

Life in the city jungle

Moving from life in a remote Aboriginal community to life in the city presents some demanding challenges, not the least being to find accommodation. People move for a variety of reasons such as for better opportunities, to avoid community restrictions on alcohol or for medical reasons such as giving birth or regular dialysis.

Recently, an older man on dialysis who calls me *yapu* (older brother) and his wife living in Cairns received a notice to vacate their small unit. This was ostensibly for renovations but it proved later to be because of too many visitors hanging around the property. They live a quiet life caring for a couple of great grandchildren and enjoy passing visits from relatives from home. Family networks remain strong and news travels fast.

One of the dilemmas faced by such people living in the city is how to handle their own survival in city living as well as handle the pressures of other 'countrymen' who would impose on them. There is a line to draw between customary obligations to support each other and the abuse of such custom.

Helping them to seek out alternative rental accommodation was a revelation. In a tight rental market, the ones who are successful are those with a perfect rental record, good income and able to meet the 100 point test. My friends had some difficulty with all these. Two issues arose, the first being the attitude of real estate agents. Some clearly did not want Aboriginal tenants and looked for excuses to decline an application – too many people, not enough income, etc. Others were more impartial but no application met with success.

The other issue arose from the location of affordable units. The cheapest were in the 'ghetto' streets, which they wished to avoid. Others on the fringes were dearer but had plenty of other applicants, many attempting to escape the ghetto streets. How could they avoid being thrown on the street or ending up joining the creek dwellers?

We resolved this by tackling their agent on the source of the problem – most of the hangers-on were connected with a neighbouring unit, not theirs. Fortunately, the agent relented, issued a warning letter to all unit residents and allowed them to stay on when the hangers-on went elsewhere.



Another middle-aged single man on dialysis is imposing on a relative but is desperately looking for his own accommodation. He applied for the cheapest one bedroom unit in town and was told that his pension income is not enough to afford it. He needs a partner! Even then it will mean tight living. The relative is overcrowded but doesn't want to put him on the street. Such are the pressures faced by those who are better established.

With a dire shortage of public housing in the city, those at the lowest socio-economic end suffer the most. Such are some effects of economic rationalism and the mainstreaming of social services. Surely these are moral and spiritual issues that need better responses from governments and the wider community?

David Thompson

Students preparing to make a difference

Twenty five Indigenous people are set to make a difference in their community after enrolling in our Certificate III in Community Organising and Development course.

This course is proving to be popular and attracted a large group from St Pauls Community, Moa Island as well as others from Mornington Island and city locations. St Pauls Community Council believe so strongly in the merits of this course that they have encouraged a great percentage of their staff to undertake it including the Deputy Mayor.



(Pictured above, L-R)
Coordinator: Rev. Les Baird
Angelina van Rysinge
Natalie Newie
(Pictured right, L-R)
Robert Taylor
Tony Connolly



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Wontulp-Bi-Buya News

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Traditional Aboriginal dancing set scene for graduation of sisters

Traditional Aboriginal dancing and Torres Strait Islander action songs set the scene for the graduation of sisters Gail Fourmile and Mary Kyle from the Diploma of Theology course.

The Principal, Rev. Des Rumble, presented the Diploma awards to them during an emotionally charged ceremony at the college residential facilities at Tropicana Lodge in March this year. Rev. Barry Paterson, their Theology Teacher also presented a gift to Gail and Mary on behalf of their fellow Diploma of Theology students.

Students from Wontulp-Bi-Buya College and members of St Albans Anglican Church, Yarrabah and St Lukes Anglican Church performed traditional gospel Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander action songs in their honour.



Aboriginal dancers from St Albans Yarrabah (above)
Gail Fourmile and Mary Kyle (pictured left, L-R)



Gail and Mary come from a strong Christian family, which also includes Rev. Wayne Connolly, recently appointed Priest-In-Charge at Church of Assension Anglican Church, Kowanyama and Rev. Mick Connolly, Honorary Field Officer and former Principal of Wontulp-Bi-Buya College (both are also graduates of our Diploma of Theology course).

