



# DIPLOMACY TRAINING PROGRAM

AFFILIATED WITH THE FACULTY OF LAW AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES  
A training program for peoples of the Asia-Pacific region

## **Indigenous Peoples, Human Rights and Advocacy**

**In partnership with Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE) and the Northern Land Council  
Batchelor, NT from June 20-29, 2005.**

### **Program Report**

#### **Executive Summary**

The Diplomacy Training Program's Indigenous Peoples, Human Rights and Advocacy Course was conducted in Batchelor, NT from June 20-29, 2005. The program was held at the invitation of Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE) and in partnership with the Northern Land Council.

The course was held at the invitation of two DTP alumni, Alma Mir and Zane Hughes. The Diplomacy Training Program would like to express its appreciation to both of them and to Batchelor Institute and its staff and to the traditional owners of the land, who provided a warm welcome to all the participants and to the trainers.

There were 28 participants drawn from Fiji, Vanuatu, Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Bangladesh and from most parts of Australia, including the Torres Strait Islands. The participants were selected from over 110 applications. Together they brought together an inspiring range of experiences from their work for and with Indigenous Peoples across the region.

The first hand accounts of the struggles of Indigenous Peoples across the region provided all involved with rare insights into our region. While the challenges faced in every country and by different communities are very diverse there are also issues in common: the struggle for recognition of identity and to maintain and assert traditional knowledge and culture; relationships to the land and the importance of communal land ownership; struggles to gain economic and social benefit from development and resource extraction from their land; environmental destruction and cultural survival.

Participant evaluations of the training were very positive, both in relation to individual trainers and the course overall. The opportunity to learn from each others' stories and experiences was a highlight of the course for the participants and for the trainers.

The success of the program was largely due to the generosity of the participants in sharing their knowledge and experience and to the many trainers who gave up their time and donated their services. DTP Board Members including Dr Sarah Pritchard, Philip Chung, Paul Redmond, Garth Nettheim and Olga Havnen all generously donated their time and expertise.

The following report reflects on the experience of running this program and looks toward the future. It draws on the evaluations of participants and makes a number of recommendations for future programs.

## **Program Objectives**

The objectives of the program were to

- provide 30 Indigenous advocates with a greater awareness and understanding of international human rights law, with an emphasis on the human rights standards and mechanisms most relevant to Indigenous Peoples
- build the capacity of Indigenous advocates to apply human rights instruments and principles to the different challenges they face
- build the capacity of Indigenous advocates to engage with the UN system and other intergovernmental organisations, national/state governments and corporations.
- provide opportunities for Indigenous advocates to share and learn from differing experiences within the region and to develop their support networks

These objectives were substantially achieved through a balanced residential program that provided both significant substantive content and considerable opportunities for exchange of experiences through exercises, role plays and more informally outside of the schedule.

## **Background/Overview**

Accelerating processes of economic change in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region are generating particular challenges for Indigenous community advocates. The program is deliberately located in the Northern Territory because of the history of the struggle there for recognition of Indigenous Rights, a struggle that is continuing and responding to shifting challenges in this part of Australia. There have been major political changes in recent years in the NT, and in the days before the program began elections for the NT were held that saw five Indigenous MPs elected to Parliament, three of them women. It is one indication of a wider transformation that is occurring.

Across the Asia-Pacific the hunger for resources of growing economies is placing increased pressure on many Indigenous communities – from Bangladesh and Indonesia through to Australia and the Pacific. As one local example there is renewed pressure on Indigenous communities in Australia to allow Uranium mining on their land. Longstanding traditions of communal land ownership can be, and are, seen as a barrier to exploitation of these resources and to the economic development of specific communities and to national development as a whole. Yet efforts to transform communal land into land held by individual title and transferable to those outside the community can threaten communal and cultural identity and survival.

