



CHURCH RESPONDS TO GOVERNMENT'S INTERVENTION IN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

UNITING CHURCH President Rev Gregor Henderson, and Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress National Administrator Rev Shayne Blackman have jointly expressed concern about legislation relating to the Northern Territory Indigenous intervention.

“The Uniting Church stands with its Indigenous leaders in expressing our alarm at the way this legislation has evolved,” said Mr Henderson.

“This is some of the most significant legislation in the history of our nation, overriding aspects of the Race Discrimination and Native Title acts.

“It is with disbelief that we note that it merited only a one-day Senate hearing, which did not consult with some of the key stakeholders in the plan.

“Agencies and members of the Uniting Church who work and live in remote communities that will be affected by these changes have expressed their dismay at the way this process has been undertaken, and are fearful of the possible consequences of legislation on the permit system and land tenure,” said Mr Henderson.

Mr Blackman said the process showed a fundamental lack of respect for the Indigenous people most affected by the changes.

“This legislation has been underpinned by ferocious and hasty so called reforms laced with military style coercion,” said Mr Blackman.

“It has not been fully negotiated with those Northern Territory communities in a manner and timeframe that will enable all stakeholders in this issue to be in a position to support these new laws in any cohesive fashion.

“The Government has chosen to pursue populist policies and temporary solutions which will further push Indigenous rights and responsibilities to the fringes.

“This is not the act of a Government that respects and values the Indigenous people of Australia.

“What is needed are long term empower-

ing programs that enable people to take ownership of these changes over the long haul so that any positive developments are sustained and are undergirded by individual responsibility.

“The child abuse crisis is just one of a series of symptomatic societal crises in Indigenous communities resulting from a legacy of failed policies.

“These problems need long-term, sustainable, fully-costed solutions, and must be backed up by political will and commitment to the long haul.”

Both Church leaders urgently called on the Government to re-evaluate its strategy.

“We call upon the Government to institute a substantial plan for consultation and fairly evaluate the plan on its merits, according to the outcomes it will produce for Indigenous communities and people and in consultation with them”, said Rev Henderson.



Rev Dr Djiniyini Gondarra OAM

While applauding the initiative to curb the “rivers of white fella grog” and deal with issues of violence in Aboriginal communities, Uniting Church Minister and Chairperson of the Aboriginal Resources and Development Services Inc. (ARDS) Rev Dr Djiniyini Gondarra, has been critical of the removal of the permit system.

Dr Gondarra believes Minister for Indigenous Affairs Mal Brough and the Prime Minister are misleading the

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From the Moderator

What does it mean for the church to be a prophetic community, speaking what we believe to be the Word of God into the cauldron of community life? This is my struggle at the moment with the declared “state of emergency” under which people in Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory are currently living.

The situation on Aboriginal communities is central to our life as a Synod for they are home for many of our members. It was our missionary forebears who created many of these communities.

I have heard the cries of our sisters and brothers in Synod meetings for many a year, “Cannot something be done to lessen the pain?” Now something is being done. Surely this is a good thing.

But I have a growing unease, indeed alarm, about the way it is being done. Again, “we” are going to solve “their” problem. There is no recognition of the need to consult or co-operate, no recognition of the resources with-

The situation on Aboriginal communities is central to our life as a Synod....

in the communities and the culture that will contribute to a solution. Unilateral action is said to be needed and is being taken. As detail of the Federal Government legislation begins to emerge, it appears “normalisation” of indigenous communities will be imposed from the top and indigenous identity extinguished. “They” will become just like “us”. A final solution to the “Aboriginal question”? Is this God’s way?

I believe God’s way, shown in Jesus, is for the Word to live among us and work with us in growing partnerships. To be a prophetic community is not to speak about a situation and act

into a situation from a distance but to live a transforming life in the midst of the situation. The coming of Jesus was not an intervention but an identification. Decisive action to make life safe for children and women in communities has been needed for some time. It is wel-



come. But when the health checks are all completed and the extra police withdraw from the communities, who will be there to teach contemporary skills and learn traditional wisdom? Will members of the church be there in partnership? And will members of the church be there alongside our sisters and brothers as the outcomes of the intervention impact on them?

That is the challenge for the church – to continue to grow a partnership that is mutually respectful and mutually transforming, a partnership that witnesses to the Life that Jesus came to give.

Steve Orme, Moderator

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public when they say that the permit system on Aboriginal communities has been used to lock out the media and allow the abuse of Aboriginal children to continue.

“To our knowledge, the permit system has not been used in this way.

“The only time that we know that the media has been denied entry to an Aboriginal community is when Aboriginal people have wanted to hold a private funeral.

“It seems that the rich and privileged in this world can deny access to the paparazzi but Aboriginal people are not allowed the same privilege.

