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ABORIGINAL HOUSING VICTORIA
MESSAGE STICK NEWSLETTER | DECEMBER 2014



Creating cultural spaces in our Community



Richard Frankland
conducts cultural
workshop at AHV

What is cultural safety @ work? 5 of EACH
Can we attain or build c/s at @ work

What is Cultural Safety?
A place where you feel safe to be yourself within your cultural framework
A feeling of safety that comes about by seeing, feeling, experiencing the positives of your people and culture
Speak learn or reclaim your language and customs
Experience, learn or reclaim your practice

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Our regular feature: Secret Kids' Business

Des Rogers joins our Team

WE ARE PLEASED TO INTRODUCE our new Director of Operations, Mr Des Rogers. Des manages the former tenancy and assets area in AHV and will be working hard to ensure that we understand the needs of our tenants and community

Des is an Arrernte man from Alice Springs, who has worked extensively in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in central Australia. Professionally he has experience in both the public service, with Bushfires NT and also private business, within transport, catering and Indigenous consultancy.

As an active member of the community, Des has participated on many committees and boards, including:

- Alice Springs Town Council Alderman
- Chairperson, ATSIC Council Alice Springs



Des Rogers

- Chairperson, Indigenous Housing Authority NT
- Deputy Chairperson, Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Education
- Council Member, Charles Darwin University
- Alderman, Alice Springs Town Council

Des was also an interim and ten-year Director of Desert Knowledge Australia and a Reference Group Member for the DKA Intercultural Leadership Program and recently the Deputy CEO of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress Aboriginal Corporation.

Des is currently progressing towards the completion of an MBA in Public

Sector Management and has accreditations in mediation, training and business planning. He is also a creative writer who has won the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Writers Award and the Max Cartwright Memorial Prize for Literature.

We welcome Des to the AHV fold and look forward to his contribution of operational expertise and experience.

AHV staff must identify themselves when visiting you

AHV STAFF MEMBERS VISITING your home must now wear an identifiable AHV uniform - either their shirt or jacket - with an AHV logo clearly visible and their identity card displayed. In addition we will write to you prior to our regular home visits and will attempt to contact you via phone prior to all other visits. Your safety, privacy and confidentiality are important features of our Customer Service Charter. This is why we will be introducing these new requirements for our Officers when they make visits to your home.

AHV logo on black uniform garment.



at your home, all our Officers are also now required to satisfactorily complete a Working With Children Check. You can find out more about these checks at: <http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/about+the+check/purpose/>



Our Holiday Season closing dates

THIS YEAR, AHV HEAD OFFICE will be closed for the holiday and festive season over the following dates: Thursday, 25 December 2014 until Friday, 2 January, 2015. Reopening on Monday, 5 January, 2015.

If you have an emergency during closure dates our Maintenance Lines will still be available - through our After Hours Emergency Service - call 9403 2171.

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For the safety of children who reside

Living on the shoulders of giants

Our tenant, Sissy Austin, an Aboriginal student and youth worker, earlier this year spoke at a luncheon held by the City of Ballarat, to celebrate the start of NAIDOC Week. Following is the text of her address.

GOOD AFTERNOON EVERYONE, my name is Sissy Austin. I would like to acknowledge and pay my respects to the traditional owners of the land we are gathered on today, I would also like to pay my respects to Elders past and present. For these people uphold the stories and the traditions of the beautiful country we are able to live on today. We must always remember that under the concrete and asphalt this land is, was, and always will be, traditional Aboriginal land.

I am a proud Gunditjmara woman. My people come from the Framlingham Mission just outside of Warrnambool. Today I wanted to reflect on what it means to me to be Aboriginal.

It is not a choice in a person's life to be this, or to be that. Being Aboriginal is the core of who I am as an individual, it's what makes me me, it's who I was yesterday and it's who I will be in the years to come. It's simply who I am - and I cannot change that, nor would I want to.