Participants in the program heard about impact of logging and deforestation and how it was affecting the traditional livelihoods of Indigenous communities in Indonesia and Malaysia. In Bangladesh Indigenous communities face grave and diverse challenges in different parts of the country – some communities face the threat of removal from their traditional lands to make way for the creation of *eco* or natural parks, while others face encroachment on their lands by the majority community and violence and repression from the military. In countries where poverty is widespread the particular vulnerability and marginalisation of Indigenous

communities is often overlooked. In nations in the region that have themselves emerged following struggles against colonial powers there is a reticence to acknowledge the existence and cultural identity of distinct Indigenous Peoples. Some of these Indigenous Peoples have found themselves divided into different countries by post-colonial settlements. In some countries in the region the intersection between religious and cultural identity in a climate of growing religious intolerance has meant Indigenous communities becoming the focus of attacks.

The experience of too many Indigenous communities is that rather than benefiting from the exploitation of the resources that they have traditionally had custodianship of, or that exist on the land they live on, they have been further marginalised by the processes of extraction such as mining and forestry. More often than not the effects of mines and forestry on health, education, livelihoods and social harmony have been negative rather than positive for communities.

These trends manifest themselves in different places in different ways and the responses of Indigenous communities and their allies in the broader community have also varied.

While Indigenous Peoples have gained some recognition of their rights in different parts of Australia, and the region, these gains are not always secure. In Victoria, the Yorta Yorta people have had to respond to a High Court decision that implied their extinction as one Australia's first nations. They are now in the process of entering into a number of land and water use agreements. Indigenous Australian advocates are exploring how to most effectively respond to desperate health, education, housing and employment realities at the same time as losing a distinct voice at the national level and the prospect of legislative change affecting hard-won legal rights to participate in and benefit from development and economic activity on their land.

While the elaboration and understanding of human rights in general and Indigenous Peoples' rights in particular have been gaining ground internationally, there is diffidence about the value and efficacy of these rights by governments within Australia. It is evident also from the statistics on infant and maternal mortality and life expectancy in the NT and elsewhere in Australia that the relatively recent legal recognition of particular rights is not sufficient in itself to overcome discrimination and disadvantage and for the realisation of the human rights of Indigenous Australians.

### **Human rights standards**

An increasingly extensive body of core legal standards has been developed since World War II. In addition to the International Bill of Rights the global community has agreed and adopted specific human rights instruments dealing with racism, the rights of women and the rights of children, the rights of migrant workers, and the issue of torture. These standards apply the key human rights principles of the indivisibility and universality of human rights, the principles of participation, equity, non-discrimination and the accountability of governments both to their people and to core minimum standards of behaviour.

While international human rights law lacks any corresponding effective enforcement mechanism, special procedures and mechanisms have been developed to assist effective scrutiny and to provide avenues to hold governments accountable. These include development of the UN Treaty Body system, the creation of UN Special Rapporteurs, such as the UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Populations, and the UN Working Groups, Independent Experts and Special Representatives of the Secretary General.

Over the last decade in particular considerable attention has also been devoted to how human rights standards and principles can be applied in practice by individuals, organisations and

governments. The UN System and its specialised bodies like the UN Development Program, the World Health Organisation and UNICEF have focused on how human rights standards can be used to enhance the effectiveness of their work on poverty and development. International non-governmental organisations such as the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions have been working with communities, individual governments and UN agencies to promote the human right to housing or shelter – to highlight that international law prevents individuals and communities being arbitrarily evicted from their land for example and how land tenure systems and changes to them can be guided by an understanding of human rights.

More focus is also being given to issues around the role and responsibilities of corporations that are not bound by human rights treaties in the way that governments are. Many Indigenous communities, particularly in countries where governments lack capacity, resources or political will, see the power and influence of corporations when it comes to decisions over mining or forestry. Increasingly Indigenous communities are also concerned over issues of bio-prospecting and bio-piracy and issues of intellectual property rights as they relate to traditional and communally held knowledge. Some corporations themselves have become sensitised to their image and to the way in which their relationships with the Indigenous communities and their impact on the environment can effect their financial bottom-line over the long term.

