



C/- Journey of Healing Association (S.A.) Inc
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NEWSLETTER MARCH 2009

Wodlianni
Stolen Generations Coming Home
Reconciliation and Healing Event
173rd Anniversary of the Letters Patent
Government House
North Terrace,
Adelaide
Kurna Land
February 19th, 2009

A momentous and historic occasion was marked on the lawns of South Australia's Government House on the morning of Thursday February 19th 2009.

173 years after the establishment of the Province of South Australia by order of King William the Fourth of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, representatives of South Australian state and local government, state and federal parliament and other dignitaries joined with Aboriginal Elders to mark the commitment of the 1836 Foundation Documents to secure rights for Aboriginal inhabitants for always.

The key phrasing of the 1836 Letters Patent was:

"to empower His Majesty to erect South Australia into a British Province or Provinces and to provide for the Colonization and Government thereof.....Provided Always that nothing in these our Letters Patent shall effect or be construed to effect the rights of any Aboriginal Natives of the said Province to the actual occupation or enjoyment in their own Persons or in the Persons of their Descendants of any Lands therein now actually occupied or enjoyed by such Natives".

Invited guests were met by volunteers from the Roma Mitchell Legal Centre, and entered the grounds of Government House through ceremonial smoke before gathering under marquees to enjoy damper and morning tea.

Master of Ceremonies Mr Neil Gillespie, CEO of the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement introduced the Governor of South Australia, His Excellency, Rear

Admiral Kevin Scarce who welcomed everyone to the celebration.

Governor Scarce endorsed the "Seven R's" of the Journey of Healing presented to him by the Kurna:

- Recognition
- Respect
- Rights
- Reform
- Reciprocity
- Responsibility
- Reparations

Mr John Browne, Chair of the Journey of Healing SA Inc, spoke of healing the Stolen Generations and the need to acknowledge the promise in Letters of Patent for the Kurna descendants and their Aboriginal neighbours across South Australia.

Traditionally dressed Kurna Descendant Major Sumner demonstrated Spear throwing using a traditional Woomera whilst Professor Roger Thomas of the University of Adelaide described the use of the Woomera and Spear. Kurna Nangki Burka Mrs Lynette Crocker and Mr Frank Wanganeen, respectively the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Kurna Heritage Board, gave a traditional Kurna welcome. Mrs Crocker described the use of the Coolamon and paid tribute to her mother, grandmother and other ancestors.

Lawyer Mr Shaun Berg raised legal aspects on the Letters Patent and Foundation Documents. Dr Rob Foster of the University of Adelaide remarked on subsequent historical aspects of the Letters Patent.

A ceremonial cake in the form of the Kurna Shield was cut and a candle lit by the Governor with the help of Koan Sumner a young Aboriginal dancer. Representatives of three Aboriginal Nations presented gifts to the Governor and his wife, Mrs Liz Scarce. Mrs Crocker and Mr Frank Wanganeen asked Mr Ivan Copley to give Music Sticks on behalf of the Kurna; Ms Bronwyn Coleman-Sleep

presented the Flag of the Kokatha Mula; and Mr Tom Trevor of the Ngarrindjeri presented a framed photograph of the Coorong; postcards of Pelican and Swan produced by the Ngarrindjeri; and a copy of "Survival in Our Own Land" by Christobel Mattingley. Mr Trevor emphasized to the Governor his people's concerns for the future of the Birds and the Waters and Lands of the Coorong region. The Governor shook hands with three Kokatha Mula children at the flag presentation: Wunna Coleman-Goddard of Broadview and Tiawana and Karel Sleep of Ceduna

Mr Brian Butler of the Stolen Generations Alliance called for guests to move onto the lawns and form a large circle for the Healing Ceremony led by Major Sumner and Professor Lowitja O'Donoghue of Flinders University.

Guests, including the Chairperson of the Aboriginal Alliance Coalition Movement, Yankunytjatjara man Mr Albert Ward of Kenmore Park in the APY Lands, held hands in a circle as Major Sumner ceremonially called to the Four Directions of North, East, South and West to the clapping sound of Boomerangs.

Professor O'Donoghue explained the symbolism of the specially prepared Music Sticks and Coolamon. This included a description of the 54 painted dots on the Music Sticks representing each of the recommendations of the "Bringing Them Home" report of 1997. She noted that most of the recommendations were yet to be implemented.

The Music Sticks were passed ceremonially around the circle, handed from Aboriginal person to non-Aboriginal person to Aboriginal person. Professor O'Donoghue led guests in singing the deeply moving "Journey of Healing" song before presenting the Governor with a 'half-caste' teddy bear to display in Government House, representing the so-called 'half-caste' Aboriginal children forcibly removed from their families. Guests were then invited to shake the hands or hug the person next to them, before the event was called to a close.

*"Come join the Journey
Journey of Healing
Together as One
Across this land"*

The full text of the Letters Patent transcript may be read on the website of ANTaR - Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (SA) <http://antarsa.auspics.org.au>

The "Bringing them Home" summary and full report is available on the website of the Australasian Legal Information Institute Indigenous Law Resources Reconciliation and Social Justice Library <http://www.austlii.edu.au>

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**173<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of the Letters Patent**

- ~Marking the Commitment to preserve the rights of Aboriginal inhabitants~
- ~Honouring contributions in advancing Aboriginal rights and wellbeing~
- ~Encouraging the pursuit of reconciliation and healing by all~

*Proudly presented by:*

- The Journey of Healing SA Inc**
- ANTaR SA Inc**
- Roma Mitchell Community Legal Centre Inc**
- Kaurna Heritage Board**
- Aboriginal Alliance Coalition Movement**
- Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs**
- Adelaide City Council**

*The efforts of the volunteers of the Roma Mitchell Community Legal Centre, the Journey of Healing SA Inc, ANTaR SA Inc and Aboriginal Alliance Coalition Movement are gratefully acknowledged*

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

SORRY DAY 2009
Tuesday May 26th 2009
Victoria Square
Tarndanyangga
Adelaide
Kaurna Land

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For further information contact:

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