



DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL COHESION PROGRAM

WANTOK CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT 2013-2014

FINAL REPORT

It is apparent that ASSI-PJ and the Wantok conferences employ many tools for strength. They mobilise communities, commemorate tragedy, lobby governments and help individuals to learn about their families and reconnect with the culture of their ancestors. But perhaps the greatest strength is ASSI-PJ's capacity to not only fight to change the future of ASSI people, but to feel grateful to be able to do so.

- Bianca Hennessy 11 June 2014



Australian Government
**Department of Immigration
and Citizenship**

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- D. Wantok Historical Advisory Group Profile
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WANTOK CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT STEERING GROUP PROFILE



HONORARY PATRON – MRS BONITA MABO AO

Mrs Bonita Mabo, like her late husband (Eddie Koiki Mabo), has always been an activist, and recently recognised as an Officer (AO) in the General Division of the Order of Australia for “distinguished service to the indigenous community and to human rights as an advocate for the Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and South Sea Islander peoples”.

As an honorary patron Mrs Bonita Mabo AO will assist in the very critical work ahead of drawing the public and Commonwealth and State Government attention to many issues concerning the tragic history and abuses of South Sea Islander human rights in Australia during 19th and 20th century.



Emelda Davis – Tanna Island descendant Vanuatu.

Group

Chair

Emelda Davis is the inaugural President of the interim national representative body for Australian South Sea Islanders (ASSI). Emelda and her mother Nellie Enares are founding members of the ASSI.PJ based in Sydney, NSW. In 2011 Emelda was elected as the main coordinator for the Wantok 2012 inaugural ASSI National Conference. Her skill base reflects diverse expertise and innovative capabilities for the delivery of community development, (education, training, media, marketing and awareness campaign strategies having worked for Federal, State Government, Community and grassroots organisations. As the director for Onyx Management Group since 2004 Emelda has worked consistently and diligently in resourcing Indigenous, South Sea Islander and broader community practitioners to deliver projects on a multitude of national and international platforms producing Film, Television, Sports, Events management, Music and Entertainment projects for grass roots, corporate and private sectors.



Duane Vickery – Solomon Island / Vanuatu descendant

Corporate Governance

Duane is the founder and managing director of ETM Perspectives Pty Ltd, a business that provides advice, training and research in relation to Indigenous and South Sea Island affairs in Australia. Following his graduation from Avondale with a Bachelor of Education, Duane completed a Master of Education at the University of New England and worked for the Federal Government in Indigenous Affairs. He founded his business in 2002. Duane is excited for the opportunity to impart his corporate governance and strategic business perspective knowledge and skill base in to the development of the ASSI National Body.



Graham Tanner

Community Engagement

Graham has some twenty-five years experience in the arena of community engagement particularly from an Indigenous and Australian South Sea Islander Perspective. Having written and implemented numerous Community Empowerment workshops inclusive of Staff Development in support Provision to specific Target Groups, with an emphasis on, “Making a Mark that Cannot be Erased.” A prolific writer of articles, funding submissions, business plans and personal manuscripts combined with background dealings in Litigation Preparatory, Mentoring, Anti Discrimination and Disability Advocacy. A Cultural and Pentecostal Faith visitor to outlying nations and Advisor to a past Australian member of International Third World Leaders Association.



Pastor Ray Minniecon – Ambrym Island descendant

Community Consultant

Pastor Ray Minniecon is a descendant of the Kabi Kabi nation and the Gureng Gureng nation of South-East Queensland and also a descendant of the South Sea Islander people with strong connections to his people of Ambrym Island. Currently, Ray is the Director of Bunji Consultancies. He is a “Vision Keeper” of the World Christian Gathering of Indigenous Peoples and Community Chaplain in the Redfern Community, a pastor with the Aboriginal Evangelical Fellowship along with many other development projects. Ray has a BA in Theology from Murdoch University in Western Australia and is the Coordinator of the Aboriginal Education Unit, which he helped establish. He also assisted in developing the Aboriginal Employment Strategy.



Marie Geissler

Media and marketing

Marie is a PHD candidate at the University of Wollongong in the Faculty of Creative Arts. Her thesis is on Australian Aboriginal Art. Marie has written about culture and the arts as well as the promotion of indigenous business. She is the Director of Geissler Communications and Marie Geissler Fine Art. Marie has run a successful public relations company for over 15 years. She is a member of the Public Relations Institute of Australia, The Media Arts and Entertainment Alliance and the Foreign Correspondents Association of Australia. Working in the fields of design, not-for-profit, architecture, science, education, medicine, Indigenous, law and heritage, Marie is also the author of *Australian Aboriginal Art, Collecting Aboriginal Paintings* (Images Publishing 2012) and co author of *Yannima Pikarli Tommy Watson* (Macmillan 2010).



Australian South Sea Islanders (Port Jackson) ('ASSI.PJ')

Media Release 3rd September 2013.

Australian South Sea Islanders (ASSI) Receive \$50,000 Federal Grant for Community Cultural and Economic Capacity Building

Grant of the Office of Senator Kate Lundy

Emelda Davis, President of The Australian South Sea Islanders (Port Jackson) (ASSI.PJ) interim national body announced today that she *'would like to sincerely thank Senator Kate Lundy, Minister for Multicultural Affairs Canberra for the receipt of a \$50,000 Community Development Grant.'* *The monies will be used to stage three educational and fact-finding, community capacity building workshops for ASSI people over the next 12 months.'*

Patron for the ASSI.PJ Mrs Bonita Mabo added her support, saying that *'This is the first ever major funding that Australian South Sea Islanders have seen in 150 years in recognition of the contribution made by our people including our forefathers to the building of this great nation. I would like to thank the Prime Minister and Senator Kate Lundy for their support.'*

Ms Davis said that *'The funding is a very overdue but much appreciated Federal initiative representing an historic milestone in the history of the acknowledgement of the significant contributions made by Australian South Sea Islanders within the Australian community. It will be used to progress the much needed process of cultural education, connection and healing between ASSI and broader community groups in Australia.'*

2013 marks a significant 150 years for Queensland since 55,000 South Sea Islanders (95% male) were bought to Australia on 62,000 indentured contracts to establish sugar, maritime and pastoral industries. Many of these men and women did not return to their Island homes and 15,000 —a third —lost their lives to common disease to which they lacked immunity. During the implementation of the White Australia Policy a mass deportation of some 7,000 SSI's occurred, and 1,600 were allowed to remain under humanitarian circumstances. Several 100's had crossed the border into NSW in the 1890's and 1900s to escape the more severe conditions in Queensland.

1992 saw the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission published a Report which called *for* recognition of the ASSI community as a distinct ethnic group within Australian. This was followed by Commonwealth recognition in 1994. In 1995 NSW Premier Bob Carr advised ministers to include ASSI's in all programs and services. This memorandum has been overlooked to date. In 2000 Premier Peter Beattie recognised ASSI in Queensland. Despite these official gestures there was little sustained government assistance to the ASSI community.

On 15th August 2013 Alex Greenwich, Independent Member for Sydney supported the ASSI.PJ with a timely motion seeing meaningful debate recognising ASSI's and gaining unanimous support from all parties in the NSW Parliament seeing two Ministers and five Members speak strongly in favour of the overdue recognition of ASSI.

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For NSW, 2013 marks 166 years since the first South Sea Islanders were bought to Eden by entrepreneur Ben Boyd who had already used Aboriginal, Maori and Pacific Islands labourers in his whaling industry ventures. Worried about not having sufficient labour for his pastoral properties, in 1847 he decided to experiment with bringing in a Pacific Islanders workforce, without waiting for government permission. This was a human disaster.

Ms Davis: said that *'Our organisation prides itself on being the interim national representative body that has led by example through meaningful collaboration with governments, and educational, community organisations and agencies. The ASSI.PJ team acknowledges the trust and respect that has been entrusted through the grants that are now being received by this group through the Commonwealth.'*

Capacity building workshops are titled 'Wantok 150' and will take place in Mackay, QLD, Tweed Heads, NSW.

A major forum will be held in Brisbane at the State Library Queensland on the 1st 2nd and 3rd of November. The Library has also donated \$10,000 worth of resources in recognition of 150 years.

Media contact:

Marie Geissler

marie@geissler.com.au Mobile: 0416285727

Emelda Davis

assi.pj@gmail.com Mobile: 0416300946

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/assipj/?fref=ts>

ATTACHMENT B



Emelda Davis

September 17, 2013 · Sydney

Australian South Sea Islander (Port Jackson) ("ASSI.PJ") - News

1. ASSI 2013 WANTOK Conference Brisbane November 1-3

2. ABS Demographic Survey for ASSI in Australia

Emelda Davis, President of the Australian South Sea Islanders (P.J) Interim Committee called on all ASSI descendants in Australia to participate in the important elections for the ASSI National Body which will be undertaken at the Wantok 2013 National Conference to be held from at the State Library Brisbane from 1-3rd November 2013.

Emelda Davis said, "Wantok 2013 is an historic event for the establishment of national ASSI representation and governance in Australia. All those registered at the event will be entitled to join in the discussions around the establishment of a national voice and vote for the National Secretariat/Steering Committee and the National Board. Prior to the elections there will be opportunities for the attendees to meet all the candidates and engage in open dialogue with them and how they plan to further the interests of the ASSI descendants in Australia."

Ms Davis also announced that her Committee have been working with the NSW Minister for Communities Victor Dominello and the Community Relations Commission (CRC) to develop a specific census questionnaire in conjunction with the Australian Bureau of Statistics. To determine more accurately the demographics of the ASSI people in Australia. It is proposed that this will be undertaken as part of Commonwealth funded ASSI capacity building workshops funded under Senator Kate Lundy's Community Cohesion grants.

Historian of ASSI affairs, Professor Clive Moore commented: "The most crucial thing at this stage is to establish the number of ASSI descendants in Australia. We believe that there are around 40,000, possibly 50,000. It is difficult to know how many indigenous Australians have South Seas ancestry. Many of the original South Sea men married Aboriginal women, and there are many South Sea descendants who identify as Torres Strait Islanders.

As Professor Moore explained, "In the mid nineteenth century there were about 2,000 to 3,000 Torres Strait Islanders. The significant numbers of ASSI immigrants and their intermarriage probably means that about half of contemporary Torres Strait Islanders have some South Sea Islander ancestry. An educated guess would suggest that there are 10,000 Torres Strait Islanders who have some ASSI ancestry."

Australian South Sea Islanders, first arrived in Torres Strait in 1860, from the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu) and the Loyalty Islands (now included in New Caledonia) to work in the pearling and bêche-de-mer industries. Others joined them from the Solomon Islands after 1870. Between 1863 until the early 1880s there was a constant flow of Pacific Islanders into the maritime industries until labour recruiting was limited to the Queensland mainland and to the sugar industry. The 'Coming of the Light' in 1871 when the London Missionary Society arrived also brought new and different Pacific Islanders, once more from the Loyalty Islands but also from Samoa, the Cook Islands and Tonga.

They all mixed freely with Torres Strait Islanders and made constant marriage links. In the 1900s St Pauls (Moa) Islands was set aside as a mission settlement for Pacific Islanders. Torres Strait family names such as Lifu, Kennedy, Ware, Tanna, Florida, and Gela are ASSI descendants.

ONLY 2 WEEKS TO WANTOK 2013!

By [w3media](#). Published on October 17, 2013.



WANTOK 2012 was a huge success!

With only 2 weeks to this year's **WANTOK 2013 Australian South Sea Islanders National Forum**, the ASSI-PJ would like to extend an invitation for all ASSIs to attend and to get involved in this historic event.

This year's event will be extra special for two reasons... firstly because 2013 marks the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the first South Sea Islanders to Queensland in 1863.

This important milestone highlights Australian South Sea Islanders' unique history and important contribution to Australia and Queensland in the development of the sugar industry and as sports people, artists, soldiers, civic leaders and most importantly, citizens.

Secondly, on this occasion Australian South Sea Islanders from all around Australia will gather to elect their first national governing bodies – a permanent National ASSI secretariat and a secretariat board of directors to represent the interests of all Australian South Sea Islanders.

So if you want to get involved and to have your say, register now to attend this year's **WANTOK 2013** National Forum.

REGISTER NOW!
Simply download the
Information Pack 



WANTOK
AUSTRALIAN SOUTH SEA ISLANDERS NATIONAL FORUM
ONE VOICE - ONE PEOPLE
2013

Australian South Sea Islander WANTOK Conference 2013

Venue: State Library of Queensland
Address: Stanley Pl, South Brisbane QLD 4101
Date: 1st - 3rd November 2013
Time: 9am to 5pm

Register now!

For more information contact: assi.pj@gmail.com
Phone: 02 9518 8981 mobile: 0416 300 946

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AUSTRALIAN SOUTH SEA ISLANDER WANTOK CONFERENCE 2013

Date: 1-3 November
Venue: Queensland State Library
Purpose: Election of the National Body for the Australian South Sea Islanders

The Australian South Sea Islander Interim Committee ASSI (PJ) will be conducting the election of the National Body for the ASSI and its Board.
All ASSI and interested professionals are warmly invited to attend. Voting will occur at the event.
Fact-filled conference program with distinguished speakers and SSI entertainment.

For further information about the Conference, Nominations for the ASSI National Body and Board please contact:
Emelda Davis: email: assipj@gmail.com

AUSTRALIAN SOUTH SEA ISLANDER WANTOK Conference 2013

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Public Notices Queensland regional press Saturday 5th October 2013

THE VANUATU DELEGATION PARTICIPATING IN WANTOK 2013

By [w3media](#). Published on [October 30, 2013](#).



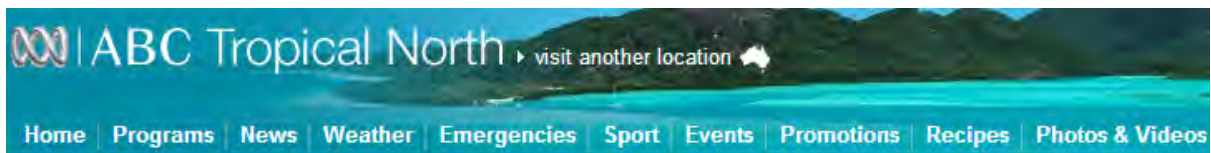
The Vanuatu delegation participating in Wantok 2013

The Vanuatu delegation participating in Wantok 2013 – Australian South Sea Islanders National Forum are (from left to right sitting in the front row): Former MP David Abel (CEO, Australia-Vanuatu Connections Inc), Hon. Ralph Regenvanu (Minister of Lands), Chief Richard Fandunamata (Vice-Chair, Vanuatu Indigenous Descendants Association), Chief Simon Kaukare (Chair, Vanuatu Indigenous Descendants Association).

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Vanuatu Indigenous Descendants Association will be representing the Malvatumauri National Council of Chiefs, on behalf of all chiefs of Vanuatu. Minister Regenvanu will be representing Prime Minister Moana Carcasses Kalosil and the Government of Vanuatu at the Conference.

Minister Regenvanu will be traveling to Brisbane to join the rest of the delegation on Thursday (31st October).

The ASSI-PJ welcomes the delegation to Brisbane and looks forward to their valuable input at this historic event.



31 October, 2013 5:53PM AEST

Wantok: 'it's time' for one voice

By Laura Hegarty

Around 200 Australian South Sea Islanders from around Queensland will gather in Brisbane over the next three days for what's hoped will be a watershed moment in the community's history.



After talking about unity for many years, the Wantok conference will draw community members from all regions to elect a representative national body.

Around 80 different countries fall under the area of the South Sea Islands, so getting everyone to work together hasn't been an easy task says interim body's president Emelda Davis.

"Wantok as a platform for transparency and openness and bringing communities together will help to overcome those differences of opinions.

"It's about everyone having a voice as part of this and delegate a representative from their community to take this one voice forward."

Wantok is a pidgeon word meaning 'one voice'.

Unity in the past

In the 1972, the Australian South Sea Islanders United Council (ASSIUC) was established by Mr Robert Corowa and Phyllis Corowa in Tweed Heads, New South Wales.


Small branches of the council started forming up and down the east coast including one founded by Jenifer Darr's parents, Percy and Olive Darr, in Ayr.

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"There were around 40 or 50 members," remembers Ms Darr.

"Most of those were my aunts and uncles and cousins."

The movement lost momentum and fizzled out but Ms Darr says she believes it will work this time.

Last year a Wantok conference was held in Bundaberg when the interim national body was elected.

"Having been a part of ASSIUC, albeit way back when, and also being a part of Bundaberg Wantok in 2012, there has been significant impetus around having and wanting a national body set up.

"I think if there's good intent then only good can come from that."

Celebrating 150 years of Australian South Sea Island History

2013 is a significant year for Australia's South Sea Islander population, marking 150 years since thousands of people were taken from their homes to work as indentured labourers in Queensland's cane fields.

Marcia Eves' great grandfather John Kwailiu, or Fatnowna as he came to be known, was one such man brought to the Mackay region from Malaita Island in the Solomons as part of the practise known as blackbirding, which took place between 1863 and 1908.

Recently the Fatnowna family had a reunion in the Solomons, an experience Ms Eves says opened her eyes to the needs of her people.

"It's not just looking after ourselves here in Australia; it's also looking after family that's still living overseas because I strongly believe that we are a forgotten race of people because we've lost our culture."

"It is time that we put a lot of things together and be united. It's time."

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The advantages of a national body

Australian South Sea Islanders were recognised in Queensland as a distinct cultural group in 2000.

Emelda Davis says that was an important step, but establishing a national representative body will allow them to better lobby governments for support and services and further their calls for better recognition.

"When you're included in programs and services, when your identity and history is recognised in the education system, when it's an option, when we walk in and we're included on the Australian Bureau of Statistics forms, people know who we are."

The initial problem is finding enough people to fill the unpaid, voluntary roles.


"The interim body is only voluntary so everyone on that committee has put their hand up to provide their services unpaid and the same will have to be for the national body but that doesn't mean that they can't then apply for the various funding sources that are out there," says Jenifer Darr.

The vote to elect the national body will be held on Saturday afternoon, November 2.


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PROFESSOR GRACELYN SMALLWOOD SPEAKS OUT TO AUSTRALIAN SOUTH SEA ISLANDERS

By w3media. Published on [October 31, 2013](#).