I am a part of the longest living culture in the world. I, as a young person, carry with me the one thousand five hundred generations of my ancestors. I carry with me the legacy of every person black or white that has stood up for justice and equity. Every action I take is about this.

I truly believe there is nothing more golden than a person's story. So I am going to share with you my story so far.

In 2012 I completed Year 12 at Loreto College. In my late high school years I began questioning who our role models were in life. Who were our mentors, our supports and our guidance? Why were so many people around me looking up to anyone who was on a pedestal, celebrities, anyone who was considered famous? Why weren't they looking up to their Elders, their community members, and their families? This concept of a role model has been lost.

I then decided that to change this, I needed to become a role model in myself. I then had one goal and that goal was to create a path, a

journey that is worthy of being followed by the younger generation. This goal drives me to do all that I do today.

After completing Year 12, I went on to study paramedicine at Australian Catholic University. My dream to be a paramedic was shaped by the concepts that I wanted to work with people in my community and at the same time, be challenged.

It was half way through my first semester at uni, where I was selected to represent and be an ambassador for the Centre for Indigenous Education and Research in South America. The trip involved volunteering in Peru, attending World Youth Week in Brazil, then travelling to Chile.

When I reflect on my story, this opportunity plays a key chapter in my young life. It was in Peru, when working with those suffering the effects of extreme poverty, that I realised the importance of community.

The people in the shanty town, Pamplona - that I worked in - don't have running water, adequate housing, food and clothing. They didn't have fancy schools, cars, phones, iPads, computers and laptops. I realised what the people of Pamplona did have was "gold". They have a true sense of community - they smile, laugh and love. They share happiness and laughter to overcome troubled days. It was at this moment I realised I needed to be working in my community, with my community and with my people, our people.

I returned home from South America with a new perspective. I did go back to University and I found my body sitting in lectures and my body sitting in classes, but what wasn't going to the lectures and what wasn't going to the classes, was my heart and my passion.

I found myself sitting in lectures planning ways of helping our youth, planning what I can



Sissy Austin

Creating cultural spaces in our Community

Richard Frankland, Aboriginal performer and artist, delivers his Lateral Healing workshop at AHV.

ON TUESDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER, AHV welcomed renowned Gunditjmara performer and artist, Richard Frankland, who conducted an in-depth cultural workshop with the AHV team.

This Lateral Healing workshop, through Richard's Korreen Enterprises training and consultancy services, firstly explored the colonial origins of lateral violence, its endemic nature through global Indigenous communities and the ongoing social and cultural damage it causes to Aboriginal families. The key focus of the workshop was to understand how our organisation can work towards healing lateral violence through reclaiming our cultural heritage by establishing what are called "places of cultural safety", both in our Community and in our workplaces.

Some of the topics covered in the workshop, included:

- Cultural platform
- Cultural safety frameworks
- Cultural resilience and resistance
- Re-authoring our stories
- Externalising the problem

Richard took the AHV team on a journey back in time to rediscover our traditional clan structure, rituals, spirituality and lore, established over some 1,500 generations and the impact the arrival of European colonisation had on these cultural traditions, around



Richard Frankland

280 years ago. Through interactive role play the team were able to evaluate what cultural assets our ancestors enjoyed, to what degree they were broken up at the time of colonisation and how that in turn has

lead to a cycle of what we refer to today as "lateral violence" in our Community.

Later, utilising real-life experiences, story telling and humour, Richard guided the team through cultural definitions, how we can practically regenerate our cultural traditions and why it is so important to create "places of cultural safety" throughout all communities.

This workshop was designed for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal participants and enables outcomes for our team to create, develop and implement policy to establish cultural safety frameworks at work and in our Community.

About Richard Frankland

Richard J. Frankland MA, is one of Australia's most experienced Aboriginal singer/songwriters, authors and film makers. Born in Melbourne, but raised mostly on coastal south-west Victoria, Richard is a proud Gunditjmara man who has worked as a soldier, fisherman, and Field Officer during the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

Richard has written, directed and produced over fifty video, documentary and film projects including award winning documentaries, such as Who Killed Malcolm Smith?, After Mabo and Harry's War.

