



WORLD DREAMING
WORLD CONGRESS FOR
PSYCHOTHERAPY 2011

24 - 28 August 2011
Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre
Darling Harbour, Australia

Major International Award for Indigenous Mental Health Professionals

A major international award for contributions to the field of psychotherapy will be presented to a group of outstanding Australian Indigenous mental health professionals at the 6th World Congress for Psychotherapy, "World Dreaming", to be held in Sydney from 24-28 August 2011.

The World Council for Psychotherapy's Sigmund Freud Award recognises the life work of individuals and groups that have made original contributions to the field of psychotherapy. The conjoint Award recipients are: Winthrop Professor Helen Milroy; Kamilaroi Elder, Aunty Lorraine Peeters; and the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council (NPY Project) represented by traditional healers (Ngankari) Mr Rupert Peters and Mr Ginger Toby.

"Together these distinguished award winners represent a spectrum of Indigenous contributions across the country from the most ancient traditional forms of applied psycho-somatic therapy (Ngankari traditional Indigenous healers), to the engagements with Indigenous trauma and healing relating to the 'Stolen Generations' and consequences of colonisation (Aunty Lorraine Peeters, Counsellor and Trainer), to western psycho-medical practice undertaken in a culturally appropriate approach (Professor Helen Milroy, Psychiatrist)," said Dr Anthony Korner, Chair of the Organising Committee of the World Congress for Psychotherapy.

"As a group these therapists demonstrate a broad range of contributions to psychological healing within Australia," said Dr Korner. Professor Helen Milroy is the first Indigenous Psychiatrist in Australia and recipient of numerous Australian awards including the Limelight Award for National Leadership in Indigenous medical education (2009) and the Suicide Prevention Australia Award, Indigenous Category (2008).

Aunty Lorraine Peeters, former NSW Senior Australian of the Year (2009), has developed the Marumali Healing Program for Indigenous people suffering the effects of trauma, specifically in relation to the Stolen Generation. Lorraine Peeters' healing work is described in the newly released, highly commended book, *Working Together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Wellbeing Principles and Practice*.

The Ngankari, Mr Ginger Toby and Mr Rupert Peters, work in association with numerous groups including the Central Australian Northern Territory Government Mental Health Team and the Indigenous NPY Women's Council. They travel nationally to undertake practice and share their work. Their work demonstrates the relevance of traditional approaches in modern Indigenous contexts and complements approaches undertaken in mainstream healthcare.

"All three award winners retain and sustain Indigenous perspectives and commitments in contemporary Australia. All three work in association with each other within Indigenous networks. Furthermore all three are nationally and internationally renowned for their work, which challenges and amplifies the understanding and practice of psychotherapy in an Australian context," said Dr Korner.

"Taken as a whole these conjoint prize winners have made significant contributions to the process of psychic healing in the Australian community, to the processes of 'closing the gap' and reconciliation, to the

overcoming of alienation and to the awakening of the sense of inclusiveness and belonging for all Indigenous Australians as well as confronting and modifying many of the unhelpful practices in the broader Australian community. The conjoint nature of the award is also in keeping with Indigenous values of shared recognition and interconnection," said Dr Korner.

"This may be the first occasion in which exceptional work by Indigenous Australian mental health therapists has achieved such international recognition for their contribution to a major field in the health sciences. All Australians should feel proud of their achievement," said Dr Korner.

The award presentation will take place on Friday 26 August at the 6th World Congress for Psychotherapy 2011. The Congress will be held from 24-28 August 2011 at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre. The event will feature internationally renowned psychotherapists, representing different fields of psychotherapy, counselling, and related disciplines.



**Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council
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NPY Women's Council Ngangkari Project - nominated for the conjoint Sigmund Freud Award- World Council for Psychotherapy 2011

Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Women's Council region covers 350,000 square kilometres of the vast, remote semi-arid lands crossing the borders of Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory. Anangu and Yarnangu (Aboriginal people) living on the lands share strong cultural and family affiliations. NPYWC began as an advocacy organisation in 1980 but is now also a major provider of human services, working to address the needs that clinical health services cannot, and that government agencies do not directly provide in this remote area. The members' determination to improve the quality of life for families in the region drives the organisation.

The **NPY Women's Council Ngangkari Project** began in 1998. A *ngangkari*, a term used in many of the indigenous languages of central Australia, is a traditional healer. Andy Tjilari and Rupert Peter were the original members of the Ngangkari Project, which has since expanded to include Toby Ginger and five women ngangkari. All the ngangkari are senior members of their communities, and all lived a traditional life in the bush with their families as children, where they began to learn the skills of the ngangkari. Their grandparents gave them sacred tools and special powers, and trained them over many years. The ngangkari continue this tradition today with their own grandchildren.



Toby Ginger Rupert Peters Andy Tjilari



Marinka Burton



Naomi Kantjurinyi

Iluwanti ken

The Ngangkari Project is funded by **Country Health SA**, and also the **ATSI Healing Foundation**.

The project provides ngangkari treatments to anangu in remote communities in this region, as well as those in hospitals, jails, nursing homes and hostels in regional centres. Their work is highly valued and the service is in great demand. The ngangkari believe that better health outcomes for indigenous people can be achieved by ngangkari and western medicine working together and to this end they are committed to educating health workers about traditional healing practices. The ngangkari are accomplished public speakers who are authorised to speak publicly about traditional anangu culture and ngangkari practices. They have travelled across Australia and overseas addressing forums about the value of traditional healing and bush medicines, and also meet regularly with staff of Central Australian health services. They have received many accolades, the most recent being the Mark Sheldon Prize for 2009 awarded by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatry (RANZCP), and the 2009 Dr Margaret Tobin Award for excellence in the provision of mental health services to those most in need.

In 2000 a group of over 50 ngangkari in Central Australia met and decided they would tell their stories as an attempt to educate non-indigenous health workers about the importance and value of ngangkari, with the aim of encouraging greater collaboration and understanding within the mainstream health system. NPY Women's Council has published a book of their stories called "*Ngangkari Work Anangu Way*". A new edition of this book is currently in production. A DVD entitled *Ngangkari*, which displays ngangkari from the project carrying out their therapeutic work in their local settings, is available from Ronin Films.