



This newsletter will be a team effort this year. Peter Russell is back. After bidding you all goodbye last year here I am again as a volunteer, putting the newsletter together. Enough said. I think we would all rather hear from our new Covenanting Coordinator. . . .

Dear Friends,

As a Church we have agreed on an official covenant between the Uniting Church in Australia and the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress. This is our legal position but what does it mean in practice for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members of the Church at the grass-roots?

I am trying to develop a relationship type of covenant. I am trying to challenge people to be friends with Aboriginal people. This is a lot more challenging than just talking about the Covenant.

So what does friendship mean? When we are friends with someone, we love and respect each other even if we are quite different and we don't understand each other. We are still friends even though we don't agree with what each other says or believes. We need to journey into friendship – accepting people for who they are.

Jesus commanded us to be friends, to love one another as God loves us. We need to imitate Christ in this respect.

However, this is something we often struggle with. We find it difficult to step out of our comfort zone to become friends with people who are different. So where do we start?

We need to get inside ourselves and change our attitudes to people who are different, whether they are Aboriginal or refugees even if there are no such people in your local area.

Your relationship with God as expressed through the Trinity is the key to building loving relationships with those who are different. The love we are able share comes from God's love for us and we have Christ's example to follow, but we need the Spirit to guide us on our way.

Loving one another means forgiving..., trusting..., sacrificing...; it means opening our hearts to others; it means transforming your attitudes toward others. This can happen even if you never have the privilege of meeting an Aboriginal person. Not having Aboriginal people living near you is no excuse for not building loving relationships with Aboriginal people. You can inform yourself of the truth rather than media spin, and what you read in the papers is mostly that, spin. It's what inside your heart that counts.

Often, as Christians, we choose who we want to love and be part of our lives. The challenge is to love everybody unconditionally. On Reconciliation Sunday we think of how we might express our love for our Aboriginal brothers and sisters in Christ, especially members of the Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress.

Grace and Peace,  
Ken

**Rev Ken Sumner** is the National Chairperson of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, State Resource Minister for the Congress in South Australia and Covenanting Coordinator for the Presbytery and Synod of South Australia. He is a Ngarrindjeri man from the lower Murray and Coorong in SA. This is a part of Ken's message for Reconciliation Sunday, the full text appearing in the worship resources for that day. See below.



## Reconciliation Sunday Worship Resources

It was agreed that the Presbytery establish Reconciliation Sunday in Reconciliation Week (27 May to 3 June) annually, to be celebrated across the Church, and request Church Councils to include this day in their worship calendars.

This year Reconciliation Sunday falls on 30 May which is Trinity Sunday. We have prepared the resources with this theme of the Trinity in mind to encourage congregations not to neglect this event. If it becomes all too hard we suggest that churches might consider moving the celebration of Reconciliation Sunday to the following week, or using the resources during NAIDOC Week.

This is the fourth year that we have prepared worship resources for use on Reconciliation Sunday. Some of the resources we produced in previous years have been used to produce this resource. Please refer to these resources for additional information. They may be downloaded from the Mission Resourcing Network Website. Go to Covenanting and click on Reconciliation Sunday.

<http://mrn.sa.uca.org.au/covenanting/reconciliation-sunday.html>

Please feel free to use all or part of these resources in planning worship for this day or they may be used later during NAIDOC week celebrations if this fits in better with your worship planning.

The resources include:

1. A complete order of service
2. Suggested hymns and a children's address
3. Some material for consideration when sermon writing
4. General information on the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and Covenanting
5. Other Resources for Parents and Playgroups

Rev Ken Sumner, Dr Marelle Harisun, Peter Russell, Andrew Clarke, Dr Di Russell

## Generation One

Generation One is a new non-partisan movement to see the end to Indigenous disadvantage. While we hope that most of the efforts of Uniting Church people will be through and for the Congress, there must be an all out effort by all Australians and the issue has to be tackled on multiple fronts. Please have a look. . . .

<http://www.generationone.org.au/about>

Part of the awareness campaign for generationone, this ad appeared in the newspapers in March. It says "Chance of having a real job - 73% 54%. These statistics are based on Australian bureau of statistics data.