Professor Gracelyn Smallwood speaks out to Australian South Sea Islanders with her talk on 'Community Cohesion and Activism' at this year's Wantok 2013 National Forum.

As a surviving descendant of the Blackbirding trade in Australia between 1863 and 1908, Professor Smallwood will be presenting a talk on 'Community Cohesion and Activism' at this year's Wantok 2013 Australian South Sea Islanders National Forum in her capacity as leader of the Historical Advisory Panel to the ASSI.PJ interim national body.

Smallwood says... *"When people in general don't understand the history of Slavery they internalise their pain and take it out on the very people that are trying to promote unity, justice and reparation".* She looks forward to presenting at Wantok 2013 and answering any questions.

Emelda Davis says... *"The ASSI-PJ board are humbled that Professor Smallwood is a volunteer advisor to the interim national body with her high range of qualifications. We look forward to Gracelyn's*

presentation and continued work with our organisation."

As well as a being scholar in residence at Drexel University Philadelphia USA, Gracelyn has lectured in cross-cultural studies at the East-West Centre in Hawaii and has also lectured at Universities in the West Indies comparing the philosophy of the late Marcus Garvey, Civil Rights Movement of the world with that of the South Sea Islander (Kanaka Slavery in Australia).

Civil Rights Activist in the United States, most notably the late Kwame There (nee Stockley Carmichael), promoted her lectures in the West Indies.

This was some 30 years ago and Gracelyn clearly recalls stating that while the rest of the world was going ahead with reparation of slavery and human rights violations, the South Sea Islander community in Australia wasn't ready at that time largely because the majority had become born again Christians which gave them a class status that was superior to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. This mentality was identical to that of the white superintendants, who gave status and power to native police to kill their own people.

ATTACHMENT B

Gracelyn was a VIP guest of Nelson Mandela – President of South Africa in 1997 where she attended the 20-year memorial of the late Steve Biko as well as attending Truth and Reconciliation meetings at Hare University South Africa. She returned to Australia with the approval of Nelson Mandela (the President and his cabinet) with a delegation, as well as Biko's two sons to address a Human Rights Conference that Smallwood hosted on Toowoomba, QLD.

The following year she toured and lectured in America and had the privilege of meeting Denzel Washington and to shake his hand and say how brilliantly he portrayed 'Biko' in the movie 'Cry Freedom'.

Professor Smallwood is a former director of Kumbari/Ngurpai Lag Higher Education Toowoomba; former Director of Nursing at Hetti Perkins Home for the Aged in Alice Springs; former consultant to the State and Federal Ministers in Australia; as well as the World Health Organisation in Geneva. She has lectured on Thursday Island and numerous NGO's and Government organisation's across Australia and the world on all topics concerning Human Rights matters.

Gracelyn was a scholar in residents at the University of Hawaii and East West Centre Honolulu Hawaii. Professor Smallwood is a former Advisor to the Vice-Chancellor at James Cook University and one of the driving forces behind JCU's progressive Reconciliation Statement. She remains an Adjunct Professor at this University and has been an editorial board member for the past 20 years on Public Health Human Rights for Harvard United States of America.

Smallwood works as a cross-cultural educator at Cleveland Youth Detention Centre in Townsville, QLD and is currently a nurse, midwife and mentor at the Townsville Aboriginal and Islander Health Service where she was the first volunteer nurse and midwife 40 years ago and where she assisted in the establishment of that service.

She has a certificate in Swedish massage, a Master of Science degree in public health (specialising in HIV Aids, a doctorate of philosophy in health and Human Rights of First Nations Australian, and she remains an advisor in a voluntary capacity to the ASSI.PJ interim national body.

Smallwood's recent achievements are:

- 1986 Queensland Aborigine of the Year.
- 1992 Australian Medal for Public Health and Human Rights.
- 1994 Henry Kemp Memorial Award for the prevention of child abuse in Malaysia.
- 2007 Deadly Award for Lifetime Achievement in public health.
- 24th October 2013 received the United Nations Award for her contribution to the community of over 45 years of Public Health in Human Rights.



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The beginnings of civil war: Sri Lanka in 1983

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South Sea Islanders hope they're close to national recognition

Melissa Maddison reported this story on [Friday, November 1, 2013 12:55:00](#)

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SCOTT BEVAN: 2013 holds a sad reminder for Australia's South Sea Islander population: it's 150 years since thousands of people were taken from their homes to work as indentured labourers in Queensland's cane fields.

But this year could also mark a new chapter for the community with hopes raised that the first national representative body will be elected.

Melissa Maddison reports from Mackay.

MELISSA MADDISON: Marcia Eves is a fourth generation South Sea Islander. Her great-grandfather John Kwailiu, or Fatnowna as he came to be known, was brought to Australia from the Solomon Islands as part of the practise known as 'blackbirding', which took place between 1863 and 1908.

And while the descendents of many of the original South Sea Islander workers have remained in regional areas, particularly in Queensland, Marcia Eves says many still feel unrecognised. She is part of a campaign to see a national body elected to represent the community.

MARCIA EVES: It's not just looking after ourselves here in Australia; it's also looking after family that's still is living overseas. I strongly believe that we are a forgotten race of people, because we've also lost our culture.

MELISSA MADDISON: There have been several attempts to set up a national body since the 1970s, but the Wantok conference in Brisbane this week holds the most hope of success.

ATTACHMENT B

'Wantok' is a Pidgin word meaning one voice - something that the various South Sea Islander bodies and groups have struggled to establish.

The interim president of Australian South Islanders Limited is Emelda Davis.

EMELDA DAVIS: Wantok, as a platform for transparency and openness and bringing communities together, will help to overcome those differences of opinions. And it's about everyone having a voice as part of this and delegating a representative from their region or their community that will take this one voice forward.

MELISSA MADDISON: Jennifer Darr's parents established one of the first local South Sea Islander committees in the Burdekin in North Queensland in the 1970s. She too believes it's time to achieve national recognition.

JENNIFER DARR: I think from that perspective it has got potential to be the one voice that the bulk of Australian South Sea Islanders have been searching for and wanting set up. This year is 150 years of our presence here in Australia, and so I think it's time.

There has been significant impetus around having and wanting a national body set up. So I think if there's good intent, then only good can come from that.

MELISSA MADDISON: Australian South Sea Islanders were recognised in Queensland as a distinct culture in 2000.

Emelda Davis says that was an important step, but establishing a national representative body will allow them to better lobby governments for support and services and further their calls for better recognition.

EMELDA DAVIS: When you're included in programs and services, when your identity and history is recognised in the education system, where it's an option that we walk in and we're included on the ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) forms, people know who we are.

MELISSA MADDISON: Marcia Eves and members of her extended family will be among the 200 people at the conference, and she's hoping they'll be part of history.

MARCIA EVES: I've just come back from our family reunion in the Solomon Islands, and it is time that we kind of put a lot of things together, okay, and be united. I think it's time.

SCOTT BEVAN: That's South Sea Islander Marcia Eves ending that report from Melissa Maddison. And the vote to elect a national body will be held tomorrow afternoon.



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WANTOK 2013 BRISBANE – LANDMARK ACHIEVEMENT AFTER 41 YEARS OF STRUGGLE.

By [w3media](#). Published on [February 16, 2014](#).



The Hon. Jane Prentice on behalf of Prime Minister Tony Abbott

MEDIA RELEASE – 24th November 2013

2013 Landmark achievement after 41 years of struggle. The Australian South Sea Islander (ASSI) community vote in a Secretariat Board of Directors and a National Secretariat (ASSI.PJ)

WANTOK 2013 ASSI National Capacity Building Forum which was held at the State Library in Brisbane from 1-3 November saw the ASSI community come together after forty-one years of struggle, to nominate a national representative voice.

The election outcomes for the WANTOK this year were indeed important for all Australian South Sea Islanders. It was the first time in forty-one years that elections were successfully undertaken for ASSI people for the membership of a National Secretariat and Representative Board to represent their many interests. These bodies will now be able to provide a united voice to Government and other audiences in relation to ASSI social, economic, educational, historic and cultural concerns.

The event commenced with a Welcome to Country by local traditional owner Aunty Carole Currie, a South East Queensland Elder from Jugura Country, and Aunty Jenni Willie who provided ASSI acknowledgement on behalf of all ASSI. Hon. Jane Prentice, MP, Federal Member for Ryan in Brisbane represented Prime Minister Tony Abbott and our revered Chairperson, Mrs. Bonito Mabo AO also spoke.

ATTACHMENT B

We had distinguished international representation from Vanuatu with the attendance for the duration of the Forum of Paramount Chiefs representing the Vanuatu Indigenous Descendants Association (VIDA), as well as the Hon. Ralph Regenvanu, Minister for Lands in Vanuatu. An authentic South Sea Islander touch was introduced in the entertainment with the colourful performances by 30 dancers from Tanna Island, TAFEA Australian Connections Community and Vanuatu singers. Local VIPs included Brisbane Deputy Lord Mayor Cr. Angela Owen-Taylor, Tim Mulherin, Member for Mackay in Queensland Parliament, and Settlement and Multicultural Affairs Queensland Manager Sue Charnley.

The Forum program provided delegates with a variety of interesting and inspirational speakers who related moving stories of reconnection to family and working in community. It was professionally facilitated by ASSI Paramount Chief Duane Vickery.

The election process was democratic and undertaken in open forum, allowing robust debates, where issues were given expression and the diversity of input was noted for consideration.

Highlights of in the program were speeches by Hon. Ralph Regenvanu on the proposed upcoming changes in the Vanuatu constitution which will see dual citizenship given to Ni Vanuatu under certain conditions, and Mr. Les Meltzer Co-Chair of National Congress for Australia's First Peoples who spoke about Australia and matters in relation to its human rights representation on the United Nations.

National coordinator and President of the National Secretariat, Waskam Emelda Davis says:

"The forum was intense and heartfelt. We were all there for the good of the community and need for change.

Australian South Sea Islanders need one voice to lobby and implement change for our communities.

The Secretariat Board reflects a strong and diverse skill base that represents knowledge of our history, education, policy and health industry professionals, all complimented with a strong media and marketing vision. With this strength we can move mountains.

I am honoured to be given the opportunity to work with such a diverse and committed group of people and of course the Port Jackson branch who were voted in as the National Secretariat and would like to personally thank the community for having faith in our capabilities."

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The National Secretariat on their return to Sydney have continued discussions with the Community Relations Commission, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australia Council for the Arts and follow up talks are to be held with the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples and a number of influential State and Federal agencies.

Please find below links to the website which will provide further insight into the Brisbane forum and will also be updated after our next Wantok to be held in Tweed Heads on the 7th and 8th December.

watch video: [Wantok 2012 National Conference – Bundaberg Queensland](#)

ATTACHMENT B

MEDIA RELEASE

Bonito Mabo AO - Opens Tweed Heads Australian South Sea Islanders (ASSI) Capacity Building Forum

Celebration of Culture and Reconnection

ABS ASSI Survey consultation begins

Two Day Forum Hosted by newly Elected ASSI National Secretariat at South Tweed Community Hall (9-5pm)

The importance of local South Sea Islander culture to the rich fabric of Multicultural Australia will be acknowledged in the upcoming Wantok ASSI Capacity Building Forum to be held at the Tweed heads Community Hall, Tweed Heads NSW on the 7th and 8th December.

The forum will be opened by Mrs Bonito Mabo AO, a Welcome to Country by a traditional owner and speeches by the Tweed Lord Mayor - Cr Barry Longland and NSW Member for Ballina and Minister for Local Government and for the North Coast Donald Page.

The two day forum will be delivered by facilitator Paramount Chief Duane Vickery complimented by a panel with Pacific Island / ASSI Historian Prof. Clive Moore and Aboriginal / ASSI activists Prof. Gracelyn Smallwood, both significant figures and contributor's to history, human rights and justice in Indigenous and ASSI communities.

2013 also marks an historical moment in seeing a national representative ASSI body voted in at this years Wantok 2013 National ASSI Forum held in November at the State Library Queensland (Brisbane). Tweed Heads ASSI will be represented on the National ASSI Board of Directors to the National Secretariat (ASSI.PJ).

Fiona Mount, Secretary TASSI and SBOD, says .. *' I am truly humbled to be nominated onto the Secretariat Board of Directors to the National Secretariat (ASSI.PJ). Acutely aware of the foundation commenced in my home town area of Tweed Heads by our predecessors such as Les & Marg Togo, Phyllis and Robert Corowa, our elders today, I am also inspired by my own family ancestors and the cultural values and morals that they have passed on to future generations. I am passionate about our culture achieving not only a higher national profile but also ensuring that our elders and our youth are not disadvantaged in modern society. I am committed to this National Body, our South Sea Island culture and the ongoing development of meeting the needs of our community. Our story is one that has taken over 150 years to unfold. It needs to be told. It needs to be acknowledged, in a visible and tangible manner. It needs to be catered for, nationally. '*

Robyn Watego, Vice president TSSI says ... *'Tweed South Sea Islanders open our arms and hearts to new and old friends, roll up our sleeves when there's work to be done, we smile to those who need a friendly face, we listen to those who need to be heard and we know when to work and when to have fun. We are a small group, but we are together and we are here. We are grateful to have such an important event as Wantok at our home.'*

Director of the National Secretariat (ASSI.PJ) Waskam Emelda Davis says ... *'The Tweed Forum represents an important milestone for ASSI people and youth especially in Northern NSW particularly since the formal NSW Parliament Recognition on the 15th August 2013. It*

ATTACHMENT B

is one of a series of programs to assist ASSI to learn more about our history, culture and families, both in the Tweed and in other regions as well as reconnecting with family from the Pacific Islands and sharing our rich culture with the broader community groups. Initiatives such as this establish a sense of belonging for what has been seen as a forgotten peoples.'

There will be a number of prominent names from the Tweed in attendance such as Boykin, Carter, Chadburn, Corowa, Enares, Itong, Keevers, Moss, Mussing, Mye, Noter, Slockee, Toar, Togo, Watego and Wogas families. In particular 95 year old Phyllis Corowa (née Enares) will be attending and is one of the founders for the 1972 ASSI United Council. Phyllis and her husband Robert (Zane) Corowa as president worked diligently with the ASSI community towards recognition by the Commonwealth of ASSI's. Phyllis continued and after Roberts passing saw Corowa Park, Chinderah named after her deceased husband. Her continued work also included the establishment of the South Sea Island Cemetery on Cudgen Road, Chinderah. There will be a ceremony recognizing the prominent elders of the Tweed ASSI community for their diligence and respected work in such a sustained ASSI community group.

Waskam Emelda Davis says *'I am so proud to deliver Wantok on my home territory. I was bought up by my nana who was well respected on the Tweed and beyond Emily May Enares, we lived on Cudgen Road, Chinderah and I have fond memories of my community.'*

'This forum will allow the Tweed Community to share their journey, knowledge and discuss a number of local and national needs that they would like to see addressed.

Importantly we will be capturing data that will form the basis for the creation by the Australian Bureau of Statistics of a survey program which will capture effectively for the first time ever, the national demographics of ASSI / SSI people. Up until this time, such statistical data has not been recorded efficiently from a national perspective by Government and ASSI people have been continuously overlooked as a population by government agencies. To most Australians we are virtually invisible and few know of our history within Australia.'

Australia is home to an estimated 40,000 ASSI descendants and a further estimated 300,000 recent Pacific Islander migrants. Men and women and children from eighty Pacific Islands were Blackbirded to Australia between 1863 and 1908 and many of those Islands are represented here in Australia today and have an untapped shared history of relevance.

The newly elected Secretariat Board of Directors (SBOD) and National Secretariat (ASSI.PJ) will champion the Australian South Sea islander plight through meaningful community engagement.

President SBOD - Natalie Pakoa says... *'As the newly elected President of the Secretariat Board of Directors, I look forward to meeting and talking with the community of Tweeds Heads to gain a better understanding from a local perspective of the issues facing our ASSI families.'*

For more information and media interviews with Director of National ASSI Secretariat Emelda Davis please contact:

Emelda Davis: 0416 300 946

ATTACHMENT B

Media: Marie Geissler: 0416 285 727

For more information logon to: www.assipj.com.au

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/assipj/>

watch video: ABC TV Late Line

<http://www.assipj.com.au/video/>

watch video: Wantok 2012 National Conference - Bundaberg Queensland

<http://www.assipj.com.au/wantok-2012-videos/>





WANTOK 2014 MEDIA RELEASE 26-03-2014

By [w3media](#). Published on [March 26, 2014](#).

WANTOK 2014 (Mackay) Prioritizes Governance Education and Democratic Representation at the Mackay March Forum

Cook Lecture Theatre – Central Queensland University Mackay – 28–31 March 2014

Emelda Davis, President of the Interim National Body for the Australian South Sea Islanders announces: "The WANTOK 2014 Australian South Sea Islanders Mackay Forum will prioritise governance education and democratic representation when South Sea Islanders from all around the region meet in Mackay. This national forum will determine how to work together to draft a constitution."

The forum will be hosted at the Central Queensland University in Mackay 28 – 31 March and will be facilitated by independent moderator, Michael Chapman. Over the last five year Michael has worked with many culturally diverse organisations.

The first day of the Forum will see the important educational session "Working together to draft a constitution" facilitated by Darren Fittler from Gilbert and Tobin, one of the nation's leading law firms. Delegates will explore vital issues associated with understanding what a constitution means and how it operates, the status and responsibilities of an unincorporated working committee, and how a governance model for a federation may work.

One of the key initiatives for the Forum will be to consider a motion to dissolve the former Wantok 2013 Governance Model and replace this with the selection of a National ASSI Governance Working Group (NASSIG) and the formation of Friends of NASSI initiative. The proposed brief of the Work Group is to deliver a Constitution for an incorporated association which will be presented to the ASSI community for possible adoption by Friends of NASSI at a special meeting.

Emelda Davis stated: "The proposed new structure will give our people the necessary means to deal with important ASSI matters that have remained largely invisible to the political processes that direct government policy. Tens of thousands of people in our communities have been disadvantaged through the impact of an indentured labour trade akin to slavery which was imposed on their forebears who were brought to this country to establish the economical base of Australia in sugar and cotton plantations of the mid 19th century."

