

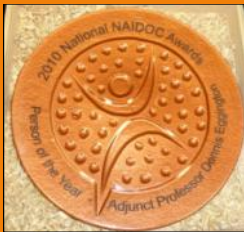


**ALSWA CEO**

**NATIONAL  
NAIDOC**

**PERSON OF  
THE YEAR**

**2010**



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# LAW MATTERS

## Aboriginal Legal Service of WA

Aboriginal Legal Service of WA

WINTER 2010

### Solid Future for ALSWA mural



The Aboriginal Legal Service of WA ALSWA is proud to be the host agency for the *Solid Futures Mural Project*, a joint initiative between Central Institute of Technology and the David Wirrpanda Foundation (DWF). This not-for-profit project will see

DWF Indigenous students work alongside talented Noongar artist Peter Farmer (2008 NAIDOC Perth 'Visual Artist of the Year') to create a mural depicting historical events in the history of ALSWA and WA's justice system. DWF students and staff visited ALSWA recently

to discuss the mural project and gain a greater insight into ALSWA's work by meeting with ALSWA CEO Dennis Eggington, EO John Bedford, Lawyers Monica Collard and Wayne Nannup and Incarcerated Juvenile Support Worker Tamara Gillespie. *Continued p.11*

### Naming and shaming targets most vulnerable

ALSWA is concerned that the proposed Prohibited Behaviour Orders (PBO's) will target those who most need our support. "We believe that naming and shaming will further breach the civil liberties of those most vulnerable, including the homeless, those suffering from mental illness and our young people, without justification" said Dennis Eggington,

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of ALSWA. "Our children deserve to grow up in a State that protects their rights, not a State that is morally bankrupt and this Bill contravenes the *International Convention on the Rights of the Child*. I fail to understand why Western Australia wants to import faulty legislation that has already failed in the UK due to its

ineffectiveness" said Mr. Eggington. With Aboriginal peoples already over-policed and incarcerated, ALSWA says that Prohibited Behaviour Orders will further increase incarceration rates for relatively minor offences and unnecessarily increase interaction with the justice system. "There is a complete lack of equity in that people who commit... *Continued p.11*

## NAIDOC Week - celebrating our Culture

NAIDOC Week is always a great opportunity to attend community events and promote the services of the Aboriginal Legal Service of WA (ALSWA).

This year ALSWA's Law & Advocacy Unit ran stalls at the Perth Official Opening in Wellington Square, Mirrabooka's Family Day and the NAIDOC celebrations at Ashfield Reserve.

For more information about legal matters or ALSWA's services, please check out our website at [www.als.org.au](http://www.als.org.au) or phone ALSWA Freecall (in WA) on **1800 019 900**



Clockwise: Cassie Riley, NAIDOC Perth official Opening, Wendy Rea-Young and Jodi Hoffmann at Ashfield Reserve, Tammy Solonec, NAIDOC Perth opening, Mary G performs at Ashfield



## ALSWA's fight for social justice receives national attention

Mick Gooda is the Canberra based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner and Lez Malezer the Chairperson of the Brisbane based Foundation for Aboriginal and Islander Research Action (FAIRA).

During their recent visit to Perth, ALSWA CEO Dennis Eggington and members of ALSWA's Law and Advocacy Unit welcomed the opportunity to meet to talk about Justice Reinvestment and provide a greater insight into ALSWA's work and some of the key issues facing our people in WA.



Pictured above left to right: Shanna Satya (ALSWA Policy Officer), Tammy Solonec (ALSWA Manager Law & Advocacy Unit), Dennis Eggington (ALSWA CEO) Mick Gooda (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner), Lez Malezer (Chairperson of the Brisbane based Foundation for Aboriginal & Islander Research Action FAIRA) and Wendy Rea-Young (ALSWA Community Legal Education Solicitor)



### Good Luck Lorretta!

After a long association with ALSWA, Lorretta McNamara has left to take up another position within the justice system. Lorretta is known to many through her work with ALSWA as a Court Officer, Women's Support Officer and Prisoner Support Officer and we wish her the very best for the future.

