

# Toowoomba First Nations Allies

Newsletter No. 2

August 2024

**Next Meeting:** 10:30am on Sunday, 18 August 2024  
Social Justice Commission - 123 Neil Street, Toowoomba

## Firelore

Recently, a number of people from our group joined an interested gathering of landholders, educators, environmentalists, and Rural Fire Brigade members at Amaroo Environmental Education Centre. The gathering was arranged to learn about and experience cultural burning practices under the guidance of Robbie Williams. Through his business called Firelore, Robbie educates about cultural burning practices and provides fire services to landholders and communities.

Robbie's talk was both informative and inspirational, demonstrating how cool burning can be used to heal the impact of many years of land



degradation, and help to protect the land from the effects of bushfire,

drought, flood, and weed infestation. He presented it as a way for the whole community to work together to achieve a positive result for everyone.

He showed how fire can be used as a constructive and healing tool, rather than being feared as a destructive force. The three main principles of cool burning that differentiate it from damaging fire or from hazard reduction burning were:

1. The flames should not reach the canopy;
2. The soil should not be cooked. It should be cool to the touch just moments after burning; and
3. It should be slow-moving to allow animals and insects time to get out of the way.

Amaroo Environmental Education Centre has a parcel of land adjoining their main facility which is in a parlous state, consisting of many weeds,



scraggly saplings, and a few large trees in relatively poor condition. The goal is to try to restore this area to health. It has been divided into 5 separate sections and over a period of five years, each section will be progressively burned using

the cool burning techniques as demonstrated by Robbie. We had the opportunity to watch the first section being burned. Next year, that section will be burned again, and the second section will be added to the

project. Over the period of years, people will be able to observe the restorative effects and how they work overtime.

Cool burning is not a quick fix. The damage has been done over many years and it will take many years for that damage to be undone. It is a tool that was used for millennia by the original inhabitants of this land and it is one that can and must be used again.

- Thanks to Majella Albion for this contribution

## **Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry Update**

1 July 2024 marked the start of the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry's search for truth across Queensland. The Queensland Government's website states:

Truth will allow Queenslanders to heal and move forward together, with respect. The Inquiry acts independently and will listen and hear the voices of those who haven't been heard before in history as the Inquiry searches for and shares Queensland's history.

Members will conduct inquiries into the impacts of colonisation on Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and document what they discover. They will empower Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples to share their stories in a trauma-informed and culturally appropriate way.

It is hoped that the Inquiry will build awareness and understanding across the state and make recommendations to the Queensland Government. The Inquiry will run for three years from 1 July 2024, unless extended.

"The Inquiry was established under the Path to Treaty Act 2023. The *Path to Treaty Act 2023* (Act) was passed in State Parliament in May 2023 and became law upon proclamation on 26 April 2024. This historic Act is the first of its kind in Queensland, co-designed between the Interim Truth and Treaty Body and the Queensland Government."

## **First Nations and the Olympics**

Especially topical, it is great to hear of the many fabulous Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander athletes taking part in the ongoing Paris Olympics.

Among them, Kokatha, Naghiralgal, Duaureb-Meriam basketball legend Patty Mills is leading the Australian men's basketball team as they attempt to defend their incredible bronze medal won in Tokyo. The Boomers are currently second in their pool and are fighting to secure a spot in the quarterfinals.



There are ten other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander athletes competing across eight sports in the Paris Olympics.

For other athletes and their events/schedule, please refer to the below article:

<https://nit.com.au/23-07-2024/12656/first-nations-athletes-in-paris-the-full-list-of-indigenous-stars-going-for-gold-at-the-2024-summer-olympics>

## Upcoming Dates

Date	Event
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August 18	<p><b>August Meeting</b>  10:30 am – 12:00 pm  Catholic Social Justice Commission Office, 123 Neil Street, Toowoomba</p> <p>Our August monthly meeting</p>
August 31	<p><b>The Visitors</b>  8:00pm – 10:00pm  Empire Theatres, 54-56 Neil Street, Toowoomba</p> <p>Group booking to see “The Visitors” at the Empire. Contact Phil Armit <a href="mailto:parmit@optusnet.com.au">parmit@optusnet.com.au</a> for details. See Empire Theatre website for details.</p>

### Some Useful Links

How to be a genuine ally - <https://www.yarn.com.au/blogs/yarn-in-the-community/how-to-be-a-genuine-indigenous-ally>

Our Website - <https://tfna.asn.au>

Our Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1036130354262912>

Our Email - [info@tfna.asn.au](mailto:info@tfna.asn.au)

### About TFNA

Toowoomba First Nations Allies (TFNA) is a local group dedicated to becoming better informed regarding First Nations matters and strengthening community relationships as we undertake truth-telling towards a closer and more cohesive community.