



CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

NEWSLETTER No. 9, OCTOBER 2005

www.chre.curtin.edu.au

The Centre for Human Rights Education :

- is committed to the achievement, protection and promotion of human rights
- is committed to multi-disciplinary understandings of human rights
- is committed to dialogue across communities, cultures, nations and religions about human rights
- engages in teaching, research, consultancy and community education to realise these commitments.

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1. People's Inquiry:


The Centre is happy to join with the Edmund Rice Centre to organise Perth Hearings of the National Peoples Inquiry into Detention. The People's Inquiry is an initiative of the Australian Heads of Schools of Social Work and is coordinated by Linda Briskman and Chris Goddard. The Inquiry is a response to the narrow terms of reference given to the Palmer Inquiry and the Howard government's refusal to launch a Royal Commission. The People's Inquiry is collecting written, taped and verbal submission from former detainees, health professionals, workers, volunteers, refugee supporters and anyone else with experience of the impact of detention. The People's Inquiry is a creative and important grass roots reclaiming of the ability to end secrecy and get hidden voices on the public record.

The Perth Hearings will be launched at the Centre for Aboriginal Studies on 27 October at 5.30pm. All are welcome and encouraged to attend. If you would like to attend the hearings, make a submission or come to the launch please contact Lucy on 9266 1678 or L.Fiske@exchange.curtin.edu.au

Details regarding the People's Inquiry are also available from our web site:
<http://www.humanities.curtin.edu.au/cgi-bin/view?area=hre&dir=Home&page=Events>

2. Visiting Fellow: Dr Ailsa Watkinson

The Centre is delighted to welcome Dr Ailsa Watkinson, from the University of Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, who will be with us until February. Ailsa is well known in Canada as an advocate of the rights of children, and is also very involved in working for the rights of women prisoners. While she is here she will be working on a book describing the campaign she led for the outlawing of corporal punishment of children in Canada. Ailsa has also worked for the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission. While she is here, Ailsa would be very interested to make contact with any of our readers with an interest in children's rights or the rights of women prisoners. She is sharing Lucy's office, and can be contacted on 9266 1678 or via e-mail awatkinson@sasktel.net



"Without understanding the soul of the culture we just invade the culture. (but). . my respect for the soul of the culture does not prevent me from trying, with the people, to change some conditions that appear to me as obviously against the beauty of being human"

...(Paulo Friere)

3. Seminar on Children's Rights, Tuesday 11 October

The Centre will be holding a seminar on protecting the rights of children, from 12 noon to 2 pm on Tuesday 11 October in the Humanities Boardroom. This will be jointly led by **Dr Sev Ozdowski**, Human Rights Commissioner and author of the recently released HREOC report on children in detention, and by **Dr Ailsa Watkinson** (see details above). All welcome.

4. Our First Graduates

The graduation ceremony on 6 October saw the first graduate in our masters program, Fausto Butta, receive his award. Fiona McGaughey and Irwan Mukhlis also have completed their Masters degrees, though as they are overseas they were unable to receive their degrees in person, and graduated *in absentia*. At the same graduation ceremony, Barbara Blundell (formerly Barbara Black) received her PhD for her thesis entitled *Contextualising Human Rights: Residents' Rights in Nursing Homes and Hostels*. Although Barbara was formally enrolled through Social Work & Social Policy, her PhD was supervised through our Centre, and we like to count her as our first completed PhD in human rights. Congratulations to all.

5. Chair in Human Rights Education

Jim Ife will be retiring early in 2006, though he plans to remain actively engaged in academic work relating to human rights, and will have an on-going association with the Centre. A new professor will be appointed to replace him. The position has now been advertised, and applications close on 11 November. If any of our readers are interested in applying for the position, or know of someone else who may wish to apply, the details are available on the following web site: <http://jobs.curtin.edu.au/>. Please spread the word widely. Jim would be happy to discuss the position with any potential applicant (08 9266 7186 or j.ife@curtin.edu.au).

6. Links with Iraq

The Centre continues to have a strong relationship with the local Iraqi community in Perth and the Human Rights Organisation Iraq. Riyadh Al Hakimi has been working tirelessly to build links and relationships between HRO and Australian organisations. After a recent trip to Iraq where he saw a great need for wheel chairs, Riyadh returned to Australia and brought together Curtin University (CHRE, Ethics, Equity and Social Justice, and the Woodside Research Centre), World Vision, Wheelchairs for Kids and the Australian Defense Forces and organised for 100 wheel chairs to be transported to Southern Iraq. The first shipment will arrive there any day.