The conclusions you might draw are very clear. All things being equal the Aboriginal girl would have significantly less chance of getting the job. As mentioned in the book, *Faith in a hyphen*, Brett Furner<sup>1</sup> relates one personal story of this type of discrimination. "As a white, Anglo-Saxon, sixth-generation Australian, I know that, as a member of the dominating cultural group in this country; I have a tendency to universalize my own life situations, experiences and assumptions. I render them normative. Those values taken from my own cultural group become the standard experience of life in Australia. To my own shame I have to admit that I also initially felt resentful regarding the 'preferential treatment' received by Bobbie; at the time, I also considered the support which he was given to be inappropriate and unnecessary. Along with most – if not all – of my white European workmates, I was operating out of the assumptions of a cultural worldview that gave uncritical acquiescence to the commonly held belief that affirmed Australia as the land of the 'fair go'."

Furner goes on to talk about our reluctance as individuals and as a nation to acknowledge that we have not given Aboriginal people a fair go and are still not doing so. Though this may now be changing our dis-

JOURNEY OF HEALING ASSOCIATION (SA) INC  
<http://sajohauspics.org.au>

# NATIONAL SORRY DAY

STOLEN GENERATIONS TRACK HOME  
10:30AM TO 2:30PM

WARRIRKUTTIINYA 'RESPECTING' the STOLEN GENERATIONS WODLIANNI COMING HOME JOURNEY OF HEALING

- Kaurna Warrirkuttiinya Welcome
- Learn about Stolen Generations
- Wodlianni – Coming Home Stories
- Guest speakers & music entertainment
- Share a free BBQ, salad and drinks
- SA Linkup will be providing assistance & support on the day

- Come to join in Kaurna Warrirkuttiinya: Respecting the Stolen Generations
- Support 'Sevens '09' for Reconciliation
- Aboriginal Heritage and Culture
- Continue weaving across the nations
- Community Displays & Information, including ANiTA SA & other stalls

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: JOHN BROWNE 0431 234 561

**WEDNESDAY 26 MAY 2010**  
**TARNDANYANGGA [VICTORIA SQUARE]**

JOURNEY OF HEALING ASSOCIATION (SA) INC  
ADELAIDE UNIVERSITY  
AFTER SA  
We acknowledge the Kaurna People as the Traditional Owners of this Land



remembering is part of a forgetfulness of Aboriginal history and could be seen as “unacknowledged sin”. It is perhaps a sin of our white culture and we are all caught up in it, like it or not.

1. ‘An/Other Australian Theology’ by Brett Furner in Clive Pearson (ed) *Faith in a Hyphen: Cross cultural Theologies from Down Under*, Open Book 2004, pages 110-110 (used with permission) For the full story also quoted in Reconciliation Sunday Worship Resources 2008 <http://mrn.sa.uca.org.au/covenanting/reconciliation-sunday.html>

Picture Source: [http://adsoftheworld.com/media/print/generationone\\_girls](http://adsoftheworld.com/media/print/generationone_girls)

## A Reconciliation Week Event – not to be missed!



***Ever wondered what Aboriginal people really think and feel?  
Or why things are not getting better for them since the PM's apology two years ago?  
Here's a unique chance to experience, with absolute clarity, what it means to honour Aboriginal culture.***

A workshop, round the campfire at Colebrook Reconciliation Park, Eden Hills, on the theme:

### **TO HONOUR IS TO VALUE**

Presented by Michael Hunter Coughlan, whose mother grew up at Colebrook.

**Saturday 29 May, starting with a cuppa at 9:30 am.**

Following the workshop, at 12:00 pm, Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue and Grace Soper of Colebrook Home will raise the Aboriginal flag while Dr Andrew Southcott, MP, and Mike Leane of Eden Hills will raise the Australian flag on the new flag-poles at the Colebrook site, marking National Reconciliation Week. And then the informal story-sharing can continue with hot soup and sausages, round the fire.

All welcome. A Reconciliation Week event!

## Kalparrin News

Kalparrin is a Ngarrindjeri word meaning “helping with a heavy load”.

Our strength comes from our identity and our heritage – Ngarrindjeri culture and Christian lifestyle.



Kalparrin Community Inc. is an Aboriginal Community controlled organisation set up in 1975 by a group of Elders who were looking for something better in their lives besides alcohol and other drugs.

