

Australian Indigenous Ministries



Strong Aboriginal Churches



Another Leader Gone - Jocelyn McCartney of Barunga

Leaders are aging and passing away...so few workers are left to encourage the believers and help them grow. The needs are vast across the AIM work. Please pray that God will raise up servant-hearted, godly Aboriginal believers willing to be disciplined and trained in leadership, along with evangelical servants willing to sit alongside and help develop Strong Aboriginal Churches.



Loss of Another Leader

Faithful, steadfast, reliable, strong in faith, quiet - never pushing herself forward, always forgiving. These are just some of the ways *Jocelyn McCartney* is being remembered following her death on 23rd April. She was part of the life of the AIM Church in Barunga and long recognised as a leader through her steadfast and faithful walk with Jesus her Lord. For decades she was there, beginning with attending Sunday School with *Max and Heather Schenk*, the first resident missionaries there in the early 1970's.

She knew tragedy and heartbreak in her life. Among the sorrow was the loss of a daughter in the early 1990's. While visiting Barunga at Easter time Jocelyn asked if I would go talk to her daughter whose health was failing. She was living in a care hostel in Katherine and Jocelyn was concerned about whether she was a Christian. I offered to drive Jocelyn into town so *she* could share God's message with her. What a joy for Jocelyn to see her daughter come to faith in Christ that Good Friday! A few weeks later her daughter was face to face with her Saviour. Jocelyn grieved with dignity through her faith and the assurance that her daughter was safe in the arms of Jesus.

For a time, physical abuse was suffered by Jocelyn but this only strengthened her faith and trust in Jesus. She was left very weak and troubled in one leg, but she continued to witness and serve Jesus in various ways in the Church and Community.

Her friend and SIL worker *Margaret Mickan* shared that '*Jocelyn got involved in the Kriol Bible translation work and beginning in 1992 took part in the Certificate III in Translating for the Kriol team. She went on to attend all the CIT training sessions and graduated in May 2001 at Barunga after being recognized with the other eight graduates during the Katherine Christian Convention.*

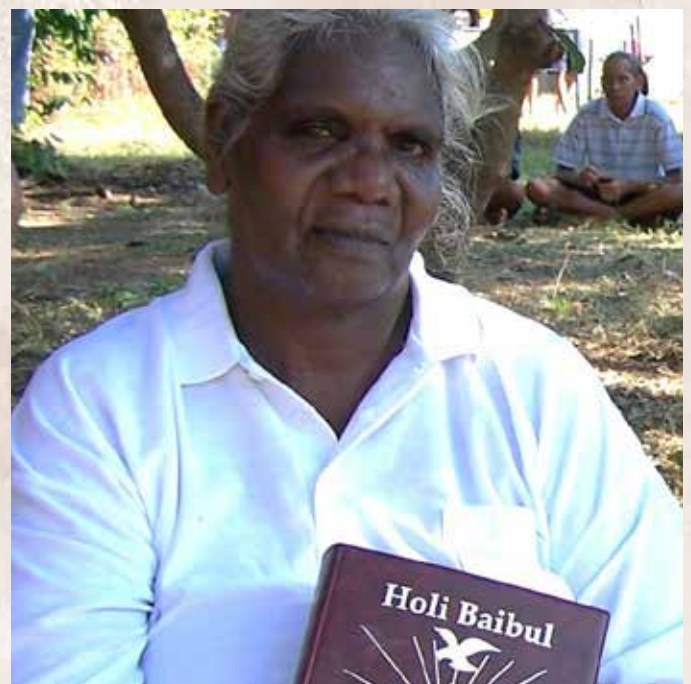
She took part in a combined languages

workshop on Psalms in Darwin. There were also many Old Testament translating workshops attended, and she assisted with the checking of translation with consultants where the texts were approved for publication.

She was an active and valued member of the Kriol translation team, attending a Bible storytelling workshop in 2010, helping choose illustrations for the Kriol Bible and recording Kriol OT Scriptures.' Jocelyn loved to sing praises in her Kriol language and helped translate some of the songs.

