

Dr Chris Bourke
Member for Ginninderra
Adjournment Debate
NAIDOC Week

NAIDOC celebrations are held around Australia in July each year to celebrate the culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This year the theme was “Change: The Next Step is Ours” meaning it’s time to plan and take responsibility for the future.

NAIDOC recognises the survival of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and their contribution to modern Australia. The week is celebrated not just in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, but also in increasing numbers in the wider community in government agencies, schools and workplaces.

Taking part in NAIDOC Week is a great way to celebrate Indigenous Aboriginal history, culture, achievements and build bridges between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

In the ACT the NAIDOC Ball and Awards Night has been held for over 30 years and if you look at the ACT NAIDOC page on Facebook you can see all the photos from this year.

There are many awards presented at the ball. The NAIDOC Person of the Year Award went to Jo Chivers in recognition of the outstanding community work she has carried out in the ACT, not only on behalf of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community but also the Canberra community more widely.

I was privileged to present Noel “Bomber” Ingram with his Elder of the Year Award for his outstanding work with Boomanulla Oval and Aboriginal sporting and recreational activities.

Other awards went to the following people:

Youth of the Year: Joseph Kapeen

Sportsperson of the Year: Jacinta Williams

Scholar of the Year: Katrina Dart

Apprentice/ Trainee of the Year: Justin Ling

Artist of the Year: Kerstin Styche

Organisation/ Agency/ Committee of the Year: Aboriginal Corporation for Sporting and Recreational Activities (ACSRA)

Non-Indigenous Person/ Organisations Contribution to the Indigenous Community: Constable Rohan Smith

Caring for Country: Murumbung Yurung Murra

VET Indigenous Student of the Year: Hayley Hoolihan

ACT Indigenous Community Sector Worker of the Year: Meg

Huddleston

I congratulate all these award winners on receiving this recognition and I would like to thank them again for the contribution they make to the Canberra community.

In the lead up to NAIDOC Week and during NAIDOC Week itself I was able to attend many functions. For example, I attended a special NAIDOC Week mass at St Benedicts in Narrabundah; I spoke at an assembly at Telopea School and I visited Giralang Primary School where I viewed their NAIDOC Week Art Exhibition and was privileged to see their whole of school welcome dance.

Giralang Primary is particularly active in its support of its Indigenous students. On Monday this week I was part of its new after school program for Indigenous boys – Strong Young Fellas – which is being organised by Duncan Smith and Bill Bashford. This is another exciting innovation for an ACT school.

Many other schools and organisations in Canberra had special NAIDOC Week celebrations and the number continues to grow each year.

After attending the ball on Saturday night, I spent Sunday lunchtime at the NAIDOC Open Day at Yarramundi Reach which was a family fun day with food, dancing, entertainment and lots of stalls.(Sunday am was a stall at Jamo and then I went to St Benedicts)

I'm already looking forward to NAIDOC Week next year.