“Permission is required to visit John Howard at the Lodge or Kirribilli.”

Dr Gondarra called for policies that will empower people instead of turning their lives into “bigger nightmares” than they are.

“Sadly one must ask is the Little Children are Sacred Report and the violence now seen in some Aboriginal communities being used as a ‘trojan horse’ to take away private protection and property rights - rights that Aboriginal people have had to fight for over many decades.

“If so then we can only hang our heads in shame that any violence against children could be used to political advantage against Aboriginal communities in this way.

“How bad is European law when it does not protect private property rights? According to our Madayin law nobody can just take someone else’s private property like the federal government is doing in the Northern Territory.

“We are pleading for the permit system to stay over the access roads and Aboriginal communities so that they can feel safe and be safe in their home communities.”

Thanks to Journey Magazine for use of this article

About F.A.C.E. 8....an exchange of faith and culture

*About F.A.C.E. is a **faith and cultural exchange** for young adults in the 18-30 year old age group. Participants spend two weeks in a placement with indigenous communities in northern Australia. There they have a chance to experience something of the faith, culture, hurts and hopes of indigenous people.*

The About F.A.C.E. program is an exciting and strategic opportunity for young adults to participate in the reconciliation and covenanting process. It aims to create an 'about face' in the attitudes and lifestyles of participants, and to build relationships and bridges of understanding.

It is not simply an event for an individual, but is a shared experience with congregations and communities.

In July 2007, eight participants in About F.A.C.E. 8 travelled to Darwin for briefing sessions before travelling to placements in Ramingining or in Amata.

Matt Oliver was one of four young people who spent time in Amata....



Matt Oliver reflects on the landscape of Central Australia

Even though I was sitting in the middle of the desert in a foreign land, with a foreign language, at that moment I still felt I retained some knowledge about life, faith and the world in general. We sat and listened to inma (worship) and would have joined in, however everything was sung in Pitjantjatjara. During the service we were asked to share a Bible passage for the people who had come. That foundation of knowing a lot of stuff disappeared into nothingness.

We all looked at each other realising we had really come with nothing, in more than just the physical sense. I thought to myself, "Come on, a well educated young man who has grown up in the church, listened to countless sermons and been to many Bible Studies, surely I should have something to offer these people." I felt I could regurgitate something or make something up. But what truth would these people hear from my babbling. I think it was this moment that I realised how indoctrinated I had become from my culture back home to believe that we are to give, provide solutions, fix, implement action in any context.

What I realised was these people didn't need a pious young city boy preaching to them, nor do they need people patronising them telling them how to 'fix' things. It shook my foundation on which I drew comfort, yet also offered a new reality

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*Rev Peter Nyangu pictured with About F.A.C.E. participants who travelled to Amata. Briefing sessions were conducted in Darwin prior to and following their visits to communities.
Front: Daniel Todd, Meg Reilly Centre: Matt Oliver Back: Caitlin O'Reilly*

Native Title does change lives

Joy Morlumbun from Mowanjum gives a glimpse of the impact that having recognised title to indigenous land can have on individuals and families.....



One Sunday in July the Gospel Reading was the story of The Good Samaritan. At Mowanjum we remembered how unexpected was the kindness shown to a Jew lying on the road by one of those 'no-good' Samaritans. We were asked to think about times when we saw or heard of an unexpected good thing happening.

Back in the north



Rev Tom and Mrs Dawn Verrier, in Broome for 3 - 4 months, have ministered across the width and breadth of the Northern Synod

This is the story I told.

In the past week there had been a meeting of Ngarinyin people at Marunbabidi in the central Kimberley. They had met to set up an Aboriginal Corporation for negotiating about the development of the land in which Native Title now, at last, recognized they had legal rights.

One of the participants was Jimmy Maline, an old man who has been in poor health, on medication, living in the Pensioners' Quarters at Mowanjum. Because of his incapacity he has not had any significant part in previous consultations. Nor has he been passing on any of the stories of his Wandjina to his family members.

One of his sons was also at the meeting.

As it dawned on Jimmy that he now had a recognized responsibility for the care of his family's Wandjina and its site, he started to pour out the stories to his son - stories that no one thought he still had in him. He was starting to LIVE again and his son now has a new chance to LIVE too.

This is a really unexpected good news story I want to share.

In my work in diabetes education my role with the children is similarly to pass on knowledge which will be vital to their future. This gives me much satisfaction... and joy!

"Felicity Amery calling. Will you come to Broome?"

"I waited until Felicity drew breath, and said yes. Dawn said yes. And here we are in Broome.

It is a wonderful feeling to be back working within the Pilgrim Presbytery and the Northern Synod.

The worship service backed up by four piece band is the centrepiece of the ministry here in Broome. Up to 40 tourists swell our numbers each Sunday. The congregation provides morning tea and a BBQ on Sunday nights....people feel at home when they visit the church.