Even when her mobility was failing she did her utmost to get to the church to help and support in services as much as possible. The faithfulness in her Christian walk saw her recognised as a leader not only in Barunga but further afield as well. She had a deep appreciation for all the AIM people who had served or regularly visited there throughout the years and always asked for any news of each one.

Please pray for her family and community in their time of sorrow. **Ask God to raise up others of such faithfulness to our Lord and His Word to be His witness in this community and surrounds.**



Aboriginal Christian Education

by *Erin Strahan*

Yn Yaama (hello) from our beautiful Kamilaroi nation. We praise God for continued opportunities to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with many in our community.

Early last year our ministry team saw *Bob & Lucy Quinn* join us from Campbelltown and then in July we were blessed further by the addition of *Manasa* and *Rhoda Bogo* from Papua New Guinea.

We continue to pray for God to raise up Christian Aboriginals to take up the mantle of leadership to serve in the local church. Until God answers those prayers, we continue to proclaim the Gospel to our local Aboriginal communities in a variety of ways using the gifts and opportunities we have available to us.

One of these opportunities that God has given us, is through the area of education. Before Erin moved to Australia from New Zealand she completed her teacher training and has a keen love to serve those who find traditional methods of education difficult. In 2015, we started a tutoring service for local Aboriginal children who were falling behind at school. In 2019 we started a Grassroots Learning Trailer programme, where we take a trailer of literacy and numeracy activities out into the community each week. Then in 2021 we developed an Education Mentoring programme, supporting students who have enrolment with a distance education provider or a partial enrolment agreement, to help them engage in their learning journey effectively.



The Strahan family

The needs we have observed over the years have been so overwhelming that we began praying about starting some kind of alternative education programme. Each step along the way, God would direct us to open a fully registered school, and we would try something not so full-on! (Sound a bit like Jonah?!).

In 2018 we pursued the idea of a NSW Board endorsed alternative education programme for 15-17 year-olds. The administrative requirements to further develop the application became too great, and again we felt strongly from the Lord that we were to open a K-12 fully registered school.

In 2024, we reconnected with the executive principal of Melos Education who has a calling and desire from the Lord for Missional Christian education, particularly in regional and remote Aboriginal communities. He too sees the need for a culturally responsive education alternative for Aboriginal families. Having had many discussions with local families we have had expressions of interest for just over 50 children – many of which have additional learning needs that have arisen directly from educational trauma (trauma caused in culturally unresponsive educational settings). The parents in most of these families have attended Sunday school, or received a meal from our community dinner run, or have had some kind of contact with our mission work over the last 20 years.

We marvel at the kindness and goodness of God to keep giving us opportunities to minister the Gospel of His grace and salvation over and over again. We are hoping that we might be able to open our new school, 'Nhuubala Yugal – Campus of Brewarrina Christian School' later this year, or possibly at the beginning of next year. Nhuubala Yugal is our local Kamilaroi language for, 'New Song'. The Lord blessed us with this name when He also brought to our attention Psalm 98. Our prayer is that students and families who become a part of our Nhuubala Yugal learning family will experience the transformation in their life that only Christ can bring, and they will be caused to sing a new, joyful, song to the Lord!

NEWSPOTS

HEALTH

At the end of April *Henry Louie* from Gilgandra went to see a specialist and was immediately sent through to Sydney. After further tests he underwent surgery on May 13 for two leaking heart valves. At the time of writing, he was recovering well and awaiting transfer to Dubbo Base Hospital for further recovery. When he awoke from the surgery he said, *'Be sure and thank everyone for their prayers.'* He was taking every opportunity to witness for His Lord at the hospital. Please continue to uphold Henry and his wife *Maria* in prayer as he recovers and regains his strength.