An acclaimed musician, Richard's music features on the soundtracks to many of his films. Richard currently performs with his band The Charcoal Club, a blues-folk act that brings together Indigenous and non-Indigenous musicians.

The AHV team with Richard Frankland



Cultural connection: Aunty Alma Thorpe on Aboriginal housing

THIS EDITION WE SPEAK with Aunty Alma Thorpe. Aunty is a Gunditjmara Elder with close connections to the origins of Aboriginal social services in Victoria.

Aunty Alma was born in Fitzroy during the 1930s depression where she lived with her parents in difficult times. "There was no housing then," she explains, "just rooms." Her mother came to Melbourne from the mission at Framlingham in western Victoria. "There was no housing whatsoever for the people who were removed from their settlements ... it was very, very hard for black fellas in those days, for the fact that we, my Mum and her cousins, at just 15, were shunted off the mission because of the White Australia Policy. So that was an assimilation process."

Growing up in the Fitzroy slums, her parents were prominent in the local community. Her father was a non-Indigenous rag-and-bone man and her mother worked long hours as a cleaner to support their family. "We formed another Aboriginal Community in Fitzroy," says Aunty, "there were no pensions in those days and white fellas were in a bad time too, but we had to come underneath the poor white man and had to survive ... and we did survive."

For accommodation in the 30s and early 40s "we managed to get rooms", she says, "which were horrible places. And they [landlords] didn't care in the day ... after a few years we got an old house in Kent Street. Otherwise there was no access to any other type of housing."

Although public housing was established in Victoria during the 40s and 50s, Aboriginal people were largely excluded. "The men were worse off as only women could get in [to public housing]. The men had no support, no work. The women could get in with the support system [welfare]. The men were isolated, they lived in the lanes in Fitzroy, we called them the 'lane boys'". Aunty Alma explains that the very first Fitzroy Health Service for the Aboriginal Community was initially set up to support the "lane boys".

At 18, Aunty married a Gunai man and eventually moved to Moe and then Yallourn. Her husband

gained employment with the State Electricity Commission (SEC), which gave them an opportunity to obtain accommodation. "So then there was another removal from Fitzroy to Moe ... when you think of the different mobs that came from Lake Tyers, you've got the Gunditjmara, the Yorta Yorta, the Gunai ... all the different nations that had to resettle ... very hard to do."



Despite difficult challenges Aunty managed to raise her family in a new environment. "I had 7 children in 9 years so I had a battle. I had a house in Yallourn, the first one I had in Moe where there were a lot of Aboriginal people. Most of them were from Fitzroy," she adds.

Speaking more about her current home with AHV, a residence she has had for 30 years, Aunty explained its significance - as one of the original group of 30-odd properties procured by the Victorian Aboriginal Co-operative in Smith Street, Fitzroy. The Co-op was a forerunner to the Aboriginal Housing Board and other Aboriginal services in our Community today. Aunty Alma played an active role in the establishment and running of the Co-op, along with Joe McGuinness and other Aboriginal leaders at that time.

Highlighting the importance of her AHV home in meeting her cultural and family needs, Aunty notes that although when her children visit, "they might stay overnight", she has proudly "worked all her life" and her children are "as independent as you can be in this country."

She believes her home has also played an important role in family gatherings and celebrations over the years. "Because of the large families of today - this is something that we all feel - my family, my grand children and great grandchildren. My mother was the focus every time we visited. Now days family is more fragmented ... but we weren't fragmented in the days of Fitzroy ... it was very whole."

Asked about her satisfaction as a tenant, Aunty summarises her thoughts: "to be honest I haven't had a problem." She had once owned a home in Northcote earlier in her life, "but I had to sell because of my pension ... housing is a very difficult thing. I couldn't care less about owning anything now. I only want security. My home means a lot to me."