**FREECALL ALSWA (within WA) on 1800 019 900 [www.als.org.au](http://www.als.org.au)**  
**LAW MATTERS** is produced by the Aboriginal Legal Service of WA (ALSWA:JH:08/10)

## ALSWA CEO National NAIDOC 'Person of the Year'

In a glittering Awards Ceremony held in Melbourne in NAIDOC Week, Adjunct Professor Dennis Eggington (ALSWA CEO) was named the 2010 National 'Person of the Year'. This acclaimed Award recognises his commitment to social justice and advancing the rights of our people, which spans four decades. A tireless human rights campaigner, Mr. Eggington, a Nyungar man whose Country ties are in the South-West of WA, began his career in education during the seventies before branching into Indigenous media during the 1980's. Known widely for his extensive work within

the justice system, he has been the CEO of ALSWA since 1996. Speaking after the Awards Mr. Eggington said that being honoured with this award is one of the "highlights of his life". "I feel extremely proud and it was wonderful to share in the national celebration of NAIDOC Week and be honoured in such a way. It is an incredible feeling and an experience which I will never forget" said Mr. Eggington. ALSWA Executive Officer (EO) John Bedford says that the Award is testament to the hard work of the CEO over many years. "Throughout his career, Dennis has demonstrated an

unyielding commitment to human rights and creating a better future for our people, and this Award is something that all Western Australians should take pride in", said Mr. Bedford. Mr. Bedford said that the Award acknowledges qualities that many within the community have for a long time recognised. "Regardless of his heavy workload, from a community perspective Mr. Eggington's door is always open. As the public face of ALSWA, he is always humble, welcoming and most importantly passionate about the ongoing advancement of the Indigenous community".



Dennis Eggington accepts his Award (Photo: Mahala Strohfeldt courtesy Koori Mail)

*Being honoured with this Award is one of the biggest highlights of my life...*



Dennis and Louella Eggington before the Awards Ceremony at the Melbourne Convention Centre (Photo courtesy of Stephen Hagan National Indigenous Times)



Photo by Mahala Strohfeldt Courtesy of Koori Mail



4-11 JULY 2010 **Unsung Heroes**  
Closing the Gap by Leading Their Way

### 2010 National NAIDOC

Award recipients:  
Front Row L-R Aunty Ali Golding, Ali Drummond, Lester Bostock, Megan Davis, (Indigenous Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin), Dennis Eggington, Back Row L-R Lewis Langton, Lucas Kickett, Jessica Smith, Vince Coulthard, Daryl Lacey, Rohanee Cox.

## Ward Matter: ALSWA welcomes news of ex-gratia payment



ALSWA's CEO Dennis Eggington and Director of Legal Services Peter Collins address the media at ALSWA's Press Conference after the announcement of the ex-gratia payment

**"Mr. Ward's death highlighted serious flaws in the prisoner transport system and every measure must be taken to ensure that nothing like this could ever happen again"**

ALSWA has welcomed the State Government's offer of an ex-gratia payment in the Ward matter (made in July). "We acknowledge that in making this offer the State Government has admitted this tragedy should never have occurred and we know that no amount of money can ever compensate for the enormous loss suffered by Mr. Ward's family and Community" said ALSWA CEO Dennis Eggington. Mr. Ward died on 27 January 2008 after being transported in

the back of a G4S van. "What also shouldn't be forgotten in all of this is the role of G4S in Mr. Ward's death. Their culpability is astronomical. He died in the back of one of their vans, driven by their employees and their silence in all of this hasn't gone unnoticed. ALSWA calls on G4S to apologise for their part in the tragic passing of Mr. Ward and to make a reasonable offer of compensation to his wife and children". ALSWA said that this tragedy highlighted serious flaws in the prisoner transport system and that every

measure must be taken to ensure that nothing like this could ever happen again. "We will now consult with our client about instituting civil proceedings against the government and G4S, and ALSWA has also requested further information to determine whether an application will be made to have the Inquest re-opened. "Mr. Ward's family and Community have suffered so much through losing Mr. Ward and we will continue working with the family to support them through this difficult time."

## DPP Decision a 'damning indictment on justice system'

The June 2010 decision by the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) not to pursue any charges in relation to the death of Mr. Ward is 'a damning indictment on WA's justice system' according to the Aboriginal Legal Service of WA (ALSWA).

Dennis Eggington ALSWA CEO said the agency was appalled at the decision. "The tragic death of Mr. Ward, a highly respected Elder, has shocked the nation and devastated a whole community. The failure by the DPP to respond in a just manner sends a very troubling message that the justice system systematically fails Indigenous communities throughout WA" said Mr. Eggington. ALSWA says that the DPP and the WA Attorney General have serious questions to answer in relation to this matter. "I am at a loss to understand how the DPP can justify

that no charges will be laid when the Coronial Inquiry found that the drivers (Powell and Stokoe), Department of Corrective Services (DCS) and GSL (now G4S) contributed to this death. Western Australia has blood on its hands and the failure to lay charges is an absolute whitewash and we will be bringing this serious matter to the attention of the United Nations" Mr. Eggington said.