"Today there are issues of educational, social and economic disadvantage to address amongst our people. We also need assistance to strengthen our culture and connect back to our families in the Pacific," Ms Davis continued.

"The delivery of the structure for a national body has been several years in the making. Considerable work has been undertaken by ASSI (Port Jackson), the Interim National ASSI Secretariat, which was given this responsibility at the 2012 WANTOK (Bundaberg) conference," said Ms Davis.

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Conference delegates will also be discussing opportunities to educate ASSI communities about the importance of the National Census and to influence how information about our communities is defined and collected by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The Forum will be opened by the Mackay Mayor Deirdie Comeford and Jason Costigan, Member for Whitsunday (Representing Glen Elms, Queensland Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs) with speeches given by Tim Mulherin, Member for Mackay, Patron Mrs Bonito Mabo – AO, Aunty Rowena Trieve – AO (former MADASSIA President), Starret Vea Vea (MADASSIA President), Emelda Davis (ASSI.PJ President).

For more information and interview with Emelda Davis please contact:

Marie Geissler: 0416 285 727

Emelda Davis: 0416 300 946

PDF Transcript can be downloaded [HERE](#).

ATTACHMENT B



Emelda Davis

July 13 · Edited

Dear Community Its great to see people on all facebook sites having this discussion and responding to the post on ASSI inclusion on the centrelink form. FYI we / ASSI.PJ did meet under the previous govt with the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) several times and via phone conference and face to face firstly during the 150th anniversary followed by then PM Rudd distributing a media release acknowledging ASSI and our forefathers/mothers contribution. On the 15th August 2013 Alex Greenwich (member for Sydney) put forward a motion in NSW Parliament House which saw bipartisan support for NSW ASSI community recognition. The minister for communities Minister Dominello commitment that day to work with the NSW community (all documentation and video speeches from 7 ministers are on our website www.assipj.com.au use them to lobby your local govt members). We had a followup meeting at NSW Parliament with CEO of the NSW community relations commission, Alex Greenwich, Prof. Clive Moore and a senior representative from the ABS, advisors and so on. All participants were handed a brief/strategy that would assist the federal and state government agencies in thinking and following through from the 1994 Commonwealth ASSI recognition on how to address the 1992 findings in an action plan for ASSI disadvantage that exists more than ever today. The only way to truly support the development of meaningful programs and services is to assess the demographic of our community through inclusion as apart of these welfare forms complimented with a strong community awareness campaigning before the 2016 Census. ASSI.PJ have drafted in all documentation and verbalised that our consideration and inclusion is NOT to take away or affect funding or otherwise of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, community, relations given our evident synergy / kinship with these communities. We stress the importance of being independent and having a separate funding stream allocated towards our community group and NOT to be included in Aboriginal funding the objective is to remain transparent. To abolish the stigma of being a forgotten people we need to encourage our community groups, leaders and friends to spread the word and alert all to participate in identifying as surviving descendants in acknowledgement of our forefathers contribution / legacy. My personal perspective on government is that either party will do what suits the climate and indigenous, ASSI or other wise minority groups always loose out. However collectively in standing strong in collaboration along side but independent of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities we are a force of nature. Karen has some valid points we need to stay on guard and proactive Congratulations to all ASSI communities, individuals and organisations who continuously commemorate, celebrate in demonstrating to the government that we are here and not going anywhere. Collectively we have achieved this change for our rightful inclusion.

[Like](#) · [Comment](#) · [Share](#)



7th & 8th December 2013

**TWEED SOUTH SEA ISLANDERS COMMUNITY
PROUDLY PRESENTS: WANTOK 2013 AT TWEED HEADS**

DATE: SATURDAY 7TH & SUNDAY 8TH DECEMBER 2013

**VENUE: SOUTH TWEED COMMUNITY HALL,
3 HEFFRON STREET, TWEED HEADS SOUTH
(NORTH OF TWEED CITY).**

TIME: 9AM TO 5PM

YOU MUST REGISTER TO ATTEND THIS EVENT

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

ASSI.PJ@GMAIL.COM PHONE: 02 9518 8981 MOBILE: 0416 300 946

Proposed program:

Welcome to Country, Patron Bonita Mabo, Tweed Lord Mayor, NSW State Minister, National Representative Chair for ASSI, National Secretariat Chair, TASSI President and Wilma Toar Blessing, Tweed Museum, Conch Shell Kakae Pakoa and Vanu Drummer performance, Local ASSI performer. (full program to be distributed once finalised)

supported by:



ATTACHMENT C (i)



Day 1: Saturday 7th December 2013

Please remember when crossing the border Queensland is one (1) hour behind NSW times.

8:00am - (NSW Time Doors Open for registration)

8:30am - Trinidad Steel Pan interlude – **Calvin Jacobs**

9:00am - Welcome to Country, Patron **Bonita Maboo AO**, **Wilma Carlson** (nee Toar) ASSI Welcome. **Elizabeth Wood** – Bislama welcome. Aunty **Amelia Watogo** – prayers. **Danny Togo** - sponsors ASSI Chronological History. **Pasifka Breeze dancers**

9:30am - Cr **Barry Longland** - Tweed Heads Lord Mayor, **Natalie Pakoa** – President of ASSI Secretariat Board of Directors, **Waskam Emelda Davis** – Director of National ASSI Secretariat, Tweed Museum representative, Recognition ceremony – **Fiona Mount** (SBOD).

10:00am - **Shireen Malamoo** 'A world perspective on the labour trade', Steel Pan – **Calvin Jacobs**

10:15am – **Pikinini Blong Yu Mi dancers**

10:30am – Historical Advisory Panel – **Professor Clive Moore** (University of QLD, Brisbane) speaks to 166 years for NSW & 150 years for Queensland Indentured Labourers. **Professor Gracelyn Smallwood** (James Cook University, Townsville) speaks on Community Cohesion, Lateral violence, discrimination and Activism for ASSI communities. **Professor Steve Mullins** (tbc) (Central QLD University) speaks to Torres Strait and Maritime connection.

(Morning tea served / gourmet sandwiches)

12:00 - **Waskam Emelda Davis** - Australian South Sea Islander National Secretariat evolution / debrief 2011, 2012, 2013

12:20pm - **Waskam Emelda Davis** - Wantok 2012 screen culture & 150 Media Campaign Strategy by ASSI.PJ

1:00pm – **Danny Togo** speaks to James Cook University – ASSI archival tape access, **Professor Clive Moore** Q&A

1:15pm – **Paramount Chief Duane Anlilipel Aptvanu Vickery** – Setting the scene 'Why are we here' – Capacity Building for ASSI Communities and what this means. Identifying the needs and how do we move forward effectively. Localised representation, networking and pathways. What a National Representative Body means. Leaders of today.

3:15pm - Afternoon tea

4:30pm – Wrapping up / debrief day 1

5:00pm – END

ATTACHMENT C (i)

Day 2: Sunday 8th December 2013

Please remember when crossing the border Queensland is one (1) hour behind NSW times.

9:30am – Prayers and remembrance, String Band Music screen culture

10:30am – Mackay births deaths and marriages register & Old QLD Kanaka Mission Baptisms –
Professor Clive Moore

Feedback session on Day 1

Christine Monday – Burdel Coop Advancement Society (Ayr Queensland) – A Story in recognition of grandad Santo from Espirity Santo.

Kathy Franklin (Community & Personal Histories DATSIMA) – Sources for ASSI Family Histories

11:30am – Paramount Chief Duane Vickery

Finding family on Malakula Island, Vanuatu (Kastom) - ordination ceremony.

Community sharing participation in story.

1:00pm – Blessing of lunch / **Pikinini Blong Yu Mi dancers, Pasifka Breeze dancers**

4:00pm - END

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Wantok Tweed Heads will be held Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th December at the South Tweed Community Hall, located at 3 Heffron Street, Tweed Heads South (north of Tweed City) NSW.

Directions: Heading north along Minjungbal Dr Turn left at the lights across from South Tweed Bowls Club. The hall is tucked in behind the pool next to Tweed River High.

TRANSPORT: Flying in? Gold Coast Airport is only 10 minutes drive away from our venue

Tweed Taxis

Phone: 13 34 22

Gold Coast Taxis

Phone: 07 5588 1223

POLICE:

- Police Emergency: Phone: 000
- Tweed Heads Police Station, New South Wales
Recreation Street, Tweed Heads. Phone: 07 5536 0999
- Coolangatta Police Station, Queensland
Musgrave Street, Coolangatta Phone: 07 5589 8444

AMBULANCE:

Medical Emergency Phone: 000
New South Wales Ambulance transport Phone: 13 12 33
Queensland Ambulance transport Phone: 1300 369 003

HOSPITAL:

Tweed Heads Hospital (3.0klms, 5 minutes):
16 – 18 Florence Street, Tweed Heads. Phone: 07 5536 1133

John Flynn Private Hospital Tugun (10.2klms, 14 minutes):
42 Inland Drive, Tugun. Phone: 07 5598 9000

ATTACHMENT C (i)



WANTOK TWEED HEADS - REGISTRATION FORM



Saturday 7TH December To Sunday 8TH December 2013
TIME: 9.00AM TO 5.00PM SOUTH TWEED COMMUNITY HALL
3 HEFFRON ST, TWEED HEADS SOUTH NSW 2486

If you have any questions please contact us on P: +61.2.9518 8981 or Mobile: 0416 300 946
Please remember when crossing the border Queensland is one (1) hour behind NSW times.

FIRST NAME : _____ **LAST NAME :** _____

TITLE : _____

MEMBER or ORGANISATION or other :- _____

DATE OF BIRTH : _____ **COUNTRY OF BIRTH :** _____

ISLANDS OF SOUTH SEA ISLANDER HERITAGE YOU IDENTIFY WITH / OTHER IF NOT SSI:

HOME ADDRESS:

POSTAL ADDRESS :

CITY : _____ **POST CODE :** _____ **STATE :** _____

PHONE : _____ **MOBILE :** _____

EMAIL ADDRESS :

PLEASE CIRCLE YES OR NO ON FOLLOWING:

Permission to share your details & images? YES or NO
Automatically register as a member of National ASSI Secretariat: YES or NO *(fee applies)*
12 months Registration fee: \$5.00

Circle type of membership
FULL (ASSI descent full voting rights)
ASSOCIATE (non ASSI descent no voting rights)

ASSI descent refers to those descendants from the indentured labor trade between 1847 to 1908
Relevant Health Issues Allergies:

Special Requirements: _____

Comments: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ **DATE:** _____

Please return this form to National Secretariat - Australian South Sea Islanders (Port Jackson) Ltd
P O Box 117 Pyrmont NSW 2009 or scan and email to assi.pj@gmail.com
ALL DONATIONS & WILL BE RECEIPTED & CONTRIBUTIONS ARE GREATLY APPRECIATED

ATTACHMENT C (i)



Wantok 2013 Tweed Heads - Opening Ceremony, Aunty Bonita Mabo acknowledges country



Wantok 2013 Tweed Heads – delegates and crowd with Bonita Mabo watch youth performances

ATTACHMENT C (i)



Chief Richard - Vanuatu Indigenous Descendants Association speaks on Blackbirding



Wantok 2013 Tweed Heads ASSI cultural group "Pikinini blong yumi"

ATTACHMENT C (i)



Wantok 2013 Tweed Heads - Opening Ceremony - Professor Clive Moore's (UQ) invaluable contribution to our history



Wantok 2013 Tweed Heads - Jacob Kafoa and Shireen Malamoo (ASSI.PJ board member and respected elder) perform a beautiful rendition of Summer Time

ATTACHMENT C (i)

Tweed Heads – 95 year old Phyllis Corowa co founder of the first 1972 Australian South Sea Islanders United Council (ASSIUC) in 1972 on the Tweed.





Opening Ceremony steel pan played by Calvin Jacobs from Trinidad West Indies playing traditional steel pan in support of a shared history in slavery all images by Tweed ASSI photographer Nathan Hart



Emelda Davis

December 20, 2013

Tweed Wantok 2013 - Great images of community engagement by Nathan Hart



Recognition certificates shared with long standing ASSI supporters from the broader community in the Tweed region



Graham Mooney Mackay Elder shares his story with Tweed Heads ASSI Community



Emelda Davis

December 20, 2013 · Edited

Day 2 - Tweed Wantok 2013 Kathy Frankland | Manager Community and Personal Histories | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs | Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs. (Finding family) images by Tweed photographer Nathan Hart.



ASSI facilitator - Paramount Chief Duane Vickery from Tasmania

ASSI CEO Burdekin (Ayr far Nth QLD) Housing tells her story of grandfather Santo



Emelda Davis

December 20, 2013 · Edited

Tweed Wantok 2013 - Pacifika Breeze debut images by Tweed photographer Nathan Hart.



NSW Parliament Recognises Australia's History of Slavery - On the 15th August 2013 Mr ALEX GREENWICH put forward the motion for debate in NSW Parliament which saw seven members speak in favour.

Video's 1 - 7

Mr Alex Greenwich (Sydney, Independent Member) said. "While being defined as a distinct disadvantaged ethnic group, there are no specific programs and services for Australian South Sea Islanders nor are there official figures on how many descendants there are in Australia. "Debate by the seven MP's who spoke was thoughtful, sensitive and informed and has strong symbolic importance to Australian South Sea Islanders"

Watch:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3zYG72G4UU8&feature=c4-overview&list=UUGSKkiIABidVxITnwfBTerA>

Ms Linda Burney (Canterbury, Member of the Legislative Assembly) Today's debate carries several messages and one of those is the importance to Aboriginal, South Sea Islander and Torres Strait Islander peoples to have their story acknowledged and legitimised and to have the identities of generations of South Sea Islanders recognised in the narrative of this nation.

Watch:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GjxEgQ14RQM&list=UUGSKkiIABidVxITnwfBTerA>

Mr Donald Page (Ballina, Member of the The Nationals) - In the Tweed the first South Sea Islander workers arrived to work in the cane fields in the Brunswick Valley in the 1880s. By 1891, 105 South Sea Islanders were recorded as living in and around Cudgen and Tumbulgum. The Pacific Island Labourers Act 1901 had led to the deportation of many islanders but some were still working in the Cudgen area. The Act was amended to include a £100 fine for employing "unregistered kanakas". There were also large numbers of South Sea Islanders at Tumbulgum, including the father of remarkable Australian human rights activist Faith Bandler, one of the major forces behind the success of the 1967 referendum recognising Aboriginal rights in this country. The peoples of the South Seas are integral to the history of the North Coast. For instance, the name of Wategos Beach at Byron Bay is named after a prominent islander family. Many South Sea Islander people still live on the North Coast, and their contribution has been better recognised more recently. They were integral in the development of the sugar, banana and timber industries and to clearing land for the dairy industry.

watch:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DSF6yS9WvQ0&list=UUGSKkiIABidVxITnwfBTerA>

Mr Chris Hartcher (Terrigal, Libral Party Minister) extract "... the people of any race, other than the aboriginal race in any State, for whom it is deemed necessary to make special laws." Among the first bills passed by the new Commonwealth Parliament after its inauguration in 1901 was legislation removing Pacific Islanders from Australia and transporting them back to the islands of the Pacific. It is important to put this in historical context. The history of the Australian Labor Party is built upon that story. While Australian Labor Party members happily support the motion today they tend to gloss over the history of their own political party. The trade union movement now endorses these principles but once again they gloss over the history of their actions. There is a famous quotation by the philosopher Santayana, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

Watch:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PMfR-u1lwiA&list=UUGSKkiIABidVxITnwfBTerA>

Mr Jamie Parker (Balmain, Greens Party) On 25 August last year I learnt a lot more about this issue when I attended a South Sea Islanders function at St Johns in Glebe. In particular, I was introduced to a word that has come to signify the great shame of this period: "blackbirding". We heard also about Faith Bandler, the daughter of a South Sea Islander who was blackbirded into the Queensland cane fields. It was a sad and shameful period in our history, and today's motion goes some way towards addressing it. I have met a number of times with representatives of the Australian South Sea Islander community, including those who attended the twentieth anniversary of the national body for Australian South Sea Islanders. I especially acknowledge Emelda Davis for her fantastic work, particularly in my electorate, on this issue.

Watch:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eXm-NMo1pAo&list=UUGSKkiIABidVxITnwfBTerA>

CONTINUED:

Mr Guy Zangari (Fairfield, Labor Party) - NSW Recognition speech 15th August 2013 - NSW Recognition speech 15th August 2013 During the early twentieth century, when the Commonwealth of Australia was in its infancy, South Sea Islanders were targeted by the introduction of legislation limiting the entry of non-British or Europeans into Australia. Records indicate that from 1904 to 1908 a total of 7,068 islanders were deported from Australia. That is terrible: The community that provided the labour upon which the early sugar industry was founded and that allowed it to flourish was denied all recognition.

Watch:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R7zvO800PcQ&feature=c4-overview&list=UUGSKkiIABidVxITnwfBTerA>

Mr Bryan Doyle (Campbelltown, Member of Liberal Party) I support the motion moved by the member for Sydney that highlights Australia's shared migrant history, which involves people from the South Sea Islands and from throughout the Pacific—Tonga, Samoa, Cook Islands, Fiji, Solomon Islands and Maori communities. I welcome the news that the Minister for Citizenship and Communities will meet with the national body of South Sea Islanders.

Watch:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UvICeGWqmbk&feature=c4-overview&list=UUGSKkiIABidVxITnwfBTerA>

NSW Parliament debate summary on Recognition of Australian South Sea Islanders

Alex Greenwich (Sydney, Independent Member) Commend the motion to the house "All those in favour say ... I" a unanimous vote was seen on this day 15th August 2013. That this House:

(1) notes 25 August 2013 as Australian South Sea Islander Recognition Day, marking 150 years since about 50,000 people on 62,000 indenture contracts from around 80 Pacific Islands were recruited or kidnapped to work in sugar cane fields where they were exploited;

(2) notes the Australian South Sea Islanders suffered inhumane treatment, the highest mortality rates of any immigrant group to Australia and mass deportations when the White Australia Policy was introduced;

(3) notes many of the 40,000 Australian South Sea Islander descendants who live in Australia remain marginalised and disadvantaged;

(4) notes thousands of Australian South Sea Islanders live in New South Wales but an official number has not been established;

(5) notes then Premier Carr's memorandum of understanding of 1995 called for adequate programs and services;

(6) acknowledges the Community Relations Commission's initiatives in relation to South Sea Islanders and requests the Government to liaise with the National Body for Australian South Sea Islanders in preparing a demographic, social and economic community profile; and

(7) acknowledges the contribution the Australian South Sea Islander community makes to New South Wales and its history in Australia.