These issues are the focus of considerable discussion and debate at the international level – in the development of the UN Draft Norms on the Human Rights Responsibilities of Companies and the OECD Guidelines on Multi-National Enterprises and at the recently established UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, at the World Trade Organisation and in the UN's World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO).

There is also increasing recognition at the international level of the relationship between the rights of Indigenous Peoples and the environment. Policy frameworks and approaches are being informed by discussions at the UN Commission on Sustainable Development and by the content of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The World Bank and the Asian Development Bank have both adopted policy frameworks that emphasise the importance of participation by Indigenous Peoples, even if these commitments are honoured more often in the breach.

In Australia and in some other countries this recognition is increasingly reflected in joint management arrangements for National Parks such as Kakadu and greater respect and understanding for how Indigenous communities have interacted and cared for their land for tens of thousands of years. In other parts of the region Indigenous Peoples are being evicted from their land in the name of environmental protection – sometimes through projects receiving funding from international agencies.

**Many of these areas of knowledge are highly specialised, and the number of advocates with knowledge and expertise in them very small. The need for sharing of knowledge and experience, to develop an understanding of how to create changes in policy and to get policy commitments translated into practice shaped this training program.**

## **The Participants**

The participants were selected from over 110 applications for the program from as far as Kenya, Namibia, Denmark and Ukraine. The selection process involved members of the DTP Board as well as consultations with DTP's partner organisations in the region. Batchelor Institute also selected six of their staff to participate in the training program. The final make-up of the program was affected by both funding and visa issues. Indigenous advocates from Nepal and from North-East India were accepted into the program but were unable to secure

visas through the Australian High Commission in New Delhi. Minority Burmese advocates also had problems in securing a visa through the Australian Embassy in Bangkok. While participants from West Papua were also selected to attend, and funding was secured to enable their participation, the problems of communication with West Papua proved insurmountable.

While most of the applications came from male advocates, a priority was given to ensuring gender balance in the program. In the end 14 of the 28 participants were women. There was great diversity in the experiences and skills of the selected participants and in the issues in which they were involved.

**John Abednego** is a senior community leader from Mer Island in the Torres Strait, and as head of legal services has a particular interest in the relevance of international law and the UN system to the issues of self-determination and governance facing his island people. **Alison Edwards** works with the Larrakia on the issues of the homeless and itinerant population in Darwin. **Rita Melicio** from the Philippines works with Task Force Detainees in Mindanao. **Steven Ross** and **Lee Joachim** work with the Yorta Yorta in Victoria and are closely involved in land management and water use agreements along the Murray Darling river system.

**Christine Dela Cruz** is a young advocate from the Philippines, based in Manila, committed to working with Indigenous Peoples to promote and protect their rights. **Jane Austria** who works in community development and organising in the Philippines, and **Monjur Rashid** and **Azmir Hossin** the two participants from Action Aid in Bangladesh, had particular experiences to share in alternative approaches to community organisation and mobilisation. **Peter Smith**, an experienced and effective advocate from Mount Isa, with a long background of working through church networks, was able to share his experiences with **Matthew Kalotiti** and **Roslyn Sarisets**, two young community advocates from the Solomon Islands.

**Siteri Kalvouniti** from DTP's partner organisation, the Pacific Concerns Resource Centre in Fiji, and **Justin McCaul** from the Australian Conservation Foundation focus on environmental issues and Indigenous Peoples' rights. **Lany Veryanti**, from West Sumatra in Indonesia, undertook an intensive English language course to enable her participation in the course. Her community is facing the loss of their traditional lands as new regulations on land ownership are being developed and implemented by the provincial government. **Lany** is acutely aware of the need for effective advocacy to protect the rights of her people and of the need to reach out to seek solidarity from beyond her community.