Dawn and I see our ministry here to be one of encouraging a well organised congregation - a congregation where all members work well together."

Revisiting the Kimberley

Rev Wally and Deaconess Margaret Johnson served in the Derby/Mowanjum Parish from 1991 - 1995. They have returned in 2007 to provide supply while Rev Andrew Watts is on long service leave from the West Kimberley Ministry. Margaret Johnson writes this personal reflection on being back in the Kimberley....

Boabs and whistling kites are two symbols for me of the Kimberley and God. Boab trees regally standing in the centre plantation of Loch St Derby. Boabs in the bush along the road. Their branches outstretched remind me of the love of God reaching out. Gliding, soaring kites remind me that "they who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles"

What a joy it has been to meet up with Mowanjum folk...to talk, to catch up on family, to



*From the air, the new Kimberley Arts Centre is fashioned in the shape of a wandjina
(Photo courtesy Julie Watts)*

meet children we knew, now adults and parents, to sadly learn of deaths, especially of young people, to re-confirm my admiration of the grannies and great grannies who still care for the littlies when parents have problems with responsibility, alcohol and now drugs.

Derby in July means tourists,

school holidays, festivals and relative coolness. It's a time of vitality and energy. The Mowanjum Festival held outside their fabulous new Art Centre included a choir of Christians and a jundba (dance). It was great to see the participation of old and young in song and dance.

The Art Centre has a great display of Wandjina paintings. The painting movement has emerged since we left in 1995. We were thrilled to see an exhibition in Melbourne. It has been exciting to hear painters delighting in the discovery of talent, in discovering their family roots and in passing on traditional stories to children through their paintings.

The Boab Festival included the established Kimberley Art Prize, Float Parade and Mardi Gras, Mud Football and the new Marsh Arts. Some events opened with acknowledgment of traditional owners and/or welcome to country. This is a big change since the early 1990's. Even the name Jandamarra, the

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*Adults are Joy Morlumbun, Jeffery Burgu, Alison Burgu, Mary Nankivell, Wally Johnson, Gudu Mungulu, Margaret Johnson.
Children are Josie Malay, Twanya Nulgit, Olivia Nulgit, Joyce Malay, Chayleen Ngerdu, Natashka Ozies.
(Photo courtesy Mary Nankivell)*

Frontier Services....at work in the Kimberley

.....in Derby

Frontier Services has recently let contracts for construction of a new \$5.7m, 26-bed high care aged facility next to its existing Ngamang Bawoona low-care village in Derby. Work is expected to be completed in June 2008. The new facility is being built and managed on behalf of WA Health and will house residents living in the ageing Numbla Nunga home nearby.



Ngamang Bawoona manager Pam Foster with staff members in grounds of the hostel
(Photo courtesy Frontier Services)



.....in Kununurra

Planning is well advanced for a new Home and Community Care centre building on the grounds of Frontier Services' existing aged care facility. It replaces a smaller existing venue and will be a multi-functional day and respite centre, with activities areas and overnight respite facilities. The new centre is expected to be ready in mid-2008 and will be enthusiastically welcomed by Manager Lorraine Donaghey and her team.

.....in Wyndham

Staff and residents at Frontier Services' 9-bed low care Marlgu Village aged care facility recently joined Home and Community Care (HACC) worker Kathy Reeri to celebrate her graduation from a distance education business studies certificate 2. Kathy (pictured) has been the HACC representative in Wyndham for many years.

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resistance fighter, is more often used to refer to Pigeon, the outlaw.

Some things are the same, some are different. The Derby shopping strip has the same buildings but different businesses. C.W.A Saturday markets still continue. Derby Hospital continues with renovations and extensions. Skillshare and TAFE are more established. The new DAHS (Derby Aboriginal Health Service) building is impressive.

The number of church buildings

in town are the same, but some of the denominations and names are different. The Numbud Patrol to help drinkers continues, as do restricted hours for the sale of alcohol and the drinking groups on the marsh. Funeral details, placed on public notice boards in shops and at the P.O., use people's names and even a photo.

Mowanjum has a sealed road in from the Gibb River Road and a large loop of sealed road through the community. Extra houses have been built, but I suspect more are needed. There are more private cars in the community and a sign

of the times the entrance notice board affirms Mowanjum is a dry community and prohibits unlicensed driving. Mowanjum Church building and grounds look very smart after renovations.

Mining has reopened at Koolan Island. TAFE is offering employment preparation courses to traditional owners and some Mowanjum people are finding employment there on a fortnightly fly in and out basis.

We are grateful to be back with the church here as its people witness to the faithful presence of God amid all the joys, and the

Life in Derby - a personal perspective

Mary Nankivell has lived in Derby for 23 years. Mary has attended meetings of Synod and Pilgrim Presbytery over the years representing Derby Faith Community.....