ALSWA is concerned that too many questions remained unanswered about the conduct of this investigation and the collusion that took place. "All Western Australians deserve to have confidence in this state's justice system and it is in the public interest that ALSWA explores all options to have this matter re-examined so that appropriate action is taken that is acceptable to all fair-minded West Australians".

## ALSWA Law & Advocacy Unit expands

The recent expansion of ALSWA's Law & Advocacy Unit means that more support can now be provided for prisoners and their families.

The Unit has newly created positions in prisoner and juvenile support, social work, policy and community legal education. These roles will further enhance the work already undertaken by the unit in policy, advocating, media and human rights.

Shanna Satya is ALSWA's new Policy Officer taking over from Tammy Solonec who now manages the Law and Advocacy Unit. Before commencing with

ALSWA she worked for the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice in Ghana, NT Anti-Discrimination Commission, Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service (Criminal Defence Lawyer), Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (Canberra) as a Government Lawyer and the Director of Public Prosecution in Sydney. "I am dedicated to policy and human rights issues and hope that through ALSWA's law and advocacy work there is a tangible improvement in the lives of Aboriginal

people in WA".

Wendy Rea-Young has also joined the Law & Advocacy Unit as the Community Legal Education Solicitor, having previously worked in ALSWA's Civil Unit assisting with Redress WA applications. Prior to working with ALSWA, she was a Defence Lawyer at the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Legal Service of QLD and N A A J A and a Government Lawyer for the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department and the NT Government. Wendy has also worked in broadcasting and photography and holds a BA in English, majoring in Journalism and Politics.



Shanna Satya



Wendy Rea-Young

MEET MORE OF  
ALSWA'S LAW  
AND ADVOCACY  
STAFF ON PAGE 8

## ALSWA Human Rights Solicitor returns from UK

Seranie Gamble, International Law and Human Rights Solicitor, attended Oxford University (UK) from 8 July - 13 August for a full time component of her International Human Rights Law course.

She commenced the part time course by correspondence last year and will graduate with a Masters qualification in 2012. Seranie studied the "Implementation of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,"

and "Regional Human Rights Systems," and will now focus on writing a dissertation due early next year, before returning to Oxford for further study and exams. The course has 30 students from around the world with a strong interest, existing qualifications and experience in human rights, to propel them to greater expertise and understanding of these issues from the guidance of each other and from leading professors in the field.

Seranie's studies have assisted in her work within the Law and Advocacy Unit through ALSWA's involvement in international advocacy with the United Nations, and work done by ALSWA preparing a number of human rights policy submissions to the Australian Government about the need for greater human rights protection in Australia and developing a human rights training program to empower Aboriginal peoples in WA.



Seranie Gamble

## Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations in 2010



Above: Tammy Solonec at the UNPFII after delivering the intervention on the Doctrine of Discovery

**To find out more about the UN voluntary fund for Indigenous peoples, go to: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/about/funds/indigenous/>**

In April 2010 Tammy Solonec, ALSWA Law & Advocacy Unit Manager, was sponsored by Oxfam to attend the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) in New York, an annual meeting where Indigenous peoples the world over come together to discuss important matters. The Forum runs in a two year cycle, with a theme for every second year. The theme for this ninth session was 'Indigenous peoples: development with

culture and identity' focusing on articles 3 and 32 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

"I had the honour of presenting twice to the Forum, first on our dialogue with the Special Rapportuer on rights of Indigenous people (James Anaya) and second on the Doctrine of Discovery. Following that, I was funded by the Australian Human Rights Commission, Mallesons, Allens Arthur Robinson and the Greens Party to attend the Expert

Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP), which occurred in Geneva between 12 – 16 July. This mechanism has a more specific mandate, focusing on an annual study. This year was the third session of EMRIP and the topic was 'Indigenous peoples' right to participate in decision making'. I again presented twice and learned much from the experience including being lucky enough to work with people I admire and respect like Les Malezer, Mick Gooda and Dea Thiele. I'm beginning to understand that the UN system has much scope for participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and encourage you all to get involved" said Ms Solonec.