Cultural Awareness Program at AHV held in August



Rueben Berg

A COMPREHENSIVE Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Program for AHV staff, delivered by Rueben Berg on 27-28 August, covered a wide range of cultural aspects, from traditional ceremonies, the kinship system, art, dance and music, to an overview of political struggle against past Government policies affecting Aboriginal people, including Native Title, the Stolen Generations and

formal recognition by the Government of Aboriginal people.

Also examined were prominent Aboriginal people from the past and present, including political activists, sportspeople, musicians, actors and academics. Rueben also touched on

the importance of Indigenous architecture and its role within our Community.

To reinforce learnings for participants, the program was supported by interactive discussion, group activities, questions and film clips.

A key outcome of these sessions for participants was to gain a better understanding about Indigenous people and culture. In particular an understanding that there is no "one" idea of "Indigenous culture" and that, while there may be some broad aspects of shared culture, each person has their own unique sense of culture and identity. At the end of the program participants also had an opportunity to ask any questions about Indigenous people and culture.

Program facilitator, Rueben Berg, a proud Gunditjmara man, is the managing director at RJHB Consulting. Rueben is also a founder and director of Indigenous Architecture and Design Victoria and was previously the Manager of Metropolitan Heritage Programs at Aboriginal Affairs Victoria.

PLEASE BE AWARE THAT THIS ARTICLE CONTAINS THE NAMES OF DECEASED PERSONS.

Former Aboriginal Housing Board Members honoured

WE ARE PROUD TO ANNOUNCE that on 25 September, Aunty Winnie Quagliotti (1931-1988) and Aunty Walda Blow, both pioneering contributors to Aboriginal housing in Victoria, were inducted on to the Victorian Indigenous Honour Roll for 2014.

In 1981, Aunty Winnie was an inaugural volunteer Member of the former Aboriginal Housing Board of Victoria (AHBV) and later Chairperson (1987-88). She was inducted for her contribution to housing for our people and a lifetime of extensive service to the Aboriginal Community, particularly within the Dandenong area, which included work in family aid, child care and promotion of Aboriginal culture. In memory of Aunty Winnie's dedicated service, her traditional name was used in the naming of the AHV building in North Fitzroy - "Narrandjeri House".

Former AHBV Member (1993-96 and 1998-99), Aunty Walda was also inducted for

her work in housing, welfare and employment services for our Community. Aunty Walda is still active on the Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation's Council of Elders and the Margaret Tucker Hostel, caring for at-risk Aboriginal girls. Her late husband, Uncle Reg Blow (1939-2012) was inducted on to the Honour Roll in 2012.

We would also like to congratulate other living inductees and pay homage to those honoured posthumously for their achievements and struggle in support of Aboriginal people in this state.

The Victorian Indigenous Honour Roll, an initiative introduced by the Victorian State Government in 2011, serves to formally acknowledge and celebrate the wide-ranging achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians, past and present.

Nominations for inductions on to the Honour Roll are assessed by achievement of Aboriginal Victorians in both a historical and contemporary context, in the areas of community leadership, human and social rights, activism, sports, music and more.

A total of 64 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians are now recognised on the Victorian Indigenous Honour Roll.



Secret Kids' Business



HOLIDAY WORD SEARCH

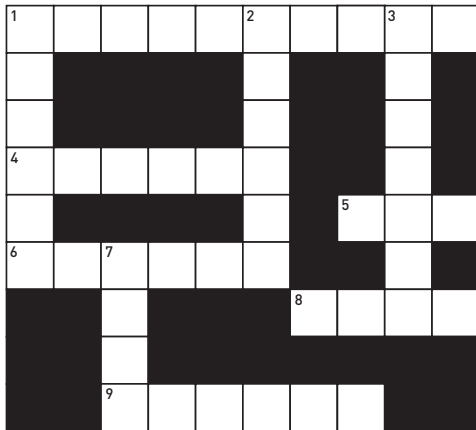
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 W E G N I H S I F X

