

ANTaR

Justice, Rights and Respect for Australia's First Peoples



Sea
of hands

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021

CONTENTS

- 2 ABOUT ANTaR NATIONAL
- 4 PRESIDENT'S REPORT
- 5 NATIONAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT
- 7 ABOUT OUR WORK
- 10 SUSTAINING OUR ORGANISATION
- 11 FINANCIAL REPORT
- 13 ANTaR IN THE STATES AND TERRITORIES
- 18 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND THANKS

WHO WE ARE

We are a dynamic organisation supporting the millions of Australians wanting justice, rights and respect for Australia's First Peoples. We are independent, non-partisan and not for profit. We are affiliated with a national network of state and territory groups.

OUR VISION

A just Australia in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' rights as First Peoples are recognised, respected and enjoyed.

OUR PURPOSE

To be a respected 'Thought Leader' that engages, educates and mobilises the broader Australian community to support and advocate for treaty, justice, rights and respect for Australia's First Peoples.



Cover photo and left by Tyler Cherry of the Sea of Hands at the University of Canberra for National Reconciliation Week 2021. Design created by Ngunnawal artist Richie Allan, with support from University of Canberra Elder in Residence Aunty Roslyn Brown.

This page Mundi Mundi lookout, Silverton NSW by Cassie Smart.

OUR PRINCIPLES

[THE WAY WE WORK]



We actively support the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to self-determination.



We partner with, and take our lead from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations. We build alliances with other organisations and across sectors in support of common goals.



We believe that all Australians should be fully informed about and have a role to play in achieving a just Australia in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' rights as the First Peoples are recognised, respected and enjoyed.



We seek to amplify the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations.



We are committed to social justice and the full realisation of human rights, including those expressed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.



We believe in empowerment and community development. Working closely with our State and Territory ANTaR affiliates to educate the broader community about justice, rights and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

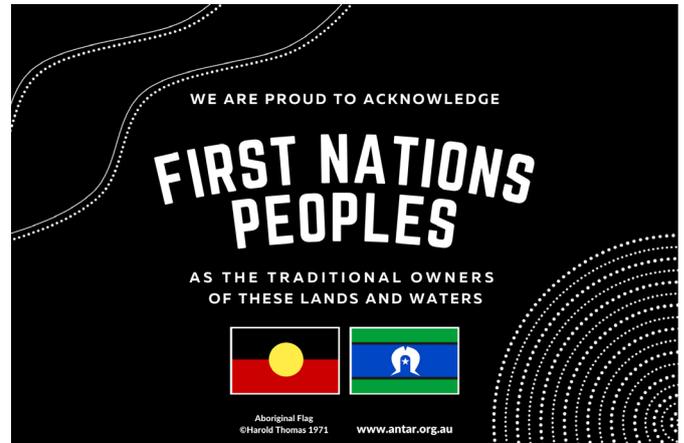


We believe in speaking up about injustice, inequality and racism.



We are accountable and transparent.

OUR STRATEGIC GOALS



We are proud to acknowledge and pay our respect to First Nations people as the traditional owners of the land on which we work across the continent.

To lead public discussions about unfinished business, truth-telling (treaty, justice, rights and respect) and a reconciled Australia from a non Indigenous perspective, in solidarity and conjunction with First Nations leaders and organisations.

To educate the broader community about the history, cultures, lived experiences, languages and human rights of Australia's First Peoples.

To build an active and engaged network of Australians committed to the achievement of justice, rights and respect for Australia's First Peoples.

To be an effective and efficient organisation that values partnerships and develops our people both professionally and culturally to enable us to achieve our goals.



To read our Strategic Goals in full see: www.antar.org.au/strategic-plan

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



“So, 2022 will mark our 25th anniversary, and while we were largely unsuccessful in the campaign for which we were created, our ability to work creatively and intelligently in solidarity with First Nations people, leaders and organisations, has meant that playing the long game may lead us to success.”

Many aspects of the 2020/21 Financial Year have felt like a repeat of the previous year – particularly for Victorians like myself. ANTaR has continued over the past year to operate in a COVID-19 virtual world, with much of our thought-leading and networking activity being zoom-based and blog-driven.

Despite the ongoing COVID-19 situation, we have had many successes concerning working in solidarity with First Nations leaders and organisations to progress truth-telling, treaty, self-determination, and speaking out on issues including raising the age of incarceration, governmental COVID-19 responses and listening to the voice of First Nations Peoples.

While there has been some progress with the National Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations in working with governments to implement the tripartite National Closing the Gap Agreement, it has been insufficient and, particularly at the Federal level, inconsistently applied.

