



The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

This article was originally published in printed form. The journal began in 1973 and was titled *The Aboriginal Child at School*. In 1996 the journal was transformed to an internationally peer-reviewed publication and renamed *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*.

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Aboriginal teachers and several elders saw their community changing daily and realised that their language and history were in danger of disappearing forever. They saw that they had to act quickly before their culture was lost completely. Together with a photographer and linguist, Dorothy Tunbridge, who had worked with the community for many years, they recorded the language of their unique landscape, the Flinders Ranges, through a collection of written texts and photographs.

Each Dreaming story tells how a part of land was created and why it has the shape we see today. Tales woven through the adventures of ancient beings, tell the history of rock formations, dry lakes and deserts which are captured in striking colour photographs. Both the stories and the photographs allow others to understand and appreciate the significance of this land for its people.

The Andyamathanha community and Dorothy Tunbridge are to be praised for the way they have managed to preserve their traditional history through stories and photographs. Now they can be sure that it will remain to guide future generations through the sacred land of the Flinders Ranges and its Dreaming.

Turning the Tide: A Personal History of the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.

Faith Bandler. Aboriginal Studies Press, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies.

This book covers the formation of FCAATSI in the late '50s through to its finish in 1977. It was a group made up of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people who united in order to stop the rapid deterioration of indigenous people and their culture.

Faith describes her involvement with organised Aboriginal struggles, detailing the Pilbarra strike (the first and longest Aboriginal strike in history), the successful battle for equal pay for Aboriginal pastoral workers in the Territory, mining disputes and land rights movements. FCAATSI's greatest and most historic victory was, of course, the referendum of 1967, which gave Aboriginal people full citizenship for the first time and took their fate and control out of the hands of the individual States.

This meant that agencies like the Aboriginal Welfare Board in New South Wales, which caused great damage to Aboriginal

families by taking their children away, were eventually removed. But what was truly remarkable about FCAATSI was its ability to unite and educate people, Aboriginal and white, about the unjust and tragic conditions in which the Aboriginal people were forced to live. They had no funding yet they were able to gain the attention and support of politicians, trade union movements, newspapers, church leaders, ethnic groups and teachers. In 1967 this support aided them in convincing the rest of Australia to vote overwhelmingly for a change in the Federal law that would allow Aboriginal people full rights for the first time. Such large scale changes to the very foundations of national history and culture have happened extremely rarely since the Constitution was first formed.

Of course, all that was hoped for back then has not come about. Still, FCAATSI was important, because its pioneering efforts paved the way for the Aboriginal controlled services that we take for granted today. Many of our prominent community members such as Jack Davis, Gary Foley, Roberta Sykes and Ken Brindle, speak in the book of their involvement with FCAATSI and acknowledge its unique role in Aboriginal political struggles. Their personal recollections all emphasise how people from reserves and outstations were able to sit down as equals and work together with those who held some of the most powerful offices in the land, in a way that will never happen again. It enabled others with influence to be educated about the needs and rights of Aboriginal people. It is an important piece of Australian history because it is so recent and yet it underlines how far Aboriginal people have come, what can be brought about by determination and change, and how much more there is to be done.

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SBS Television - Tuesday October 17: 9.15 (8.45 Adelaide)

Ngurunderi: A Ngarrindjeri Dreaming

A beautifully filmed tale of the Koori legend of Ngurunderi - ancestral hero of the lower Murray and the Coorong. This production from the South Australian Film Corporation won a Silver Award at the International Film & Television Festival of New York.

Also on Tuesday October 17 - 7.30pm (7pm Adelaide) A *First in Line* special - *Aboriginal Languages Face Extinction*.

This notice is too late for our readers but if you'd like information on SBS Aboriginal programs, contact Lindsay Cullens, SBS Publicity - (02) 964 2828.