

MONTHS IN REVIEW

MARCH / APRIL

compiled by Hadeel Al-Alosi and Alexandra Lillis

01/03

- ☀ The Federal Government announced that \$20 million will be given to several Indigenous communities to help tackle alcohol and substance abuse. The funding is aimed at helping communities to provide education and skills training, prevention programs, referral services and other measures to minimise the harm caused by alcohol and substance abuse.

06/03

- ☀ The Western Australian State Government announced that it will grant ex gratia payments to Aboriginal people whose wages were withheld from them by successive Australian governments between 1905 and 1972, and never repaid. After recommendations from a taskforce more than three years ago, Western Australia has become the third state to take action to remedy the 'stolen wages'. Under the scheme successful applicants will receive an ex gratia payment of up to \$2000.

13/03

- ☀ The Australian Senate passed the National Radioactive Waste Management Bill 2010 amid criticism that the draft legislation is at odds with the *Aboriginal Heritage Protection Act 1984* (Cth) and the Aboriginal Land Rights Acts. The draft legislation passed by the Senate names the Aboriginal-owned Muckaty Station as the only site to remain under active consideration for a national industrial waste site.

22/03

- ☀ This date marked the sixth annual National Close the Gap Day, an Oxfam Australia initiative established to promote Indigenous health equality. To celebrate the values and objectives this initiative represents and to draw attention to the many issues that continue to divide Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, Close the Gap events were held across the country, in schools and workplaces. When Close the Gap day began in 2007, it was focused primarily on health. Since then the Australian Government has adopted additional 'close the gap targets' including Indigenous education and employment.

26/03

- ☀ Peter Collier, Western Australian Minister for Indigenous Affairs, acknowledged the discriminatory character of the

Aboriginal Affairs and Planning Authority Act 1972 (WA). Under this legislation, if an Aboriginal person dies without a will, his/her estate is handled by the Public Trustee. While this is the same for non-Aboriginal people who die without a will, a non-Aboriginal person's family has the right to apply to the Supreme Court to become administrator of the estate. Under current legislation, the family of an Aboriginal person is denied this right. Minister Collier has committed to changing the laws by the end of the year.

27/03

- ☀ The Select Committee on Youth Suicides in the Northern Territory released its report *Gone Too Soon: A Report into Youth Suicide in the Northern Territory*. The Report presented to the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory includes 23 recommendations designed to prevent and respond to the alarmingly high rate of youth suicide among Indigenous communities in the region. The Report has received the backing of the Federal Government.

30/03

- ☀ The First People's Disability Network (Australia) was launched. This new national network will operate as a communication mechanism between the Australian Government and its members on issues and policies affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living with a disability. It is envisioned that the network will provide these individuals with better representation, allowing their needs to be addressed more effectively.

02/04

- ☀ For the first time, an Aboriginal organisation is given statutory power to decide on applications that impact on Aboriginal heritage. The South Australian Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, Paul Caica, has delegated his power under section 23 of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988 (SA) to the Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority. Specifically, this is the power to grant authorisations relating to the removal of Goolwa regulators in the Murray River region.

12/04

- ☀ In what has been described as a landmark case, the Northern

Territory Supreme Court awarded an Indigenous man, Marcellus Majindi, more than \$100,000 in damages for having been unlawfully arrested, detained and assaulted in 2010.

26/04

- ☀ The Federal Government announced a new \$1.5 billion Remote Jobs and Communities Program that will commence on 1 July, 2013, in 65 remote regions across Australia. The program is aimed at improving the way in which employment services operate in remote communities. Part of the strategy involves rolling the four main programs currently delivering employment and participation services and community development in remote Australia – Job Services Australia, Disability Employment Services, Community Development Employment Projects and the Indigenous Employment Program – into a new integrated service.

ILB – SUBSCRIBE TODAY

Make sure that your organisation stays in touch with emerging developments in Indigenous affairs – sign up for a one year subscription to the ILB and keep up with the latest news, reviews and critical analysis. We offer affordable rates, with special discounts for private individuals, community groups and students. For more information, please visit our website at www.ilc.unsw.edu.au or contact the Editor at ilb@unsw.edu.au.

Untitled

Natalie Puantulura

Ochre on linen