In terms of our internal, organisational matters we have continued to strengthen our financial position through our ongoing engagement with supporters and the excellent work of our fundraising team. Through the dynamic leadership of our National Director, Paul Wright, and the hard work of the staff team, we come into the 2021/2022 Financial Year in the strongest position in our 24-year history.

ANTaR was ‘born’ when the National Indigenous Working Group needed support to combat the Howard Government’s Ten Point Plan that would have reversed the advantages First Nations Peoples had gained with the High Court decision against ‘*terra nullius*’. The two-year national campaign grew support for First Nations Peoples rights amongst the non-Indigenous community – particularly through the Sea of Hands ‘plantings’ all across Australia. Despite the widespread engagement, in the end many of the gains from the *Mabo* and *Wik* Decisions were lost. That is when ANTaR evolved from a ‘campaign’ to an NGO to promote First Nations rights in solidarity.

So, 2022 will mark our 25th anniversary, and while we were largely unsuccessful in the campaign for which we were created, our ability to work creatively and intelligently in solidarity with First Nations people, leaders and organisations, has meant that playing the long game may lead us to success.

At the 2020 AGM we saw some key changes to the membership of our Board. Andrew Gargett resigned from the position as Treasurer – and later the Board – due to taking up the Chief Executive Role at the *First Peoples Assembly of Victoria*, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for his valuable contributions to the Board’s deliberations. At that AGM we re-elected Jill Webb and elected Jaki Barton as Secretary with Darren Dick becoming our new Treasurer.

In closing, I want to thank our staff, Board members, Council members and the State/Territory ANTaRs for the great work they have done this year despite the necessary COVID-19 lockdowns.

And, of course, a big thanks to you, our members and supporters.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Lewis', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Peter Lewis
PRESIDENT, ANTaR

NATIONAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT



“Every year, more Australians are wanting to know more about the truth of colonisation. Without fear, more and more Australians are wanting and expecting our governments to truly reconcile with the First Nations, formally through treaty and fundamentally by acknowledging the past (and present) implications of colonisation. It is only when we embrace these challenges together that we can begin building and shaping the Country that we can be together.”

The last 12 months have been productive ones for the ANTaR team and we have worked hard to represent the solidarity and commitment of our ANTaR supporters across the country – to be active allies for justice, rights and respect for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia.

The 2020-21 year has been my third full year as National Director and it has been so encouraging to see our partnerships with First Nations peak organisations and the leading social justice campaigns deepen and grow.

In several discussions with the Staff team over the last few months, we reflected that our work is a war of attrition in many ways. We fight and scrape for every inch of justice and truth. Progress can be slow, but Australia must inevitably come to terms with the history of our shared story. Every year, more Australians are wanting to know more about the truth of colonisation. Without fear, more and more Australians are wanting and expecting our governments to truly reconcile with the First Nations, formally through treaty and fundamentally by acknowledging the past (and present) implications of colonisation. It is only when we embrace these challenges together that we can begin building and shaping the Country that we can be together.

Over the last year, the ANTaR Team has worked closely with our excellent and dedicated Board of Directors to continue the evolution of ANTaR into a ‘thought leader’ that makes a growing contribution to the policies and strategies that progress the rights of First Nations Peoples. We have gone through an extensive process to consider a re-branding of ANTaR and over the next 12 months we’ll be launching our new brand to complement the evolving work and priorities of our organisation. We are excited by this and it will be timely to launch our new look and feel in 2022, which will mark 25 years of ANTaR!

As part of our core work, we continue to play a central role in the operation of some long standing and emerging social justice campaigns and initiatives, like the Close the Gap and Change the Record Campaigns and newer campaigns like Raise the Age and Know Your Country. This campaign work is the thread that connects ANTaR to its foundations as a grass roots, peoples’ movement that follows the lead of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues, friends and communities. I cover this more in the ‘Our Work’ section of this report.

ANTaR continues to be active in the policy space, and have made a number of submissions to government processes and inquiries to shape better programs, services, policies and politics. At the core of our message is the need to work with First Nations Peoples. Throughout the year **we made submissions** relating to Disability, Northern Australia, Native Title, the Voice to Parliament and protecting our cultural and environmental heritage.

ANTaR ACT acknowledges the 474 First Nations deaths in custody since the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, 30 years on.



NATIONAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT [CONT.]

Jye Synnott participates in creating a Sea of Hands for National Reconciliation Week 2021 at St. Aloysius Catholic College Junior Campus, Kingston Beach, Tasmania.



As always, I want to thank our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family, friends, leaders and peak organisations.