I have been teaching at Mowanjum Aboriginal Kindergarten since 1999. At the moment Kindergarten numbers are down due to a lull in the birth rate but next year, according to the clinic list, my 3 year old numbers are likely to triple. My husband Trevor and I also run a plant nursery and this year we celebrate our tenth anniversary in the business. On Saturdays I load up the ute with plants and seedlings and take them to the local CWA market.

I worship at Mowanjum Uniting Church which I started attending not long after I started teaching at the Kindergarten. I also sing in the Catholic Church Choir once a fortnight.

The Catholic Church recently held a Centenary Mass to celebrate the hundredth year of the work of the St. John of God Sisters in the Kimberley. In Derby they were responsible for the nursing of the patients at the leprosarium just outside of Derby as well as providing education for many children in Derby and other Kimberley communities. Sister Camille, who is our Choir leader, is getting older and frailer but she is still a hard task master. She said the Centenary mass was her swan song but we're still singing.

I live opposite the marsh and it is a great place for walking my dog. There has been a lot of activity on the marsh lately for the "Art on the Marsh" Boab Festival activity. One creation utilised the large deposit of broken glass that glitters our marsh, a relic from the days when cattle were driven to the wharf for transportation south. In the warmer



Mary Nankivell and Anne O'Reeri (Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer with Mowanjum Kindergarten) on a shopping expedition with the kindy class

weather I utilise the town pool. I recently started attending ballroom dancing. I also take my dog to Dog Training once a week - he gets so excited that he pulls the lead out of my hands. Fortunately he now comes back to me.

I am a member of the local Country Women's Association and a Girl Guide Leader. My unit, the Derby Barniy Guides, utilises the Uniting Church Youth Hall for its meetings. Barniy is the local name for a big goanna or lizard. The husband of my co-leader has recently been diagnosed with cancer. Doctors predict he has only 12 to 18 months to live. He wished to remain in Derby. Arrangements have been made for two nurses to visit Derby to give chemotherapy treatment. This is a first for Derby and already a second patient has commenced treatment. They also visit Broome and Kununurra.

I recently had a chance to try out the newly completed wing of the hospital that has replaced the old wing - condemned due to a cancer in the cement. A white floor in a building surrounded by red pindan is a cleaner's nightmare. The local

hospital administration had no choice in the matter as white is the standard for all hospitals in Western Australia.

I have a rabbit as well as a dog to care for and the warmer weather will bring out the many blue tongue lizards that live here. Before long they will be mating and we will have a new crop of youngsters. Large goannas have also been spied racing through the nursery or scratching in the sand. Many different birds frequent the trees including an owl. Our yard is the territory for a male cuckoo pheasant and I have sometimes seen him caring for his offspring. In the wet season we are inundated with frogs of all shapes and sizes. Hopefully those cane toads won't get across the border and decimate our wildlife.

It has been great to catch up with Margaret and Wally Johnson who are staying next door. Wally is filling in for Andrew Watts who is on long service leave from the West Kimberley Ministry.

That's all folks.

Yours in Christ, Mary Nankivell

Uniting Church 30th Anniversary How we celebrated.....nationally

The Uniting Church in Australia was formed on 22 June 1977 when Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian churches united.

Now with approximately 2800 congregations and some 300,000 active members, it is the third largest church in Australia.

President, Rev Gregor Henderson, declares “We are an inclusive, diverse and multicultural church. We have a good number of growing and vibrant congregations, new congregations starting every year, and 160 congregations worshipping in languages other than English - including 16 Aboriginal languages at last count. Looking forward I see a confident and joyful Church which is attractive and welcoming to all sorts of people.”

“The 30th Anniversary is a time for all members of the Church to celebrate what we have achieved and our fellowship in Christ.”



Rev Gregor Henderson, President, Uniting Church in Australia

How we celebrated.....locally

The Tennant Creek congregation celebrated the 30th Anniversary of the Uniting Church conjointly with the celebration of Frontier Services Sunday at Pulkapulka Kari. The service celebrated the ‘Ballad for the Bush’ with members of the Tennant Creek Congregation and staff from PPK taking part in leading the service.

We welcomed members from the wider community of Tennant Creek and also travellers from various southern states.

A highlight of the worship was the singing of the old chorus Follow, Follow in Warumungu.



The Rainbow People of God - PPK residents, travellers and folk from the Tennant Creek community join for worship and celebration



New members of the congregation lead in song

The singing was led by a group of adults and children who have recently joined the congregation. At the conclusion of the service, PPK hosted a lunch of pumpkin soup, damper and a sausage sizzle.

We were reminded that the work of PPK, and the work of the Patrol Ministry offer an opportunity for people to experience the living God in the outback of Australia. Not only did we celebrate 30 years of the Uniting Church in Australia but also part played by Frontier Services as it seeks to serve the people of the outback.

