

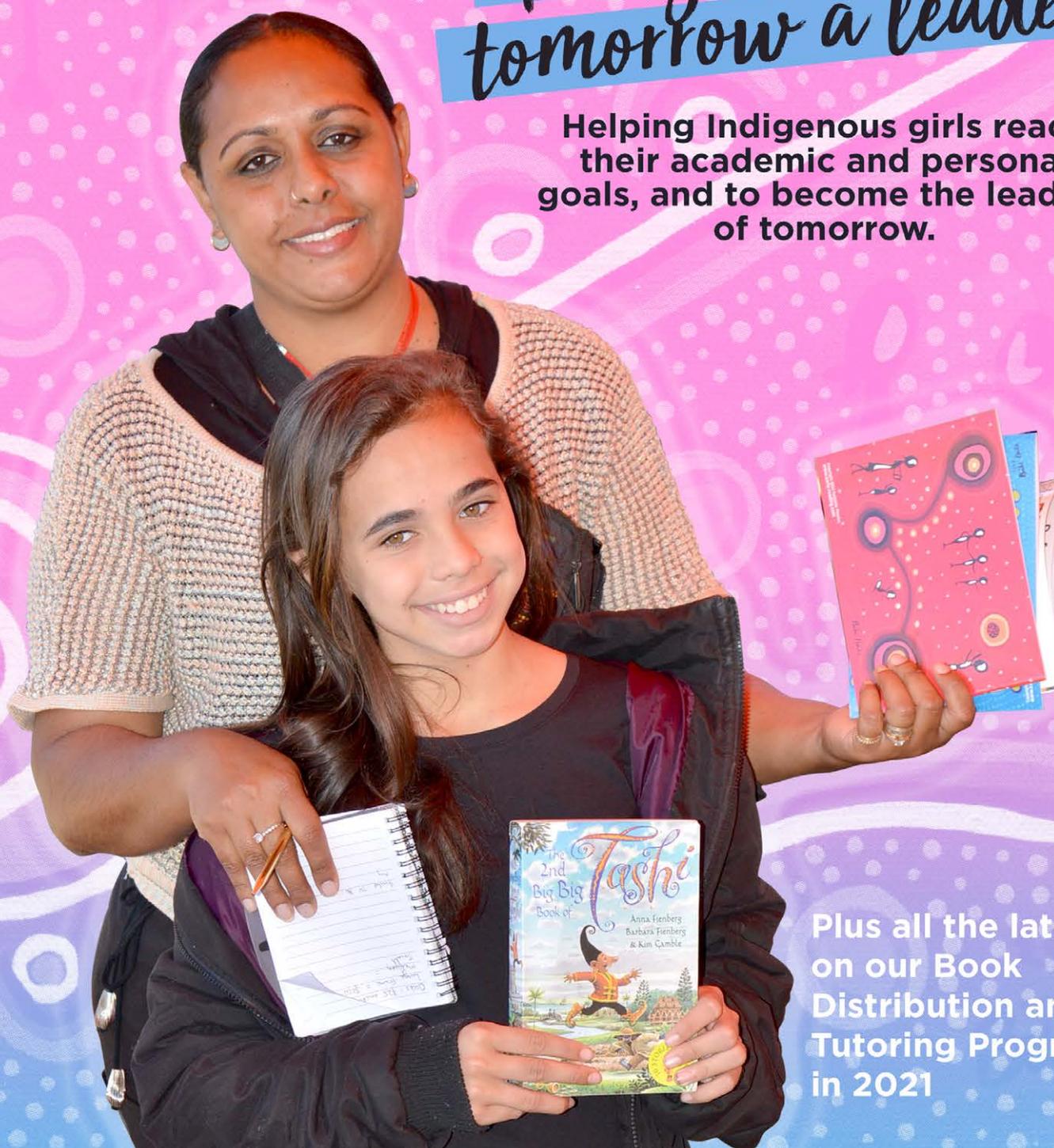
THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ABORIGINAL LITERACY FOUNDATION

ALFABET

WINTER 2021

*Today a reader,
tomorrow a leader*

Helping Indigenous girls reach their academic and personal goals, and to become the leaders of tomorrow.