Watch:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B8ObW6sjc0E&feature=c4-overview&list=UUGSKkiIABidVxITnwfBTerA>

ATTACHMENT C (i)

Torres Strait at 'heart' of South Sea Islander history

By MARK BOUSEN

TORRES Strait Islander people are in the heart of South Sea Islander history in Australia and their input IS vital in obtaining recognition and recording history, a prominent spokesperson has said.

Mrs Natalie Pakoa, the president of the board of Directors at Wantok, was speaking at the Australian South Sea Islanders' Capacity Building Forum at Tweed Heads on December 7-8.

Mrs Pakoa says she was "very happy" with the response to the

Forum.

"We informed the community about the purpose of the national body and working together as a community to promote recognition and our culture.

"There was a great deal of sharing stories and having conversations which connect to our history.

"We also informed the community about the links that have been built with Vanuatu and Solomon Islands families."

Mrs Pakoa says the group will be working closely with ASPJ (Australian South Sea Islanders Port

Jackson) to lobby the Government about the policies for the ASSI community.

"The forum has been a success for the Tweed Heads South Sea Islander community."

The first South Sea Islanders were brought to Australia about 1863.

Mrs Pakoa (nee Willie), who is of Aboriginal (Gureng) and ASSI (Vanuatu) descent, estimates there are about 2000 ASSI residents in the Tweed Heads area, and between 4000-5000 in the area south to Byron Bay.



ABOVE: National ASSI Secretariat President Emelda Davis, Paramount Chief Vanuatu David Richard Fandanumatu, ASSI Patron Mrs Bonita Mabo and Natalie Pakoa, President of the Board of Directors for Wantok.

BELOW: Key figures at the forum were (from left): Sandra King, Emelda Davis, Shireen Malamoo, Dr Clive Moore and Professor Gracelyn Smallwood.



Wantok Board of Directors. Back row (from left): Sandra King, Christine Monday, Alan Johnson, Fiona Mount and Emelda Davis. Front (from left): Lesley Yasso, Louise Pferrer, Natalie Pakoa and Jenifer Darr. Page 26 Torres News 16 - 22 December 2013





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DATE: 1ST - 3RD NOVEMBER 2013

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

ASSI.PJ @ GMAIL.COM

PHONE: 02 9518 8981 MOBILE: 0416 300 946

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Queensland
Government

ATTACHMENT C (ii)



23rd September 2013

Dear Community associations, Leaders, Academics, Youth, Elders, Friends and Families,

The Australian South Sea Islanders (Port Jackson) (ASSI.PJ) interim national body formally invite you to participate as a delegate from your organisation or as an individual community member at this year's Wantok 2013 national capacity building forum funded under the Australian Commonwealth Government's Senator Kate Lundy as Minister for Sport, Minister for Multicultural Affairs' under her 'Community Cohesion Grants Program'.

Our venue this year is proudly sponsored by the State Library Queensland (SLQ) Australia from the 1st 2nd and 3rd of November 2013, daily times 9am to 5pm. (address: Stanley Pl, South Brisbane QLD Australia 4101 (61.7) 3840 7666) <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au>

2013 marks a significant 150 years for Queensland since 55,000 South Sea Islanders (95% male) were bought to Australia on 62,000 indentured contracts to establish sugar, maritime and pastoral industries. Many of these men and women did not return to their Island homes and 15,000 —a third —lost their lives to common disease to which they lacked immunity. During the implementation of the White Australia Policy a mass deportation of some 7,000 SSI's occurred, and 1,500 were allowed to remain under humanitarian circumstances. Several 100's had crossed the border into NSW in the 1890's and 1900s to escape the more severe conditions in Queensland.

For NSW, 2013 marks 166 years since the first South Sea Islanders were bought to Eden by entrepreneur Ben Boyd who had already used Aboriginal, Maori and Pacific Islands labourers in his whaling industry ventures. Worried about not having sufficient labour for his pastoral properties, in 1847 he decided to experiment with bringing in a Pacific Islanders workforce, without waiting for government permission. This was a human disaster.

Australia is home to some 300,000 - 400,000 migrant Pacific Islanders (PI) and a further 40,000 – 50,000 South Sea Islander (SSI) descendants of the Blackbirding era.

The ASSI.PJ interim national body encourages those of PI descent and the broader community from within Australia and internationally to attend Wantok 2013 in support of recognition for the 80 islands that were affected by the Blackbirding era between 1863 – 1908.

Our PI families and community representatives are significant within Australia's economic base, bilateral relations and carry political clout in relation to United Nations platforms and Australia's relations with its Pacific Islands' neighbours. Together we are a strong contender for rightful recognition of our Forefather's and the ongoing PI's contribution to one of the richest countries in the world.

This year's program will see a democratic vote in favour of a national representative secretariat and a committed representative board from all regions across Australia to continue the momentum of the past 20 years. There will be additional Wantok capacity-building workshops hosted at Tweed Heads Northern New South Wales (NSW) and Mackay Queensland as well as Vanuatu and Solomon Islands

1

Australian South Sea Islanders (Port Jackson) Limited,
PO Box 117 Fremont, NSW 2009 mobile: +61(0)1816 300 000 fax: +61 2 9571 0326 email: assipjj@gmail.com A0560003402590

ATTACHMENT C (ii)

during 2013 / 2014. The Vanuatu and Solomon's workshops will focus on ASSI / SSI reconnection with community, culture and families.

The program will also commemorate 150 years of survival for Australian South Sea Islander descendants, presenting an academic panel that addresses the history and current demographics of the ASSI / ATSI and Pacific Islander connections across Australia and the Pacific. There will be an interim national body report and a Wantok Working committee panel, as well as ASSI Associations and community perspectives on recognition, past and present day.

The call for a national recognition came out of a Brisbane forum of Australian South Sea Islanders, Vanuatu Government officials and Paramount Chiefs in October 2011, which saw an official coordinator committee appointed and the ASSI.PJ President and Vice President nominated as the main coordinators for producing Wantok 2012 Bundaberg QLD. The ASSI.PJ branch is a not-for-profit organisation, which is located in Sydney, NSW, Australia. Although ASSI.PJ is based in Sydney, it is an organisation that manages events and public relations activities for Australian South Sea Islanders and broader communities throughout Australia.

The special guest speakers are being discussed as we progress through the final planning stages, therefore any recommendations or participants you wish to put forward from your organisation, community or cultural perspective will be kindly considered over the next three weeks.

We will be collecting feedback on our community and its issues through delegates attending the Wantok 2013 Conference. It will be used to shape further capacity building for ASSI's and assist in the implementation of a national and international action plan to move our South Sea Islander communities and countries of origin towards a better future for our families.

Please find attached your registration, which is necessary for entry as seating is limited. All details requested are compulsory to ascertain the demographic of those attending. Should you fail to complete the form in its entirety your incomplete registration can delay your confirmed seating.

Lastly, nomination, proxy and voting guidelines and selection criteria are being drafted for distribution to your communities and associations in the immediate future.

Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me on phone 61. 2. 95188981 OR 61. 2 + (0) 416 300 946 or email assi.pj@gmail.com for further information.

Yours sincerely,



Emelda Davis - President (m: 0416300946)
Encl: Wantok 2012 Information Pack

ATTACHMENT C (ii)



WANTOK 2013 - PROGRAM (3days)

Day 1 - Friday 1st November 2013

8:00am Doors Open

9:00am **Pastor Ray Minniecon** MC, Welcome to Country traditional owner **Aunty Carole Currie** South East Queensland Elder from *Jugura Country*, **Aunty Jenni Willie** (SSI acknowledgement), The Voice of the Chiefs **Kakae Pakoa** (Conch Shell), Vanuatu Indigenous Descendants Association (VIDA), Paramount Chief's & Distinguished guests, One minutes silence in remembrance.

9:20am Opening speeches - Patron **Mrs. Bonita Mabo**, **Hon. Jane Prentice** on behalf of Prime Minister Tony Abbott, Brisbane Deputy Lord Mayor - **Cr Angela Owen-Taylor**, **Tim Mulherin** Member for Mackay, Vanuatu **Minister Ralph Regenvanu**, Settlement and Multicultural Affairs Queensland Manager **Sue Charnley**.

Sponsor Acknowledgements – **Danny Togo**

Australian South Sea Islanders Political and Literary Achievements by **Danny Togo**

9:50am ASSI.PJ President – **Waskam Emelda Davis** (speaks to mandate and ASSI.PJ report)

10:05am ASSI Community 150 briefing - Vanuatu Indigenous Australian South Sea Islanders Community – **Natalie Pakoa**, **Fiona Mount** - 150 Tweed Heads ASSI Association.

10:20am Entertainment – TAFEA Australian Connection 'He Speaks choir' & Dancers from Tanna Island – Chief Colin Tarer, **Indigo Ukulele Mob**, **Shane Togo**, **Shireen Malamoo**, **Charlie Bobongie**.

10:55am Setting the scene 'Why we are here' facilitated by **Paramount Chief Duane Anlilinpel Aptvanu Vickery**

11:10am Government commitment verses questionable delivery – **Graham Tanner**

11:25am Historical Advisory Panel – **Prof. Clive Moore**; South Sea Islander Chronological History, **Prof. Gracelyn Smallwood**; Community Cohesion and Activism, **Assoc Prof. Doug Hunt**; The Legacy of the 1860's, **Assoc Prof. Stephen Mullins**; Torres Strait & Maritime Connection, **Dr Francis Bobongie**; reconnecting with Mailaita in the Solomon Islands, audience Q&A

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ATTACHMENT C (ii)

Suggestion box notes from participants.

12:00 LUNCH break

1:00pm Kastom & Culture leadership – **Minister Ralph Regenvanu**

1:30pm Moving forward through effective leadership – sessions below by **Paramount Chief Duane Vickery**

2:00pm Proposed National ASSI Governance structure – briefing

3:00pm Open forum discussion for formal decision from Wantok 2013 forum participants
(closed session to media)

3:20pm Afternoon Tea

3:40pm Role and responsibility of the secretariat board directors (selections & confirmations)

4:30pm Election process

Suggestion box notes from participants.

5:00pm Overview of Day 2

Day 2 - Saturday 2nd November 2013.

8:00am Doors Open

Suggestion box notes from participants.

9:30am SLQ Archive images access, Mackay births deaths and marriages register & Old QLD Kanaka Mission Baptisms – **Professor Clive Moore** ([White Gloves Room level 4](#))

10:30am 150 News Reel and Wantok 2012 – screen culture

11:00am Burdel Coop Advancement Society (Ayr Queensland) – ‘A story in recognition of Grandad Santo’ from Espirity Santo - **Christine Monday. Jane Smith** from Bundaberg shares an insight to her community work. VASSIC Beaudesert film – **Natalie Pakoa.**

11:30am Kathy Frankland (Community & Personal Histories DATSIMA) - Sources for Australian South Sea Islander family history.

Kastom & Culture Practices (Traditional belief systems) – **Minister Ralph Regenvanu**

ATTACHMENT C (ii)

12:00pm LUNCH

1:30pm Voting briefing process

2:00pm AFTERNOON TEA

3:30pm VOTING IN A NATIONAL SECRETARIAT formalising voting process

Suggestion box notes from participants.

5:00 END Day 2

Day 3 - Sunday 3rd November 2013

10:00am Church Service – **Pastor Ray Minniecon**

sponsor Kapapa Lawyers TAFEA Australian Connection 'He Speaks choir' from Tanna Island
other performances (tbc)

Suggestion box notes from patrons.

12:00pm LUNCH

1:30pm Finalisation, Consolidation, Looking Forward, Wantok 2014 decision

Suggestion box notes from participants.

5:00pm END Day 3

Sincerely,



Emelda Davis – President

Australian South Sea Islanders (Port Jackson) Limited

PO Box 117 Pyrmont Sydney NSW 2009 Email: assi.pj@gmail.com Mobile: 0416300946

www.assipj.com.au

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/assipj/?fref=ts>

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ATTACHMENT C (ii)



The Hon. Jane Prentice on behalf of Prime Minister Tony Abbott opens Wantok 2013



Tanna Island dancers perform at Wantok 2013

ATTACHMENT C (ii)



Aunty Carole Currie South East Queensland Elder from the Yugura People 'Welcome to Country'



Delegation from the Government of Vanuatu at Wantok 2013 Brisbane acting Prime Minister Ralph Regenvanu

ATTACHMENT C (ii)



Vanuatu acting Prime Minister Ralph Regenvanu addresses Wantok delegates Brisbane 2013



ASSI.PJ Patron - Mrs Bonita Mabo addresses Wantok 2013 Brisbane

ATTACHMENT C (ii)



The crowd at Wantok 2013 Brisbane



Paramount Chief Duane Vickery facilitator and ASSI corporate governance specialist - Wantok 2013

ATTACHMENT C (ii)

FUTHER MATERIAL AVAILABLE ON FACEBOOK AND YOU TUBE

 **Emelda Davis** ▸ Australian South Sea Islanders Port Jackson
February 27 · Sydney · 🌐

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mUvMo5P0u6E>

 **Vanuatu Minister Ralph Regenvanu at Wantok 2013 State Library Queensland**


YOUTUBE.COM

TAFEA Australian Connection Community perform at Wantok 2013 - State Library QLD a sacred women's dance from Tanna Island Vanuatu.

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=10202333952855413&set=vb.1389734062&type=2&theater>



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=thKVtqJhddU&feature=youtu.be>

 **Opening speech at Wantok 2013 Brisbane by Waskam Emelda Davis**

read full article: [http://www.assipj.com.au/meet-the-team/Waskam-Emelda-Davis -- Tanna Island descendant Vanuatu. Emelda Davis is the inaugural President of..](http://www.assipj.com.au/meet-the-team/Waskam-Emelda-Davis--Tanna-Island-descendant-Vanuatu.-Emelda-Davis-is-the-inaugural-President-of..)

YOUTUBE.COM | BY ONYX MEDIA 1

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ATTACHMENT C (ii)



Emelda Davis ▸ Australian South Sea Islanders Port Jackson

February 23 - Sydney · 🌐

remembering Wantok Brisbane 2013 - the critical need for demographic assessment.

SBS RADIO INTERVIEW - 6th November 2013 (click on below link to listen)

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2013/11/05/new-group-represent-south-sea-islanders...> See More



New group to represent South Sea Islanders

Australian South Sea Islanders have established a national body to lobby for their interests at a federal level. At a meeting in Brisbane, representatives of the estimated 40,000 strong community in Australia elected a national president...

[SBS.COM.AU](http://www.sbs.com.au)

Some comments from <https://www.facebook.com/groups/assiji>

Congrats to all who participated in the 2013. We got the job done. Congrats to PJ ASSI, back in the seat to a National Body now and also to the Board of Directors. Woohoo.

Congrats to all who participated in the 2013. We got the job done. Congrats to PJ ASSI, back in the seat to a National Body now and also to the Board of Directors. Woohoo.
November 4, 2013 at 4:26pm · Like · 2

Congratulations Emelda Davis...your hard work is paying off.Would like to catch up when I get back from Cape Town.
November 5, 2013 at 2:45am · Like · 1



Emelda Davis

November 21, 2013

Indigenous Jobs and Training Review Seminar (Emelda Davis, Alan Tudge secretary to the Prime Minister - Tony Abbott, Shireen Malamoo)

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/election-2013/tudge-to-reinforce-abbotts-pledge/story-fn9qr68y-1226721309975>



Like · Comment · Share

👍 Michael von Reth, Joanne Timor, Lydia George and 11 others like this.



Emelda Davis This man was across the Wantok Forum... I think we're on our way when people know what we are about. awesome!

November 22, 2013 at 6:08am · Like



Caroline Munns So hopefully there will be jobs, etc for our ASSI people


November 22, 2013 at 7:36am · Unlike · 3

THE AUSTRALIAN SOUTH SEA ISLANDERS - PORT JACKSON

The Australian South Sea Islanders - Port Jackson (ASSI-PJ) are the national secretariat representing the interests of all Australian South Sea Islanders.

ASSIPJ.COM.AU

[Like](#) · [Comment](#) · [Share](#)

 [Juno Gemes](#), [Fred Havea Bulanyi Leone](#), [Agnes G Ware](#) and 3 others like this.



Juno Gemes Well Done! xxx

November 26, 2013 at 8:12am · [Like](#)



Emelda Davis

February 24 · Sydney

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GuVzd2pijDI&feature=c4-overview&list=UUGSKkiIABidVxITnwfBTerA>



Waskam Emelda Davis speaks at Wantok 2013 - State Library Queensland

Australian South Sea Islanders (ASSI) Receive \$50,000 Federal Grant for Community Cultural and...

YOUTUBE.COM

Like · Comment · Share

Niky Jax, Robyn Tait Watego, Vanessa Fisher and 8 others like this.



Robyn Tait Watego Well said Emelda, Loved it.

February 25 at 1:09pm · Unlike · 1



Jacqueline James Go sister. Jx

February 27 at 5:38am · Like



Emelda Davis

February 25 · Sydney

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yNH0T4zit8g>



Deportation funded by deceased estate - Prof. Clive Moore speaks at Wantok 2013 SLQ

read full article:

<http://www.assipj.com.au/southsea/wp-content/uplo...>

YOUTUBE.COM

Like · Comment · Share

Niky Jax, Robyn Tait Watego and Joe Tara like this.



Robyn Tait Watego Proud to say I was there for the talks of Wantok 2013
Wow, so much great info, cluey people.