Kalparrin Community is situated on a property located 8 km east of Murray Bridge on the Karoonda road.

### **Housing Issue for Aboriginal communities**

The most recent meeting of the Covenanting Committee was held at this community which is one of three centres of the Congress in SA. At this meeting Victor Wilson spoke about the community's concerns over changes to the management of

Aboriginal Housing introduced by the government (in relation to the NTEI) intending to lease housing and management to the SA Housing Office in Murray Bridge. “This agreement calls for us all to sign off and hand over our community housing for a period of forty (40) years for an unspecified benefit.” Communities are very angry and upset. Meetings of communities to discuss these changes and develop a unified state-wide position were planned for on May 17 in Port Augusta.

### **Prayer Meetings**

Uncle Victor spoke about a number of other issues, including support for a Treaty. He said that all issues are connected; housing, health, employment, law... They all affect the wellbeing of Aboriginal people.

Victor also reported that there is a prayer meeting at Kalparrin every Wednesday night, with a recent visit by the Rev Ernest Sorensen and members of the Murray Bridge Uniting Church Council being very positive.

The community has an excellent website. Please explore: <http://www.kalparrin.com/>

Report from Peter Russell

## Salisbury Congress News

### Bus and volunteer drivers needed

The Congress Congregation which meets at Salisbury North has many members who have no access to transport and live a significant distance from the church. Currently Congress runs two 12 seater buses (and borrows a third when available) on Sunday mornings.

Another bus that was able to be regularly available on Sundays would be really helpful. Also we are seeking volunteers who would be willing to assist with driving on Sundays (12 seater buses can be driven with a normal drivers licence).

Normally we begin picking up people about 8.45am, have the service at 11.30am followed by lunch and have taken everyone back home by about 4pm. *Drivers need just the right mix of caring, patience, flexibility, time awareness and cross-cultural sensitivity.*

*If you are interested in helping or being rostered to drive on an occasional or regular basis that suits you and us please contact Dean on 0409090824. Thanks.*

### Strathalbyn Visit

On Wednesday May 12<sup>th</sup>, a group of folk from Adelaide Congress visited Strathalbyn. Some of our members had been invited to sing or speak at a meeting of Lutheran Fellowships from around the Strathalbyn and Mount Barker area, so our Bible Study group decided we would all go to lend moral support. When the word got out other church members also joined in.

When Sue Eckert, who has been a great supporter of Congress over some years (catering for Family Camp, KCO and SAYCO), found out we were coming to Strathalbyn she invited us all out to her place for lunch, on a farm our near Langhorne Creek (see photo). Mai Wiru!



Afterwards we gathered at the Lutheran Church Hall where Colleen Bradtke and Edmund Bilney from the Lutheran's Aboriginal Ministry SA group shared. Diane Thomas told a Bible story about Ruth, and Nelson Varcoe and a group of Anangu women from our church sang.

After the meeting we all had lovely country afternoon tea provided by the fellowship groups. One of our buses called in at the Goodwill Store at Mt Barker and had a great time buying lots of second hand clothes just when the store was supposed to be closing. Heading for home, everyone seemed happy to have had a good day.

### A busy day at Salisbury Uniting Church and Murray Bridge Lutheran

On Sunday May 16<sup>th</sup>, our Congregation joined with the combined congregations at Salisbury Uniting Church for a special service. We appreciated the fellowship and hospitality of the Salisbury Uniting Church folk. That afternoon, Edmund Bilney was being ordained in the Lutheran Church at Murray Bridge so most of our people took off from Salisbury Uniting and made dash up the freeway to be present and celebrate this important occasion with Edmund. Another fantastic day!

After prayerful consideration Dean Whittaker has decided to take six months leave in the second half of this year. Dean's wife Penny has accepted a position helping to establish a Christian School in the Mäpuru Community in north-east Arnhem Land.

Report from Dean Whittaker

## Port Augusta Congress News and Tjinatjunanyi

### Manse rebuilding begins at last

Finally, about 18 months since the fire that destroyed the Port Augusta Congress manse, work has started on rebuilding it from the ground up. This reminds us that after many weeks in a local motel, the Matthews family have been living in rented accommodation that has been on the market all the time they have been tenants, and they face more of this until the new manse is completed. This has put a considerable strain on the family. Despite this, and the fact that government funding for the Tjinatjunanyi program was stopped at the end of term 1, 2009 because 'Congress had been overpaid' for their services, the work of Congress in Port Augusta has continued unabated.