Plus all the latest on our Book Distribution and Tutoring Programs in 2021

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ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER VISITORS ARE WARNED THAT THIS EDITION CONTAINS IMAGES OF DECEASED PERSONS.

CEO'S REPORT

The last twelve months have seen some important changes in the work of the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation. For about five months we were not able to provide our tutoring program in the metropolitan area or in rural and regional Australia. We were also forced to curtail our classes at our new Literacy Centre in Ballarat. However, this has enabled us to develop our Distance Education Program which is run jointly with Need a Tutor. Whilst we feel distance education is not a replacement for one to one tutoring, the digital space has enormous potential for under resourced communities.

Another new development has been the expansion of our Aspire Program for Indigenous girls. The Aspire program is designed to encourage girls to not only improve their literacy skills but

also stay on at school. As well as the one to one tutoring, we also have Indigenous mentors who have stayed on at school and undertaken post school studies often leading to a career. We feel this can make a real difference to the prospects of a lot of young Indigenous women.

Our Books to the North Program has carried on and returned to the remote and regional schools we support in the Northern Territory. (More information on these schools is provided in the newsletter.) I can't emphasise how important this program has been and how grateful we are to the thousands of school children in Melbourne and Sydney who donated more than 100,000 books over the past two years. In some cases, the books sent by the ALF provide one of the only collections of reading material

in the community.

For prospective book donors, we are keen to receive donated books on specific topics of interest to young Aboriginal Australians. These topics include any Aboriginal stories, books about native animals or flora, and of course books about successful Aboriginal sportsmen and sportswomen.

Thank you to all our supporters over the past twelve months. It's been a difficult time not only for the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation, but for all Australians and we are most grateful that you managed to remember us.

Anthony Cree
CEO
Aboriginal Literacy Foundation

ART SHOW

Students attending art classes with Aunty Janet Curtain will be exhibiting their work at the RadMac ArtSpace throughout July, 2021.

All are welcome.

RadMac ArtSpace
110 Armstrong Street
South, Ballarat Central



Above: Dr Anthony Cree with Aunty Janet Curtain

PROGRAM UPDATES

JOB READY

An important development over the past 12 months has been our Job Ready Program. The key to success of this program is the provision of both literacy studies and practical advice through the involvement of Indigenous mentors. Literacy tutoring centres on language relating to work, and in particular that which is required under the new Occupational Health and Safety Act. Another important aspect is the writing of resumes, and of course job applications. Through this program, many young Indigenous Australians will have the opportunity for employment and this is clearly the best way to better lifetime outcomes and the general good of the Indigenous community.



DISTANCE EDUCATION

2020 and into 2021 has seen the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation supporting Indigenous students' education through their ongoing partnership with Need a Tutor.

Supporting students from Wiluna Remote Community School in WA, we ensure these students receive weekly online tutoring sessions with a qualified tutor assisting with subjects such as English and History.

Last year we saw a student transition from Wiluna to a private school in Perth. He credits his success at his new school in part to the tutoring he received during 2020.

Through Need a Tutor we have also taken on 2 new Indigenous boys in 2021 both in foster care & OOH (Out of Home) situations. These two boys have struggled with consistency in their education and their weekly tutoring sessions has proved to give them the educational support and

confidence particularly in Literacy and Numeracy. These boys were also provisioned with donated laptops through our partnership.

We are proud to be assisting these children and seek to further support students from Pia Wadjari Remote Community School in WA in term 3.

We are proud of our partnership with Need a Tutor and the impact our partnership with them has on our remote communities.

If you can help us support more Indigenous, remote children please do not hesitate to get in touch with either Need a Tutor www.needatutor.com.au or the ALF.



ASPIRE PROGRAM

Our Aspire Program is directly aimed at Aboriginal girls in upper primary and lower secondary schools (and also those who may have left school already, or do not attend for other reasons).