February 25 at 10:13pm · Like



THE AUSTRALIAN SOUTH SEA ISLANDERS NATIONAL FORUM

CENTRAL QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY
MACKAY BUILDING 1/G.03
151 BOUNDARY ROAD,
OORALEA, MACKAY QLD

DATE: 28TH-31ST MARCH 2014

REGISTRATIONS: 8.30AM DAILY

CONFERENCE 10.00AM TO 6.00PM
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

ASSI.PJ@GMAIL.COM

PHONE: 02 9518 8981

MOBILE: 0416 300 946



Opening Ceremony Program

Friday 28th March 2014

10:00am to 11am

Master of Ceremonies – Dennis Bobongie

1. WELCOME to Country – Gary Mooney, traditional owner from Yuibera clan
2. Deirdre Comeford, Mayor of Mackay
3. Jason Costigan, Member for Whitsunday (representing Glen Elmes, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs)
4. Tim Mulherin, Member for Mackay
5. Mrs Bonita Mabo, AO (patron ASSI.PJ)
6. Aunty Rowena Trieve, (2013 Cultural diversity recipient and respected ASSI elder and former MADASSIA president)
7. Melina Fakatava (nee Togo), ASSI.PJ Secretary reading an ASSI Chronological History.
8. Starrett Veve, President of MADASSIA
9. Verinica Griffin, **President** of Kanaka Voices, reading her poem 'We are not forgotten'
10. Emelda Davis – ASSI.PJ President

To be followed by Morning Tea service in the foyer and a simultaneous screen the highlights from Wantok 2013 (Brisbane) State Library QLD in the auditorium.

Thanks to the participants and we look forward to our discussions over the next few days.



Australian South Sea Islanders (Port Jackson) Limited.

1

115 Dorril Street, Mackay, Queensland 4740 Australia Tel: (08) 4922 4444 Fax: (08) 4922 4996 Email: assipj@assipj.com.au www.assipj.com.au



WANTOK 2014 (MACKAY)

PROGRAM

Friday 28th March to Monday 31st March 2014

CQU Mackay Building 1/G.03 (Cook Lecture Theatre) & Foyer

Program Facilitator/Moderator:	Michael Chapman
Forum Scribe:	Dianna Robinson
Opening & Closing Proceedings	
Host/Master of Ceremonies:	Dennis Bobongie
Session Facilitator:	Darren Fittler, Gilbert & Tobin Lawyers
Session Facilitator:	Robyn Watego
Session Facilitator:	Melina Fakatava
Session Facilitator:	Emelda Davis
Session Facilitator:	Graham Mooney
Session Facilitator:	Tony Watego



ATTACHMENT C (iii)

DAY 1: **SESSIONS 1 - 6** COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING FRIDAY 28th March 2014

SESSION 1

10:00am - 11:00am

Opening Ceremony

[See separate Opening Ceremony Program.]

11:00am – 11:25am

Morning Tea (screening Wantok 2013 Brisbane)

SESSION 2

11:25 – 12:00pm

“Program introduction and some ground rules for working together”

Session Facilitator: Michael Chapman

Aunty Shireen Malamoo introduces Michael as the Wantok 2014 Facilitator/Moderator.

- Over view of Wantok 2014 Workshop program
- Facilitator/Moderator to set rules for debate and conduct, and obtain attendees agreement
- Facilitator/Moderator to acknowledge community discord and deficiencies in current model, and how, prior to attendees debating these issues, community capacity building can be used to assist in effectively addressing these issues. (NB: no debate on the floor during this session regarding the discordance issues.)
- Group exercise: commence unpacking ‘Kindness’, ‘Respect’, ‘Joy’, ‘Mercy’, ‘Community’ and ‘the Greater Good’.

[See Conference Document: *“Some Ground Rules for Working Together.”*]

SESSION 3

12:00pm - 1:15pm

“Working together to draft a constitution”

Special Guest Facilitator: Darren Fittler, Gilbert & Tobin Lawyers

Moderator: Michael Chapman

- What is a constitution (what does this mean)
- Discussion regarding an unincorporated working committee
- Federation model discussions / insights

1:15pm – 1:30pm

Short break and commencement of lunch service for the Working Lunch.

SESSION 4

1:30pm – 3:30pm

“Working towards an inclusive national representative body”

Special Guest Facilitator: Darren Fittler, Gilbert & Tobin Lawyers

Moderator: Michael Chapman

Working Lunch with G&T Lawyers

- Benefits of a Federation model
- Terms of Reference/Instructions/rules for a national ASSI governance work group

ATTACHMENT C (iii)

- Governance
- Conflicts of interest
- Copyright of images and stories (oral culture)
- 'Umbrella insurance' for affiliate organisations – is this possible?
- Q&A

[See Conference Documents: *"National ASSI Governance Work Group: a proposal for discussion"* and *"Future Visions: A Federation/Ordinary Community Member Model."*]

3:30pm – 4:00pm

Afternoon Tea

SESSION 5

4:00pm - 5:00pm

"Good Governance and Community Organising"

Facilitator: Michael Chapman

A workshop on the three keys to good governance for community organisations

- Openness
- Transparency
- Accountability

SESSION 6

5:00pm – 6:30/7pm

"Where to now? Motion, Debate and Vote"

Facilitator: Michael Chapman

Consideration of a Motion to dissolve the Wantok 2013 Governance Model, and to work towards developing a better model through further consultation and by instituting a *"National ASSI Governance Work Group ('NASSIG Work Group')"* to deliver a Constitution for an incorporated association for adoption at the next Wantok.

[See documents: *"DAY 1, SESSION 6: MOTION: A Pathway to an Incorporated Association"* and *"National ASSI Governance Work Group: a proposal for discussion."*]

6:30/7pm Supper at the Hut / END DAY 1

ATTACHMENT C (iii)

DAY 2: SESSIONS 7 – 11 COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING SATURDAY 29th March 2014

SESSION 7

10am – 11:30am

“Reconnecting with History, Family and Community: Welcoming Mackay to the Wantok Communities”

Facilitator: Robyn Watego

- Poem by Veronica Griffin
- Mackay historical information
- Mackay Births Deaths & Marriages archives
- Finding family power point presentation – DATSIMA

11:30 am - 12:00 noon

Morning Tea (screening Wantok 2013 Brisbane)

SESSION 8

12:00 noon – 1:00pm

“Discussion regarding recognition of ASSI Elders and a National Register of ASSI Elders”

Facilitators: Michael Chapman and Robert Watego

Discussion regarding:

- the value of traditional decision making
- whether a National ASSI Association should institute and keep a Register of ASSI Elders
- consider a major celebration of ASSI Elders to launch the Register and honour existing ASSI Elders

1:00pm – 2:00pm

Lunch service (Phantom Island Screening)

SESSION 9

2:00pm – 3:30pm

“The NASSIG Work Group: Discussion regarding the Terms of Reference, selecting the NASSIG Work Group and interim National Spokesperson(s) and Administration”

Facilitators: Michael Chapman and Melina Fakatava

A summary of Day 1 followed by discussion regarding:

- the Terms of Reference for the NASSIG Work Group
- selecting members of the NASSIG Work Group to deliver the next Wantok at which a Constitution for an Association will be presented for adoption
- which ASSI organisation will provide administration to assist the NASSIG Work Group
- who will the National Spokesperson(s) (if any) until the next Wantok

[See Conference Document: *“National ASSI Governance Work Group: a proposal for discussion.”*]

3:30pm – 4:00pm

Afternoon Tea

SESSION 10

ATTACHMENT C (iii)

3:30pm – 5:00pm

“The NASSIG Work Group: Community Capital Building – Identifying community skills, talents and resources”

Facilitators: Michael Chapman and Graham Mooney (plus Regional Facilitators)

A workshop to identify existing regional community skills, talents and resources.

SESSION 11

5:00pm – 6/6:30pm

“The NASSIG Work Group: Motions regarding the NASSIG Work Group”

Facilitator: Michael Chapman

Consideration of a Motion regarding selection procedures for members of the NASSIG Work Group and the adoption of Terms of Reference for the Group.

Consideration of a Motion regarding interim Spokesperson(s) and Administration.

If the Motion regarding selection procedures for members of the NASSIG Work Group includes a provision to appoint three (3) attendees of Wantok 2014 (Mackay) to the Work Group, an election for these three appointees will take place.

[See Conference Document: *“National ASSI Governance Work Group: a proposal for discussion.”* Motions to be drafted during the course of the day.]

6:30/7pm END DAY 2

ATTACHMENT C (iii)

DAY 3: SESSIONS 12 – 14
FUTURE VISIONS
SUNDAY 30 March 2014

SESSION 12

10am – 11:30am

“Future Visions: Getting Counted – National Census and Australian Bureau of Statistics”

Facilitators: Michael Chapman and Emelda Davis

- Report back of meeting with the Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Importance of being included in the National Census
- 2016 Census community education campaign
- 2021 Expansion of Census family heritage question

11:30 am - 12:00 noon

Morning Tea (screening Wantok 2013 Brisbane)

SESSION 13

12:15pm – 1:30pm

“Future Visions: Overview of a Federation/Ordinary Member Governance Model and Discussion”

Facilitators: Michael Chapman and Melina Fakatava

In light of the community consultation undertaken so far, what a national incorporated association of ASSI organisations and community member could look like.

[See Conference Document: *“Future Visions: A Federation/Ordinary Community Member Model.”*]

1:30pm to 2:30pm

Baked Sunday Lunch (screening Wantok 2012 Bundaberg)

SESSION 14

2:30pm – 3:30pm

“Future Visions: Defining the Criteria for Membership of the Association”

Facilitators: Michael Chapman and Melina Fakatava

Workshop to identify criteria for membership of the Association.

[See Conference Document: *“Future Visions: A Federation/Ordinary Community Member Model.”*]

3:30pm – 4:00pm

Afternoon Tea service

SESSION 15

4:00pm – 5:30pm

“Future Visions: Structuring the National Council: Defining the Classes of Seats”

Facilitator: Michael Chapman, Robyn Watego and Graham Mooney

Workshop regarding defining the classes of seats on the National Council and possible geographic boundaries of regions.

[See Conference Document: *“Future Visions: A Federation/Ordinary Community Member Model.”*]

ATTACHMENT C (iii)

SESSION 16

5:30pm – 6.30pm

“Future Visions: Thinking Ahead: Strategic Plan for the Association: Your thoughts”

Facilitator: Michael Chapman and Robert Watego

Workshop and discussion to ascertain topics/needs to be addressed in the Association’s first Strategic Plan.

[See Conference Document: *“Future Visions: A Federation/Ordinary Community Member Model.”*]

6:30/7pm / END DAY 3

**DAY 4: SESSIONS 17 – 19
CLOSING BUSINESS
MONDAY 31 March 2014**

SESSION 17

10am – 11:30am

“Recap, Questions on Notice and other matters”

Facilitators: Michael Chapman and Robert Watego

This session addresses any outstanding matters and replies to questions taken on notice during the course of the conference.

11:30 am - 12:00 noon

Morning Tea (screening?)

SESSION 18

12pm – 1:30pm

“The NASSIG Work Group: Organising the next Wantok”

Facilitators: Michael Chapman and Melina Fakatava

Exploring ideas on delivering the next Wantok.

1:30pm – 2:30pm

Lunch

SESSION 19

1:30pm – 2pm

“Closing”

Host: Dennis Bobongie

2pm End of Conference

ATTACHMENT C (iii)



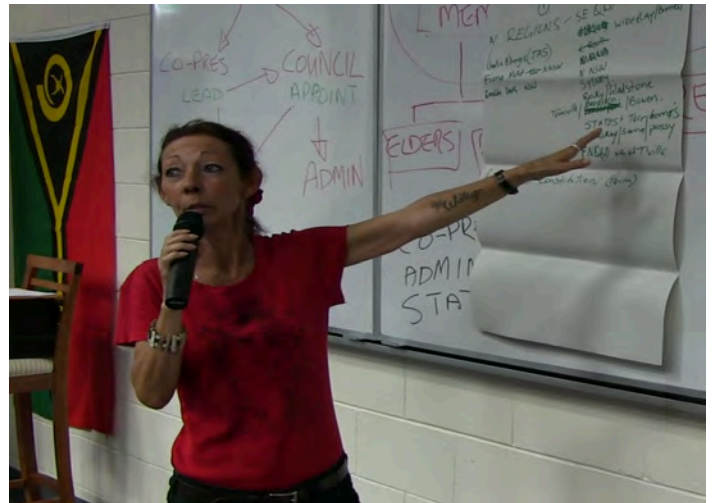
Seaview girl dancers (youth group) produced by Uncle David Tass (nee Fatnowna)



Seaview men dancers (youth group) produced by Uncle David Tass (nee Fatnowna)



Elders – Hazel Togo, Shireen Malamoo & Graham Mooney



Robyn Tait Watego – facilitates ASSI census session in Mackay



Starret Vea Vea president MADASSIA - Mackay



Graham Tanner from Bundaberg facilitates 'good governance'



Tony Watego and Joanne Timor facilitate group session in Mackay

ATTACHMENT C (iii)



Emelda Davis

April 6 · Sydney

interview with Radio 4MW Torres Strait 'Wantok Mackay 2014' Good Governance for ASSI Communities...

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BE9Ly_qE-bs&feature=youtu.be



Radio 4MW Torres Strait 'Wantok Mackay 2014' Good Governance for ASSI Communities

Wantok moves ahead to reach National Goal in Mackay QLD. The 2013 National Secretariat Model...

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Emelda Davis shared Robyn Tait Watego's video.

April 3 · Sydney

"Wantok had a break through" - Poem by Cissy Griffin Day 4...

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Emelda Davis

April 2

Listen to Radio 4MW interview:

<http://www.nirs.org.au/blog/NEWS/article/33175/South-Sea-Islanders-maintain-push-for-better-recognition.html>

South Sea Islanders maintain push for better recognition

Posted on April 02, 2014 09:54

By Warren Bamsley/Torres Strait Radio 4MW



The head of a body representing Australian South Sea Islanders says her people are disadvantaged in the same areas as the nation's First Nations communities.

The WANTOK Australian South Sea Islanders National Forum is being held in central Queensland this week and is discussing ways to improve recognition of their communities.

Emelda Davis is President of the Interim Association of Australian South Sea Islanders and she told Torres Strait Radio 4MW better policies and programs are needed to support their communities.

She says they're also working to establish a permanent national advocacy body.

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Emelda Davis ▸ **Australian South Sea Islanders Port Jackson**

April 1 · Sydney · 🌐

Mackay Wantok DELIVERED in achieving expected outcomes. Thanks to all the ASSI.PJ team, ASSI Organisations friends and family. X

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Local News

WANTOK moves ahead to reach national goal

By David
02 4051 1111

AS THIS year's WANTOK Forum draws to a close in Mackay today, it's already been dubbed a "complete success".

Interim National Body for the Australian South Sea Islanders president Emelda Davis said the forum had, in part, discussed the move towards national representation.

The four-day Australian South Sea Islanders national forum at CQUniversity Mackay was an extra significant as it was also 20 years since the first national conference was held in Mackay in 1995.

"Wantok has been a great vehicle to reignite a lot of community groups across Australia," Ms Davis said.

"The response has been



GREAT SUCCESS: The success of the WANTOK Forum pleased Professor Clive Moore, Interim National Body for the Australian South Sea Islanders Association president Emelda Davis, and Mackay and District Australian South Sea Islanders Association chairperson Starrett Vea Vea. PHOTO: LEE CONTABLE

Wantok has been a great vehicle to reignite a lot of community groups across Australia...

Emelda Davis

People are wanting to see successful programs and services that will help further our access to better health, education and economic development.

"That's what we want - that's the end goal."

She said good progress was being achieved.

Ms Davis described building national body representation for the ASSI community as like baking a cake.

She said the ingredients were there.

Forum facilitator independent moderator Michael Chapman notes key points for inclusion in an Elders Register.

It was all about building foundations. She said Gilbert+Tobin Lawyers, one of Australia's biggest law firms, had donated services pro bono to the not for profit organisation.

The University of Queensland's Professor Clive Moore, who spoke at the forum on Saturday, highlighted visit improvements in access to government records as a major step forward.

This greatly assisted Australian South Sea Islanders when they were trying to research their ancestry.

"The access they have on their home computers now is greatly improved," Prof Moore said. "They were bought here by force. They were not voluntary migrants. They don't know much about their ancestry," Prof Moore said. Most want to know more.

Tony Watego leads a discussion on establishing an Elders Register at the Wantok forum at CQUniversity Mackay.



WIN

Celebrating its 10th Annual Business

Sydney Med

WANTOK had a Breakthrough

Written and spoken by Veronica Griffin (nee Mooney) from
'Kanakan Voices' newly formed community organisation Mackay
QLD. (with crowd joining in for the chorus)

View video:

<https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=10203459799760882&set=vb.1389734062&type=2&theater>

*Wantok had a break through
Wow how's that
Wantok had a break through
Now a working group has been selected
Wantok had a break through
How deadly ... Oh how deadly
Wantok had a break through
My people from near and a far
Hey ... Wantok had a break through
Emelda, Graham and Michael ... all of us can relax
Cause Wantok ... had a break through
Our Kanaka voice will be nationally heard
Now that ... Wantok had a break through
Australian South Sea Islanders rejoice
We can never again be blue
Our ... Wantok had a break through
Will not remain silent we will be ever strong
Why? ... Wantok had a break through
My birthday 30th March 2014 will always be known as the
date that ...
Wantok had a break through
From Mackay our progressive town where
Wantok ... had a break through
Let us hear loud clear voices ... hey!
Wantok had a break through
Shout it from every beat of your heart
Hooray...
Wantok had a break through
Go back to your family and your people and tell them...
Wantok had a break through
Teach the children... listen to the young folk and respect your
elders be humbled by this thing.
Remember all of you the date the time the place ... when
Wantok had a break through*

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A positive domino effect in seeing federal ministers from our populated regions recognise and move a motion of regret on the 1st September 2014



The screenshot shows the National Indigenous Radio Service website. At the top left is the logo for the National Indigenous Radio Service. To its right is a news section with the headline "NEWS Tasmanian budget a let down for heritage: Land Council" dated 03 Sep 2014. Further right is a weather forecast for Borroloola, showing 27°C and sunny conditions for Thursday and Friday. Below these are navigation buttons for "LISTEN", "STREAM 1", "STREAM 2", and "STREAM 3". The main article is titled "Moves to recognise South Sea Islanders in parliament", posted on September 03, 2014, by Gerry Georgatos, with a byline "with Torres Strait Radio 4MW". The article includes a photograph of a group of people, including Australian South Sea Islander President Emelda Davis, and text stating that Federal Nationals MPs George Christensen and Keith Pitt have called on parliament to recognise the rights of South Sea Islander Australians, tabling a motion expressing regret over their past treatment. The motion asks the Government to recognise Australia-born Islanders as a distinct ethnic group and acknowledge the 60,000 Islanders who were blackbirded. The motion calls for Islanders to be acknowledged as a separate group in the Census and for special assistance in areas of disadvantage. Ms Davis told Torres Strait Radio she was in the audience when the motion was tabled. The image is credited to Max Fleet. Below the article is a video player with a 30-second duration and a volume icon. The article is categorized as "Featured".