Uniting Church 30th Anniversary

How we celebrated.....in our agencies

Somerville Community Services Inc.

Somerville Community Services Inc is a non-government, not for profit, youth, family and community welfare organisation indigenous to the Northern Territory. We maintain strong constitutional links with the Uniting Church in Australia.

To celebrate the 30th birthday of the Uniting Church, Somerville hosted a morning tea for staff and clients. A special guest was the Moderator, Rev Steve Orme who spoke to the gathering about the history of the church, the United Church in our Northern Territory. Rev Orme applauded Somerville's work and talked about the importance of living and working together – Church and Community Services.



Vicki O'Halloran, Chief Executive Officer; Daphne Read, Vice President; Steve Orme, Moderator pictured next to Somerville's artwork depicting the link between Somerville and the Uniting Church

Daphne Read, the Vice-President of Somerville Community Services Inc. thanked Steve for his presentation, and highlighted the long association of Somerville and Methodist Overseas Missions and later the Uniting Church. Daphne said that Somerville was now 42 years of age and in anniversary years was the “Pearl” of the Uniting Church.

UnitingCare

The Uniting Church is the largest non-government provider of community services in Australia through the UnitingCare network.

National Director of UnitingCare, Lin Hatfield Dodds (pictured) grew up in the church and was 12 years old at union. She continues to be “unashamedly passionate” about the church and what it stands for.

“I love this church that is so young yet so willing to continue to risk following Christ’s call to the edges,” she said. “This church that welcomes all, includes all, celebrates all, regardless of label or stigma.”

Last year, UnitingCare services assisted more than 1.8 million people at every stage of life in urban, rural and remote locations across the country. “Our service users are the reason that the Uniting Church puts so much of its self and its resources into social and welfare services”.

Ms Hatfield Dodds said the UnitingCare family was part of the church’s pilgrim journey, on the way to a promised end.

“We will continue our pilgrim journey as we hope and work for a nation and world shaped by love, justice, and grace. I believe that UnitingCare will play a significant part in bringing that future closer.”

“We have made a difference for the past 30 years. Together, we can continue to make a difference.”



Looking to the future

The Standing Committee of the Northern Synod has confirmed the appointment of the new General Secretary. Mr Peter Jones will take up the position from January 2008.



Peter (Wamud) Jones has lived in the Northern Synod since 1977 when he went to Maningrida as a primary school teacher. Before that he was a teacher in Canberra, following childhood years in several NSW country towns.

His years at Maningrida were an important learning time, especially about issues of concern to Aboriginal people. After eight years in Arnhem Land, Peter returned to Canberra for one year to commence his Master of Education studies. Then came a move to Darwin, where he became an advisor in the Education Department's bilingual education program.

Peter then managed several curriculum development projects before becoming the a/Director of the Education Department's Policy Branch. Currently Peter works for the NT Government's Department of Justice, where he is part of the team writing a new Liquor Act and the response to the Commonwealth Intervention in the Northern Territory.

Peter is married to Kaye and has two daughters, Grace and Alice, who live in Sydney. He is trying to grow a tropical garden to provide shade and keep his house cool. If he can stop Kaye's two dogs from digging up the garden, he may well succeed. He also enjoys riding his motorcycle and getting out into the bush to spend time being quiet.

Peter is a member of Palmerston Uniting Church and is the Chairperson of the Pilgrim Presbytery Pastoral Relations and Placements Committee.

Synod 2007

The 31st Annual Meeting of the Northern Synod will be held in Darwin from Sunday 30 September 2007. Theme for the meeting is ***“Christ came to give life - life in all its fullness”***.

The Synod Opening Service which includes the induction of the new Moderator, Rev Wendell Flentje, will be held at Casuarina Uniting Church.

Synod business sessions will be conducted at Kormilda College and will run conjointly with the meetings of the Pilgrim Presbytery of Northern Australia (PPNA) and Northern Regional Council of Congress (NRCC).

A major focus of the Synod meeting will be on education - education that will enhance scholastic growth and develop-

ment of the individual and the family - education that will bring fullness of life.

The Synod is hosting a public forum on Tuesday 2 October with the topic **“Education for what?”** General Secretary, Kevin Davis, explains, “The forum will explore issues confronting Aboriginal education particularly in remote localities. Focus will be on the outcomes of education and how these outcomes relate to the environment in which school leavers find themselves.

“Particular emphasis will be on how Aboriginal law and culture dovetails with the wider Australian society. Critical also is the education of families.”

Following the successful introduction of translation equipment



Outgoing General Secretary, Mr Kevin Davis AM

in 2006, Synod will again be a multi-lingual conference. Translation services will be provided to indigenous members from Central Australia and Arnhem Land.

