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# MONTHS IN REVIEW

## MARCH-APRIL

Compiled by Kate Bonser

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**03/03** The Perth Noongar Tent Embassy on Matagarup (or Heirisson Island) establishes up a 'refugee camp' to take in those displaced by the planned closure of 150 Aboriginal Communities by the Western Australian ('WA') Government.

**04/03** The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service ('NATSILS') is denied a portion of the \$680 million awarded to 964 organisations under the Federal Governments 'Indigenous Advancement Strategy'.

**10/03** Prime Minister Tony Abbott sparks outrage, commenting that the government cannot be expected to subsidise the 'lifestyle choice' to live in the remote communities targeted for closure under the WA Governments plans.

**13/03** The Federal Government extends funding for more than 100 Aboriginal community controlled health organisations for another three years, following the announcement of \$1.4 billion in funding.

**16/03** Federal Environment Minister Greg Hunt, in a joint commitment with the Queensland Government, says the dumping of dredge spoil in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park will be completely banned under new draft legislation.

**19/03** Held alongside 'Close the Gap Day', thousands of protestors across the country rally in a national day of action against the Barnett Government's proposal to close up to 150 remote Aboriginal communities in WA.

**20/03** In an effort to place 20 000 Indigenous Australians in work by 2020, the Federal Government announce that they will offer businesses that employ Indigenous people a 'financial incentive of \$10 000 per employee for 26 weeks of training'.

**26/03** In a widely welcomed move, the Federal Government announce the reinstatement of \$25.5 million worth of cuts to Indigenous legal services.

**26/03** The North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance ('NAILSMA') based in Darwin, NT announces it has been denied funding under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy.

**30/03** A war memorial dedicated to fallen Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander servicemen and women is unveiled near the Anzac Memorial in Sydney's Hyde Park.

**31/03** The NSW Aboriginal Land Council returns the title deed of a number of properties to 17 Local Aboriginal Land Councils in the state's north west region, securing land for the benefit of their own communities.

**01/04** The Federal Court recognises Native Title for the Gangalidda and Garawa peoples in Burketown, Queensland. The determination—15 years in the making—is for about 9350 square kilometres of land and waters in the Gulf of Carpentaria (far north-western Queensland).

**01/04** The Supreme Court rules against a WA Government committee who deregistered a Port Hedland Aboriginal sacred site. The test case opens to the door to a class action by Traditional Owners.

**09/04** Warren Mundine, the Chair of the Prime Minister's Indigenous Advisory Council, calls for the establishment of a national database of Aboriginal people. Mr Mundine says such a database would help overcome allegations of corruption and fraud.

**14/04** An alternative proposal for constitutional recognition is put forward by Noel Pearson, recommending a declaration in a separate document acknowledging the country's Indigenous history and heritage. The proposal would work in conjunction with a referendum to remove discriminatory provisions within the Constitution; and an amendment to allow the formation of a national Indigenous advisory body that would give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples 'a voice in the legislative process.'

**15/04** The 24<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the tabling of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody report is observed.

**20/04** Prof Megan Davis is elected Chair of the fourteenth session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues ('UNPFII'), held in New York from 20 April to 1 May.

**22/04** The Kimberley Land Council takes their concerns over the closure of remote communities in WA to indigenous delegates at the UNPFII.