'Wraparound support' is the common term given to the specified assistance provided to Indigenous students: it involves a collaborative partnership with schools, families and community partners. The effectiveness of this model is due to the cultivation of a long term network to keep students engaged in a shared plan.

Historically, most programs have been targeted towards boys due to poorer results in most education criteria (attendance, year12 attainment and higher education). However, Indigenous girls face many of the same challenges as Indigenous boys and others which are unique: for example, girls are more likely to leave school in order to support the family needs with raising younger siblings.

A standing committee on Indigenous affairs in 2017 recommended, "As a matter of urgency, the Australian government allocate an additional portion of remaining funds available through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy to girl's education programs."

Literacy for girls and women is just as important, possibly even more so. The advent of the internet and the availability of information on health and quality living is only useful if you can read; another factor is that the availability of

employment for Indigenous women who do have literacy and possibly post school training.

A key factor in the Aspire Program is that as well as providing one to one tutoring (and small group tutoring) the program also provides a mentoring and support package for each student. It is particularly encouraging for a young woman to meet with a mentor who has had similar experiences, overcome difficulties, completed her education and then undertaken post school training leading to a career - a whole world is thus opened to the student. Often the student's family are far more supportive when they realise that there is an Indigenous mentor involved in the program.

One of the main factors contributing to non-attendance relate to a lack of recognition by schools of Indigenous culture. It was decided to introduce a cultural aspect to the program and with the support of noted Aboriginal artist Aunty Janet Curtain and Aboriginal Craft and Culture expert Donna Jackson. As well as traditional painting, the students learn to identify Aboriginal foods and to collect native flax and other flora to be made into mats, dilly bags and various other traditional pieces.

Our experience has been that the cultural support also encourages the students to attend this program and makes the experience far more enjoyable than a more rigid academic program.



PROGRAM UPDATES

AFTER SCHOOL TUTORING

2021 has seen a large uptake in our Victorian tutoring programs after the school interruptions throughout 2020. We expect this is largely due to parents hoping to offset any deficiencies following the home schooling period.

We are already receiving great feedback from parents about the improvements their children have made by attending the classes:

"My daughter would struggle with certain concepts but she was too embarrassed to put her hand up and so she would have to play catch up for the rest of the term, and in the past she has given up and become really disinterested in class. Coming to these classes has kept her up with the others and she's

much, much happier going to school each day."

Tutoring focuses on Literacy and Numeracy we also believe in a broader approach to education: Our tutoring classes take place along side heritage painting with Aunty Janet Curtain. This is an aspect of our work that is not offered in mainstream curriculum. We believe incorporating Culture into the education experience is a vital tool in keeping Indigenous children engaged with their education.

Heritage painting provides a time of calm and reflection. Dot painting in particular, as a practice of mindfulness, has had unexpected benefits on the mood of students and their interactions together.

There are many students who take part in both the tutoring classes and heritage classes or alternate throughout the school terms.

An exhibition of work from the heritage classes will be held in Ballarat in July at the RadMac ArtSpace in Armstrong St and we encourage all supporters in the area to come and see the wonderful paintings.

As ever, we're so grateful for our wonderful tutors and Elders who have remained with us throughout a very challenging 12 months.

Our sincere thanks for your patience and dedication.



STUDENT INTERVIEWS

Name: Sapphie

Attends: Tutoring Classes

What year level were you in when you first came to ALF tutoring?

I was in year 1.

What year level are you in now?

Year 4, so I have been coming for four years.

Can you remember what you had difficulty with when you first came to ALF tutoring?

Math/Reading/Writing? Probably reading and math

How do you think that the tutoring has helped you at school?

It's had a big impact, because I come to tutoring practicing the things I need to know, and once I go to school and I do it again, I get it right.

What is your favourite subject at school? Art

What is your favourite thing about coming to tutoring? Probably talking about things I need to learn and getting them off my chest.

Have you learnt anything new at ALF?

