
MONTHS IN REVIEW

JANUARY–FEBRUARY

Compiled by Kate Bonser

10/01 Thousands of mourners, among them Prime Minister Abbott and Opposition Leader Bill Shorten, attend the memorial service in Cairns for 'Keriba Omasker' (meaning 'Our Children' in the Meriam Mir Erub dialect), honouring the lives of the eight Torres Strait Islander children taken in Cairns last month.

22/01 A two-decade long native title claim launched by the Bargala people of South Australia's Eyre Peninsula is granted by Justice Mansfield in the SA Federal court.

23/01 The long-awaited results of the Liliwan Study, initiated by Aboriginal community leaders from the Fitzroy Valley, have found that one in eight children in Fitzroy Crossing have Foetal Alcohol Syndrome, the highest found rate in Australia.

23/01 Federal Court Judge Justice Mansfield rules that the Northern Land Council ('NLC') has the right to decide what percentage of mining royalties it pays to Aboriginal clans.

25/01 NSW Opposition Leader Luke Foley pledges that an elected Labor Government will transfer Sydney Harbour's Goat Island, or 'Memel', to the NSW Indigenous Land Council, recognising its traditional ownership by the Bennelong family and the Wangal peoples.

26/01 Indigenous people mark Invasion Day/Survival Day, remembering the continuing survival of Indigenous Australians in a host of festivals, marches and gatherings. In Canberra, hundreds of 'Freedom Movement' supporters gathered for a sit-in protest on the grounds of Federal Parliament.

26/01 Gurinjdji man and ABC Sports Broadcaster Charlie King; West Arnhem Land Elder Timothy Nadjowh; Northern Queensland Yarrabah Elder Florence Watson; and Alice Springs Indigenous Health Worker Kathleen Abbott, each receive Medals of the Order of Australia for their outstanding contribution and service to the community.

28-29/01 United Nations ('UN') expert group meeting 'Dialogue on an optional protocol to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples' is held in New York. The final report will be discussed at the next UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in April-May.

29/01 Ahead of the Queensland ('QLD') State elections, the Labor Government commits \$21 million dollars to repay the stolen wages of Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders between 1890 and 1975.

30/01 Australia joins the Humans Rights Watch List for the second year running, criticised for its treatment of Indigenous peoples and the over-representation of Indigenous Australians in the prison population.

01/02 Nunukul-Nughi woman Leeanne Enoch becomes the first Indigenous woman to be elected to Parliament in QLD.

04/02 Adam Giles remains the NT Chief Minister after an attempted party-room coup, whereby Giles refused to resign despite his colleagues calling for his resignation.

09/02 Following a sit-in protest by the 'Freedom Movement' at Federal Parliament, movement representatives meet with Federal Indigenous Affairs Minister, Nigel Scullion, on reducing rates of Aboriginal child removal and replacing the Indigenous Advisory Council with a community-based voice.

11/02 Prime Minister Abbott reveals faltering efforts to close the life expectancy gap, describing the latest annual *Closing the Gap* report released today as 'profoundly disappointing.'

11/02 NLC CEO Joe Morrison addresses the National Press Club in Canberra, saying the Country Liberals Party is attacking the Land Rights Act.

13/02 The seventh anniversary of the National Apology to the Stolen Generations is observed.

13/02 'Grandmothers against Removal' hold rally at Parliament House in Canberra, calling for support as the removal rates of Indigenous Children from family increase. Since the National Apology in 2008, rates of Indigenous children in out-of-home care have risen by 65 per cent.

12-26/02 The 50th Anniversary of the 'Freedom Ride' is observed. In 1965 University of Sydney student Charles Perkins led 29 students from the Student Action for Aborigines group on a journey around rural NSW.