



A range of materials from conference workshops follow; some summaries submitted by workshop speakers, and reports from facilitators summarizing the workshops...

NUKUNU - OUR HERITAGE AND IDENTITY:

An Exercise in Collaborative Story Telling

Malcolm McKinnon & Jared Thomas

Artist Malcolm McKinnon and Nukunu man Jared Thomas described a collaborative initiative involving an Aboriginal community organisation, a local historical society (strongly supported by a local council) and an artist, working together to address the lack of recorded Aboriginal history in a part of the Flinders Ranges in South Australia. Directed towards the development of a permanent museum exhibition, this project explores the historic and contemporary connection of Nukunu people to the Mount Remarkable area. Combining first-hand narratives with historical artefacts and multi-media presentation formats, the exhibition presents a range of stories promoting an understanding of local Aboriginal heritage and identity.

The exhibition includes stories concerning:

- the continuing survival of Nukunu people, culture and language and a surviving sense of connection to the Mount Remarkable region (despite the physical absence of Aboriginal people from the immediate area);
- the impacts of European settlement on Nukunu people;
- relationships and interactions between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples, in all their diversity and complexity.

In particular, Malcolm and Jared talked about the collaborative nature of the project and the unusual leadership role fulfilled in this instance by a local historical society, brokering a working relationship with an Aboriginal community. They also outlined the project's focus upon a story telling approach that places contemporary Aboriginal voices within the context of a eurocentric museum environment. Most significantly, they talked about the way in which this project is promoting dialogue and mutual understanding between blackfellas and whitefellas in a small rural community. Central to this presentation was the screening of a short film called *Still Connected*, one of the works produced through the project.



Margaret Smith, Nukunu elder, from film *Still Connected*



Nukunu country at Mount Remarkable, South Australia, from film *Still Connected*

Malcolm McKinnon is an artist and planner with bases in Melbourne and in the southern Flinders Ranges region of South Australia. His work encompasses research and planning assignments, community development initiatives and public and community art projects. He has particular interest working in a regional and rural context, including numerous projects with farmers and aboriginal communities.

Jared Thomas is a Nukunu person from the southern Flinders Ranges in South Australia. Currently employed as an indigenous Arts Development Officer for Arts SA, Jared is also a writer. His first major work, a play called 'Flash Red Ford' toured Uganda and Kenya in 1999 and his first novel, 'Sweet Guy' was short listed for the 2002 Adelaide Festival Awards for Literature. Jared is also involved in film writing and editing and was Assistant Director on the film 'One Night the Moon,' directed by Rachel Perkins.

Copyright: All text and images, except where otherwise attributed, are copyright of the authors and may not be reproduced without written permission.