Yes, for maths, it was difficult for me to do take-away, times, division, so yeah.

If you were a tutor at ALF, what would you teach? Art.

During last year's School Lock Downs, what did you find hard to do during distance education? Probably it was

harder going onto different Apps for every different thing we had to do, and the internet might have changed and everything.

What was the best thing about going back to school after the lockdowns?

Seeing all my friends.

What do you want to be when you grow up? A Vet.

If you could have a super power, what would it be? And why? I would fly so I

could watch over everyone and make sure they are safe.

Name: Sabriel

Attends: Heritage & Art Classes

What year level were you in when you first came to ALF art classes? I think I

was in grade 1 or grade prep.

What year level are you in now? Grade 3.

Do you think that the art class has helped you at school? A little bit.

What is your favourite subject at school? Um, probably the Aboriginal Languages on Thursdays

What is your favourite thing about coming to ALF art class? Getting to paint and sell my paintings.

During last year's School Lock Downs, what did you find hard to do during distance education? Playing with my friends.

What was the best thing about going back to school after the lockdowns? Getting to see all my friends again.

What do you want to be when you grow up? Uh, I don't know. Lots of things I want to be, Police, Fire Fighter.

If you could have a super power, what would it be? And why? To fly. Because it's fun.

BOOK PROGRAMS

Despite the logistical difficulties in 2020, we are working hard to ensure our commitment to schools and other organisations are met. In the latter part of last year, we were able to resume our full delivery schedule and we have also supported many other Indigenous, medical and family support organisations with literacy resources.

The following Northern Territory schools have received book deliveries and resources since September 2020.

Clyde Fenton Primary School
Belyuen School
Yirara College
Yirrkala School
Katherine High School
Rosebery Primary School
Taminmin College
Wulagi Primary School
Forrest Parade School

Mutitjulu School
Centralian Middle School
Tipperary Station School
Woolianna School
Ludmilla Primary School
Yarralin School
Bradshaw Primary School
Hailebury Rendall School
Milyakburra School
Tennant Creek High School
Rosebery Middle School
St. Pauls Catholic Primary School
Lajamanu School
Malak Reengagement Centre
Bulla School
Mamaruni School
Xavier Catholic College Wurrumiyanga
St. Josephs Catholic College
Pine Creek School
Karama School
Henbury School
Manunda Terrace Primary

OLSH Catholic College
Mackillop Catholic College
MacFarlane Primary School
Kintore School
The Essington School Darwin
Yipirinya
Epenarra School
Tivendale School
Ross Park Primary
Driver Primary School
Mulga Bore School
Dundee Beach School
St. Phillips College
St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School
Alcoota School
Baniyala Garrangali School
Adelaide River Primary
Sacred Heart Primary School
Douglas Daly School
St Francis Xavier Catholic School

The new ALF book depository is situated at 7 Eyre Street, Ballarat, 3350. All books must now be delivered to Ballarat as our Melbourne book depository at **247 Russell Street is now closed**. We do apologise for any inconvenience that this causes and hope that you will be able to maintain your wonderful support for this important program.

ORIGINS OF THE ALF

We are often asked how the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation got started, and we thought our supporters may appreciate learning more about our origins.

Dr Tony Cree's interest in Indigenous education had its beginnings in the late 1960's. Tony undertook a gap year, working at the Mount Tom Price iron ore mine in the Pilberra prior to taking a place at Oxford University to study Philosophy.

Although only eighteen, Tony had undertaken some company training and was driving heavy equipment including the two hundred tonne GM Dart truck that used to haul the iron ore down from Mount Nameless where the main mine was situated.

After suffering an injury, Tony wasn't able to work at the mine for several months: the company felt obliged to find him some employment in the township and this coincided with the opening of the local school. Tony took on a teaching role and began working with Indigenous families in the community. He soon realised that despite students often speaking another language at home, it seemed to have no affect on their ability to perform at the same rate of non-Indigenous peers. The success of this short period and the friendships formed would go on to deeply shape his future work.