I am always grateful for the wonderful people on the ANTaR Board, for their wisdom, direction and support. Led by our President, Dr Peter Lewis, we have passionate and experienced Board Directors that volunteer their time throughout the year to make sure ANTaR is an organisation that we can all be proud of.

Finally, it was a very sad time for our ANTaR Family at the beginning of 2021 when our much-loved colleague and friend, the one and only Wayne Willis, lost his battle with cancer. Wayne was a fierce social justice warrior and advocate for the underdog all his life. We miss you mate.

Thanks to the staff for all your hard work and commitment over the last year. We are a small team but you wouldn't know it by the volume of work and the outstanding commitment shown constantly. Big thanks again to our wonderful volunteers – Wendy Rayner, Sue Downes, Sheilagh Kelly, Cathy Noble and John McNeil – and the many other volunteers and interns that have given their time to support our work. We couldn't do it without you!

I am looking forward to another year, working towards the realisation of a just and reconciled Australia.

Paul Wright
NATIONAL DIRECTOR

ABOUT OUR WORK

Laying the foundations for Treaty:
Agreements, Treaties & Negotiated Settlements Seminar and website relaunch
 6-7.15pm Thursday 12 November

Professor Pip Nicholson in conversation with Professor Marcia Langton AO, Jamie Lowe and Amanda Porter, with an introduction by Minister Ken Wyatt

 Professor Pip Nicholson
 Dean, Melbourne Law School

 Professor Marcia Langton AO
 Foundation Chair of Australian Indigenous Studies, the University of Melbourne

 Jamie Lowe
 CEO, National Native Title Council

 Amanda Porter
 Senior Fellow (Indigenous Programs), Melbourne Law School

hosted by  THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

in partnership with  National Native Title Council

 ANTaR
 Sea of Hands

A National Treaties Summit event

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – TREATY

ANTaR has continued our successful partnership with the National Native Title Council and the University of Melbourne to platform a series of public discussions on Treaty in Australia. Over the 2020-21 year we have held a further four online events called *Treaty Talks* with topics including sovereignty, treaty in the States, foundations and justice. These events have been very well attended and we have been able to feature Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders such as Mick Gooda, Professor Mick Dodson, Dr Jackie Huggins, Tony McAvoy, Professor Marcia Langton and many others.

We will continue to advocate for a national treaty process that complements what is already happening in a number of the states and territories. This is the unfinished business of the Australian national project.

30 YEARS SINCE RCIADIC

In April, we marked the 30th anniversary of the *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody*. As we noted at the time, so many of the recommendations of that seminal Commission report remain unactioned and the injustice of overwhelming incarceration rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is a rolling travesty in Australia.

We partnered with the Melbourne Law School to host a speech by former Royal Commissioner and now Senator Patrick Dodson. Senator Dodson spoke eloquently about the dire need to change and reminded everyone that a racist system will continue to do untold damage unless we take drastic steps. To coincide with Senator Dodson’s speech, ANTaR and the University of Melbourne created a special Sea of Hands installation on the lawn outside of the Law School to commemorate the too many lives lost in incarceration over the last 30 years.

#STOPBLACKDEATHSINCUSTODY

30 YEAR SHAME

455+ FIRST NATIONS DEATHS IN CUSTODY SINCE THE 1991 ROYAL COMMISSION INTO ABORIGINAL DEATHS IN CUSTODY

15 APRIL

- DEMAND GOVERNMENTS TAKE URGENT ACTION ON THIS NATIONAL EMERGENCY
- PM MUST MEET WITH FAMILIES OF THOSE WHO HAVE DIED IN CUSTODY
- THE SEA OF HANDS HAVE BEEN A SYMBOL OF SOLIDARITY WITH FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES FOR OVER 23 YEARS

Join the Melbourne Law School webinar featuring Senator Pat Dodson, RCIADIC Commissioner talking about where things are at, 30 years on. 6PM 15.4.2021

 THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

 LEARN MORE TAKE ACTION

 ANTaR
 Justice, Rights and Respect for Australia's First Peoples | Sea of Hands

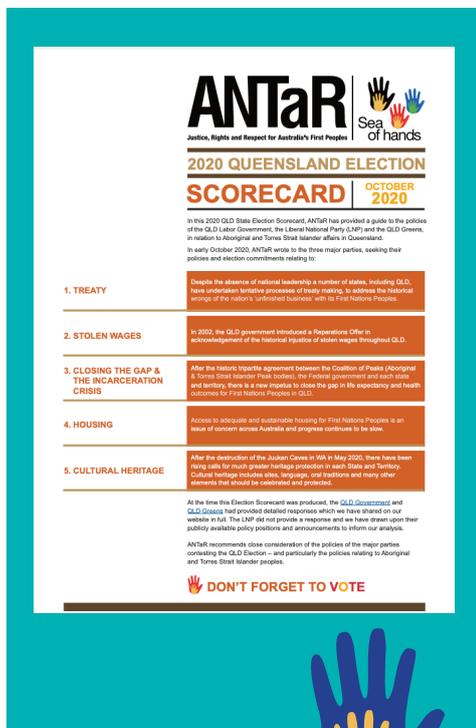
ABOUT OUR WORK [CONT.]

