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# MONTHS IN REVIEW

## AUGUST–SEPTEMBER

Compiled by Paris Donnelly

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**04/08** • The Indigenous Affairs Minister admits he received an official briefing about abuse claims at Don Dale Detention Centre in October 2015.

- A new \$6 million Queensland Government Fund is announced in order to reduce the number of ATSI children in care and to help keep them with their families. It is hoped this funding will be dedicated to community-driven programs.

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day is observed.

**06/08** • The National Indigenous Music Awards are celebrated.

- Indigenous fathers share their experiences on Twitter using the hashtag #Indigenousdads to counter the racist image of Indigenous men portrayed in Bill Leak's cartoon as published in *The Australian*.

**08/08** • Federal shadow Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus cites underfunded community legal aid programs as a major contributor to the Northern Territory Youth Justice scandal. He calls on the government to reverse impending funding cuts to legal services.

**12/08** • Representatives from 46 Murray-Darling Basin nations begin talks to develop a Treaty. It is hoped the Treaty will create additional economic opportunities, assist in resource sharing and formalise a united voice on Indigenous rights issues.

**15/08** • #Wagejusticenow trends on Twitter in protest against the Indigenous-specific 'Work for the Dole' program. Concerns were raised about how the program will subject Indigenous workers to poor employment standards and conditions, lack of superannuation and minimal coverage under workers' compensation acts.

**16/08** • Rebecca Maher is the first Indigenous death in custody in New South Wales in 16 years. The Aboriginal Legal Service alleges this tragedy occurred because NSW Police failed to follow Custody Notification Service protocols.

**23/08** • A new edition of the *Australian National Dictionary* is published, containing more than 500 words from over 100 Indigenous languages.

- The Indigenous Affairs Minister promises the Government will continue funding the Indigenous Rangers Program until 2020. The program is regarded as one of the most successful 'Closing the Gap' initiatives because it provides sustainable employment for Indigenous peoples in rural areas.

**31/08** • Unrest between police and Indigenous peoples is sparked when 200 protesters gather outside Kalgoorlie Courthouse ahead of the appearance of the man charged with the manslaughter of 14-year-old Indigenous boy Elijah Doughty.

**7/09** • The Queensland government announces it will no longer treat 17-year-olds as adults in the criminal justice system. This move responds to an Amnesty International Report and brings Queensland in line with the rest of Australia, and with the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

- Indigenous Literacy Day is celebrated at the Opera House.

**08/09** • It is revealed a 26-year-old Indigenous man, David Dungay, died in Long Bay Correctional Complex on 29 December 2015 after being restrained and tranquilised in the prison's mental health unit.

**13/09** • Peak Aboriginal health service bodies raise concerns they are insufficiently resourced to participate in the public hearings for the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory.

**14/09** • In Western Australia, plans are announced to build the first specialist counselling centre for Indigenous perpetrators of domestic violence. The centre will aim to promote education and accountability. Negotiations with the government to secure funding are ongoing.

**20/09** • Githabul Tribal Elders are granted access to a proposed basalt quarry site in Kyogle to conduct an archaeological study. The Githabul peoples claim traditional ownership over this ancient men's initiation site that contains human remains. The Githabul Elders believe the Local Aboriginal Land Council did not follow proper consultation procedures before the quarry was approved. The Land and Environment Court has made an order to prevent work on the site until mid-November.

**26/09** • Wayne Morrison dies whilst held in custody in a South Australian Prison. Wayne was transferred to hospital with brain damage following an 'incident' with five police officers. Wayne had not been convicted of any charges and it was his first time in custody. There will be an inquiry into his death.

**27/09** • An Oxfam Global Report finds Government policy is deliberately undermining Native Title rights. In its Kimberly region case study, Oxfam found there were threats to close down Indigenous communities, amendments to weaken laws protecting sacred cultural sites, and moves to create new conservation reserves to force Indigenous peoples to surrender their land rights.