The Centre received a brief visit from Sheikh Ammar Al Hakeem. Mr Hakeem is a highly respected community leader from Southern Iraq and has been visiting exiled Iraqi communities in several countries discussing the political processes underway in Iraq, most particularly, explaining the new draft constitution and encouraging people to participate in the referendum. We were grateful that Mr Hakeem was able to take some time to spend at the Centre in his busy schedule.

The Centre will be co-sponsoring a public forum on Iraq at the end of November. Speakers will include Dr Ismael from the International group "Doctors for Iraq", Dr Richard Hil of Southern Cross University who is currently writing a book on civilian casualties in Iraq, and Riyadh al Hakimi from the local Iraqi community. Further details will be available in due course.

7. Mabo Day and NAIDOC



MABO. On Friday 3rd June 2005, Curtin held its very first Mabo Day Celebration. The Torres Strait Islander Community in conjunction with Curtin's Office of Ethics Equity and Social Justice, Corporate Communications, and the Centre for Human Rights Education organised the event to celebrate Eddie Mabo's landmark victory for Native Title.

Kerry was the event coordinator and the MC on the day. The program started with a march from the John Curtin flagpoles down to the Centre for Aboriginal Studies. There were many distinguished guest speakers including Professor Lance Twomey (Curtin's vice-

chancellor), Ted Wilkes (Nyoongar Elder) and George Pitt (Torres Strait Island Community Leader). The entertainment included traditional dances by the Wadumbah Aboriginal Dance Group and LOZA Torres Strait Island Dance Group. The program ended with a feast cooked in a traditional Torres Strait Island camp oven (Kup Mauri – similar to a NZ Hungi). This was an opportunity for Curtin to showcase the diversity of Indigenous Australian culture as well as acknowledging the efforts and achievements of Eddie Mabo. There are speeches, reviews and amazingly colourful pictures available on our web site, just click on the link below:

http://www.humanities.curtin.edu.au/cgi-bin/view?area=hre&dir=Home&page=Events&sub=Printer_Friendly_Version_of_Past_Events#mabo



NAIDOC. On Wednesday 6th July 2005, the Centre for Aboriginal Studies (CAS) hosted a NAIDOC Day celebration. Following the success of the Mabo Day celebrations, Kerry was asked to join the CAS NAIDOC event organising committee. This is an annual celebration that is held around Australia in the first full week in July. It is an opportunity for the community to celebrate the history, culture and the achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Initially, NAIDOC was an acronym meaning ‘National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee’. This committee was once responsible for organising national activities during NAIDOC Week. The acronym has now become the name of the celebration week. The week is celebrated not just in the Indigenous Australian community, but involvement is expanding into more government agencies, schools, local councils and workplaces. The theme for this year was “Our future begins with solidarity.”

The program for this event began with morning tea and included: art exhibition/sales, cultural performances (Aboriginal Didgeridoo player and Torres Strait Island Dancers), book launch by Hazel Brown and Kim Scott, book signing, bush tucker lunch, and concluded with a performance by singer – Gina Williams. Kerry welcomed the opportunity to be involved in this very spiritual and uplifting event.

"All people need to know who they are and where they were born. Black and white should all help one another, learn to understand and respect each other and their country. That is what reconciliation is about."

...Author unknown (on the meaning of reconciliation)



8. Conferences and Public Engagements

Since our last newsletter:

- Jim Ife spoke and led a half-day human rights workshop at the annual conference of Northern Territory Social Workers in May
- Also in May, Jim delivered the Alice Tay Memorial Lecture entitled *A Culture of Human Rights and Responsibilities* in Parliament House, Canberra. This is available at our Centre web site (www.chre.curtin.edu.au).
- In June, Jim attended a Fulbright Symposium at Melbourne University on Human Rights and Peace Education. This symposium, bringing together scholars in the field from the USA and Australia, was also attended by three of our adjunct staff, Olivia Ball, Jan Ryan and Sonia Tascon.
- As part of the same trip, Jim and Sonia also attended a conference in Melbourne on engagement with East Timor.
- Also in June, Jim gave a presentation to the National Conference of the National Union of Students in Perth, about academic freedom and the influence of corporatisation on freedom of expression in universities.
- In September, Jim was keynote speaker at a Community Development conference in New Zealand. His paper, *Globalised Community Development* explored the use of human rights as a framework for community development in a globalised world, and is available at our Centre web site.
- Jim also was keynote speaker for the annual conference of the Australia New Zealand Education Law Association, where he spoke about freedom of speech and expression from a human rights perspective.