SUBMISSIONS AND REPORTS

It has been another busy year for contributing to the policy processes and public inquiries relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs. **We have made submissions or produced background papers on the following issues:**

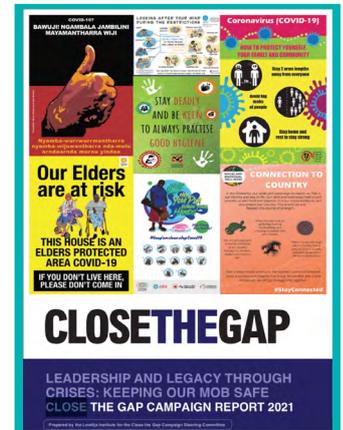
- Protecting the Fitzroy River in Western Australia
- The Indigenous Voice to Parliament design process
- The Australian Human Rights Commission's Native Title Report process
- The Northern Australia standing Committee inquiry into the destruction of Juukan Caves
- *The Royal Commission on Disability*
- Background paper on the Cashless Debit Card
- Background paper on Cultural Heritage

We also continued to produce our series of Election Scorecards in the leadup to both the Queensland and Western Australia elections, outlining the major parties' policies on key issues such as Treaty, Closing the Gap, Justice, Housing and Cultural Heritage Protection. We also published comprehensive analysis on our blog prior to the elections in the NT, ACT, and Tasmania.



CAMPAIGNS AND ADVOCACY

Throughout the year, ANTaR has continued our long association with the Close the Gap Campaign as a foundational member of the Campaign's steering committee. Once again we were heavily involved in the organisation of National Close the Gap Day in March; and assisted in the production of the [Campaign's 2021 Report](#) which showcased the amazing work of Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services in protecting First Nations communities from Covid-19.



ANTaR continues to auspice the [Change the Record Coalition](#) and it has been exciting to see this campaign go from strength to strength and really lead the national advocacy to fix the 'justice' system. Out of Change the Record, we have been working on Raising the Age of Criminal Responsibility and we are members of the [Raise the Age Campaign](#). It has been very encouraging to see the ACT Government commit to raising the age of criminal responsibility to at least 14 years – the first jurisdiction to do so. This is a direct outcome of the advocacy we have been a part of for some years.

This year we joined a new campaign called 'Know Your Country' which aims to get a First Nations educational officer into every primary school in Australia. This is such an important campaign and it is a major, long-term element to promoting truth-telling and building the links between the First Nations and non-Indigenous communities.



ANTaR is an active member of [Just Reinvest NSW](#) and it continues to be a great privilege for me to sit on its Executive Committee. Justice Reinvestment is an important vehicle for closing the gap in justice and health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and it is the key to transforming how governments work to better support these communities.

ABOUT OUR WORK [CONT.]



ANTaR's Sea of Hands stars on the ABC's Play School 2021 Reconciliation Week episode 'Walking Together'.

HANDS UP!

The Hands Up! program continues to go from strength to strength with this year seeing record numbers of participants engaging with the Sea of Hands either through the creation of an installation in their school, community or workplace, or through a digital engagement. The entire ANTaR National collection of hands were booked out for both Reconciliation and NAIDOC Week in 2021, and travelled far and wide across the country to stand in solidarity with First Nations Peoples. Increasingly, the hands are being included in education programs and Reconciliation Action Plans, aside from the usual celebration of calendar events. This year the Sea of Hands also starred on the ABC's Play School Reconciliation Week episode 'Walking Together'.

THE ANTaR COUNCIL

ANTaR has a number of affiliated sister organisations in the states and territories, and these jurisdiction-based ANTaR groups do much to raise awareness and advocate on issues of importance in their respective States and Territories. One of the ways ANTaR (National) collaborates with our State and Territory affiliates is through the ANTaR Council which has representation from each ANTaR group. Jill Webb was appointed chair of the ANTaR Council for 2021 and the Council has met a number of times over 2020-21 to share the work in each state and territory and to discuss opportunities to support each other.