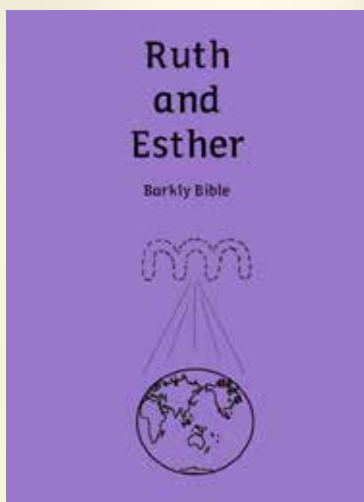


We give thanks that *Fay Chambers* was finally able to have her surgery. All has gone well and she able to attend the Ladies Conference in Woorabinda.

STAY OR GO

The very heavy wet season throughout the Territory brought a lot of damage and closure to roads, especially the outback tracks to communities. This put *Richard and Sue Davies* in a holding pattern regarding their dry season visit to Canteen Creek. Then came the fuel crisis...will it be available, and if so, at what cost?

While waiting there was the joy of finally receiving the printed book of Ruth and Esther in the Barkly Bible Version. A bit later than usual, but at last the decision was made to head north from Cootamundra on May 22nd.



AWARD

Congratulations to Kathy (*Naden*) Bird from Gilgandra for receiving the 'Senior Citizen of the Year' award from the Mayor. In his address he shared the following:

She is recognised as a highly respected elder still active in serving others. She is secretary of Yindymarra Ladies Inc., and a long-standing member of the Gilgandra Aboriginal Land Council.

Kathy serves as secretary and an elder of the Gilgandra AIM Church, offering steady leadership and strong faith, and supports those facing difficulties. She also supports the Christian Bookshop Committee and the Combined Churches of Gilgandra.

As a board member of the Jack Towney Aged Care Hostel, Kathy coordinates the craft group and is known for her exceptional cooking. Despite her own age, she also provides full time care for her older sister *Phyllis Morgan*.

Kathy was humbled by the award and in part, replied, *'With God's help, I'm going to keep doing what I'm doing.'*



DUBBO

David Cox gave his last message as pastor of the Dubbo Christian Family Church on May 31st. This brings to a close 25 years of service and always being careful to rightly divide the Word of Truth. He has been faithfully supported by his wife *Rose (Naden)*.

Please pray for the congregation as they seek God's guidance of who He would now have to fill the role of pastor.

DEATHS

The church family has been saddened by the death of *Pammie*, the youngest daughter of church leader *Michael Jones*. She was married to *Jimmy Brodie* who is one of the younger leaders in the church. Please pray for God's comfort and strength for all her family as they adjust to this loss. Please pray that the Christians will support one another and step up in sharing the load at the various meetings.

This loss has affected not only the church, but also the Indigenous Language and Culture program *Karen Dixon* is heading up at the school. *Annie Morrison* who has been her Language Assistant was sister to Pammie so has not been available for work since that death.



Michael and Pammie (used with permission)

Deb McKerrell passed away April 12th following complications from a second back surgery. She and her husband *Bob* spent 10 dry seasons travelling in the Territory and conducting children's meetings in various places. They were always keen to have extended time in Elliott and Alice Springs to carry out a more extensive ministry.

We look back with thankfulness for her ministry, friendship and fellowship shared over the years. The sympathy of the AIM family is extended to Bob and their family.

EPENARRA EASTER CONVENTION

Richard Davies shared this news of the convention: We spoke with people from Canteen Creek who travelled the 60 kms to Epenarra for the Easter weekend. The feedback was that it was a great time of sharing God's story, and that they shared paintings and Bible passages. The children did action songs. Apparently nearly the whole Canteen Creek community went.

When *Jono Wright*, who had been asked to give the Easter message, had to pull out for medical reasons, *Rodney Robertson* from the Tennant Creek AIM Church spoke. He had felt God had called him to travel out to Epenarra to share God's Word. To get there, he had to go north from Tennant Creek to 3 Ways, then east along the Barkly Hwy to Barkly Homestead, then south along a fire trail to get to Epenarra – a 672 km round trip.

Brenda (a CC church leader) said there wasn't a white fella anywhere to be seen and that was music to our ears!