### Tjinatjunanyi Update

Congress staff and volunteers have continued to support the students who had been attending the Tjinatjunanyi program before its cessation. Last year Uncle Reggie and Auntie Dawn spent a lot of time visiting the former students and their families trying to encourage them to access other alternative educational programs run by ICAN, all to no avail. The students refused to go somewhere they did not feel comfortable. A new ICAN program was devised this year and Uncle Reggie went to work for DECS to help support it as his funding through Uniting Foundation had come to an end. A few students attend this alternative program but not the students who had been attending the Tjinatjunanyi program. This meant that the former Tjinatjunanyi students were 'at a loose end' and, as a result, even with support from Congress, many of them have again become involved in the justice system. This means that the need is still there to provide an appropriate educational program for the seriously disengaged Aboriginal young people in Port Augusta.

Two months ago there was some good news. Having considered all the documentation about the Tjinatjunanyi program and how monies received were expended, DECS have officially said that all the expenditure was legitimate and they will not be seeking recompense of any of the 'overpayment'. The letter also invited Congress to apply to become a preferred provider of alternative programs. However, it took about six weeks for Congress to receive the information about how to apply for this. In that time Congress heard UnitingCare Port Pirie had received funding to run a program that sounds as if it should cater for Tjinatjunanyi type students, but there had been no consultation with Congress about what makes such programs work for really disengaged students. Also, other goal posts have been moved. The whole process of applying to become a preferred provider has changed and this will make it difficult for Congress to be successful.

However, Congress has begun looking at alternative ways of helping the former Tjinatjunanyi students, without having to rely on DECS funding, and doing so with some success. Gulf Getaways, a tourist operator in Port Augusta, likes to provide Indigenous cultural input for their local gulf and Flinders Ranges tours (<http://www.gulfgetaways.com.au/site.cfm?/gulfgetaways/6/>).

They have asked Congress people in the past and been pleased with the outcomes. They have now formalised an agreement with Congress that Congress will be the sole supplier of this cultural input. Congress has been involving some of the former Tjinatjunanyi students in this, mentored by appropriate Elders. It also provides an additional income for some Congress people.

Congress is still exploring ways in which they might provide a more comprehensive program to support these young people and talking with the courts about this as the magistrates are very concerned about how much the former Tjinatjunanyi students are back to becoming involved in the justice system.

Report from Di Russell

## Education for Aboriginal students – a fair go?

### Why aren't remote Indigenous schools in the NT 'Normal Schools'?

The allocation of educational funding in the Northern Territory actively discriminates against Aboriginal students if they do not attend mainstream schools. Remote Aboriginal schools are classified differently and resourced very differently. This policy conflicts with the governments' 'Closing the Gap' commitments and dismisses the Australian idea of an 'equal go for all'. The following two case studies available for download from *The Institute for Cultural Survival* website (<http://www.culturalsurvival.org.au/>) illustrate this quite explicitly. This is institutional racism!

### Unequal Schools

"This case study compares the resources provided to two similar school communities. One school community located in Arnhemland, where students speak Aboriginal languages, the other in a regional location where the students speak English." Both are small schools. The statistics and pictures tell the story quite graphically. [http://www.culturalsurvival.org.au/docs/Case%20Study\\_Unequal%20Schools.pdf](http://www.culturalsurvival.org.au/docs/Case%20Study_Unequal%20Schools.pdf)

### Build a Future for Our Children

"This story is not just about inequality in schooling opportunity based on race. It is about governments actively and deliberately further marginalising the most alienated pupils in the Northern Territory... The discriminatory treatment of homelands schools continues. In 2009, the Rudd federal government provided \$11.4 billion for

educational infrastructure as part of its Economic Stimulus Package. While every 'normal' school across Australia received a minimum of \$200K from this program, homeland schools were unable to access these funds. Call this a fair go?? We shouldn't because it's unfair and un-Australian."

