



2011 Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC week celebrations

Reconciliation Queensland has a continuing commitment to encourage the establishment and or re-establishment of Local Reconciliation Groups, (LRGs) across Queensland.

1. RQI Co-Chair Peter Jackson visited Cairns during the 2011 National Reconciliation Week and attended the following events:

- The 2011 Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Business Forum which was attended by approximately 50 small business operators.
- The 2011 Queensland Reconciliation Awards which was attended by approximately 250 participants from throughout the state. (Peter as Co-Chair of RQI was on the judging panel for these awards.)
- Whilst attending the Cairns events, Peter actively promoted Reconciliation and was approached and exchanged contact details with several participants who expressed an interest in establishing a Reconciliation group in the region. Discussions are now continuing with these individuals.

2. Following the severe floods earlier this year, RQI conducted a series of fundraising events in order to raise monies for the flood affected Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families living in the Rockhampton district who had been so badly affected by these events.

Whilst travelling by road to Tropical North Queensland to visit Ingham, Palm Island and Cardwell for the 2011 NAIDOC week celebrations, RQI Co-Chair Peter Jackson was able call into Rockhampton to present a cheque for \$1200 to representatives of the Central Queensland Indigenous Development Company which is a training organisation which supports the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

- Paul O'Meara
- Wayne Oates



Wayne Oats (left) and Paul O'Meara receiving a cheque for the Central Queensland Indigenous Development Company training organisation from Peter Jackson (right), RQI Co-Chair (non-indigenous).

3. There were many highlights during Peter's journey up the east coast of Queensland which included five days at Mungalla Station. The property is located in the Hinchinbrook region east of Ingham.



Jacob Cassidy, Manager, Mungalla Station.

A group of around 40 people from The Gap Uniting Church in Brisbane along with 12 local Nywaigi Aboriginal Community members, who now own and manage the Mungalla Station property and who initiated the visit, participated together for a week of Reconciliation and NAIDOC activities.

Prior to The Gap group visiting North Queensland and during the church's Reconciliation week activities, Grant Paulson from Reconciliation Australia was invited to speak to the very large and supportive congregation about the work that RA is currently undertaking.

One of the church's two pastors, the newly ordained Pastor Richard Cassidy is a Nywaigi man and has very strong community links with many of the local clans in FNQ. All these links came together for what Peter described as a deeply moving and significant week for Reconciliation in Queensland.

- Jacob Cassidy
- Uncle Alban Bligh
- Chairperson Edin Surha

4. The Gap group and some members of the Nywaigi Aboriginal Community also visited Cardwell and the local district, and spent a day of cultural immersion with members of the six clans which make up the Cardwell Aboriginal Community including the Girramay people.

- Auntie Marcia Gerry, Elder, Jumbun Community

5. A very rare opportunity was presented to The Gap group and some members of the Nywaigi Aboriginal Community when they were invited, by Uncle Walter Palm Island the senior Elder of the Manbarra people who are the traditional owners of Palm Island, to visit Palm Island for a day during NAIDOC Week.

Uncle Walter conducted a well planned, detailed and very informative tour of many of the culturally significant sites on the island. Uncle Walter also arranged for the group of 55 visitors to attend a smoking ceremony which he conducted for the opening of a new safe house for young men living on the island.

- Uncle Walter Palm Island, Elder, Manbarra Community



Jacob explaining cultural aspects to The Gap visitors at Mungalla Station.



(far right) Auntie Marcia Gerry, Elder, Jumbun Community



Uncle Walter Palm Island, Elder, Manbarra Community conducting smoking ceremony at Palm Island.



Artists in the Cardwell workshop.



(Centre left) Uncle Walter at Mungalla Station.



(from left) Uncle Alban Bligh, Peter Jackson and Edin Surha receiving an RQI cheque for cultural resources.

Before returning to Brisbane, and during a special NAIDOC Week celebration for the Hinchinbrook Region, Peter was asked to speak to a large combined audience, which included Community Elders and the Hinchinbrook Shire Mayor, about the goals and objectives of RQI and the importance of establishing regional groups to promote and support these objectives.

As a greatly appreciated gesture to encouraging reconciliation in the region, Peter, on behalf of RQI, presented a cheque for \$750 to the local Nywaigil Aboriginal Community and indicated that it was intended that these funds be used by the community to increase their range of cultural resources.

The additional resources will assist the community in their endeavour to promote aspects of Reconciliation among the many visitors to Mungalla Station.

6. Aunty Heather Castledine, in her capacity as Co-Chair, attended the following events during NRW, to spread the word of reconciliation. We were delighted to have a presence at these events and to actively participate in the spirit of NWR.

- Launch of Relationships Australia RAP
- Launch of Elders Calender
- Southern Primary Health Care Network dinner
- State Library Awards
- Indigenous Veterans Wreath Laying Ceremony
- Royal Brisbane Hospital's Market Day
- Logan Library – to give a speech about RAPs
- Logan Central Community Health Care – speech