**Dewayne Mundraby** from far North Queensland plays a key role in developing collaboration and effective advocacy among a large number of Native Title Holders and Representative Bodies and is concerned at the lack of genuine participation of Indigenous Australians in decision making processes, and the imposition of inappropriate models of economic and social development. **Joe Clarke** from the Central Land Council works closely with Traditional Owners, travelling vast distances to consult with them and to assist them in addressing the challenges they face in relation to health, education and employment issues and their negotiations with mining companies. **Rebecca Cooper** works with the Northern Land Council, the key representative organisation for Traditional Owners in the northern half of the Northern Territory.

**Johnny Kieh Dullah** from Sarawak in Malaysia is a leading member of the the Indigenous networks that are working to prevent destruction of the forests on which Indigenous People depend and was able to share particular insights from working in a political environment of effective one-party rule, where army and police have a tradition of being able to use violence against Indigenous advocates with relative impunity.

**John Reid, Michael Spry, Catherine Stokes, Adrian Burkenhagen** from Batchelor and **Anita Gail** from Curtin University in Western Australia are closely involved in the challenges

of Indigenous education and training and interested in exploring the relevance of human rights and how this understanding might be integrated into their work.

**Eleanor Burke**, Co-Chair of Reconciliation Australia, has a lifetime of experience of working towards recognition of Indigenous Rights in Australia and of seeking to engage the wider, and often indifferent or hostile, community in this struggle for justice. **Melodie Gibson** who works with the Indigenous Law Centre at UNSW is committed to finding effective ways to move this struggle forward and to learning from others. **Jeanette Vaha'akolo**, an Indigenous woman working with the Equal Opportunity Commission in Victoria shared valuable insights from her role with an official watchdog organisation and her engagement in community consultations on human rights and discrimination issues as they are experienced. **Cherie Buchert** works with the Community Justice Centre on the NSW South Coast and was able to share the experiences of working on the groundbreaking restorative justice initiatives aimed at preventing the criminalisation and imprisonment of Indigenous Australians.

**Amanda Hunter**, a young woman from the Kimberley had to withdraw from the program early as a result of family illness.

The above outline provides an indication of the diversity that the program brought together. There is not space to mention all, nor to capture the richness of the experiences and knowledge that they brought to the program and shared with each other.

## **Program Description: Schedule & Program Content**

### ***The First Week:***

The program began with introductions and moved quickly into two-days of intensive focus on the international human rights framework, with a particular focus on Indigenous Peoples' rights and relevant forums in the UN system. This included a focus on the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations and the more recently established UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues that meets annually in New York. Among the role plays and practical exercises was one focussing on a visit of the UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Issues, Rodolfo Stavenhagen. These sessions were facilitated by Dr Sarah Pritchard.

There were skills sessions on developing advocacy strategies and the principles that underpin effective advocacy work. DTP Board member Philip Chung led a full day of intensive work focussed on developing internet skills for research and advocacy – including web page design.

Professor Paul Redmond delivered a session focussing on Corporate Accountability and Human Rights. Governments are not formally accountable to human rights standards in the same way as governments, but accountability mechanisms are emerging and a wide range of strategies and tactics have been creatively used by advocates to hold companies to account. Professor Garth Netheim led participants through some comparative models of Indigenous governance from Australia and Canada.

John Christopherson provided a dynamic presentation that explained some of the complexities of relationships between land and peoples in Northern Australia and some of the history of interaction between Indigenous Australians and European colonists in the Northern Territory including a history of world heritage-listed Kakadu National Park.

### ***The Field Trip to Kakadu:***

The weekend field trip to Kakadu included a presentation from Justin O'Brien who has worked with the Traditional Owners for a number of years and through a number of their struggles with government, mining companies and park administrators. Participants had the opportunity to see the paintings and art in caves and on rocks that tells some of the stories of Indigenous Peoples' relationship to the land and its spirits over the past 50,000 years. The field visit also included a cultural tour up the East Alligator river with one of the few Indigenous owned and controlled tourism enterprises in Northern Australia.