<http://www.culturalsurvival.org.au/docs/Case%20Study%20-%20Building%20a%20Future%20for%20our%20children.pdf>

### **The importance of "cultural affirmation" for Aboriginal students**

Leading Indigenous educators are critical about the way the federal government is attempting to address its 'Closing the Gap' commitments. They have criticised the federal government's draft Indigenous Education Action Plan designed to halve the gap in the literacy and numeracy performance of Indigenous and mainstream students by 2018. They say it fails to recognise the crucial importance of cultural pride to success at school. Renowned Indigenous educational leader, Chris Sarra, argues that the plan "appears to be a subset of an assimilation policy where things are done TO Aboriginal communities to make them more like mainstream society, not WITH and this is disturbing... Such assumptions can only result in more of the same."

The full text of the article from which these snippets were taken can be found at:

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/aboriginal-pupils-in-sharp-focus-in-education-plan-20100511-uuun.html>

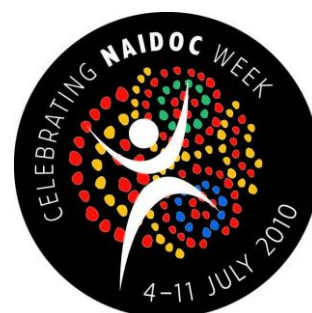
## **National Congress of Australia's First Peoples**

Since the demise of ATSIC, this is the second attempt by governments to get a representative consultative body together. While this body has been criticised on a number of fronts and while it is not elected by Aboriginal people it deserves some support. Notably, there are two South Australian Directors, Professor Peter Buckskin and Mr Klynton Wanganeen. [http://www.hreoc.gov.au/about/media/media\\_releases/2010/41\\_10.html](http://www.hreoc.gov.au/about/media/media_releases/2010/41_10.html)

## **NAIDOC Week**

Celebrate NAIDOC Week 4 – 11 July 2010. If your church misses out on celebrating Reconciliation Sunday then the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 2010 is an alternative. Order a poster for your church for NAIDOC Week.

Go to [http://www.naidoc.org.au/naidocPoster/2010\\_Poster.aspx](http://www.naidoc.org.au/naidocPoster/2010_Poster.aspx)



## **Coming to Terms: Aboriginal Title in South Australia**

**Shaun Berg (Editor), Foreword by Geoffrey Robertson QC, Wakefield Press, 2009, RRP \$39.95**

"Sean Berg, a quietly spoken Adelaide lawyer...has spent 10 years exploring various English archives for documents related to South Australia's foundation in 1836... British authorities...fully intended the white settlement of South Australia to be a consensual act requiring treaties and bargains with the Aborigines, and payment for any land the colonists took up...no treaties, bargains or payments occurred."

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/features/an-idea-to-repair-the-flawed-foundations-of-state/story-e6frg6z6-1225811892041>

"South Australia was actually built on an unlawful land grab that breached British laws protecting the rights of Aboriginal people... the Letters Patent included a clear direction from the King that no land within the Province of South Australia be the subject of a land grant if the grant would affect the rights of the Aborigines...what happened was a complete usurpation of Aboriginal rights".

<http://www.independentweekly.com.au/news/local/news/news-features/new-book-reveals-sa-land-injustice/1702846.aspx>

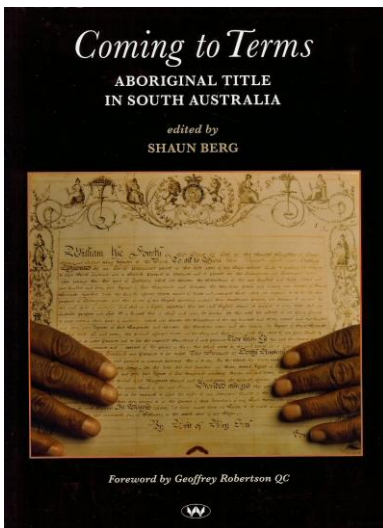
"Both Governor Hindmarsh and Resident Commissioner Fisher received instructions on how to acquire land from the Aborigines. The Colonization Commissioners for South Australia were also aware of these instructions... Tragically all the good intentions came to nought. At the beginning of 1836 Aboriginal people owned all the land in South Australia, as they had done for countless thousands of years. By the end of 1836 they owned none of it." <http://www.southernhistory.com.au/landtitle.htm>

Here is the **Preface of the book**, written by three South Australian Aboriginal (Ngarrindjeri) people.