About F.A.C.E. 8...an exchange of faith and culture

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which I didn't know existed. In this experience we were called to hear their stories, in their time, at their pace and to support these people in the decisions they make.

Towards the end of our trip, Amata became a ghost town, as everyone had left for the next footy carnival in Docker River. The ensuing numbness that followed was something that I never expected. In this time not knowing or understanding our purpose of being here, a loss of independence as we were completely controlled by our circumstance, not being surrounded by our culture and our first language, not having anything to do – it was these days that we all struggled to do anything at all. We could conjure up ideas of things to do to occupy our last few days, yet felt so completely drained of energy. All these circumstances just compounded these feelings.

What I realised out of this experience was that this predicament has been imposed on many indigenous populations, and this was a very small window into that world. Sometimes it felt people didn't see purpose as they were caught between two cultures and one potentially being imposed on them. People were trapped by their circumstances and I could now see how damaging the assumption of assimilation could be.

However, there were moments of hope, in the oddest places. It was at footy carnivals that people were drawn together as a community. It was people retaining their language and being proud of that. Through this, I saw people owning a sense of identity. It was a resilience of the people to continue going on despite sometimes extreme but also very complicated circumstances.

Tim Waite, Emily Evans, Liana Brice and Hillary Anderson spent time in Ramingining. This article from Tim has been taken from the About F.A.C.E. webpage...

(In the three weeks) since I have got back from my About FACE 8 placement, I have continued to learn more about my experiences and how I have changed. The experience was not just one that went for 2 weeks but one which seems to be continuing



Tim, Emily Hillary and Liana with Mätjarra Garrawurra at Ramingining

as I see the world through different lenses to what I had before I left for About FACE.

One example of acting differently since I returned happened just the other night at church. A young man who had not been before came. He was from Korea and has come over to study at one of our Uni's. He somewhat struggles with our language and was quite shy and didn't know anyone. Previous to my About FACE experience I would have possibly smiled and said hello but would not have gone out of my way to welcome him. However on Sunday night I tried hard to make him feel welcome and engage in conversation, and invited him to dinner with us after church where we were able to continue talking.

I had a new found respect for this man as I somewhat had empathy for him knowing how hard it can be to have a language barrier and be somewhat an "outsider" to an already established community. In some ways it was a chance to offer this person the same welcome, love and hospitality that was shown to me by the Indigenous families and people of Ramingining.

This is just one story from my "after About FACE experience" which goes along with my many wonderful experiences during my placement that have helped in some ways to see more than anything that our "balanda" (white person) way is not always the only or best way to do things which I think I would have naively and arrogantly thought before my experience.

Specified Ministry of Pastor

In the last ten years the shape of congregational life, and the way in which ministry is exercised in the life of the Uniting Church, has changed quite dramatically. The reduction in the number of ordained Ministers and the congregations that can afford them has led to an increased reliance upon the service of people who have not necessarily been through the normal training and selection processes that the Church has in place. This need for flexibility and appropriate standards led the 11th Assembly to streamline the number of lay Specified Ministries and to institute the Ministry of Pastor. Pastors may serve in a wide range of roles and do not need to use the designation of “Pastor”.

It was recognised that preparation of people for this ministry will need to be flexible in its delivery and have a focus on competence for the task and not just academic courses for their own sake. The decision to implement a system of competencies for Pastors is a necessary and important step in strengthening the ministries that many people exercise on behalf of the Church. The aim of establishing the new Specified Ministry of Pastor is to increase community confidence in the capacity of those representing the Church and to make certain that Pastors receive and abide by the training and disciplines that ensure that the values of the Church are upheld.

“People will not self-select to be Pastors nor will they be able to avoid the requirements that will be in place if the Presbytery identifies a person’s role and ministry location as suitable for the role of Pastor,” said Terence Corkin, Assembly General Secretary. “If it looks like a Pastor, sounds like a Pastor, and walks like a Pastor, then it is a Pastor.”

The March Assembly Standing Committee received the first report from the Implementation Task Group on the Specified Ministry of Pastor. A further report was presented to the July ASC that stressed continuous recognition and accreditation, not continuous service, as the way in which persons who continued as Lay Pastors and Youth Workers will be recognised after the opportunity for new applicants to these ministries ends.



Assembly General Secretary, Rev Terence Corkin

The scope of the Ministry of Pastor was confirmed by the July meeting of the ASC. Focus points include teaching the beliefs and practices of the Uniting Church, pastoral oversight of members and or groups operating under the auspices of the Uniting Church, leading worship of congregations and faith communities of the Uniting Church, and evangelism or service beyond a gathered congregation exercised under the auspices of the Uniting Church.

