



The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

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YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW

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A three day seminar for Aboriginal secondary students was held in early April. This was the first time that such a program has been attempted by the Education Department. Valuable assistance was given by a number of other government departments.

All Aboriginal students in years 9 to 12 who attend Adelaide metropolitan high schools were invited to attend. A few representatives from selected country schools were also invited. Between 180 and 200 students attended each day. They were supervised in groups of eight to ten by Aboriginal teacher aides and other volunteers from the Aboriginal community.

The aims for the seminar included the following:

1. To present students with a positive view of their Aboriginal heritage.
2. To increase student awareness of career opportunities.
3. To lift student morale by developing group esteem and through contact with Aboriginal adults holding a variety of prominent positions in the community.

As stated above, one of the main aims of the seminar was to present to students a positive view of their Aboriginal heritage. A major contribution to the part of the program aimed at achieving this was made by David Gulpilil, who starred in "Storm Boy" and "The Last Wave". He performed several traditional dances for the students and also shared with them some of his experiences as an actor. Sharing the platform with him was Wandjuk Marika, Chairman of the Aboriginal Arts Board, and a very accomplished player of the didgeridoo.

A number of other Aboriginal people were also involved in outlining for students the opportunities that are open to them for the future. A panel of Aboriginal sportsmen spoke about careers

and answered many queries that students had concerning specific jobs.

Most of the program was held in the Scott Theatre, at the Adelaide College of Advanced Education. However, half a day was devoted to various trips, mainly to Aboriginal organizations, but including the Careers Reference Centre and Torrens College of Advanced Education. These visits enabled students to talk informally to people in a variety of occupations and study situations.

Non-Aboriginal speakers included in the program were the author Colin Thiele, and the comperes of the Television Science production, "The Curiosity Show".

Students also enjoyed performances by the Aboriginal orchestra and other individual artists. A selection of short films was shown to provide some light relief from what at times, were rather demanding sessions.

The students' response to the seminar can probably best be described from some of the answers given in a short questionnaire at the conclusion of the program:

- .. Well, in the last three days, it meant to me that
Aboriginals are very lucky and we have a lot of people
working hard to help us. And if we don't use what we
can, we are missing out on a lot.
- .. It has meant a bigger and better understanding of myself....
- .. I have learnt more about my people and I can be proud.
- .. I learnt more about my culture than I ever knew existed.
I met a lot of new people, also my cousins I had not met
in years.
-very interesting, and I learnt a lot about my culture.
- .. It gives you an opportunity to know what you would like
to be when you leave school.
- .. It helps me how to go about, how to find a job and lots
of other new things.
- .. It has made me not to be ashamed of culture and to mix
with some of my people.

- .. It has meant many important things. To learn about your own culture and the things we have forgotten about our tribes. It has helped me to understand school a lot better and to appreciate what I am getting out of school and life.
- .. It has taught me a lot about myself and about Aboriginal men and women who lived before me. And this has made me proud of what I am today.
- .. I have met people, and found out about all the opportunities we have in life and not to throw it all away.
- .. It's made me proud of being an Aboriginal!!
- .. It's opened my eyes and made me understand that I should be proud to be a part of the future of Aboriginal people in this state, or should I say, a part of Australia!!

Other information provided in the questionnaires showed unanimous appreciation for David Gulpilil and Wandjuk Marika. The various trips were also surprisingly well received by the majority of students.

The message of the seminar was very ably summed up by Mr Lewis O'Brien who works for the Education Department as an Aboriginal home school visitor. His final words included:

You must always have pride in yourself, you must always have pride in your people, in your heritage and you must do something about it. We've seen a lot of things here today, and the day before that and the day before that. A lot of positive pictures have been painted. You've seen people that have come out of tribal situations like David and Wandjuk who have learnt the ways of European life and they've had a harder battle than you have. They've done it, and I think you should take heed from that. You'll be leaders of your people in the future and I hope you realize it because you can't escape it.....When you are leaders of your people, which you will be, you will need to be well equipped and the only way to be well equipped is to get an education...You've got the capabilities...you're as good as anyone else and don't let anyone tell you any different.

And like the man you saw in the film that was "SOLO", he climbed to the top because he aimed high, and that's what you've got to do. You've got to climb the mountain and when you get there, you can hold your hands up and say, "I made it!!"

I hope you can remember that and do something about it.

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JUDY INGLIS MEMORIAL PRIZE

ESSAY COMPETITION OPEN TO TERTIARY LEVEL STUDENTS

The Judy Inglis Memorial Prize is awarded for essays of up to 5000 words in the field of Aboriginal Studies focusing on social change. Individual or community histories, development projects, education, traditional and contemporary life or similar topics are appropriate.

A prize of \$50 will be awarded for the essay judged to be the best, and publication of the essay is anticipated in a suitable professional journal.

CONDITIONS

Entrants should be registered students at a tertiary institution in Australia. Essays must have been written during 1978. Entries for 1978 close on 30 NOVEMBER 1978. Essays should be clearly typed on one side of the paper only, and two copies should be sent to:

The Convenor,
Judy Inglis Memorial Prize Committee,
Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies,
P.O.Box 553,
CANBERRA CITY, A.C.T. 2601

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