*We, the Aboriginal people of Australia, like our ancestors, our grandfathers, our grandmothers, fathers and mothers before us, have been fighting with governments all our lives. We have been fighting for acknowledgement and recognition of the rights of our people to legally and freely occupy our lands and waters, to protect our heritage, and to practise our cultural traditions and beliefs. We are still fighting for acknowledgement and recognition of our rights today.*

*The legal implications of the Letters Patent and other founding documents of the state has been a burning issue for us. These documents have not been effective in protecting our rights to occupy and enjoy our lands and waters but are explicit in their terms. We know many of our ancestors were forcefully removed from their traditional dwelling areas by demeaning methods, thus denying their children their full inherited rights to enjoy,*

occupy or own these areas. We need to understand why our rights have been ignored when they were protected by King William IV.



*Our Old People, our Elders, and our families have been subjected to oppressive laws for a long time. These laws have denied our Elders equal human status: they have taken our land; they have imprisoned some of us on Reserves and Missions; they have placed us in goals; they have wrecked our communities and our economy. For all of us we need to understand why the laws have failed to protect our rights to land. It makes no sense to us why our native rights to our lands and waters were protected in the Letters Patent but not in reality. We need to find answers to these questions for ourselves and our brothers and sisters in other Aboriginal communities in South Australia and across Australia. For these reasons we endorse the publication of this book.*

*To us it is unfinished business. It is something the Government of South Australia has to come to terms with.*

George Trevorrow, Thomas Trevorrow, Matthew Rigney

... Australians should take pride: a determination by the political founders of a free state (and South Australia was the only state free of convicts) that settlement from the outset should provide fair and equal treatment to all Indigenous peoples and to their descendents. The essays in this book rightly demand that governments and courts should make this promise meaningful today.

*Geoffrey Robertson QC.*

### Prayer Points

- Pray for the restoration of the Racial Discrimination Act in the NT and for fair treatment of all Aboriginal Australians. Pray that governments stop forcing “reforms” against Aboriginal people’s rights and against the evidence (e.g. bi-lingual education). Pray that that true listening will occur when consulting.
- Pray for congregations as they celebrate or don’t celebrate Reconciliation Sunday; that hearts may be opened and minds challenged.
- Pray for the National Congress of Australia’s First Peoples, that it might courageously represent Aboriginal people to government and that in turn government will listen.
- Give thanks that the Port Augusta manse rebuilding has commenced at last and pray for the Matthews family and the work of the Congress in Port Augusta.
- Pray for the Kalparrin Community. Pray that a united voice has come from the meeting in Port Augusta and that respect for and self determination might be restored to all Aboriginal communities by governments.
- Pray for the Salisbury Congress Congregation and their new Council chairperson, Nelson Varcoe. Pray that a suitable supply minister might be found. Pray for extra bus drivers.
- Pray for all Aboriginal children going to school or not going. Pray that equitable funding is provided for ALL schools and that solutions may be found for those children not attending.
- Pray for justice and a ‘fair go’ for Aboriginal people and the ‘unfinished business’. Pray for a Treaty.

Palya, Go with God,

*Peter*

May 2010

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(Usually only in the Synod Office 1 day a week)

‘Til we meet again,

*Ken Sumner*  
Rev Ken Sumner  
Covenanting Coordinator  
Mission Resourcing Network  
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Hold the warmth of the camp fire in your heart  
And may the Creator Spirit, the God of peace,  
Always walk with you.

Note: The Covenanting Coordinator position is only half time. Office hours are usually in the first half of the week, Monday to Wednesday when not out and about. The Covenanting Coordinator is able to preach at Services, and talk to Church Councils, Bible Study and Fellowship Groups. For further details contact the Covenanting Coordinator. This and past copies of this newsletter may be downloaded from the website: <http://mrn.sa.uca.org.au/covenanting/covenanting-whats-new.html>

If this newsletter has been forwarded to you and you wish to be included on the regular Covenanter's Email Newsletter list please email me (Peter Russell: [prussell@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:prussell@sa.uca.org.au)) your request.

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