Terence spoke to the need for clarity regarding just who should undertake the new process. “Some confusion has arisen about whether all members of a Lay Ministry team will be designated as Pastors for the purposes of the Regulations,” he said. “The short answer is ‘no’ — the Presbytery will have to weigh up whether the roles are broad enough for this designation to be appropriate.”

Synods have now appointed panels that will interview and consider applicants for transition to ordination from one of the discontinued Specified

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Successful Partnership helps Indigenous kids

The Aboriginal Resource and Development Services (ARDS) Inc, in partnership with the Yolngu people of north-east Arnhem Land, the Commonwealth Department of Families, Community and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) and Anglicare NT, released a DVD earlier this month to help Indigenous parents understand anaemia.

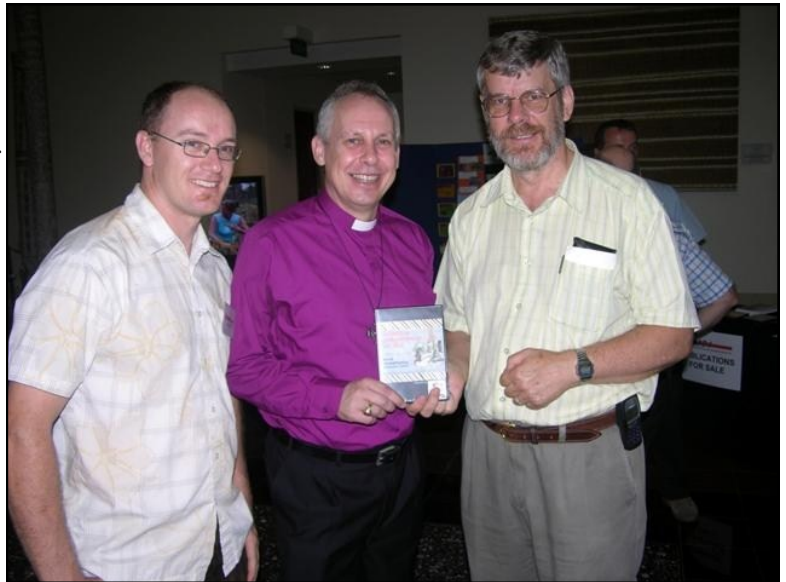
Anaemia limits children's growth and learning potential. Indigenous kids suffer higher rates of anaemia than kids in other parts of Australia. The tragedy is that anaemia is preventable!

To help combat anaemia in Indigenous communities ARDS and the Yolngu people, supported by FaCSIA and Anglicare NT, created the *Iron Story* DVD Gulangbuy dälkunhawuy weyika – Blood Strengthening Element (Iron). This DVD explores what iron is and how it helps our bodies to grow and be healthy. Also, recently released is a Yolngu made *Childhood Discipline* DVD Djamarakuji' Raypirri – Childhood Discipline.

These two DVD resources will play a vital role in helping Indigenous families improve their health and well being.

They are in the Yolngu Matha language which makes the knowledge accessible to the Yolngu people who often feel isolated from an English speaking world.

The *Iron Story* and *Childhood Discipline* DVD resources are designed to support government and non-government organisations and workers and are available to purchase via the ARDS website www.ards.com.au/store.htm.



Mr Greg Stehle - ARDS Multi Media Producer, Right Rev Greg Thompson - Bishop, Anglican Diocese of the Northern Territory and Rev Steve Orme - Moderator, Uniting Church Northern Synod at the launch of the Iron Story DVD

They will also be made available to Yolngu families trying to live across two worlds.

For further information on ARDS health, language and culture resources contact the ARDS office on (08) 8982 3444 or email: admin@ards.com.au

Memorial Service for Rev Carol G. Gondarra

People travelled from interstate and from many parts of the Northern Territory to attend the memorial service for the Rev Carol G. Gondarra which was held at Galiwin'ku, Elcho Island, on Friday 6th July.

Before the service began our late sister's husband, the Rev Dr Djiniyini Gondarra, and his family greeted the guests who had travelled to Elcho Island for the service.

He later thanked all those who

attended and spoke movingly of his wife's role as his counsellor, mentor and pastor over 40 years of life together. Together they raised 5 children.

Many speakers referred to her leadership of women all over northern Australia. She was the second woman in the UAICC ordained as a Minister of the Word.

Indigenous leaders who participated in the service included the Rev Shayne Blackman, National Administrator of UAICC, the Rev

Mawunydjil Garawirtja, Chairman of NRCC, the Rev Peter Nyangu and the Rev Ken Minyipirriwuy, National Elders of the UAICC, and the Rev Dhalnganda Garrawurra of Elcho Island.

The Moderator, the Rev Steve Orme represented the Northern Synod and the Rev Felicity Amery represented Pilgrim Presbytery.