### **The Concluding Sessions:**

When the training resumed on Monday, Matt Fagan provided useful insights into what many regard as one of the most successful campaigns to defend Indigenous Peoples' rights – the Jabiluka campaign. Matt worked closely with Jacqui Katona and with the Mirrar people in what was a long and gruelling campaign. There was discussion around issues of principle and practice in relation to participation, and in relation to the difficult choices that are a part of most effective campaigns. One of the key lessons was the need to keep reflecting and evaluating on what is working and what is not and to keep looking for what might work when other tactics and actions have failed.

The major focus of Matt Fagan's presentation was on the challenges of community development following the success of the campaign – the challenges of developing new relationships and in ensuring that all in the communities benefit from economic development. An evolving model of community development is being used that emphasises drawing on existing community capacities and strengths.

Olga Havnen, DTP Board Member and one of Australia's most experienced Indigenous advocates, shared some of her experiences in the practicalities of putting together advocacy campaigns. Professor Donna Craig led sessions with participants on emerging international understandings on the relationship between Indigenous Peoples, the environment and human rights, and the debates around Indigenous and traditional knowledge systems and intellectual property rights.

On the final day Rita from Mindanao and Monjur and Rashid from Bangladesh shared their experiences from applying the human rights based approach to development and the changes and explained the benefits that this had brought to their work on poverty and development. The presentations emphasised the issues of participation and of empowerment through knowledge. There was a session on media work that was followed by a role-play on organising and conducting a media conference.

Throughout the program there was an emphasis on exercises, small group work, the use of role plays and other participatory teaching methods. Time was also set aside each day and some evenings for participant presentations.

### **Participant Comments and Recommendations**

The training program was evaluated by participants through the completion of two anonymous questionnaires at the end of the program, and by a final feedback session. It should also be noted that early in the program some participants raised the issue of discriminatory and intolerant remarks being made in relation to issues of gender and sexual identity. In response participants recommended that DTP begin each program with a specific and clear statement explaining that the organisation was committed to creating a positive learning environment in which each individual should feel secure and respected and should not be subjected to or exposed to discriminatory remarks. Some of the participants put together a draft of such a statement for use by DTP.

Some discomfort was also voiced in relation to the fact that the Rio-Tinto Aboriginal Foundation had provided some funding for the training program – and that this had not been made clear to participants in the program prior to commencement of the program. At least one participant felt that this contribution compromised his principles and that he might have decided not to participate in the program.

The following comments are drawn from the evaluations:

***Will the training assist you in your work? How?***

*Of course. Now I have a huge idea of the global features of the Indigenous community. All this knowledge is helpful to give me a broader perspective of the area.*

*It certainly would. Knowledge of the UN Conventions/Mechanisms, human rights approaches to advocacy certainly gives me a lot more confidence in dealing with them in our campaigns.*

*Yes. I will be better prepared in tackling the work at home. I have the tools (knowledge) to negotiate better.*

*It helped me to reassess the present strategies that we are doing on the ground. Continuing to link with other participants with common issues could be tapped in the form of exchanges.*

*This training will help me to work as an advocate on behalf of Indigenous people in Bangladesh.*

*Yes, more confidence in presenting information and education programs, additional knowledge re workings of UN, different models of delivery; networks.*

*Yes, becoming a better leader in my community.*

*Yes, the issue of human rights cuts across all issues relating the environment and its management.*

*More insight into the avenues available to address the issues.*

***What was the most useful session or sessions for you and why?***

*The role of the UN in monitoring and protecting human rights of Indigenous Peoples by Dr Sarah Pritchard.*

*I found all the sessions useful. But I found the Community development tools and organising most useful. It's something that's not really been looked into with my organisation in terms of empowerment for better results.*

*Community development.*

*Exercises – for it shows us their applications in the real way/life.*

*Media – very practical ideas. Introduction to international law of human rights. This opened the way for all the other sessions on human rights.*