Many years later Tony, now with a Ph.D, took a position at Ballarat University, teaching Philosophy in the Education Department and also to Paramedicine and Business Studies students.

Part of his job was to provide further assistance to Indigenous students: in those days support came from the Government as part of the ATAS (Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Scheme) Program.

Tony tutored outside University commitments and worked extensively with community leaders, Steve Johnson and Anne Patmore Cooper. The support of these two people cannot be understated and over the following years, the three worked together on Heritage Camps at the University. In those days, Camps would last 5 days throughout the holidays and would involve tutoring and extensive cultural activities and story telling.

When the Federal Government decided to end the ATAS program, it became apparent that there was no replacement service and that although the universities and schools often had an Indigenous Education Officer, or something similar, they were usually not qualified as teachers or tutors.

In 2003, Tony founded the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation and developed a series of programs in Victoria and Southern New South Wales. The emphasis was on late Primary and early Secondary school students who seemed to be the ones most at risk of leaving school prematurely.

Over the years, more than five thousand students not including those attending Heritage Camps and our other programs.

An important development in 2017 was the Books to the North Program which identified more than one hundred and fifty remote Aboriginal schools that did not have a library or access to reading material outside text books or the internet. This program has been extremely successful.

Tony, Steve Johnson and Anne Cooper continued to work together with both serving on the Advisory Committee and working at the weekend Literacy and Heritage Camps (an abbreviated form of the early Camps at Ballarat University).

Steve sadly passed away in 2014 after a short illness, although his legacy is strongly felt at the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation. Steve's work was recognised with the Indigenous Leadership Award at the World Literacy Council Conference in 2015. His wife Heather was present to accept the award on his behalf.

While we have now expanded far beyond our Victorian roots with our Book and Distance Education programs, we could not have grown without the support of many people along the way, and of course our donors. The Aboriginal Literacy Foundation has not received government funding since our inception, which means you are the lifeblood of our work.

David Flemming

Chair
Aboriginal Literacy Foundation



Above: Tony at eighteen
Below: Tony, Anne and Steve



KIDS CORNER

Earlier in the year, we were contacted by the mother of 8 year old, Sarah Lichaa. After meeting Elder, Barbara Simms-Keely, Sarah has been very busy undertaking some wonderful projects support of the Indigenous community.

There has been a positive ripple effect from Sarah spending time with Barbara Simms-Keely, a Bidjgal/Gweagal Elder of La Perouse. Sarah is interested in gaining knowledge and listening to Aboriginal stories, culture, norms, customs, and traditions. Sarah, who is eight years old, personally carried out a few projects to support the Aboriginal Community:

1. Sarah gave away her pre-loved books, spending her pocket money to purchase glues, scissors, textas, colouring pencil sets, donating them by post to the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation in Ballarat, Victoria,
2. At Christmas last year, Sarah painted four canvases under the Supervision of Aunty Barb Simms-Keely and donated them to the Dorothy Boyt House in Malabar as a sign of respect to the Aboriginal Seniors that reside in the House
3. Sarah learned about weaving with lomandra, making a bracelet at the Kooloora Community Centre, Malabar,
4. Sarah wore her bracelet and undertook a day out with Aunty Barb:

- First going to Indigi Grow: Aboriginal Native Plants Nursery, tasting and listening to stories about how the herbs and flowers can be used to make damper, honey, and medicine.

- Then went to the La Perouse Museum, learning about Aunty Barb's culture, art, and connection to the Timberly Aboriginal Family - who set up a boomerang shop at La Perouse.

- Explored the shores and given detailed explanations regarding the way they lived off the land and sea.

- Sarah then went home and wrote a creative piece about her day out: "The Colour of My Day", decorating the poem with all the seashells she collected with Aunty Barb.

Respect for the Aboriginal Community is at the heart of our family. Sarah carries this out daily in word and action. Sarah would be more than happy to carry out any ambassador youth roles or public community work.

Sarah also donates her pocket money

and purchases activity books for children donating them to The Pyjama Angel Foundation in Queensland. Thinking of foster children who need help.