Right: Tammy Solonec and Mick Gooda (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner) outside the UN building in New York in April 2010



## Inaugural Aboriginal Lawyers Committee forms in Perth



Kristy Gaunt, June Kenny, Tammy Solonec, Karen Ward, Douglas D'Antoine, Jonathon Reid, (name unavailable) Kim Axford, outside of the Supreme Court of Western Australia

A new committee which will encourage, support and advance Aboriginal lawyers, law graduates and law students has been formed in WA. The inaugural **Aboriginal Lawyers Committee** (announced by the Law Society of WA) will also communicate with the legal profession and broader community on issues of importance to our people. Members include June Kenny (convenor), Tammy Solonec (ALSWA), Karen Ward, Nicole Casey and Christie-Rochelle Annice.

Members encourage all Aboriginal lawyers and students to become involved with this committee and more information is available on **08 9322 7877**.

## ALSWA CEO attends UN Forum as Mentor and Leader



ALSWA CEO Dennis Eggington (above), attended the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples (UNPFII) in New York from 19-30 April 2010. Selected to go to the forum as an experienced Leader and Mentor, he joined other Indigenous representatives from Australia who also attended. This was the ninth session of the UNPFII and this years theme was 'Indigenous peoples: development with culture and identity'. "It was a

wonderful opportunity to attend this forum with other Indigenous representatives to highlight the injustice that is faced by many of our young peoples. There is much international interest surrounding the human rights of our First Nations peoples and this forum provided an invaluable opportunity to network with both Australian and international delegates attending" said Mr. Eggington. During the forum, a comprehensive report about juvenile justice in Australia was presented, a meeting was held with the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights and Fundamental freedoms of Indigenous Peoples and information was provided on the situation facing our young people in Australia.



Photos from top, anti clockwise: New York, Inside the General Assembly, Neil Gillespie (Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement SA), Dennis Eggington outside of the General Assembly building, Mick Gooda (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner) and Rodney Dillon (Amnesty International), Dennis Eggington and Mick Gooda

## Good Luck Sam



Sam Dinah during his farewell speech at ALSWA Head Office

Respected Elder and ALSWA Prisoner Support Officer Sam Dinah has moved on from ALSWA after a long and dedicated association with our organisation. Sam brought a wealth of experience and commitment to ALSWA. One of our first Field Officers in the 1970's, Sam

returned to ALSWA 12 years ago where he worked tirelessly assisting our community and prisoners in Perth and regional areas. Sam's efforts and commitment to Community have been widely recognised over the years with achievements including NAIDOC

Perth Male Elder of the Year (2007) and Outstanding Achievement (Runner Up) 2009. During a staff farewell CEO Dennis Eggington acknowledged the outstanding contribution Sam has made over many years. Good luck Sam - we will miss you and wish you the very best for the future.



Ray Gidgup



Tamara Gillespie



Linc Ugle



Thomas Quayle

## More support for prisoners and families

Newly created positions in ALSWA's Law and Advocacy Unit will ensure that more support is available for our incarcerated women, men and children and their families.

**Ray Gidgup** (*Prisoner Support Worker*) was born and raised in Bruce Rock. He has previously worked within WA's prison system and looks forward to having a positive impact on those around him and "making a difference to prisoners lives whilst they're incarcerated and released, and assisting their families".

**Tamara Gillespie** (*Incarcerated Juvenile Support Worker*) has been working in Perth but also spent six years in Meekatharra. She is committed to helping our young

people and assisting them in planning for their future. "It's rewarding to see the smiles on faces when our young people know that you're there to support them. I want to work towards preventative measures being put in place so that our young people can gain more self esteem as they embrace culture, purpose and planning for the future".

**Linc Ugle** (*Prisoner Support Worker*) has worked within WA's prison system and hopes to make a difference in the lives of those incarcerated. "If providing the right information and assistance to prisoners can ensure that their time spent in custody is made easier without stress, then that's a good thing. I also want to

establish a rapport with prison staff to improve the lines of communication and assist our people in ensuring required prison programs are completed in time to avoid unnecessary delays with release".

**Thomas Quayle** (*Senior Social Worker, Prisoner Support*) is from New Zealand and will work with our community whilst incarcerated, to establish programs and support services to assist upon release to work towards reducing the chances of returning to custody'. Thomas wants to ensure that Aboriginal people have better access to support services and will work holistically with prisoners and their families. He has recently completed his Law Degree and has worked in Botswana, Scotland and SA.