*I think all the sessions are useful and it has its own value when we go back to the field. But in all the sessions, I think Mat Fagan's interest me the most. He is very honest and he always subject his work to sharp/critical analysis from the participants. His process of handling the session was with dialogue so the participants were very active in sharing their experiences.*

*Other people's presentations. It has given me a wide knowledge of what is happening in other countries in the region.*

*The explanation of the UN structure etc because I never understood it before.*

*Those sessions that had role plays/exercises helped with the learning.*

*Even though I found the role plays difficult, they were important and we all seemed to get better as we went along.*

***How might knowledge of human rights and UN System change your work?***

*It sure opens up a lot of doors on the available processes that are there/available that can assist in advocacy/lobbying work.*

*I believe I gain a lot from this training because I'm a grass root level which I have no idea of the system. Since this training it empowers me to fights for our ancestors land and also to build more awareness about Indigenous Right.*

*It gives me more tools in my approach. I can use Special Rapporteur; Intervention in UN Working Group for Indigenous Populations or an intervention at the Permanent Forum.*

*Making use of human rights standards/treaties that my government are a signatory/party to could be used in making petitions and statements.*

*Knowledge of human rights and the UN System will help me work more effectively. I will convey this to all the national NGOs who are working with ActionAid Bangladesh as a partner.*

*If action at a national level is not enough to address human rights concerns, then it will be easier for us to bring to any UN body if we know the UN system.*

*Better able to respond with information and advice.*

*It can be used to apply pressure to the government to make policy and legislation change.*

***Please describe how you will share what you have learned over the period of the training?***

*When I return to my home, then I will organise a sharing session with our colleagues and partners we are working with.*

*I will have to do a very descriptive report based on a template used by the organisation and will present this at a campaigns staff meeting.*

*Among communities, targeting youth, women, and community leaders.*

*More determined to delve own leadership/training for our people.*

*Presentation to senior government staff. Incorporate in staff mentoring i.e. issues.  
Provision of series of human rights training sessions for staff.*

*Help my people go forward.*

## **Reflections and Lessons for DTP**

This program followed the *Indigenous Peoples, Human Rights and Advocacy Training Program* held in the Northern Territory in 2004. It is regrettable that due to a combination of circumstances fewer of the trainers and resource people on this program were Indigenous than in the previous year. There is a wealth of Indigenous expertise and skills that DTP is able to draw on, including from alumni of its programs and doing so conveys an important message in itself.

As in the previous training there is a constant balance to be drawn between looking at existing and specific issues relevant to specific participants, and the value of encouraging people to explore and understand the situations of others. Understandably given the composition of the participants, Australian issues tended to dominate, sometimes to the detriment of learning about other situations and the sense of involvement of other participants.

At the same time learning about the situation of others is clearly a highlight for all and changes in both the composition of participants and some facilitation from regional facilitators would enhance the richness of this exchange. While international participation is more expensive and therefore more subject to the constraints of funding, this is an issue that will need to be addressed in future. In addition the program would benefit from having some input from an Indigenous advocate/facilitator from the region and this is one way that balance between Australian and international issues could be addressed.

There is also a continuing tension of balancing the time available for delivery of content by invited experts and in ensuring that there are adequate opportunities and time for participant presentations. Attempts to find the right balance continue.

- **Recommendation 1:** *Partnerships with regional/international Indigenous organisations should be explored to develop curriculum, source facilitators and participants.*
- **Recommendation 2:** *Contact should be made with relevant officials in DIMIA and DFAT to explore apparent problems with visa applications from advocates.*
- **Recommendation 3:** *The next course should aim for a better balance between Indigenous Australia and international participants, with no more than two participants from the same country (outside Australia).*
- **Recommendation 4:** *The possibility of putting in place support arrangements for younger participants should be explored.*
- **Recommendation 5:** *The timing of the 2006 program will be moved to before the 2006 session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.*
- **Recommendation 6:** *Where possible, trainers on this course should be Indigenous.*
- **Recommendation 7:** *Efforts should be made to include Indigenous trainers/resource people from the region – recognising the costs associated with this.*
- **Recommendation 8:** *DTP needs to explore developing the capacity for both offering future support and development opportunities for its alumni and consider how it might be able to utilise alumni more effectively in its work.*

## **DTP's future role in the arena**

Through 15 years of involvement in working with Indigenous organisations and networks in Australia and the region the Diplomacy Training Program is well placed to develop and deliver the capacity building programs that are of real practical value to Indigenous advocates.