Mary Kyle and Gail Fourmile are both casual teachers for Wontulp-Bi-Buya College, teaching Certificate III in Theology. Mary is now based in Kowanyama providing assistance to the local church.

Wontulp going online

Until now our College has offered students residential courses and the chance to do further studies by distance education. Beginning in 2008, with the help of the Bible Society of NSW, we plan to introduce an online study option

for our Certificate and Diploma of Theology students. While it will be based on our current study books, it will allow the Rev. Barry Paterson, the online study coordinator, to feedback information to students far more quickly than the present system does. We plan to give online students direct access to

Fr Barry by an 1800 number to encourage them to contact him for help with their studies. The online environment will also give students a chance to access more pictorial and other material easily to enrich their studies. This is an exciting development for the College.

WONTULP-BI-BUYA COLLEGE Inc. Qld partner of Nungalinga College, Darwin, providing education programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander church and community leaders in Queensland. Supported by the Anglican, Catholic, Lutheran and Uniting Churches. Wontulp-Bi-Buya means faith and light. PO Box 960N, North Cairns Qld 4870. Office: 472 Severin St, Manunda 4870. Phone: 07 4041 4596. Fax: 07 4041 4597. Web site: www.wontulp.qld.edu.au

From the Principal

This is my first report as the new principal of Wontulp-Bi-Buya College and I would like to take a brief moment to acknowledge our College's former Principal Rev. Michael Connolly and to offer a word of thanks for his leadership of the college in years previous.

During his term of appointment as Principal Rev. Michael has done an excellent job as both an administrator and pastoral carer. Together with his wife Valma they committed themselves fully to the task to which God had called them and it's wonderful to note that they will still continue



their involvement in the life of the college as our honorary field officers.

I would also like to acknowledge Rev. David Thompson who is continuing as Wontulp's present Assistant Principal and Financial Manager on a half time basis.

Rev. David has also made a wonderful contribution to the College over an extended period of time and continues to do so.

Since commencing as Principal most of my time has been spent in some teaching, meetings and greetings and familiarising myself with the internal operations of the College.

These certainly are BIG shoes that I have to fill! But I'm confident that I will be up to the task.

Yours in Christ
Rev. Des Rumble

Opportunity to be involved in a worthwhile Indigenous cause

Do you wish to be involved in a worthwhile cause helping an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student to undertake higher education?

Wontulp-Bi-Buya College has established a Scholarship Fund to provide financial assistance to Australian Indigenous persons from Queensland planning to study an accredited course in the field of theology, business or community development at an Australian higher education institution or registered training organisation.

The Scholarship Fund is managed by the Wontulp-Bi-Buya College Management Committee and scholarship applications will be considered depending on the funds available.

Consideration will be given to the potential for academic achievement and the personal circumstances of each applicant. Assistance provided may include the cost of fees, travel and incidental expenses.

We are appealing to the general public or to corporations to help support our Scholarship Fund. Education is the key to seeing Indigenous people overcome social problems within their communities and your donation could make an immense difference in the life of one individual.

Donations are tax deductible and can be sent to Wontulp-Bi-Buya College, PO Box 960N, Cairns Qld 4870.

Change of the Guard at Wontulp-Bi-Buya

Melissa Bann is leaving as Registrar of the College at the end of June 2007 to move onto other ventures after supporting the development of Indigenous staff to succeed her. Melissa will be greatly missed as her contribution to the college has had a positive impact on students and staff. Melissa was more than just a Registrar, as she is a person who shares the Gospel. We thank Melissa for all the time and effort that she has given to the College and wish her all the best for the future.

Daniella Crowe who was the Administrative Assistant has been appointed to the new position of Administration Officer.

Daniella has strong administrative and organisational skills and has already shown great commitment to the College. She is currently undertaking an Associate Degree in Business Administration (ATSI) through the Australian Catholic University, Brisbane.