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS RADIO SERVICE

NEWS
Tasmanian budget a let down for heritage: Land Council
03 Sep 2014
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Fri Sunny. 34 11

LISTEN **STREAM 1** **STREAM 2** **STREAM 3**

Moves to recognise South Sea Islanders in parliament

Posted on September 03, 2014
Gerry Georgatos
with Torres Strait Radio 4MW



Federal Nationals MPs George Christensen and Keith Pitt have called on parliament to recognise the rights of South Sea Islander Australians, tabling a motion expressing regret over their past treatment.

Australian South Sea Islander President Emelda Davis says the motion asks the Government to recognise Australia-born Islanders as a distinct ethnic group and acknowledge the 60,000 Islanders who were blackbirded.

The motion calls for Islanders to be acknowledged as a separate group in the Census and for special assistance in areas of disadvantage.

Ms Davis told Torres Strait Radio she was in the audience when the motion was tabled.

Image: Max Fleet

30 

Categories: [Featured](#)

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SPEECHES IN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF AUSTRALIAN SOUTH SEA ISLANDERS

Mr CHRISTENSEN (Dawson—The Nationals Deputy Whip) (16:46): I move:

That this House:

(1) acknowledges the 20th anniversary of the Australian Government's recognition of Australian-born South Sea Islanders as a distinct ethnic group in Australia;

(2) expresses deep regret

(a) over the cruel treatment of the approximately 60,000 South Sea Islanders, mainly young men, who were blackbirded (or essentially kidnapped) or lured onto ships and then transported to Australia for the purpose of indentured labour; and

(b) that a number of discriminatory acts followed, chief among these being the forced repatriation of Pacific Island labourers back to their place of origin in 1906, in many cases against the will of those being repatriated;

(3) acknowledges the considerable economic contribution of Australians of South Sea Islander descent to the establishment of the sugar industry in the state of Queensland, and other agricultural and industrial development in the north;

(4) celebrates the contributions of so many Australians of South Sea Islander descent to Australian life in every field of endeavour, from the football field to the political sphere; and

(5) calls for consideration of measures to ensure that Australians of South Sea Islander descent can achieve equity and assistance in this present day through:

(a) inclusion on the national census as a separate people group, by the simple addition of an extra question;

(b) access to diabetes treatment in the same way this is available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders; and

(c) access to assistance in all areas of disadvantage such as health, housing, education and training.

[http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=\(Speaker%3APitt%20Date%3AcurParliament%20Dataset%3Ahansardr,hansardr80\)%20\(Alert_Mod_Time%3A%3E%3D20140830090004%20%7C%20Alert_Create_Time%3A%3E%3D20140830090004\);rec=2](http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=(Speaker%3APitt%20Date%3AcurParliament%20Dataset%3Ahansardr,hansardr80)%20(Alert_Mod_Time%3A%3E%3D20140830090004%20%7C%20Alert_Create_Time%3A%3E%3D20140830090004);rec=2)

On the banks of the Pioneer River in Mackay there is an impressive piece of public art called *Sugar Cubes*. While the average man on the street may not know what it represents, there are about 3,000 people in the area who do, and these are the descendants of South Sea Islanders brought to our shores by force, coercion or bribery more than 150 years ago. *Sugar Cubes*—a semicircle of tall piles of cubes crafted out of steel—tells the story of their ancestors. This period of our history—the blackbirding era—is the closest thing Australia has had to a slave trade. About 63,000 South Sea Islanders were brought to Queensland, and each sugar cube bears the name of a trade ship that carried human cargo as well as the name of the plantation they were sent to work on. These workers came mainly from the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. In one year alone—1881—1,789 people were brought to Queensland in 31 ships; 15 of those ships came directly to Mackay, sometimes at a rate of one each week, and their trade continued for 40 years.

Many are familiar with what happened, but I suspect that few have stopped to consider the sheer number of people who are affected. Many died during the

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long voyage to Queensland, and more died after arrival from diseases like dysentery, pneumonia and tuberculosis. You could probably call the next sad chapter of their story 'Discrimination by legislation'. The dawn of Federation in 1901 brought with it the push from the union movement for a white Australia, and thousands of South Sea Islander labourers were deported under the Pacific Island Labourers Act. Other racist legislation followed, like the 1905 Sugar Bounty Act, which rewarded producers who used white labour, and the 1913 Sugar Cultivation Act, which required islanders who wanted to grow cane to be able to read and write 50 words in any language. Between 1900 and 1940 there were at least 40 pieces of discriminatory legislation on the statute books. There were restrictions on voting, land ownership and fishing for pearl shell. South Sea Islanders were even banned from employment in butter factories. This was a bitter pill to swallow, particularly in relation to the sugar industry, because their labour in the cane fields and their contribution to the establishment and ongoing success of the sugar industry was significant.

And this is another chapter of the story that is rarely told. In 1902 about 84 per cent of labourers in Queensland sugar were non-white workers. Another source states that since these islanders performed all the fieldwork connected with the sugar industry it is probable that without them the initial enterprise would not have been forthcoming and very few of the old mills and plantations would have seen the light of day.

It was a significant contribution for one of the state's most significant and enduring industries, which accounted for 1.7 per cent of total exports in 1900 and grew to 25 per cent by 1980. More chapters in the story have unfolded throughout the lives of many Australian South Sea Islanders who have contributed to our culture. Rowena Trieve from Mackay and Joe Leo from Rockhampton are both OAM recipients. Mal Meninga has made a legendary contribution to the sport of rugby league. Faith Bandler, who championed recognition long before others, was made a Companion of the Order of Australia in 2009.

Proud Australian South Sea Islanders did not shirk their duty when it came to serving their country. Sadly, Mackay man, Frank Fewquandie, was the first Australian killed in the Vietnam War. And Percy Mooney Senior, who still lives in his family home at Habana, enlisted and served in World War II. Others who made significant contributions in Mackay include Cedric Andrew, Greg Sutherland, Jeanette Morgan, Christine Andrew, Winnie Boah, Kay Fatnowna and the late Noel Fatnowna.

There is no doubt that the day of official recognition in this parliament on 25 August 1994 was a landmark moment, and I want to pay tribute to the efforts of former member for Dawson, Ray Braithwaite, who pressured the Keating government at the time to respond to the call for recognition. Mackay's Greg Sutherland, who is also chair of the National Australian South Sea Islanders Governance Working Group, remembers the day well. He said, 'A lot of us were excited and pleased to be finally recognised for our heritage and our contribution to the state, and I guess we were hoping a bit more would come from it'.

At the time of recognition it was noted that the government of the day needed to assess how it was servicing the needs of Australian South Sea Islander people. Twenty years on, the time is right to again take stock as the next chapter of their journey unfolds. Why is it that proud Australian South Sea Islanders cannot tick a box on the national census forms acknowledging their distinct heritage? And why is it that Australian South Sea Islanders in need of special treatment for conditions like diabetes need to deny their heritage in order

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to access what is readily available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders? These questions need to be answered, and as chair of the House Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs, I will call for a roundtable to give full and proper consideration to those issues.

Member for Hinkler, Keith Pitt – seconder

Mr PITT (Hinkler) (16:57): The northern end of my electorate is completely flat. From the air, the cane fields look like a giant patchwork quilt. There is only one blemish on the otherwise flawless landscape—it is an extinct volcano known today as the Hummock. Just 96 metres above sea level, the Hummock Lookout offers ocean views to the east, to the west cane fields encircle the city of Bundaberg, and then there are the smokestacks that belong to the sugar mill and of course the rum distillery. The beaches are covered in volcanic rock but if you look closely you can see the fields have been cleared.

Dotted across the landscape are stone walls that were built by South Sea Islander labourers who worked the district's plantations. These walls serve as a physical reminder of the blood, sweat and tears South Sea Islanders shed for the establishment of Queensland's sugar industry. Most Australians have no idea that, even some 30 years after the Emancipation Proclamation in the United States, slavery was still rife in this country. Between 1863 and the early 1900s, South Sea islanders as young as 12 were ripped from their communities to work on Australian farms.

There is not enough time here today, in this place, for me to provide a detailed chronology of political and cultural events, but research shows about 60,000 South Sea islanders were blackbirded and in 1902 about 84 per cent of Queensland sugar labourers were non-white workers. It is widely regarded that, without Kanakas, very few of the old mills and plantations would have seen the light of day. In Queensland there are at least 40 pieces of discriminatory legislation on the statute books between 1900 and 1940—this includes the White Australia policy that resulted in many of them being forcibly repatriated. The practice of blackbirding was at one point rebranded indentured labour, to circumvent the slavery laws of Britain.

Australian South Sea islanders were not officially recognised as a distinct ethnic minority group by the Commonwealth until 1994. The Queensland parliament only formally recognised Australian South Sea islanders in July 2000 and in August last year the New South Wales parliament passed a motion acknowledging the ASSI community's contribution to the state. As I understand it, the government in Vanuatu is now granting dual citizenship to Australian South Sea islanders. Their blackbirding history is now taught as part of the Vanuatu school curriculum. Australian South Sea islanders are defined as being those who are the descendants of the South Sea islanders brought to Australia as blackbirds or Kanakas. There are thousands of Kanaka descendants living in Australia, many in my electorate. Sadly, an official number has not been established.

This motion supports calls by the Australian South Sea islander community for a specific question in the Australian census to count them as a unique ethnic group in a similar method to questions 18 and 19 on some Centrelink forms. There is widespread confusion among many Australian South Sea islanders about how they should identify themselves on paper. In many cases, such as question 7 on the 2011 census, their only choice is between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. ASSI community leaders say this has resulted in many people slipping through the cracks. Without the necessary statistics to create a

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demographic, social and economic profile, government programs and services will not be as well targeted as they otherwise could be. Community leaders are working to finalise a national ASSI association constitution. In 2012, they held their inaugural conference in Bundaberg. I congratulate Matt Nagus, Joe Eggmohlesse and Emelda Davis and many others for their efforts in seeking recognition for their people.

I worked in the sugar industry in Bundaberg from a young age both as an electrician and as a cane farmer. I grew up hearing stories about Kanakas and the backbreaking work they did in very difficult conditions. I have moved some of those rocks! To give the House some understanding of what they endured, I will read from a local newspaper clipping dated 4 October 1884: 'John Arthur, the white man who put an ounce of lead through a Kanaka recently at Bingera, has been acquitted on charges of murder brought against him because Polynesian witnesses who were to give evidence could not be made to understand the nature of an oath or declaration.' The report goes on to say: 'Arthur made 12 Kanakas share a single ration,' which was one pound of meat per man per day. The potatoes he gave them were not fit for pigs.

There are unmarked Kanaka graves on farms right across my electorate, and I have seen them. In some cases, they were buried right where they died in the field. The former member for Hinkler, Brian Courtice, fought to have 29 graves on Sunnyside farm heritage listed for protection. His family purchased the farm in the 1920s from local businessman Edward Turner. Turner financed the slave ship *Ariel* to bring South Sea islanders back to work on the local plantations. Brian continues to be an effective advocate for recognition of Australian South Sea islanders. A memorial garden and community centre is being created at the unmarked mass grave site on Johnston Street near Bundaberg cemetery.

It is important that we continue to ensure ASSI graves across the district, and indeed the country, are preserved. The contribution Australian South Sea islanders made to Queensland's sugar industry and Bundaberg's social fabric is extraordinary. Their story is one that is so little known but it deserves to be recognised for what it is—that is, an integral part of Australia's history and its future.

Member for Shortland, New South Wales

Ms HALL (Shortland—Opposition Whip) (16:52): I would like to congratulate the member for Dawson for bringing this motion to the House. This is a sad period in Australia's history, and one that not a lot of people know and understand. I also acknowledge that the member for Hinkler, as a Northern Queensland, and a member who has sugarcane and sugar farming within his electorate, is here to speak on this piece of legislation today.

I would also like to acknowledge the presence in the chamber of members of the Australian South Sea Islanders (Port Jackson) Limited group. It is fantastic that you could be here today to hear us make our little tribute towards the South Sea Islanders in Australia, and their contributions to our country.

As I was preparing this speech, I went through a lot of information and it reminded me just how cruel and brutal the treatment of South Sea Islanders was in Australia. They were used as slaves in their indentured labour. The member for Dawson was, I think, a little bit generous when he said it was the closest we came to slavery, I actually think that those South Sea Islanders working there were, in effect, slaves. They had no rights and they did not receive the same wages as other workers. It is a blight on the history of our country. The White Australia policy contributed to this also. The simple fact that

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South Sea Islanders were deported, were treated even more appallingly after 1901, is another blight on our country.

But I would like to make some positive statements about the enormous contribution that South Sea Islanders have made to our country. There have been many fields and many endeavours in which they have made positive contributions, but none more so than rugby league. As a proud member of parliament coming from the Newcastle region, I have to say that the South Sea Islanders have made a fantastic contribution. Last Sunday the Newcastle Knights defeated Parramatta and at the forefront of that defeat were three outstanding people from Australian-Samoan origins—there was Leilua, who scored one try, and the Mata'utia brothers, who are sensational football players. They really show what South Sea islanders can do for the game of rugby league. These are two young brothers that have spent the whole of this season basically in junior football, and because of injuries they have been elevated to first grade, and between them they scored not one try, not two tries, but five tries. To top it off their brother Peter Mata'utia plays for St George, and he is also a sensational player. These young guys were brought up in a household where there was no money, where they talked about having to eat bread to survive, and despite that disadvantaged background they have managed to be sensational rugby league players. So I think we need to pay real tribute to South Sea islanders, particularly in the area of rugby league and rugby union.

The point I would like to finish on is around diabetes. Diabetes is a disease that has a really big impact on the community. It is a disease that I do not think your community has come to terms with. South Sea islanders really are affected by diabetes, probably more than just about any sector of the population, and I think there is a need for programs and education directed towards combating diabetes in your community.

Member for Chisholm, Victoria

Ms BURKE (Chisholm) (17:02): I also rise to speak on the motion, acknowledging the 20th anniversary of the Australian government's recognition of Australian-born South Sea islanders as a distinct ethnic group in Australia. I commend the member for Dawson for bringing the motion before the House. I also recognise the member for Hinkler and the constituents from his electorate who have made the long journey to Canberra—we hope you survive the cold weather while you are here. South Sea islanders came to Australia in 1863, not as immigrants seeking a new life; instead, enticed onto ships and in some cases kidnapped, in what was often classified as blackbirding, to work on sugarcane fields in Queensland. Indeed, as many speakers have said, they were not enticed to work; it was slavery.

I too express deep regret at the treatment in bringing the islanders to Australia and the subsequent discriminatory acts that followed. In 1901, the Pacific Island Labourers Act ordered the recruitment of Pacific islanders to cease up to 1903. In 1906, after enduring decades of hardship and discrimination, the Pacific island labourers were forcibly deported back to their place of origin, leaving behind a life they had built and a country they now called home. At this time, roughly 10,000 who identify as South Sea Islanders remain in Australia. From 1909 until 1942, the remaining South Sea islanders living in Australia experienced considerable hardship. Legislation prohibited their employment in the sugar industry, unions registered their employment elsewhere and they could not obtain financial assistance from banks. An example of the discrimination acts that South Sea islander women had to ensure was being

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relegated to the black ward at Rockhampton base hospital which was separated from the from the main maternity section and overlooked the morgue. What a terrible way to treat women giving birth to children.

After decades of discrimination, in 1991 the Congress of the Australian Council of Trade Unions committed itself to assisting South Sea islanders to be recognised as a group in their own right and we are continuing that journey today. The Australian government, in response to *The call for recognition report*, official recognises the South Sea islander community as a distinct ethnic group in Australia with its own history and culture. But we still have not managed to get it on the census, in recognition and acknowledgement by the Australian government of the injustice of the indentured labour system and the severe disadvantage suffered by the South Sea Islanders and their descendants, as well as their contribution to the culture, history and economy of Australia. Australia is a migrant nation, and this is another great subset of that migrant identity. It should be celebrated for what it is. The response included a number of initiatives especially designed for the Australian South Sea Islander community, including several projects to strengthen community membership awareness and pride in their culture. We acknowledge the 20th anniversary of this recognition that the economic and cultural contribution made by the first Australian South Sea Islanders and their descendants should not be forgotten.

I know it is slightly different, but I have visited the communities on Christmas Island and on the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, and it is a very similar story. They were taken from their homelands. On Christmas Island it was the Malays who were taken to work there and now their descendants who are there. And of course on Cocos (Keeling) they were taken by Clunies-Ross to literally work as slaves in the coconut plantations. There are incredible cultures that we need to nurture, and we need to recognise that that is what makes Australia the great place it is today.

I have also had the distinct honour of working with the parliaments of Australia and the Pacific island nations in our parliament partnership program, trying to encourage more women into parliaments around the Pacific. This initiative is taking female parliamentarians from Australia and various Pacific nations. I have just returned from a visit to Tonga where I met some amazing women throughout the South Pacific who are attempting to get into parliament. One of my friends whom I met there is attempting to stand and be elected in the upcoming Fiji election. This woman was amazing. Another woman I met, who was from Samoa, is also seeking election. I took her out doorknocking in Melbourne before the last election. When I complained about the rain, she told me about taking her canoe down crocodile-infested waters. I applaud these amazing cultures, these amazing natures, and what they strive for.

We have a phenomenal relationship with those from the South Sea islands who have called Australia home since 1901 and should be recognised. I deeply regret the cruelty and I endorse the motions moved in this to ensure that the census is updated so this additional question can give recognition to this specific group.