The ANTaR Council also takes responsibility for setting the agenda for ANTaR's National Forum each year and this year we featured discussions on Disability and Treaty, with a keynote speech from Worimi man and CEO of the First Peoples Disability Network, Mr Damian Griffis.

SUSTAINING OUR ORGANISATION



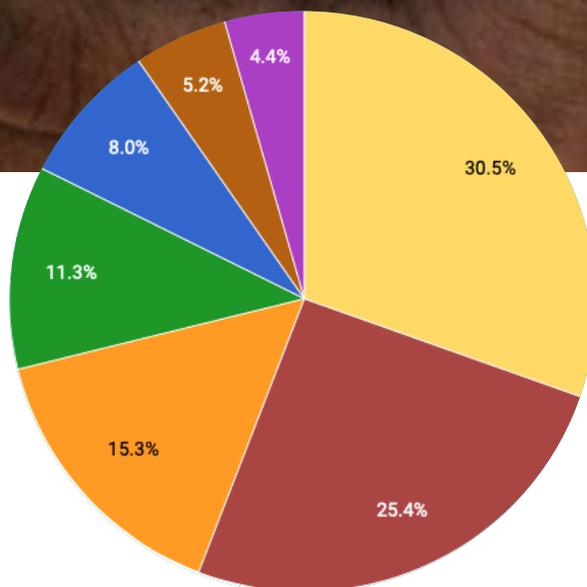
KEY FACTS ABOUT OUR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM:

- Fundraising income remained strong this year at \$597,305;
- Digital fundraising around campaign work raised \$70,336;
- Monthly donations from Sea of Hands Partnerships (regular donors) grew 53% to \$190,347;
- Expenses for these activities were at 3% of the income; there was some contraction on fundraising expenses from routine activities due to the Coronavirus pandemic;
- 2,348 donors supported our Annual Appeals and digital campaigns together with 781 Sea of Hands Partners.

GIFTS-IN-WILLS

We were very grateful to have received bequests from two long-time supporters who passed away in 2020, the Late Roland Good and the Late Bruce Spence.

The legacy of our trailblazing supporters that have walked with ANTaR for many years is that we remain strong and constant allies of First Nations People, after 24 years. We're dedicated to ensuring that their gift has a lasting impact on the sustainability of our campaign work.



- Sea of Hands Partnership 30%
- Annual Appeal 25%
- Other fundraising income 15%
- Digital Fundraising 11%
- Events 8%
- Bequest 5%
- Merchandise 4%

FINANCIAL REPORT

PROFIT & LOSS JULY 2020 TO JUNE 2021

	THIS YEAR	LAST YEAR
INCOME		
Fundraising	\$597,305	\$620,307
Grants	-\$0	\$12,750
Merchandise	\$27,666	\$23,256
Miscellaneous Income	\$229	\$932
JOBKEEPER Subsidy	\$54,000	\$24,000
ATO Cash Boost	\$53,998	\$37,946
TOTAL INCOME	\$733,198	\$719,191
COST OF SALES		
COS - Merchandise	\$19,165	\$15,082
TOTAL COST OF SALES	\$19,165	\$15,082
GROSS PROFIT	\$714,033	\$704,109
EXPENSES		
State ANTaR Disbursements	\$33,494	\$34,714
Staff Expenses	\$309,521	\$353,172
Operating Expenses	\$136,131	\$137,382
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$479,146	\$525,268
OPERATING PROFIT	\$234,888	\$178,841
OTHER INCOME		
Interest Income	\$1,442	\$2,225
Suspense	\$250	\$0
Total Other Income	\$1,692	\$2,225
OTHER EXPENSES		
Interest Expense	\$93	\$203
TOTAL OTHER EXPENSES	\$93	\$203
NET PROFIT/(LOSS)	\$236,487	\$180,863

**FINANCIAL
REPORT [CONT.]**

BALANCE SHEET JUNE 2021	THIS YEAR	LAST YEAR
ASSETS		
Cash at Bank	\$1,451,179	\$949,054
Cash on Hand	\$181	\$181
Receivables	\$27,726	\$58,650
Other Current Assets	-\$22,305	-\$29,463
Fixed Assets	\$24,127	\$29,235
Stock on Hand	\$12,477	\$14,167
TOTAL ASSETS	\$1,493,384	\$1,021,824
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities	\$5,974	\$4,844
Payroll Liabilities	\$4,215	\$12,531
Tax Liabilities	\$8,601	\$11,699
Payroll Provisions	\$33,750	\$30,204
Other Liabilities	\$755,475	\$495,443
Inter-State Office Amounts Due	\$0	\$18,220
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$808,015	\$572,942
Net Assets	\$685,369	\$448,882
EQUITY		
Retained Earnings	\$448,882	\$268,019
Current Year Earnings	\$236,487	\$180,863
TOTAL EQUITY	\$685,369	\$448,882

ANTaR IN THE STATES AND TERRITORIES



ANTaR ACT

ANTaR ACT has continued to pursue our long-term priorities of reducing the number of First Nations children in Out of Home Care, reducing incarceration rates, and enabling greater self-determination and community control for First Nations people in the ACT. We maintained advocacy and education, regular meetings, our newsletter, website and facebook page, and attended various consultations through the pandemic.

EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT

In August 2020, in partnership with ANTaR National, we arranged an online David Hunter Memorial Lecture. Our guest speaker was Tony McAvoy, SC, Australia's first Aboriginal Senior Counsel. His subject was 'First Nations Treaties: A Matter of Justice'; he focussed particularly on the question of compensation as a part of any Treaty agreements.



Cherisse Lyons and Phil Anderson at the Parliament of Youth on Sustainability – all set up for another wave of students to arrive!



ANTaR ACT's Julie Evans, Michele Smith and Jeanette Matthews at the NAIDOC week stall.

On 15 April 2021 we organised a display of 447 Black Hands at the Aboriginal Tent Embassy to recognise the 30th anniversary of the Report on the *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC)*. Since then, 447 First Nations people have died in custody in Australia, and many of the report's recommendations have not been fully implemented.

In April, Dr Ed Wensing spoke to us about his report on land rights and native title in the ACT. The ACT is the only jurisdiction where there are no land rights, and a 20-year old agreement for joint management of Namadgi National Park has never been implemented.

We attended the ACT Reconciliation Week event with a Sea of Hands, had a stall at the NAIDOC Week event at the Boomanulla Oval, and participated in the Parliament of Youth on Sustainability presentation day at Australian National University to help raise awareness of Australia's First Nations in a fun, interactive way. We invited students to write down

what reconciliation meant to them on post-it notes that they placed on hands, which became a collage sea of hands.

ADVOCACY AND CAMPAIGNS

Prior to the 17 October 2020 Legislative Assembly election ANTaR members consulted with local elders and community organisations to identify priority issues and policies. We compiled a document 'ANTaR ACT priority areas for the upcoming ACT election', which we shared with all candidates. It focussed on important actions for any incoming government in three major areas: The justice system and imprisonment; Health and community; and Community leadership and treaty.

This was a successful strategy with various commitments made by all parties. Following the re-election of a Labor/Greens government, we pushed for the Parliamentary Agreement between the governing parties to include their commitments. We were very successful, no doubt helped by national developments through the Closing the Gap Partnership Agreement. Commitments to achieve parity in incarceration rates by 2030, invest in Justice Reinvestment, promote community-controlled organisations and start Treaty negotiations were in the agreement.

Another success was the previous Government's commitment to raise the age of criminal responsibility in the ACT if re-elected. ANTaR joined the Raise the Age (RTA) Coalition of the ACT which campaigned for this. Subsequently, ANTaR made a submission to a RTA Discussion Paper released by the new Government and supported the submission by the RTA Coalition.

ANTaR IN THE STATES AND TERRITORIES [CONT.]

ANTaR VICTORIA



As you will imagine, the 2020/21 financial year has been a difficult one for a community-based NGO due to COVID-19 lockdowns and therefore the inability to hold public events. Added to that has been the relocation of office process ANTaR Vic has undergone after nearly two decades of office support from the Brotherhood of St Laurence.

However, we did hold a successful joint Reconciliation Forum with Reconciliation Victoria and also, perhaps more importantly, we began a strategic planning process in March in order to regroup and refocus our work. Part of that process was aimed at reengaging directly with our Founder and first chair, Uncle Richard Frankland, which being successful has created great enthusiasm for our future work. In Victoria we have had an up and running Treaty and Truth-Telling process which saw the ongoing development of the First Peoples Assembly of Victoria and the establishment of the Yoo-rook Justice Commission in May 2021, which will no doubt guide our efforts in the 2021/22.

Most of our work with the community this FY has been through social media. The ANTaR Vic Social Media committee has continued to work hard while in and out of lockdown. This group is a small group of dedicated volunteers who publish ANTaR Victoria's monthly E-Newsletters, and keep our followers engaged on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Through social media we continued to support the Black Lives Matter, Change the Record and Raise the Age Campaigns.

We have continued to see a steady increase in followers on each of the platforms, reaffirming that the online world is key to our ongoing advocacy and education work.

