governor.

28.10

Former ATSIC Deputy Chairman Ray Robinson announced plans to launch a constitutional challenge to abolition of ATSIC.