Rev Wendell Flentje

Meeting and Retreating in Arnhem Land

Representatives from Warruwi, Maningrida, Minjilang and Jabiru gathered together at Warruwi in June for the second meeting of the newly established West Arnhem Area Ministry Council.

Rita Djitmu is Convenor of the Council. “We started to discuss ourselves how we got together with Area Council because it was the first meeting for Jabiru people and now we are four congregations”, Rita said. The Council discussed important issues about the church and what they are going to do in the future. The proposal for a placement, based in Jabiru, that would support and resource the four

congregations was discussed. This placement will be a partnership between Northern Regional Council of Congress, Pilgrim Presbytery of Northern Australia and Frontier Services.

At the conclusion of the meeting, West Arnhem members travelled to Jabiru to meet with some Darwin-based Pilgrim Presbytery ministers for a combined retreat.

East Arnhem Area Ministry Council met in Ramingining in August. Following this meeting, East Arnhem area ministers, elders and church leaders gathered with ministers from Top End congregations of the Pilgrim Presbytery to share together in retreat.

Rev Tim Bose and Rev Rronang Garrawurra led the retreats in a series of studies on the Book of Ruth.



Above: Howard Amery supports West Arnhem Area Ministry Council Convenor, Rita Djitmu, at the Council meeting at Warruwi



Members of West Arnhem Area Ministry Council with Howard Amery, NRCC Resource Worker based in Darwin



Joanne, Felicity, Jenny, Rita and Nancy meeting at Warruwi to discuss Women's Ministry in West Arnhem

Below: Study sessions on the verandah at the manse in Jabiru



Meeting and Retreating in Arnhem Land



Rev Dr Tim Bose (right) in the improvised 'lecture theatre' at the old abattoir buildings in Ramingining. A swag served as the lectern until an old 44 gallon drum was brought into service. Newsprint substituted for the electronic whiteboard and most participants sat on the concrete floor.

Above: Rev Ken Garrawurra, Rev Bilanya Garawirtja, Mr Howard Amery and Rev Steve Orme



Above: Rev Ronang Garrawurra leads a study session on the Book of Ruth



Above right: Part of the adventure for Darwin based ministers was the road trip through Arnhem Land



Right: Salomo Bangun, Wendell Flentje, Felicity Amery, Howard Amery, Steve Orme, Peter Richter on the road back to Darwin from Ramingining

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All enquiries should be directed to the Editorial
Committee at the address above.

*The next edition will feature stories from the
meetings of Synod and the Presbyteries*

Deadline for articles 1 November 2007

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of were provided by Matt Oliver, Tim
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Mary Nankivell, Frontier Services, As-
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ville Community Services, Aboriginal
Resource and Development Services.

The Editorial Committee appreciates the
support of all contributors.

PATCHWORK PROJECT

A fundraising project to help in the establishment of a

*Centre for the
support of Indigenous Scriptures*

A Partnership project in the Northern Synod

**Get together with
friends and make a
patchwork quilt to be
sold at Presbytery, Syn-
od and Assembly meet-
ings**

*The project will be
launched at
Nightcliff Uniting
Church
on September 1
2007*

*For information on design of the quilts contact:
Rev Felicity Amery by phone on (08) 8941 8300 (after hours)
or by email: felicity.amery@ns.uca.org.au*



(Continued from page 12)

Ministries according to a set of national guide-
lines. Discernment retreats will be organised and
work is underway on the formation retreats for
accepted applicants.

A Task Group of the Ministerial Education Com-
mission is developing the list of competencies
which will make clear the requirements of those
serving as Pastors. It is expected that this task will
be completed by the end of the year.

The July Standing Committee also determined
that anyone accepted as a candidate for ordination
under the transitional arrangements must com-
plete the process by December 31, 2014.

All the decisions and information about the min-
istry of Pastor will appear on the Assembly web-
site: <http://nat.uca.org.au/home/>

*Meera Atkinson
Uniting Church National Assembly Communications Unit*

GROWING A NATION OF HOPE

The National Assembly is producing a set of election resources
around the theme of "growing a nation of hope" to help
members of the Uniting Church think through the issues and
political rhetoric of the forthcoming election campaign from a
Christian perspective.

These resources are not party political. They are not designed to
direct the votes of members but rather to encourage the
exploration of the implications of the gospel in the
consideration of policies and the process of coming to an
individual decision.

The cornerstone of these resources is the *Growing a Nation of
Hope: your faith, your vote, your voice* booklet, which will
explore some of the major policy areas and current issues from
a Christian perspective. Areas covered include: climate change,
counter-terrorism and human rights, indigenous health,
industrial relations, aid and development, issues of
reconciliation and multiculturalism and more. It will also
include an election toolkit with useful links and suggestions for
planning activities and getting involved.

*A copy of the booklet, together with other resources, will be
mailed out to all congregations in early September.
All material is free of charge.*