## Additional funding welcomed by ALSWA

The Aboriginal Legal Service of WA (ALSWA) welcomed the May 2010 Federal Budget announcement that more funding would be available to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (ATSILS). "Our staff at ALSWA work under enormous pressure as the demand on our services continues to increase. As a statewide body which receives no funding from the State Government, this funding boost will go some way towards easing that pressure" said Dennis Eggington

ALSWA CEO. The Government will provide an additional \$34.9 million over four years to support ATSILS across the country. ALSWA admits that while this money won't provide all of the funding that is required, it will definitely assist. "It has been a real struggle to keep up with the workload as more of our people seek our services" said Mr. Eggington, adding that ALSWA lawyers in some regional areas could see as many as 30 to 100 clients in one day. ALSWA believes that as long as WA adopts

legislation such as move-on notices, stop and search laws and mandatory sentencing, Indigenous people will continue to be over-policed and over-represented in the criminal justice system. "We're pleased that the Federal Government has recognised the essential role that ATSILS play within the criminal justice system and by providing this funding to us we can continue to deliver a professional and culturally appropriate legal service for our people" said Mr. Eggington.

***"Our staff at ALSWA work under enormous pressure as the demand on our services continues to increase"***

## Federal Attorney General visits ALSWA



The Federal Attorney General Robert McClelland visited the Aboriginal Legal Service of WA in May to present ALSWA with a cheque for \$620,000. This additional one-off funding will assist ALSWA in finalising cases arising from the

WA Justice Taskforce, which was convened in 2007.

ALSWA CEO Dennis Eggington welcomed the funding boost for the agency and the opportunity to meet with Mr. McClelland. "We appreciate the Attorney General taking the time to visit

our Head Office and meet with our management and staff. The visit gave ALSWA the opportunity to provide a greater insight into our role, the challenges faced by ALSWA and the importance of continuing to provide quality legal support and representation for our people in WA" said Mr. Eggington.



L-R ALSWA's Robyn Ninoyette, Dennis Eggington, Attorney General Robert McClelland, Gulmina Miocevich, Rob Owens, John Bedford and Mara Barone



## WA Landmark legal action begins on Sorry Day



**“It is profoundly timely that such an important action should begin on Sorry Day”**

The first step in a landmark legal action seeking damages and compensation for members of the Stolen Generation has begun in Western Australia. The Writ was lodged in the Supreme Court of WA on 26 May on behalf of nine Indigenous people, and could become a test case for thousands of others. Dennis Eggington CEO of the Aboriginal Legal Service of WA (ALSWA) said the pro bono action by Law Firm Lavan Legal, addresses an extremely significant issue. “Whilst this is significant primarily for the survivors of the Stolen Generations, it should also be welcomed by all West

Australians who wish to right a moral, ethical and historical wrong”. It is also profoundly timely that such an important action should begin on Sorry Day, when so many of our people are still reeling from the long term effects of such a heartless and misguided policy”. Although ALSWA has worked with many survivors of the Stolen Generations it is unable to provide legal assistance to those seeking legal representation in this area due to lack of funding.

“Our Civil and Human Rights Unit has worked closely with Lavan Legal and the plaintiffs in this matter, however ALSWA

receives absolutely no funding from the State government. When one considers that many of the legal issues our people are dealing with are directly attributable to past State policies, one would assume the government should step forward and accept some responsibility” said Mr. Eggington. “Although no legal action could ever erase what has occurred, we sincerely hope that this important test case can at least dismantle the significant barriers that have prevented members of our community from holding accountable a State that presided over their forced removal”.

## First Nations service for our First Nations people

ALSWA was recently visited by First Nations (run through CUA Credit Union Australia) and provided with information about the financial assistance and services that First Nations can provide to Indigenous peoples.

Attending the meeting with ALSWA staff was Raylene Bellottie, a Nanda woman from Yamatji Country (First Nations National Business Development Manager) and Darren Northey, (General Manager of CUA Distribution), who is based in Queensland.



Above: ALSWA Staff Tina Ward, Cassie Riley, Lynette Jenkins, Ray Gidgup, Kristy Gaunt, Dennis Eggington, Peter Coole, Tamara Gillespie, Linc Ugle and Kim Axford with Raylene Bellottie, (front row centre) and Darren Northey (back row third from left).