We congratulate Daniella on her promotion and look forward to supporting her and seeing her develop personally and professionally.

A new Administrative Assistant will be appointed soon.



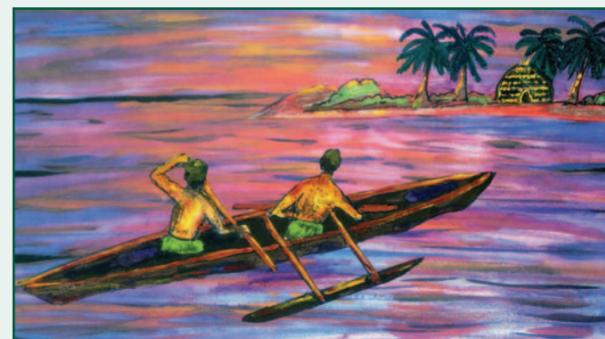
Daniella Crowe, appointed to the new position of Administration Officer

New publications

Avid readers of our children's book series will be delighted to learn a new children's story-book will be released in July by Wontulp-Bi-Buya College.

The book called *The Fishtrap Makers - Kos and Abob* and brings to life the rich culture of the people of Mer Island, the traditional home of Eddie Mabo. It is a traditional story about the origin of fishtraps in the eastern Torres Strait islands while the two brothers cooperated to fight evil.

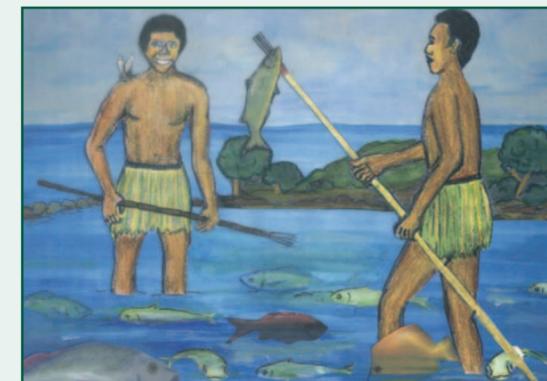
This is the fourth book in our Rainbow Theology series. The two other books in the series 'The Peacemaker' and 'How Kangaroo Found His Tail' have proved a favourite with Indigenous and non-Indigenous children alike.



In another exciting development, the ground-breaking book *Rainbow Spirit Theology*, first published in 1997, is being reprinted by the Australasian Theological Forum. The book came from two workshops with Pastor George Rosendale and other Aboriginal Christians aiming to give expression to an Aboriginal Christian Theology. The rainbow serpent is taken as a symbol of the Creator Spirit. The book will be available from ATF and Wontulp-Bi-Buya College.

Contact our office for further information on (07) 4041 4596.

We are privileged to publish an Occasional Paper *The Beyond is Near* by an Australian mystic, Fr Dan O'Donovan who lives as a hermit near Beagle Bay, WA. Inspired by *Rainbow Spirit Theology*, he has written meditations on Life, Light and Thabor (the mountain top experience). He reflects on the practical and contemplative sides of our union with God. The paper is available for \$5 posted or by free download from www.wontulp.qld.edu.au.



We also encourage support of projects at the College funded by agencies - Anglican Board of Mission - Australia, Bible Society in NSW and Tear Australia..

Help Wontulp-Bi-Buya College Grow

Please send me copies of *The Fishtrap Makers - Kos and Abob* at \$19.95 posted
 copies of *Trigger Fish and Trevally - Nagag and Geigi* at \$19.95 posted
 copies of *The Peacemaker* at \$16.95 posted / copies: *How Kangaroo Found His Tail* at \$16.95 posted
 copies of *Milbi Dabaar* at \$25.00 posted / copies of *The Beyond is Near* at \$5 posted

Please accept my gift of: \$25 \$50 \$100 \$ for:
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Credit card donations may also be made by calling 1800 065 607 in Qld or (07) 4041 4596.

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 Please advise change of address. Enclose mailing label if possible.