WANTOK CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT HISTORICAL ADVISORY GROUP PROFILE



Professor Clive Moore CSI, FAHA, holds BA Hons and PhD degrees from James Cook University. He has taught at James Cook University, University of Papua New Guinea and University of Queensland, where he is now McCaughey Professor of Pacific and Australian History in the School of History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics. His major publications have been on Australia's Pacific Island immigrants, the Pacific labour reserve, Australian federation, masculinity and sexuality, New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands.

The inaugural President of the Australian Association for the Advancement of Pacific Studies

(2006-2010), in 2005 he received a Cross of Solomon Islands for his history work on Malaita Island. In 2011 he became a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities and in 2012 was made an Outstanding Alumni of James Cook University. Since 1976 Professor Moore has been adopted into the Rakwane family in east Fataleka, Malaita Island, Solomon Islands.



Professor Gracelyn Smallwood – AO, MSc, RN. A Vanuatu descendant and Birri-gubba Woman & Elder for the Birri people in Townsville, Gracelyn was awarded Queensland Aboriginal of the Year in 1986; an Order of Australia medal in 1992 for service to public health, particularly HIV-AIDS education; and in 1994 was the first woman, Indigenous person and non-paediatrician to receive the Henry Kemp Memorial Award at the International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect. Scholarship in cross-cultural comparative health of Maori and First Nations in New Mexico and Arizona, and then Polynesian disadvantage in Hawaii.

Gracelyn has lectured in cross-cultural studies at the East-West Centre in Hawaii and was Associate Professor and Director of the University of Southern Queensland's Kumbari/Ngurpai Lag Higher Education Centre for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders from 1995 to 1999. She has lectured at Thursday Island, the University of Honolulu, and participated as a speaker at a W.H.O conference in public health. Currently works at the largely Indigenous Cleveland Youth Detention Centre as nurse and mentor, and at Townsville Hospital as a nurse and midwife; Associate Professor and Indigenous Advisor to the Vice-Chancellor at James Cook University a driving force behind JCU's progressive Reconciliation Statement.



Professor Douglas Hunt teaches political science at James Cook University in Cairns. His work on Queensland industrial relations and labour history recently led him to research on the history of the early years of the Southwest Pacific labour trade. In particular, a current research project centers on the life and times of Henry Ross Lewin, who brought the first Pacific Island labourers to Queensland for Robert Towns in 1863. A notorious recruiter, Lewin operated out of Brisbane and then from Vanuatu until 1874, when he was killed on his Tanna plantation. Rather than a standard biography of Lewin, the research aims to incorporate the experiences of Islanders themselves, and to provide a lens through which to re-evaluate this period.

Doug is a voluntary consultant to the Vanuatu Cultural Council's blackbirding history project, and keenly believes in the contribution of historical research to recognition of Australian South Sea Islanders as a distinct and important community.



Professor Steve Mullins teaches at Central Queensland University in Rockhampton. He is maritime historian who specialises in the pearl-shelling, bêche-de-mer (trepang) and trochus industries in the western Pacific, northern Australia and Propinsi Maluku, Indonesia. His first book was a history of the colonial occupation of Torres Strait, which highlighted the crucial role South Sea Islanders played on the maritime frontier. He led the 1995/96 Commonwealth Attorney General's Australian South Sea Islander research project (After Recognition: access and equity for Australian South Sea Islanders) and was an historical advisor to the 1994-96 DFAT/EQ curriculum development project.

Since then he has participated in a number of Australian South Sea Islander history projects in Central Queensland, the last of which resulted in the publication of "Mere colloquial things" South Sea Islanders and the memory of place' for the CRC for Coastal Zone, Estuary & Waterway Management.



Professor Francis Bobongie Central Queensland University Grad Cert TEFOL, TEFOL 2010, CQUniversity Masters Administration 2003 – 2004, University of Southern Queensland 2012, D.Prof Studies, Transdisciplinary Studies 2008 – 2011, Avondale College, Bachelor of Education, Primary 1994 – 1997, 1997 Student Dean (Andre Hall), PACIFICA Club 1994-1997, Music Coordinator Avondale College Church 1996 – 1997.

Founder of GLEAM (Girls Leadership Education and Advancement Mission) which advances girls and women in the Pacific through a scholarship fund for high school students and small projects fund, Currently tutor for indigenous students at CQUniversity.



WANTOK CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT PROJECT TEAM PROFILE



Emelda Davis – A Tanna Island Vanuatu descendant, Emelda Davis is the inaugural President of the interim national representative body for Australian South Sea Islanders (ASSI). Emelda and her mother Nellie Enares are founding members of the ASSI.PJ based in Sydney, NSW. In 2011 Emelda was elected as the main coordinator for the Wantok 2012 inaugural ASSI National Conference. Her skill base reflects diverse expertise and innovative capabilities for the delivery of community development, (education, training, media, marketing and awareness campaign strategies having worked for Federal, State Government, Community and grassroots organisations. As the director for Onyx Management Group since 2004 Emelda has worked consistently and diligently in resourcing Indigenous, South Sea Islander and broader community practitioners to deliver projects on a multitude of national and international platforms producing Film, Television, Sports, Events management, Music and Entertainment projects for grass roots, corporate and private sectors.



Shireen Malamoo - Aboriginal / Kanak descendant Tongoa, Vanuatu.; An ATSI and ASSI community worker who advocates a holistic approach to ATSI and ASSI issues, Shireen is founding Board Member for the ASSI.PJ. In the 1970s, she worked for the Department of Social Security in Townsville, Queensland and her involvement with the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care included membership of the Finance Committee. A Commissioner of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) from 1991 to 1993 and sat on the NSW Parole Board for 9 years (1994 - 2003). Shireen has extensive experience in the management of non-government services for the Aboriginal community including the Aboriginal Legal Service, the Aboriginal Media Association and the Aboriginal Medical Service in Townsville, and currently sits on the Justice Health Board and has done for some years now. Shireen is also involved with the Aboriginal Medical Service in Redfern and the AHMRC - Ethics Committee. 2009-2012 saw her sit on the ATSI advisory panel to the City of Sydney. A well respected artist Shireen feels her involvement in ATSI / ASSI affairs on a local and national level has deeply influenced her artistic work, and her art depicts all the spiritual experiences of her life.



Danny Togo - Ambae Island descendant, Vanuatu; Danny Togo is the inaugural Vice President for the ASSI.PJ elected in 2011. October 2011 saw Danny elected the assistant coordinator for Wantok 2012. A family man and father of three he has taken on a task that will see him transition his extensive skills in logistics, OH&S and driver management to championing the plight of his ASSI community. A dedicated team player with a strong commitment in skills development to empower our youth and community sees Danny as a great role model for all young men. “Our reconnection with heritage, culture and history is “the only way to go” he says.



Shola Diop - Tanna Island descendant - Vanuatu. Graduate of Winthrop University - South Carolina USA, with a degree in Business Administration, Shola is pursuing a Masters in Finance and eventually a Masters in Business Administration. While abroad he has remained an active member of his community through family the web and since graduating has re-joined the ASSI.PJ board. As an original founding member Shola represents a youth perspective. Shola is keen to use his knowledge and experiences to aid his community in whatever way he can, and hopes to become an advocate to youth of the possibilities and pathways to personal development through a strong sense of family, community awareness, education and sport.



Melina Fakatava – Vanuatu descendant. Committed to her community and having found family in Vanuatu through travelling to cultural celebrations she has a strong love and connection to her forefathers lands. Melina is highly skilled in office administration and has over 20 years experience in customer service. Other areas of skill for Melina have been in cultural awareness delivering ATSI initiatives and TV program content in her capacity as an assistant producer and production assistant. As a young mum, Melina hopes to see ASSI's properly recognition throughout the education system which will benefit her son and ASSI / SSI families at large. Melina represents in her mother with pride 'Carriette Pangas' (nee. Togo) who was a founding member of the ASSI.PJ and has designed the logo / crest for our organisation



Duane Vickery – Solomon Island / Vanuatu descendant. Duane is the founder and managing director of ETM Perspectives Pty Ltd, a business that provides advice, training and research in relation to Indigenous and South Sea Island affairs in Australia. Following his graduation from Avondale with a Bachelor of Education, Duane completed a Master of Education at the University of New England and worked for the Federal Government in Indigenous Affairs. He founded his business in 2002. Duane is excited for the opportunity to impart his corporate governance and strategic business perspective knowledge and skill base in to the development of the ASSI National Body.



Graham Tanner Graham has some twenty-five years experience in the arena of community engagement particularly from an Indigenous and Australian South Sea Islander Perspective. Having written and implemented numerous Community Empowerment workshops inclusive of Staff Development in support Provision to specific Target Groups, with an emphasis on, "Making a Mark that Cannot be Erased." A prolific writer of articles, funding submissions, business plans and personal manuscripts combined with background dealings in Litigation Preparatory, Mentoring, Anti Discrimination and Disability Advocacy. A Cultural and Pentecostal Faith visitor to outlying nations and Advisor to a past Australian member of International Third World Leaders Association.



Pastor Ray Minniecon – Ambrym Island descendant. Pastor Ray Minniecon is a descendant of the Kabi Kabi nation and the Gureng Gureng nation of South-East Queensland and also a descendant of the South Sea Islander people with strong connections to his people of Ambrym Island. Currently, Ray is the Director of Bunji Consultancies. He is a "Vision Keeper" of the World Christian Gathering of Indigenous Peoples and Community Chaplain in the Redfern Community, a pastor with the Aboriginal Evangelical Fellowship along with many other development projects. Ray has a BA in Theology from Murdoch University in Western Australia and is the Coordinator of the Aboriginal Education Unit, which he helped establish.

He also assisted in developing the Aboriginal Employment Strategy.



Marie Geissler. Marie is a PHD candidate at the University of Wollongong in the Faculty of Creative Arts. Her thesis is on Australian Aboriginal Art. Marie has written about culture and the arts as well as the promotion of indigenous business.

She is the Director of Geissler Communications and Marie Geissler Fine Art. Marie has run a successful public relations company for over 15 years. She is a member of the Public Relations Institute of Australia, The Media Arts and Entertainment Alliance and the Foreign Correspondents Association of Australia. Working in the fields of design, not-for-profit, architecture, science, education, medicine, Indigenous, law and heritage, Marie is also the

author of *Australian Aboriginal Art, Collecting Aboriginal Paintings* (Images Publishing 2012) and co author of *Yannima Pikarli Tommy Watson* (Macmillan 2010).



24 March 2014

Dear WANTOK participants

ABS Win for ASSI

Last year the New South Wales Parliament unanimously supported my motion which acknowledged the inhumane treatment of Australian South Sea Islanders (ASSI), recognised the contribution of Australian South Sea Islanders to Australia's history, and called for a demographic, social and economic community profile.

Following the success of my motion, I took a delegation of Australian South Sea Islanders to meet the NSW Minister for Citizenship and Communities and we both committed to write to the Australian Bureau of Statistics asking them to include Australian South Sea Islanders in the Australian Census.

On the 17 March, ABS officers met with ASSI representatives and I, and we agreed:

- ASSI would decide on a term to accurately describe those who are descendants of Australian South Sea Islanders;
- The ABS will ensure that this term is valid for statistical purposes;
- For the first time the ABS will seek to count the number of Australian South Sea Islanders who identify themselves with the agreed term in the next Census; and
- An education programme would be developed to help ASSI descendants accurately record themselves in the next Census.

This next Census provides an historic opportunity for the Australian South Sea Islander community to be counted.

I encourage you to work together to agree on a suitable term for your community and educate all Australian South Islander descendants to record this in the 2016 Census.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AG', written over a light blue background.

Alex Greenwich
Member for Sydney

180 Durland Street Parramatta NSW 2124 T (0) 4040 3192 F (0) 3321 9932 [facebook.com/alexgreenwich](https://www.facebook.com/alexgreenwich)
E sydney@parliament.nsw.gov.au www.alexgreenwich.com.au [twitter.com/alexgreenwich](https://www.twitter.com/alexgreenwich)



ATTACHMENT F

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) [10.32 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

(1) notes 25 August 2013 as Australian South Sea Islander Recognition Day, marking 150 years since about 50,000 people on 62,000 indenture contracts from around 80 Pacific Islands were recruited or kidnapped to work in sugar cane fields where they were exploited;

(2) notes the Australian South Sea Islanders suffered inhumane treatment, the highest mortality rates of any immigrant group to Australia and mass deportations when the White Australia Policy was introduced;

(3) notes many of the 40,000 Australian South Sea Islander descendants who live in Australia remain marginalised and disadvantaged;

(4) notes thousands of Australian South Sea Islanders live in New South Wales but an official number has not been established;

(5) notes then Premier Carr's memorandum of understanding of 1995 called for adequate programs and services;

(6) acknowledges the Community Relations Commission's initiatives in relation to South Sea Islanders and requests the Government to liaise with the National Body for Australian South Sea Islanders in preparing a demographic, social and economic community profile; and

(7) acknowledges the contribution the Australian South Sea Islander community makes to New South Wales and its history in Australia.

15th August 2013.



The Hon Victor Dominello MP
Minister for Citizenship and Communities
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

17 October 2013

Ms Emelda Davis
President
Australian South Sea Islanders (Port Jackson) Limited
PO Box 117
Pyrmont NSW 2009

Dear Ms Davis *Emelda*

I write to provide an update on undertakings agreed to in our meeting on 27 August 2013 to support the ASSIPJ.

I have sent a letter to the Minister for the Australian Bureau of Statistics requesting assistance with capturing official demographics of the descendants of ASSI in NSW.

In addition, I am advised that the Commission has met with you to discuss guidelines and criteria of the CRC Multicultural Advantage Grants Program. Subsequently, you have lodged two grant applications which the Commission is currently considering.

The Commission has also sent letters to the Chief Executive Officers of NSW government agencies notifying them of the resolution passed in NSW Parliament regarding the recognition of the ASSI community.

Enclosed is a copy of the relevant correspondence to the Minister for the Australian Bureau of Statistics for your information. I will keep you informed of any response I receive.

I hope that these actions assist your goals and wish you success in your endeavours.

Yours sincerely

Victor Dominello MP
Minister for Citizenship and Communities
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

ATTACHMENT F

Discussions with ABS managerial heads assisted the inclusion of ASSI description on the Centrelink form in 2014

How often do you wish to receive your pension supplement amount?

Fortnightly

Quarterly

18 Questions 18 and 19 are optional and will not affect your payment. If you do answer, the information will help us to continue to improve services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and Australian South Sea Islanders. Australian South Sea Islanders are the descendants of Pacific Islander labourers brought from the Western Pacific in the 19th Century.

Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Australian origin?
If you are of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian origin, please tick both 'Yes' boxes.

No

Yes – Aboriginal Australian

Yes – Torres Strait Islander Australian

19 Are you of Australian South Sea Islander origin?

No

Yes

Payment details

NSW office of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) meeting regarding Census inclusion for Australian South Sea Islanders (ASSI).

ATTACHMENT F



Alex Greenwich Member for Sydney (front right), Michael Chapman Wantok 2014 Moderator, (back left) Geoff de Baux - Statistical Consultant to NSW Government, Paul Roper - Asst. Director client services, Will Swain - Indigenous Engagement Manager NSW ACT, Shireen Malamoo ASSI.PJ Board/Founder.



Michael Chapman Wantok 2014 (front row), (back left) Emelda Davis president ASSI.PJ, Geoff de Baux - Statistical Consultant to NSW Government, Paul Roper - Asst. Director client services, Will Swain - Indigenous Engagement Manager NSW ACT, Shireen Malamoo ASSI.PJ Board/Founder.

DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL COHESION PROGRAM

END-OF-PROJECT REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2014

NAME OF ORGANISATION: Australian South Sea Islanders (Port Jackson) Limited

NAME OF PROJECT: **Wantok Capacity Building Project**

PROJECT CONTACT DETAILS Emelda Davis, President / Project Coordinator
H: 02-9518 8981 M: 0416300946

ORGANISATION'S MAILING ADDRESS PO Box 117, Pyrmont, NSW, 2009

FUNDED PERIOD From 01 August 2013 to 01 January 2015

1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Australian South Sea Islander (ASSI) Community is descended from some 55,000 indentured labourers from more than 80 islands in the Western Pacific who were "blackbirded" to work in Australia's sugar cane, maritime, pastoral and domestic service industries, firstly to NSW in 1847 and the influx of the trade to QLD between 1863 - 1908. Blackbirding was the process of coercing people, often through deception, from their indigenous homes into indentured labour known as a new form of slavery. Some 15,000 died from ill treatment and lack of immunity to common diseases. Many of those who died had their wages misappropriated by the Government. Following mass forced deportations between 1906 and 1908, only about 2,500 remained in Australia to become the ancestors of today's ASSI Community. ASSI families have strong kinship ties, through blood or marriage to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities.

Despite remarkable obstacles Australian South Sea Islanders have retained their identity as a distinct cultural group with a shared history. 2013 marked 150 years since the influx of indentured labourers came to QLD between 1863 and 1908 and 166 years since Benjamin Boyd bought 226 Melanesian labourers to Eden NSW. Many of the estimated 40,000 descendants are still confronted by issues such as continuing marginalisation, social and economic disadvantage and a high incidence of disease such as diabetes. There also continues to be a lack of recognition for their ancestor's important contribution to Australia's economic base. This anniversary created an occasion to help build community esteem, strengthen community awareness and work towards a more positive future.

The word "Wantok" is pidgin and pronounced in English "one talk" and means "a common understanding, brethren, same same".

The primary aim of the Wantok Capacity Building Project was to share with the ASSI and broader community groups in wisdom, experience and ideas in discussing the way forward in capacity building for our communities through self determination which reignited and promoted a stronger ASSI awareness of the history, culture and the issues which impact the community as well as examining options for national leadership. The Project also provided an opportunity for cultural celebration, healing and the fostering of family reconnections as a displaced and culturally kidnapped peoples.

The Project involved three Capacity Building Forums in Tweed Heads, Mackay and Brisbane.