**More information on First Nations / CUA at  
[www.cua.com.au/baw](http://www.cua.com.au/baw)**

## Naming and shaming targets most vulnerable *continued from page 1*

... minor offences will be publicly identified, whereas more serious offences will not be publicly scrutinised in the same way". Mr. Eggington believes that the push for PBO's in WA is emblematic of a Government who refuses to address the root causes of offending behaviour. ALSWA strongly oppose the introduction of the Prohibited Behaviour Orders Bill 2010 (WA) and call for this Bill to be withdrawn from Parliament immediately.

## ALSWA Court Officer off to Japan for Darts Championships



Congratulations to ALSWA Court Officer Kyle Anderson who has been selected to go to Japan in November to take part in the Darts Asia Pacific Cup.

Kyle 22, started playing darts when he was 11 and since then has achieved

numerous darts achievements both nationally and internationally.

Part of the WA State Seniors Darts Team, Kyle and older brother Beau (pictured on right) were both in Sydney recently for the Australian Darts Championships, where

their team won the WA State Teams event. Other highlights saw Kyle win the Mixed Doubles, place equal third in Doubles with his brother, with both selected to go to Japan later this year. Kyle is also off to England in October for the Winmau World Masters. Well done!



## Northam Secretary a proud Granny!

Simone Loder, ALSWA's Northam Office Secretary has proudly announced that she became a "Nanna" for the very first time in April this year. After Elizabeth Mary Christine Loder was born on the 17 April, Simone said: "I'm so very proud of my son Timothy and his wife Louisa!" Louisa Loder (nee Morris) is a former ALSWA employee having previously worked in our Criminal and Family Law Units. Congratulations to all!



## Solid Future for ALSWA Mural

*Continued from page 1*  
Mr. Eggington said that ALSWA is thrilled to be involved with the DWF and such an

important project and looks forward to the mural being unveiled and launched later this year.



Front Row L-R: DWF students Jaime Lee Little, Whitney Joseph, Deborah Jones, Karina Riley, Candice Nundle, ALSWA CEO Dennis Eggington Centre Row L-R: DWF Lecturer Chris Hodson, DWF students Jack Calyun, Glen Miller, Darren Hart, Travis Hansen, ALSWA lawyer Monica Collard and Tamara Gillespie ALSWA Incarcerated Juvenile Support Worker, DWF Mentor Eddie Brown, DWF Lecturer Peter Dooley, Back Row L-R: DWF students Brian Ryder, Lee Ratcliffe Youth Work student, DWF students Devin Indich, Robert Hansen, DWF Project Coordinator Jodie Schroder. DWF student Trista Webber, ALSWA lawyer Wayne Nannup, DWF Mentor Dale Kickett, Joni Van Der Laan Youth Work student, ALSWA Executive Officer John Bedford



**CHRISTMAS CLOSURE 2010** The Aboriginal Legal Service of WA will close on Friday 24 December 2010 and re-open on Wednesday 5th January 2011



**FEDERAL ELECTION 21 AUGUST 2010**  
**Open Letter from ALSWA CEO Dennis Eggington**  
*2010 National NAIDOC Person of the Year*

*Regardless of which Party is elected I hope that the government has a commitment to equity in the true sense of the word.*

*I want to see an Australia that can open both its head and its heart to difficult issues and walk an equitable path.*

*I want to see an Australia where every Indigenous kid can aspire to what every other kid takes for granted.*

*An Australia where our children are no longer seen as exceptional if they complete their secondary education. An Australia, where it is unacceptable for people to be denied food, shelter, safety, health, education, or a future, regardless of who they are.*

*I want to see a government that is rights driven rather than poll driven.*

*A government prepared to do what's right rather than what's popular.*

*A government that engages honestly, ethically and respectfully with both Indigenous and non Indigenous Australians.*

*A government that honours the struggle of asylum seekers and validates their pain and suffering rather than adding to it through incarceration.*

*I want to see an Australian government that recognises and respects the sovereignty of our First Nations Peoples.*

*For it is only then that Australia can honestly engage with other countries as an authentic ethical entity.*

*I want to see an Australia that embraces and nurtures the values of mutual respect, ethical engagement and affirmation of humanity.*

*When we achieve such a government leading such a country we can then all share the pride of saying Australia is a lucky country.*

*A country where a fair go is given to all, regardless of class, culture, religion, individual needs or beliefs. To live in such a country, we would all be truly lucky.*