At the beginning of the year, ANTaR Victoria invited our Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and E-Newsletter audiences to fill out a short survey. The results identified a large divide between what people wanted to see and learn, versus how much they felt they already knew about First Nations current affairs. On a positive note, this tells us that more and more of the public are becoming aware of the need to advocate for First Nations Peoples' rights. The survey has helped us tailor our content and discuss topics that the Victorian community wants to see.

To date, our most popular social media campaign has been 'Truth Telling Tuesday', where every week ANTaR Victoria shares a new fact about First Nations history, culture, language, for example. The Committee also endeavors to keep abreast of relevant important events and news stories, and these are also regularly shared across all our online platforms. Most recently, the Social Media Committee began its latest online campaign – images and quotes to share the 'Tomorrow Australia' concept of Uncle Richard Frankland and began planning for film nights and other events based on Uncle Richard's work. More on this in the 2021/22 report.





BUILDING A PATH TO TREATY

ANTaR QUEENSLAND

Despite the obvious challenges of operating in a pandemic environment, ANTaR Queensland has continued operations with a relatively successful year. COVID-19 has meant that some early ambitions had to be abandoned or modified as we have adapted to the constraints imposed by social distancing and disruptions of not being able to meet in physical environments.

ANTaR Queensland remains in a very sound financial position and, with our mid-year move to a completely mobile office, we have been able to curtail a number of expenses. Our financial position currently means that we may be able to extend the employment of our Office Manager to two days per week although this is subject to deliberations at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting and decisions by the new Management Committee.

During the year we have maintained activity on important programs such as Justice Reinvestment, the Minimum Age for Criminal Responsibility, Treaty within the context of the Queensland's government commitments, and somewhat of a watching brief on the continuing problematic issue of the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families of origin and cultural connections. There has been a significant attempt to deal with the vexed issue of constraints on First Nations people in Custody being able to attend funerals of relatives. This has been both time-consuming and to date we have been unable to reach a satisfactory resolution to this issue. We have also continued a reasonably viable presence in the social media space which provides a good

platform for distributing information and engaging with the wider community. The latter has been important in the COVID-19 context.

We have recently completed an important strategic meeting to re-envision our future over the next two-year period. The strategic meeting agreed that focus should be placed on the issues of child removal, Queensland treaty, justice reinvestment, and greater visible engagement with the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Underpinning all of our plans is a commitment to place truth telling at the centre of everything we do. There has been a consensus that without truth telling most other activities will be constrained, and goals such as Treaty are unlikely to be achieved. We have an intention to emphasise truth telling in our various campaigns and programs as well as developing specific truth telling activities especially by trying to engage local government authorities.

The biggest challenge faced by ANTaR Queensland lies in creating greater membership engagement and activity. While we remain fortunate to have members who have been consistently generous in providing financial donations, we need to find ways of bringing more members into our campaign areas and planned activities. A significant effort will be made on this after the forthcoming AGM.

In summary, despite COVID-19 and the challenges of membership activism, ANTaR Queensland remains viable, and we are confident of a productive and successful next two years.

ANTaR IN THE STATES AND TERRITORIES [CONT.]



ANTaR SOUTH AUSTRALIA

ANTaR SA acts in support of the promotion and encouragement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' land rights, including the protection of Native Title rights, the Aboriginal Title rights of the Aboriginal Descendants of South Australia's original NSW Native Title inhabitants under the 19 February 1836 Letters Patent that erected SA out of NSW, and all their communities' interests in land, sea, and inland waters.

ADVOCACY AND CAMPAIGNS

ANTaR SA publications canvas the impact of racism in the Australian Constitution on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including Section 25, and what repealing its racism may come to mean to First Nations Peoples, with the debate extending to Recognition of a South Australian Aboriginal Representative body outside the Constitution.

Noting the ongoing relevance of these issues in the Justice system, including the 'race powers' under the Constitution, and how this bears upon another issue of local concern that is the increasing number of Aboriginal people in SA who are being incarcerated. Concern at over- incarceration and the minimum age of children's criminal capacity has been part of ongoing community discussions.

With the relevance of Closing the Gap issues to Voice campaigning, and bearing upon local issues, including in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands, ANTaR SA actively supports Federal, State and Local government legal action over constitutional 'race powers'.

First Nations member activists are researching other countries' domestic governance relationships with First Nations Peoples through existing networks to advance participation of Aboriginal peoples and communities in self-determination, participation and governance.



Official South Australian NAIDOC award recipient Male Elder of the Year – Kurna Meyu Burka "Uncle" Jeffery Newchurch.

EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT

Our Sea of Hands is being managed by First Nations member activists with ongoing involvement in an Australia-wide Red Centre Aboriginal Bush Tucker initiative with cooperation of the National Sorry Day SA Committee. COVID-19 meant the annual National Sorry Day Sea

of Hands was cancelled, so we instead concentrated on supporting the Candle Light Walk for Peace with Justice, Treaty and a Bill of Rights around SA Government House with the 240th Walk (inaugurated 26/1/2000) being held at dusk on the first Friday of October.

Members attended the 2021 Kurruru Survival Day Beachside Breakfast held by the Kurna Kura Yerlo (Largs Bay) Centre, and the annual Apology Breakfast held by Reconciliation SA to commemorate the 13th anniversary of the National Apology, although the National Apology Day event was postponed due to COVID, it was replaced by a Link-Up 'Walk of Awareness' event held on Friday 12 February, at Port Adelaide, to commemorate Apology Day. Members went to Reconciliation and NAIDOC Weeks, NAIDOC March, the Premier's and the Lord Mayor's Awards, and other NAIDOC Week Celebrations.

Over 750 Treaty and Premiginal calendars were provided by ANTaR SA for the Adelaide AIATSIS Summit and Native Title National Conference in June, and for SA high schools students in August 2021.

We have maintained partnerships with The Journey of Healing, The Roma Mitchell Legal Community Centre, and Holdfast Bay Council and with its annual Proclamation Day activities promoting Kurna Nation advancement while also supporting the Aboriginal Alliance Coalition Movement (AACM) that was inaugurated through ANTaR SA with the assistance of then HREOC Social Justice Commissioner, Tom Calma, and charged with raising the Letters Patent with the State Government. The AACM was developed as an umbrella organisation backing statewide grassroots Aboriginal activities.



ANTaR IN THE STATES AND TERRITORIES [CONT.]



ANTaR WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Although ANTaR WA has been active in a number of issues in Western Australia, our main focus is the proposed new Aboriginal Heritage Act, and the destruction of the Juukan Caves by Rio Tinto.

CULTURAL HERITAGE PROTECTION

ANTaR WA made a submission to the Joint Standing Committee Inquiry into 'The destruction of 46,000 year old caves at the Juukan Gorge in the Pilbara region of Western Australia.'

The main points were :

1. The accepted meaning of Aboriginal Heritage is too narrow as it excludes lore and culture, song, dance, art, language, intellectual property and more.
2. Looking after special places is an Aboriginal lore and cultural responsibility, and for that role to be usurped by the various branches of governments is at best discriminatory.
3. New Federal and State/Territory legislation is required as the present system is ineffective.
4. Australian and International investors are demanding a better system of heritage protection and this trend will continue, so the extractive industries have a fiduciary responsibility to support a better protection for our nation's ancient heritage. This can benefit all stakeholders.
5. The potential to use the advanced technology of the resources industry to monitor and protect special places.

The consultation happening in WA around this issue and across our nation on other First Nations' issues demonstrates the need for an elected representative body that has been missing since the abolition of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC).



Kimberley dancers led on sticks by Elder Mr Jonny Watson at a rally for Aboriginal Heritage Protection at WA Parliament House.

RAISING THE AGE

At the recent WA ALP State Conference, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Stephen Dawson endorsed raising the age of criminal responsibility from ten to fourteen, and we are awaiting the legislative changes to see this enacted.

Lobbyists for change include Social Reinvestment WA and the Wungening Aboriginal Corporation.

"Discussions about raising the age of criminal responsibility are ongoing around Australia among the nation's Attorneys-General, any changes would require resources and careful consideration to ensure that the small number of children who exhibit serious offending at a young age can be properly managed outside the criminal justice system," a spokesperson for the Attorney-General John Quigley MLA, said.



Family of Yamatji woman known by request as JC, at the trial of the policeman responsible for her death.

JUSTICE

Raising the age is closely connected to other gaps for First Nations people that urgently need reducing.

Incarceration rates are sadly linked to deaths in custody and ANTaR WA attended and spoke at the annual Deaths in Custody WA Memorial for John Pat at Fremantle Prison.

Another first in WA is the trial of the policeman who shot dead a young First Nations woman in Geraldton. This is alleged to be an excessive use of force by the defendant and we are awaiting the verdict in the ongoing trial.

These issues, combined with better education, increased public awareness and widespread media coverage, give us hope for positive changes for First Nations Peoples in WA and across Australia.

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ANTaR acknowledges the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation
as the traditional owners of the land upon which our office is located.

For further information: www.antar.org.au