



JOURNAL OF INDIGENOUS POLICY
ISSN 1448-4463
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JOURNAL OF INDIGENOUS POLICY

Issue 11

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RECONNECTING GOVERNMENT AND ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE



Issue 11

This Issue may be cited as:
Journal of Indigenous Policy - Issue 11
Reconnecting Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People
Published March 2011

ISSN 1448-4463

Cover painting:

Artist: Elaine RUSSELL (Gamilaroi)

Title: *Growing up Murrin Bridge Series (Setting Rabbit Traps to Catch Possums)*

Medium: Synthetic Polymer Paint on canvas

Size: 80cm x 100cm

Year: 2006

Statement: Elaine was born at Tingha, meaning 'apple tree', in northern NSW in 1941. The local Aboriginal community know this town as Nuccrimla. Elaine's early life was spent on the mission at Murrin Bridge, near Lake Cargelligo, on the Lachlan River. When Elaine was about 12 years old she entered a local art competition, winning the first prize of a trip to the Philippines. Due to the government policy at the time of taking fair skinned children away from their parents Elaine's mother refused to allow her to go. Elaine can remember children just 'disappearing' from the mission - never to be seen again. After marrying at Purfleet, Elaine moved to Sydney where she has lived for the past 32 years. Having already achieved a Certificate in Catering and Nutritional Management and Small Business Management from the Eora Centre in Redfern, Elaine enrolled in 1993 in the Certificate of Visual Arts course realising a lifelong ambition to be a painter. Since this time, Elaine has completed a number of commissions and in 1993 exhibited in 'sayin' something' at Boomalli, where she is an artist member. In 1994, Elaine was one of four women artists invited to participate in 'Narratives' at Boomalli and also exhibited in the Open Invitation Craft Exhibition, Untitled?: Aboriginal Art in New South Wales and Urban Artyfacts. In September of 1994 Elaine was awarded the prestigious Museum and Art Gallery Award at the National Aboriginal Art Award in Darwin.

This painting is hanging in the National Gallery of Australia and the image was also included by Australia Post in the *Indigenous Culture Series* released in April 2009 and issued as a \$1.40 stamp.

Cover design and layout by Francisco Fisher.

Printing by Sydney University Press.