Sarah also wrote a letter to three ministers, outlining the need to protect their land as to bring the koalas back to their natural habitat, especially after the bush fires. She is also in the process of publishing a book called Cuddles Blue Shoes.



ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES WORD SEARCH

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| I | U | B | A | R | D | I | N | M | G | Y | B | O | A |
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| A | U | A | E | T | A | A | J | T | K | J | D | R | K |
| L | A | J | B | H | R | G | M | U | M | I | J | U | O |
| A | I | R | M | A | R | N | M | W | U | B | A | J | J |
| Y | L | U | A | I | W | O | I | A | N | A | L | D | A |
| U | B | T | G | J | G | O | L | N | G | R | U | A | J |
| K | A | D | U | U | T | N | K | G | K | N | N | R | N |
| U | I | M | Y | A | A | N | I | K | A | D | G | I | Y |
| K | A | E | K | B | D | G | G | A | N | I | Y | W | N |
| N | G | A | R | R | I | N | D | J | E | R | I | I | A |
| N | G | A | A | N | Y | A | T | J | A | R | R | A | I |
| P | I | T | J | A | N | T | J | A | T | J | A | R | A |

YINJIBARNDI
 NGARRINDJERI
 NOONGAR
 PITJANTJATJARA
 WIRADJURI
 NGAANYATJARRA
 KUKU YALANJI
 WIK MUNGKAN
 BARDI
 YUGAMBEH
 BUNDJALUNG
 MARTU WANGKA



BEQUESTS

The Aboriginal Literacy Foundation is most grateful to individuals or organisations who choose to make a bequest. We would recommend that you inform your solicitor to include a bequest in your will – If you prefer, you can use the form provided below.

I _____ wish to bequeath _____ dollars to the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation.

I would like this bequest to contribute towards:

- A library for a remote school
- Extending the tutoring program
- To provide a school or post-school scholarship
- All work currently undertaken by the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation
- Other (please specify)

Please forward a copy of this form to your solicitor and a copy to the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation at info@aboriginalliteracyfoundation.org

or

Ross House
P.O. Box 315 Flinders Lane
Melbourne, Victoria, 8009

We thought it would be interesting for our readers to hear of some of the wonderful bequests we have received in recent times and what it can mean for our Indigenous students (names have been changed).

Betty Braithwaite, who has spent a lifetime as a nurse, a matron and finally as the proprietor of an aged care facility left a bequest to the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation of approximately \$50,000 and asked that it might be spent for a library at a remote Aboriginal School in Northern Australia. Not only were we able to fulfill her request, but we were able to establish two libraries one in Katherine and one in a remote settlement 150 kilometres south known as Coolabah. This has made such a difference to the students, and both libraries are open to the entire community centering as they

do on subjects of interest to Aboriginal people. (Aboriginal biography, sport, animals, nature and traditional history and art)

Mrs. **Rachel Wenzel**, who had been married to a businessman in Melbourne left \$100,000 to the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation, and asked that it might be spent on fees for an Aboriginal girl to attend a private school. As she did not elaborate, we offered this as a scholarship at one of the Aboriginal Co-Ops, and found that several girls were keen to participate. We contacted a number of private girls schools, all of whom indicated that they would contribute towards the fees and ensure that the girls complete their education. We were even able to use some of the money towards uniforms.

Jim McArthur, retired farmer in Western Victoria made a generous donation of

\$20,000. He had Aboriginal employees on his farm for many years and felt that he'd like to contribute something towards young Aboriginal people interested in working on the land but who had poor literacy skills. We approached the Aboriginal Community in several country towns and found that there was a group of young boys and girls who did want to work on the land but whose literacy skills were not up to entry into a TAFE or an Agricultural College. Special classes in this town were held and were well attended for about a year. At least three of the students were able to enter TAFE at the culmination of the program. This would not have been possible without such a wonderful donation.

PHILANTHROPIC SPONSORS



CORPORATE SPONSORS



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