Since the Diplomacy Training Program began in 1989 specific organisations and programs focussing on developing leadership in Indigenous Australia have been established. They fulfil an important need. The challenges facing Indigenous Australian advocates have also changed – the need to address issues of governance, of economic enterprise and of management are among those changes. There is today a great wealth and resource of Indigenous expertise to draw on in Australia for capacity building programs. Importantly this experience and knowledge also has much to offer the Indigenous Peoples’ organisations in the Asia-Pacific region, many of which struggle in dangerous and even more difficult circumstances.

At the same Indigenous communities in Australia continue to face challenges in an environment that is often indifferent to the injustices being experienced daily - and often hostile to claims for justice. The movement for reconciliation based on an agenda of addressing past and current injustice has continued, but has faltered without the government support it once enjoyed. There is no longer an elected national Indigenous body to provide a voice, economic weight, and political representation. The recognition of the land rights of Indigenous Australians is facing change at a time of growing demand for the resources on Indigenous Peoples’ land.

Internationally, the major development NGOs are moving away from a simple service delivery model as an ineffective and short term approach to poverty and discrimination. They recognise the vital importance in developing the capacity of communities and their representatives – including their capacity through advocacy to claim their rights and hold governments accountable to their obligations.

It is in this context and based on long records of partnership with Indigenous advocates that the Diplomacy Training Program is committed to enhancing its capacity building work on Indigenous Peoples, human rights and advocacy. As part of this commitment the Diplomacy Training Program will undertake consultations with its alumni to explore how to improve and enhance the impact of its courses.

## **Acknowledgements**

The Diplomacy Training Program is indebted in particular to Alma Mir of Batchelor Institute whose initiative and commitment ensured the success of the program. The efforts of former DTP staff member Naomi Hamilton who worked so hard to get everyone to and from Batchelor and to ensure all went smoothly is also gratefully acknowledged. The staff at Batchelor went out of their way to be hospitable and DTP was fortunate to be able to learn more of their work and to spend time with them. The setting was ideal for the program. Special thanks should also go to the Batchelor Butterfly Farm that provided a memorable venue for many of the participants on many evenings.

The Diplomacy Training Program operates on a shoestring, pulling together funds from a variety of sources to make the training programs possible and to ensure that the participants who need the training can attend. The generous partnership arrangements and significant financial commitment of Batchelor Institute to this program was greatly appreciated. The Diplomacy Training Program would also like to acknowledge financial support from the following sources that made this program possible through donations, project grants and subsidies to participants: Oxfam Australia; Julie Kantor; Bill and Heather Webster; Bret

Walker; The Rio-Tinto Aboriginal Foundation; the Reichstein Foundation; the Ford Foundation; the Northern Land Council and Caritas Australia.

The Diplomacy Training Program would also like to acknowledge the contribution of all the trainers who donated their time and freely shared their knowledge and expertise. The programs could not occur without this generosity and the shared commitment to human rights and justice that it signifies. In particular the contribution of Professor Garth Nettheim for agreeing to be co-facilitator for the second half of the program is greatly appreciated.

Finally the Diplomacy Training Program would like to acknowledge the participants in the program. Many left family and friends, took time out from pressing commitments and travelled great distances to come and learn and share with each other. **Joe Clarke** contributed in particular as the volunteer bus driver for the field trip. Participants gave generously to each other, and it was this spirit of giving that made it such a memorable program for all involved.