The specific aims of these forums included:

- Establishment of a sustainable national network of ASSI representatives
- To agree to the election of a National Body to represent the ASSI Community on Australia wide issues and to establish governance mechanisms
- To create a platform of community cohesion and the sharing of history and culture
- The establishment of a means to collect survey data in order to contribute and be recognised in the next Australian census appropriately.
- Identify the islands of origin for the descents of the trade
- Field general comments for current and future considerations

2. ACHIEVEMENT OF ACTIVITY MILESTONES

Milestone	Date completed	Comments
Agreement signed and 1 st tax invoice provided	Immediately upon signing of the agreement	Agreement executed 26/08/13
Project Steering Coordinator recruited	September 2013	Emelda Davis
First Steering Committee meeting held	September 2013	Complete - September 2013
First forum held	November 2013	Brisbane 1 – 3 November 2013
Second forum held	January 2014	Tweed Heads 7- 8 December 2013
Progress Report and audited Financial Statement of Income and Expenditure submitted to Department	February 2014	Complete
Department advises Organisation that Report and Statement are satisfactory	March 2014	Complete
Organisation submits tax invoice	April 2014	Complete
Harmony Day event held and reports submitted to Department	May 2014	Deferred
Third forum held	July 2014	Mackay 28 – 31 March 2014
End of Project Report (including evaluation) and Audited Financial Statement of Income and Expenditure submitted to Department	September 2014	Complete
Department advises Organisation that Report and Statement are satisfactory	October 2014	Pending
Organisation submits final tax invoice	November 2014	Pending
Funded Period complete	January 2015	

3. EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE AGAINST ACTIVITY OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Establish and promote the project		
Action	Performance Indicators	Result/Outcome
1.1 Establish Steering Committee	Members reflect key stakeholders	Please see Steering Group Profile at Attachment A
1.2 Develop promotional plan	The Funded Project widely promoted to key stakeholders, prospective participants and community	Copies of promotional material contained at Attachments B and C
1.3 Consolidated contacts database to support promotion of Funded Project		Database of approximately 1500 contacts established

Objective 2 – Capacity Building Forums		
Action	Performance Indicators	Result/Outcome
2.1 Capacity building forums held in 3 locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tweed Heads (80-150 participants) • Mackay (150-250 participants) • Brisbane (400-500 participants) 	One forum for each location Participants to identify areas of need for ASSI community Supporting documents: Forum program and course material	Brisbane 1-3 November 2013 245 registered participants Tweed Heads 7-8 December 2013 119 registered participants Mackay 28 – 31 March 2014 200 registered participants Please see further information about the Forums at Attachment C
2.2 Online interaction through live streaming of forums All materials for the forums are to be made available online for e-participants A blog, monitored by	Forums sessions must be streamed live via the internet	Updates of the forums were provided live at: https://www.facebook.com/groups/assipj Project Coordinator occupied a guest spot at the State Library of Queensland Blog site: http://blogs.slq.qld.gov.au/assi/2013/10/14/wantok-2013/

<p>Project Co-ordinator, to support e-interaction and feedback</p> <p>The blog is monitored for appropriateness of comments and feedback</p>	<p>All materials are to be made available online prior to the forum</p> <p>Supporting documents</p>	<p>Brisbane event promoted with blog at: http://blogs.slq.qld.gov.au/assi/2013/10/30/speakers-and-dignitaries-confirmed-for-wantok-2013/</p> <p>All materials published on website at: http://www.assipj.com.au/ And Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/groups/assipj</p> <p>Supporting documents can be seen at Attachments B and C</p>
<p>2.3 Report required under Item 2.1 of this table is to be collated and presented at the Brisbane Forum</p> <p>Report must also be published online</p> <p>Video/documentary uploaded to You Tube</p>	<p>Report is tabled and distributed at Brisbane Forum and published online</p>	<p>Background reports are contained at Annexure X</p> <p>Report published at https://www.facebook.com/groups/assipj and https://www.facebook.com/groups/assipj</p> <p>Video documentary can be viewed at: http://www.assipj.com.au/wantok-2013-videos/</p> <p>Further documentary excerpts can be seen at: https://www.facebook.com/groups/assipj</p>

Objective 3 – Harmony Day event		
Action	Performance Indicators	Result/Outcome
<p>Develop and implement a Harmony Day event</p>	<p>Plan for Harmony Day event provided to DIAC for approval in writing.</p>	<p>Owing to limited interest in attendance at a NSW Harmony day event, all funds were directed towards frontline capacity building activities i.e. the three Forums, to better</p>

		address the needs of the national ASSI Community. NB: No funds were specified for this event in the initial funding application.
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Objective 4		
Action	Performance Indicators	Result/Outcome
Provide an evaluation on the Funded Project on the extent to which the objectives and aims as outlined in Part 1 of this Schedule 1 were achieved	Evaluation completed. The evaluation must consider a sample of the feedback provided by the participants from each forum at each location	Based on feedback, both written and anecdotal the success of the Capacity Building forums exceeded expectations. Please further see information at Attachments B and C.

4. GENERAL ACTIVITY ASSESSMENT

Did the Activity's outcomes meet the Organisation's expectations?

The outcomes of project activities greatly exceeded the expectations set out in the Funding Application. Outcomes of this project include:

- The formation of a Project Steering Group (see profile at Attachment A)
- The development of promotional materials to support the three Capacity Building Forums (see attachments B & C)
- The formation of an academic historical advisory board both ASSI/ATSI and broader community (see attachment D)
- The compilation and consolidation of a national database of over 1500 community members
- The success of each of the three Capacity Building Forums which involved attendance by more than 600 community members from throughout Australia, Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands and Fiji.
- The production of a video documentary of the Brisbane Forum which has been posted and viewed on multiple websites
- Productive discussion and agreement about the formation of a National Representative Body of the ASSI Community
- A draft Constitution to govern the activities of the National Representative Body
- Widespread media coverage including press articles and appearances on radio and television.
- Additional community consultations in Townsville, Ayr – Burdekin QLD
- Evident community cohesion particularly in Mackay which is considered a fragmented community and hosts our largest population (see poem)
- Agreed national body structure to be a federation model alienated with government
- National Governance Working Group situated in Mackay
- Secured pro bono services of reputable law firm Gilbert & Tobin to assist the development of a national constitution

- Comprehensive Website development to host significant updates and historical documentation www.assipj.com.au
- Partnered with Universities and State agency venues for delivery
- Lobbied and gained support from Australian Ministers – Federal and State particularly for NSW Recognition
- Partnered with ASSI organisations and ni Vanuatu, Solomon Island governments for delivery giving a strong kastom and cultural perspective

- **Activity materials**

The following materials are attached to this report:

- A. Steering Group Profile
- B. Promotional material
 - i) Capacity Building Forum grant announcement (<http://www.assipj.com.au/assi-pj-news-and-events/page/2/>)
 - ii) News and media releases
- C. Capacity Building Forum registration packs, posters and press coverage
 - i) Tweed Heads
 - ii) Brisbane
 - iii) Mackay
- D. Letters from the Hon. Victor Dominello and the Hon. Alex Greenwich
- E. Capacity Building Project Team
- F. Audited financial statements

- **Media and publicity**

1. Article: "Wantok – it's time for one voice"; ABC Tropical North, 31 October 2013 Attachment B; <http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2013/10/31/3881471.htm>
2. Article: "Torres Strait at the heart of South Sea Islander History"; *Torres News* 16-22 December 2013 (Attachment C (I))
3. Article: "Wantok moves ahead to reach national goal"; Mackay Daily Mercury (Attachment C (iii))
4. Interview and article: "New group to represent South Sea Islanders" SBS World News 6 November 2013 (<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2013/11/05/new-group-represent-south-sea-islanders>)
5. Interview: Radio 4MW "Wantok Mackay 2014 Good governance for ASSI Communities": (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BE9Ly_qE-bs&feature=youtu.be)
6. Article: "A blackbirded past, a healing future"; 11 June 2014: <http://themonsoonproject.org/2014/06/11/a-blackbirded-past-a-healed-future/>
7. *The Australian* article: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/blackbirder-families-want-reparation/story-e6frg6nf-1226697410724>
8. Placed 4 adds in classified local and regional papers (see attachments)

- **People aware of the activity**

- *Direct contact*: estimated 750, including 564 registered Forum attendees plus an estimated 200 casual attendees
- *Media coverage*: estimated 200,000+ (based on ratings and readership data)
- *Other publicity efforts*: including website, Facebook (854 followers) YouTube, State Library of Queensland blog site and other ASSI PJ activities estimated 5000+

- **Effectiveness in reaching primary target group**

The Project was exceptionally effective in reaching the primary target group of Australian South Sea Islander Communities as well as a much wider audience.

Reach was achieved through:

- Press coverage
- Radio interviews
- Television interviews
- Social media coverage
- International forums
- Word of mouth
- Contemporary Pacific Island Community groups and organisations
- University and Educational facilities

Representatives at the Forum travelled from NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and Queensland with a delegation of 30 participants from Vanuatu attending the Brisbane Forum. Delegates also travelled from Fiji and the Solomon Islands as well as academics from New Caledonia and London.

Feedback indicates that the forums were highly valued as a vehicle for cultural awareness, historical knowledge sharing and learning. There were a number of comments and likes from our 854 Facebook followers with widespread social media and conventional media coverage contributing to the promotion this initiative in both the wider Australian South Sea Islander and mainstream communities.

- **Unexpected issues**

One of the main objectives of the Wantok Capacity Building Forums was to reach agreement on the establishment of 'One Voice', a national representative body to give a cohesive national voice to ASSI issues while recognising community diversity and local interests. Specific aims in proposing this National Body included:

- The engagement from across the nation of many ASSI people, organisations and community groups to participate in the decision making process and to engage and nurture the involvement of established community organisations
- To acknowledge, accept and share the wisdom of Elders
- The development of innovative strategies to encourage direct engagement and retain involvement of ASSI youth (under 33s);
- To assist with the sustainability and cohesion of state, regional and local ASSI organisations
- To encourage and accept participation from broader community leaders, organisations and federal/state government representatives and agencies

These aims were significantly advanced during the Brisbane Forum on 1 to 3 November 2013 with the nomination and election of 9 representatives to the National Secretariat through a secret ballot involving 90 delegates. This initiative was further supported at the Tweed Heads Forum on 7-8 December and received favourable

media coverage on SBS and ABC television and radio as well as regional press.

However, there was some dissent to this action at the Mackay Forum on 28 to 31 March 2014. Delegates from Mackay argued that the newly formed National Secretariat was not regionally diverse or adequately representative of the ASSI Community at a national level. It was also maintained that governance issues existed in the voting process conducted in Brisbane, which were addressed and voted on accordingly.

A great deal of robust debate ensued. It was recognised by the organisers that the appointment of a National Secretariat governed by a National board of 12 delegates might have been premature. This led to the following outcomes:

- The National Secretariat elected in Brisbane was dissolved
- The appointed National Board was dissolved
- A resolution to develop and widely distribute a Constitution document to govern the election and activities of a future National Body, which will coexist with existing organisations
- The formation of the National Australian South Sea Islanders Governance Working Group (NASSIG).

Subsequently, the National ASSI Governance Working Group was elected in March 2014 at the Mackay Capacity Building Forum. This group has been instrumental in the development of the Constitution document. Gilbert and Tobin Solicitors have been engaged on a pro bono basis to consult and advise on the development of the document.

• **Additional outcomes**

- The formation of the National Australian South Sea Islander Governance Working Group
- The development of the National Constitution
- The Forums galvanised a commitment to coordinating youth community participation and cultural awareness.
- The forging of closer links to communities in Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands.
- As a direct result of the Brisbane Forum, ASSI PJ representatives were invited by the Government of the Solomon Islands to visit Honiara for International Museum Day, to address the local community about the history of the ASSI Community and the issues associated with the legacy of blackbirding.
- ASSI.PJ representatives were invited to attend the Vanuatu Government Commemoration of blackbirding during Vanuatu Independence Day ceremonies. This provided an opportunity to network with community, youth, women's groups and the media.
- ASSI.PJ representatives participated on a panel at the State Library of Queensland at the "Memories of a forgotten people" symposium
- ASSI.PJ representatives participated, along with the Member for Sydney Alex Greenwich and respected journalist Jeff McMullen as well as highly respected academics, in the *Sydney Ideas* forum at Sydney University

- Gilbert and Tobin are engaged on a pro bono basis by the ASSI.PJ to work on Constitution and other advisory issues
 - The Wantok Capacity Building forums facilitated the commencement of survey data, which will contribute to data collected by the Australian Bureau of Statistics during the 2016 National Census (see Attachment D).
 - On 28 July 2014, members of the Interim National Secretariat attended the Vanuatu Prime Minister's cocktail party
 - The Forums assisted in establishing formal guidelines, protocols and communication channels.
 - The call for a National Body led directly to additional news coverage e.g. <http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/2013/s3882029.htm> and ABC News 24 interview at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELSKjwmMFbk>.
- **Extensions of the Activity beyond original locality**
 - The Wantok Capacity Building Projects achieved a wide National reach via SBS and ABC media coverage as well as regional press coverage.
 - The Forums attracted visitors from throughout Australia as well as Vanuatu, Fiji, Solomon Islands and Pacific Island organisations both nationally and abroad. Many new relationships have been formed as a result.
 - **Other relevant evaluation information.**

Official recognition

On 1 September 2014 Australian Federal Parliament officially acknowledged the role Australian South Sea Islanders have played in our history and culture and expressed deep regret at their suffering and exploitation, calling for inclusion in programs and services addressing education, training, diabetes research and health services. Members of ASSI PJ were proud to be invited to both Houses of Parliament to witness and take part in this landmark declaration.

This followed a motion of formal recognition by NSW Parliament on the 15th August 2013 by Alex Greenwich (Member for Sydney) seeing bipartisan support and solid commitment from the Communities Relations Minister – Victor Dominello. The recognition conveniently aligned with 25 August 2013, which is now known as Australian South Sea Islander Recognition Day.

These motions support calls by the Australian South Sea Islander community for a specific question in the Australian census to count them as a unique ethnic group. As a result, ASSI.PJ met with the Australian Bureau of Statistics for discussions around community education and effective process in counting ASSI descendants in the 2016 census. This will enable government programs to be tailored more effectively to the ASSI Community.

On 3 September 2013 Prime Minister Rudd issued a Media Release, recognising the significant past injustices faced by the Australian South Sea Islander community, and the positive contribution they have made to our current modern multicultural society.

Those Parliamentarians who called for this official recognition have played an integral part in the Wantok journey in supporting Wantok since its inception. ASSI PJ continues to work closely with the Hon. Victor Dominello, NSW Minister for Citizenship and Communities and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs as well as the Hon. Alex Greenwich, the member for Sydney in building an economic, social and community profile for the ASSI Community (see attachment D).

5. COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

What changes were noted as a result of the Activity in the Organisation and/or the community in respect to community attitudes to social cohesion and integration?

In summary, we have taken leaps and bounds together as a community. The Forums were valued as a celebration of our rich culture and a healing process for a painful history. It was felt that they contributed to a better collective understanding of common issues.

It is clear that the ASSI community is a diverse group of people with differing opinions on a range of issues. However, the healthy and passionate discussion at Wantok helped to consolidate these differences and led to agreement on an approach to the establishment of a National Body representing collective interests.

While there is much work yet to be done the Forums galvanised the sense that as a Community we can work together to achieve better outcomes for the Australian South Sea Islander population in collaboration with broader community groups and organisations.

There was also a renewed commitment to youth engagement and dealing with youth issues. There was a huge attendance by Elders especially those staunch advocates that have been waiting and are in need of specific programs and services.

Were any new links between members of groups in the community developed and sustained as a result of Project Activities?

The Wantok Forums helped to bring together communities, some of whom had not been in contact for many years. It assisted in forging new relationships and strengthening old ones.

Some participants travelled from Fiji and the Solomon Islands and a large group represented the Government of Vanuatu in Brisbane in hope of reconnecting the families and to participate in change for our communities.

The discourse continues and is very necessary ensuring that the consultation and discussion process continues to reach and inform our grass roots community groups. It's an ongoing dialog and process that will ensure a strong self esteem, identity, cultural awareness and a strong sustainable community representation is established as a legacy and in recognition of our forefathers and mothers.

What has been learned from the project and by whom (eg. by the general community, the targeted audience and/or the Organisation itself)?

ASSI community is a diverse and passionate group of people with a fierce desire to own their history and control their future. This resulted in some strong differences in opinion, which can only be resolved through listening to the concerns, being able to adapt and react responsibly. There is much need for continued meaningful community consultation.

Wantok emerged as a platform for transparency and openness and bringing communities together which helped to overcome those differences of opinions. It is important that everyone has a voice in representing their region or community. This will help us to take this one voice forward.

The outcomes of this Project will assist greatly in informing future activities.

How does the Organisation plan to sustain the project Activities and/or achievements and momentum in the community into the future?

Wantok Forums are planned to continue annually. Feedback has overwhelmingly indicated that they have become a valuable feature in the bringing together of communities in particular our elders and the younger generations.

ASSI PJ will continue to work on bringing together a national voice, promote reconnection with family, bilateral relations and the sharing of factual historical information. The success of Wantok 2013/2014 has seen the NSW Community Relations Commission support a series of Wantok workshops specifically targeted at NSW in assessing the demographic our community.

6. OTHER ISSUES

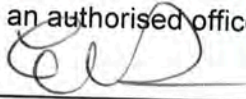
Please provide any other comments that may assist:

- *Future Diversity and Social Cohesion Program activities*
It is important that the momentum achieved by the Wantok Capacity Building forums in 2013 – 2014 be continued.
- *The Department's administration of these activities*
ASSI PJ would like to thank the Department of Immigration and Citizenship for the strength of its support of these activities
- *Other organisations.*
Representatives from a large number of ASSI organisations attended the Wantok forums, demonstrating that a wide range of community groups with a multitude of different agendas can work together to achieve common goals.

7. CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the information contained in this document is a true and accurate report by Australian South Sea Islanders (Port Jackson) Limited for the Wantok Capacity Building Forum 2013/2014

Signed by an authorised officer of the Organisation:



(Signature)

Enwelda Davis

(Name of Authorised Person)

President ASSI PJ

(Title/Position)

15/10/14

(Date)