BEACH
 BUSHWALK
 CAMPING
 FISHING
 HEATWAVE
 ICECREAM
 MOVIES
 PICNIC
 PLAYING
 SWIMMING

TRACK THE DOTS



MIA MIA CROSSWORD



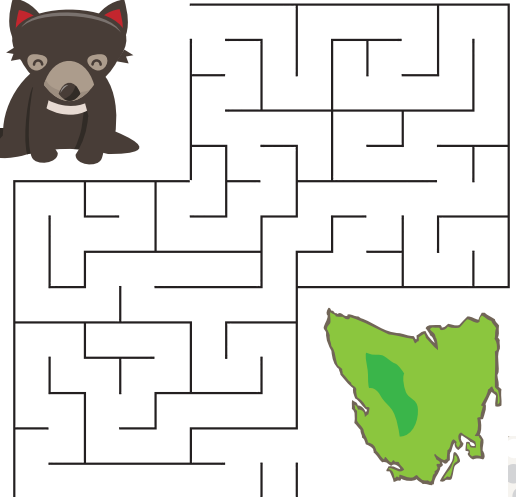
- Across**
1. Australian fish from way up north.
 4. Aboriginal word for a lot of talk.
 5. Another type of fish.
 6. Lots and lots.
 8. You can have one at Luna Park.
 9. Aboriginal hunting tools.
- Down**
1. Scary creature from the dreamtime.
 2. The longest river in Australia.
 3. Precious stone or a type of python.
 7. Reptiles and birds lay these.

Last edition's answers. Across: 1. Bilby 5. Didgeridoo 7. Truganina 9. Snakes. Down: 1. Bung 2. Yard 3. Spirit 4. Koala 6. Yarn 8. Rod

