
MONTHS IN REVIEW

OCTOBER–DECEMBER

Compiled by Paris Donnelly

OCTOBER

04/10 • Protests are held around Australia on the one-year anniversary of Julieka Dhu's death in custody. A coronial inquest is announced for November 2016.

06/10 • During a bush meeting, over 350 Pilbara Traditional Owners, Elders and community members pass a unanimous no confidence resolution against the Western Australian Minister for Aboriginal Affairs due to his 'lack of interest' in Indigenous issues.

10/10 • The North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency is given \$1.1m to provide the Children in Care and Youth Detention Advice Service. For those involved in the Royal Commission, the service will provide financial assistance to potential witnesses and referrals to solicitors and community outreach services.

11/10 • Royal Commission hearings into the Protection and Detention of Children begin. Hundreds protest at Sydney Town Hall, waving Aboriginal flags and chanting 'Free Dylan Voller'.

13/10 • Tasmania's Lower House passes legislation to recognise Indigenous people in the preamble of the Tasmanian Constitution.

14/10 • The Government supports Senator Jacqui Lambie's motion for a Senate committee inquiry into Indigenous funding in Tasmania.

- Indigenous leaders meet three Federal Ministers in Broome for a high level roundtable on Indigenous-led prevention of suicide programs. A date for the trial program has not yet been confirmed.

17/10 • The Royal Commission begins a series of bush meetings in remote Indigenous communities.

18/10 • The 13th Northern Territory parliament, where the new Labor government holds 18 out of 25 seats, opens to Namatjira Chansey Paech's maiden speech; 'I am young, I am gay, I am black, a true blue Territorian'.

20/10 • Bill Leak and The Australian newspaper are investigated for breach of Section 18C of the *Racial Discrimination Act* after publishing

Leak's cartoon that depicted an Indigenous man holding a beer can and forgetting his son's name.

21/10 • The Coalition announces it will fund a national roll out of the Custody Notification Service ('CNS').

25/10 • Taskforce 1000, an inquiry into Victorian child protection services, is tabled in Parliament. The inquiry makes 77 detailed recommendations to address the reality that Indigenous children are twelve times more likely than non-Indigenous children to be placed in out-of-home care.

27/10 • The Western Australian Government rejects the Commonwealth's offer to fund the CNS for a three-year trial period.

28/10 • A summary of the Hamburger Report is released. The Report states that imprisonment rates in the Northern Territory are a 'crisis of devastating proportions'. The report echoes calls to close Don Dale Detention Centre and makes 172 recommendations to overhaul the justice system to provide culturally appropriate services. The full report will be tabled at the Royal Commission.

- The Prime Minister allocates \$25m to tackling Indigenous family violence.
- Representatives from the Kimberly region travel to Morocco to participate in climate change talks and to share their traditional fire management techniques.
- Qantas adds Kakadu plum to its inflight menu.

30/10 • Fifty years ago, Charlie Perkins is the first Indigenous person to graduate from university.

NOVEMBER

04/11 • Under Section 18C of the *Racial Discrimination Act*, the Queensland Federal Circuit Court dismisses a case against three QUT students accused of racially vilifying an Indigenous woman on social media. An appeal against the decision has been lodged.

16/11 • The New South Wales Government announces plans to legislate to protect Indigenous languages.

17/11 • The Western Australian Parliament's Education and Health Standing Committee inquiry finds that over the past 15 years the Western Australian government has failed to respond to recommendations from 40 different inquiries into Aboriginal youth suicide.

21/11 • The Gumatj clan settle a historic 99-year land lease, meaning that they do not need Land Council approval for developments on their land.

23/11 • The Senate tables a petition to lower the retirement age for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders due to their decreased life expectancy.

25/11 • Backbencher Chansey Paech urges the Northern Territory Government to legalise adoption by same-sex couples. The Northern Territory and South Australia are the only two jurisdictions where same-sex adoption is prohibited.

26/11 • The NSW Government agrees to contribute \$140,000 to the Indigenous Chamber of Commerce to allow it to mentor and train Indigenous business people.

28/11 • As part of an Indigenous grassroots anti-family violence campaign, the Prime Minister, Labor politicians and members of the Rirratjingu clan link arms in the forecourt of Parliament House in a symbolic stand against rates of Indigenous domestic violence.

- After Pauline Hanson states there is no definition of Aboriginal, Indigenous people share their personal racism stories with the hashtag #DefineAboriginal.

29/11 • After planning to transfer Indigenous teenagers involved in detention centre riots to a maximum-security prison, the Victorian government agrees to only transfer such teenagers in exceptional circumstances and with the permission of the Commissioner of Aboriginal Children and Young People.

30/11 • An Aboriginal Mural on the side of Sydney's Wayside Chapel is painted over by the Chapel's management. Indigenous and community groups were not given the opportunity to make an interim heritage listing to protect the mural, which was a tribute to Indigenous rights activists and a symbol of reconciliation.

- An Indigenous Northern Territory minister, Yingiya Mark Guyula, asks to speak his traditional language in Parliament, proposing the use of an interpreter.

DECEMBER

02/12 • The NSW Government announced will provide a reparations package of \$73m to address the trauma and harm for members of the Stolen Generation.

05/12 • *Wotton v Queensland* was handed down by the Federal Court. Mortimer J held that QLD Police Service members committed unlawful discrimination, in contravention of section 9(1) of the *Racial Discrimination Act*, by failing to treat Senior Sergeant Christopher Hurley as a suspect in the death of Mulrunji Doomadgee.

08/12 • Traditional owners from the remote Mutitjulu community near Uluru signed off on a landmark leasing deal, after six years of negotiations with the Federal Government.

09/12 • The Referendum Council kicked off a consultation process with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders on a path forward for constitutional recognition by hosting the first Regional Dialogue meeting in Hobart. Five delegates, who were elected during the meeting, will represent the views of the Hobart Dialogue at the National Indigenous Constitutional Convention to be held in Uluru in late April 2017.

12/12 • A 44-year-old Noongar woman died in custody in WA after having a heart attack at the Royal Perth hospital. She is the first Indigenous woman to die in custody since 22-year-old Yamatji woman Ms Dhu died while being held in the police lockup in Port Hedland for \$3,622 in unpaid fines.

13/12 • The second Aboriginal Victoria Forum was held in Melbourne today and the Interim Treaty Working Group reported on the consultations and provided recommendations on a roadmap to progress treaty.

16/12 • The Coroner's Court of WA released their inquest into the death of Ms Dhu. The report concluded that Ms Dhu's treatment and care at the Hedland Health Campus fell below the standards that should ordinarily be expected of a public hospital. Further, the behaviour of a number of the WA Police Service officers towards Ms Dhu was unprofessional and inhumane.

26/12 • After 16 years of dreaming, the first Indigenous crew set sail in the iconic Sydney to Hobart yacht race. Indigenous communities along the coast of NSW will conduct smoking ceremonies to greet the yacht as it travels south.