

# Aboriginal Benefits Foundation Limited

## Newsletter October 2007

The Aboriginal Benefits Foundation (ABF) was set up in 2005 by a group of concerned individuals involved in Indigenous art and culture with the objective of benefiting the well being of Aboriginal Australians.

The Foundation accepts moneys as direct donations, as proceeds in full or in part from the sale of art works, as gifts in kind, and as bequests and in various other ways. The Foundation's aim is:

*To promote, provide or carry out activities, facilities or projects for the benefit or welfare of Aboriginal communities in Australia and members of those communities in particular by reason of youth, age, infirmity or disability, poverty or social or economic circumstances.*

The current Board members are Robert Edwards AO (Chair), Adrian Newstead (Treasurer), Jennifer Isaacs AM (Secretary/Public Officer), Dawn Casey, Director, Western Australian Museum, and Shane Simpson, legal practitioner.

The Board raises funds, and identifies projects consistent with the aims of the organization. In view of the limited resources available to the Foundation in the first few years of its establishment phase, the Board decided that support for improving aspects of Indigenous health was an urgent priority, and that in particular it would endeavor to facilitate schemes or projects of benefit to Aboriginal health and welfare which have potential for wider application.

### East Arnhem Healing Centre: Yirrkala

#### PROPOSAL

Members of the community at Yirrkala approached the Foundation to visit and review the urgent need to expand the care available to Yolngu families in distress. They proposed a healing centre which could attend to the problems of family breakdown, youth addictions and alienations, women's stress and well being, and in addition offer a centre to which professional teams and individuals could visit, service, and train locals in techniques now not available- such as acupuncture for injury recovery, and deep massage for muscular problems and stress. The proposed Centre would incorporate Yolngu healing techniques through the employment of several Yolngu natural health specialists- and offer areas for traditional massage, steaming, and counseling.

As it was acknowledged that assistance was required in the area of counseling, particularly for youth, a separate area was envisaged for this, with an option identified of bush location camps for rehabilitation and spiritual renewal for youth in distress.

The ABF provided a seeding grant of \$20,000 for Dhanbul Council to commission a feasibility study for the Centre prior to fundraising. This study, completed by Ambrose Solutions P/L, Darwin in May 2007, indicates the Centre has potential for success as a combined social welfare/business initiative and, providing it receives expected support from currently available Government initiatives in Indigenous health, and Medicare backing, it could be self-supporting within a few years of establishment.

#### IMMEDIATE GOAL

The Aboriginal Benefits Foundation is now embarking on a drive for funds in order to establish the financial support for this project. In order to respond to the health needs of Yirrkala and surrounding areas with the immediacy required, the Foundation is now calling for donations. A series of art auctions and events is planned in several states over the next 12 months with the goal of a health war chest of \$1,000,000.

#### HOW CAN YOU HELP?

ART is the single most successful business activity in Aboriginal communities. Amongst collectors, dealers, and people who respond and love Indigenous creativity, many have also felt the guilt and frustration of the current heavily publicised crisis and the resulting ‘National Intervention’. While it is of great concern to all, those who sensitively gaze at the beautiful paintings on their walls are left wondering what they can possibly do about it. The refrain “How can we help” is heard from many who are acutely sensitive to the daily distress of the artists and families concerned.

The ABF offers a means by which art collecting individuals and corporations can assist Indigenous Health and well-being. The proposed Yirrkala Healing Centre is one locally driven initiative that is worthy of our support. Others will follow.

The Aboriginal Benefits Foundation Limited is a charitable fund and a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR). As such, the ABF and all donations to it are income tax exempt under:

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- Subdivision 50-B and item 2 section 30-15 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 and
- Division 176 of A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999

Committee’s are currently being established in each State. If you would like to:

- **Donate**
- **Give an Artwork**
- **Make a Bequest or**
- **Volunteer assistance to the Auction committees.**
- **or just find out more**

CONTACT:

The Secretary  
Aboriginal Benefits Foundation  
0425233447

The Foundation Secretary, Jennifer Isaacs AM, will speak and be available for questions during the talks session of the Lawson~Menzies Aboriginal Art viewings at 1.00pm on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> November at 1 Darling Street, South Yarra, Melbourne and Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> of November at 12 Todman Avenue, Kensington, Sydney. Please come and participate in this seminal event.

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