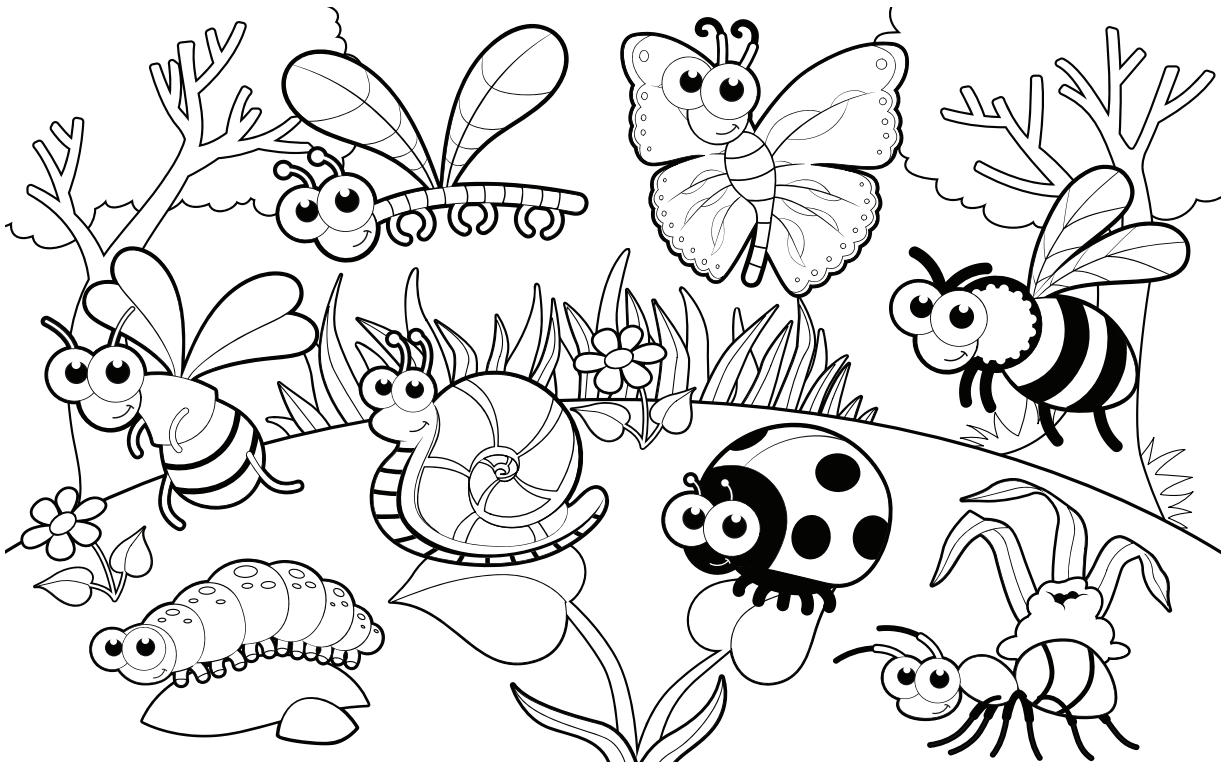
MIA MIA MAZE



Terry the Tassie Devil has been on holiday on the mainland. Help him to return home.



DEADLY COLOUR-IN



----- TRACKED FROM PAGE 3

do to create change to enlighten that sense of community. At the same time I was cautious of that goal to create a journey that is worthy of being followed by the younger generation.

After months of thinking and having thoughts of worry that I would disappoint those around me, I made the decision to defer my university studies. I knew from this moment I needed to be working with young people.

After months went by, the school where part of my journey kicked off, was advertising a position as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Worker. I had this mission and determination to prove to Loreto that I, even being so young, could fulfil this role. I was lucky enough to be successful in this and am so proud to call myself the first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Worker at Loreto College, Ballarat.

Following this I applied for a position with AIME (Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience). I was successful in gaining my position as Casual National Presenter where I am privileged to work with amazing young people and with

an organisation that upholds this incredible determination to support young Indigenous students through high school and on to university or employment.

So I can safely say that my decision to defer hasn't been such a bad one. In saying that, I truly believe that everything happens for a reason, wherever we are placed and whatever we are faced with all happens because it was meant to.

Not one day goes by where I don't reflect on the fact that these opportunities wouldn't be available for me if it weren't for our Elders. We as the next generation are living on the shoulders of giants. These giants are our Elders, who have fought with blood, sweat and tears to make this place an easier place for us to be. Although we have many battles to face, we must bang our heads against the walls just like our Elders did. It's our time to step up. Our ancestors have equipped us with a history like no other.

What I have learnt in my journey so far is: it doesn't matter if you fall down, what matters is how you get back up. It doesn't matter if you give up, what matters is that you get up and slap life back again.



TENANT
Yarn



Joel

WE RECENTLY SAT DOWN for a yarn with Joel Nieuwenhuizen, to get feedback about his new tenancy with AHV.

Joel, a descendant of the Noongar people of Western Australia, tells us that after a lengthy, but patient stint on our waiting list he was "really stoked" to obtain his 2-bedroom unit in outer-suburban Melbourne.

He describes his AHV home as "a grouse place" that meets his needs. Joel is an artist and proudly

displays his craft, painting and drawing pieces around the house.

He notes that he was quite impressed with recent maintenance work to adjust his hot water service.

Comparing his new home to other rentals he has had, Joel comments: "this is the best place ... it's my home, it's my castle."

For all your repairs and maintenance needs please call one of the following AHV Maintenance Lines:

General metro: (03) 9403 2166

Regional: 1300 664 392 (cost of local call)

Emergency after hours: (03) 9403 2171



Hours of Business: Monday to Friday, 8:30am – 4:30pm. **Address:** Narrandjeri House, 125-127 Scotchmer Street, North Fitzroy, VIC 3068. **Telephone:** (03) 9403 2100.

Fax: (03) 9403 2122. **Email:** info@ahvic.org.au **Aboriginal Housing Victoria** is a not-for-profit organisation that works to deliver accessible, affordable, appropriate and secure housing to meet the social, cultural and economic aspirations of the Victorian Aboriginal Community.