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Rivers Convention

The following comes from updates sent from *Erin Strahan* (Moree). She and husband *Paul* were faithful servants with *Isaac (Ike) Gordon* and the team during the preparation and participation in the Convention:

Praise God for the unity, strength and bold proclamation of the gospel during the Rivers Convention. The team saw God deepening relationships, encouraging Christians in remote communities and Indigenous leaders being built up from continued discipleship.

The 2026 Convention began with Easter weekend meetings in **Brewarrina**. It was a very special time highlighted with five baptisms and a communion service down at the river.

Enngonia, 194 kms NW of Bre, was the next stop. The team was thrilled to see the biggest turn out of local people to the gospel meetings yet! The reality for the people here...they only get to meet with Christians once a year. There is no scripture in the school, no holiday programs/kids club, not even a monthly church service. There is no spiritual input except the yearly visit of the Convention.

The smallest community visited by the team was next. **Weilmoringle** has a population listed as less than 100. There are only 4 students at the primary school – those of high school age must go to boarding school.

It is believed this was the last known community in the area to carry out witchcraft practices. Please pray that the strongholds of the enemy would be



broken and that people would be set free to follow and worship Jesus. There is much division in this tiny community, but the team was welcomed with open arms by the Byno sisters, *Aunty Josie* and *Aunty Vera* who are the only Christians here at this time. Despite this, they radiate real joy and delight about how much they love their Saviour.

The first night the team setup at the reserve and had dinner and outreach where Paul shared the Gospel. There was a kid's programme as well. The next morning there was prayer time, then morning ministry time followed by a shared lunch. It was encouraging to have the Scripture Union group joining the team here.

We (Paul and Erin) were only in Weilmoringle for a day as we needed to travel back to Moree for the funeral of a young suicide victim. As everyone else left Weilmoringle and headed for **Goodooga**, Ike Gordon had to head back to Brewarrina to conduct a funeral. He then rejoined the team at Goodooga.

On a vacant block in the centre of **Lightning Ridge** is where the outreach meetings are held. During both meetings many people drove up and parked, had a listen and then drove off. The Scripture Union team handed out invites to the kid's programs and a few families came along. Please pray for a local guy, *Jarod*. He's not a Christian but is seeking spirituality in his life.

Tuesday morning the team had prayer and then a morning ministry time under the shade of the trees in the caravan park. The owners were so glad to see the team arrive as they had had 130 cancellations over the last few weeks due to the fuel situation.

On Wednesday morning the Scripture Union team headed home, and others had to leave due to a death



Paul and Erin with the Byno sisters



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The requested amount of \$20 per year helps fund the printing and posting of this quarterly magazine.

Women @ Woorabinda

by *Sandy Fonmosa (Rockhampton)*

The 2026 Queensland AIM Ladies Conference was held at Woorabinda from May 1-3. The theme for the gathering this year was 'Women of God'. There were women attending from Brisbane, Cherbourg, Gladstone, Rockhampton, and Woorabinda. We enjoyed a fellowship dinner together on Friday night, followed by a time of praise and singing before heading to the accommodation facility. It is set on a property about 13 kilometres out from the community and was a lovely, quiet place of rest.

On Saturday we gathered to share testimonies and participated in a Bible trivia segment. *Lenore Blair* did an excellent job leading all the meetings and keeping us informed about the daily program. It was also good to have her share from God's Word. *Gwennie Mick* also spoke to us and delivered an encouraging and informative message from Ruth 1:16 on 'Women of God'. The meeting was concluded with additional praise and singing.

That evening we shared another fellowship dinner. This was accompanied by singing around an open fire. The weekend together concluded with a Sunday morning worship service with the locals.

I am confident the ladies returned to their homes feeling refreshed and strengthened in Christ Jesus through the fellowship experienced over the weekend. A heartfelt thank you to the ladies of Woorabinda for their hard work, as well as to the caterers for the wonderful food that contributed to the success of the weekend. We look forward to gathering in Cherbourg in 2027, God willing.



Gwennie



Lenore



Fay Chambers from Brisbane with Jandalyn and Lesley from Rocky and friends