

Media Statement

Klynton Wanganeen
Khatija Thomas
Commissioners for Aboriginal Engagement

10 March 2011

GEORGE TREVORROW

Commissioners for Aboriginal Engagement Klynton Wanganeen and Khatija Thomas and the Aboriginal Affairs Minister Grace Portolesi, joined Aboriginal communities today to farewell Aboriginal elder and leader George Trevorrow.

Mr Trevorrow was the elder and leader of the Ngarrindjeri people and in traditional Ngarrindjeri governance structure was known as the 'Rupelle of the Ngarrindjeri Tendi'.

Born at Raukkan in 1951, he held many positions within his community and government since he began his working life as a fisherman at the age of 13. He worked at the Engineering & Water Supply in Coonalpyn and Raukkan, at the Meningie Council and as an Aboriginal Education Worker at Meningie Area School.

In the early 1980s Mr Trevorrow and his community worked to have the Ngarrindjeri Lands & Progress Association incorporated and secured property at Camp Coorong. Along with his brother Tom Trevorrow, he established and managed Camp Coorong, a place where the community and the public sector could learn about the Ngarrindjeri culture.

He served as Chairperson for the Ngarrindjeri Lands and Progress Association for many years and in 1992 his dream to establish his own eco-tourism venture began. This led to the establishment and management of the Coorong Wilderness Lodge which provides eco-aware tourists from all over the world the chance to experience the natural beauty and history of the Coorong and the Ngarrindjeri culture.

Commissioner for Aboriginal Engagement Klynton Wanganeen said Mr Trevorrow was a cultural warrior and dedicated his life to protecting and preserving the Ngarrindjeri culture and progressing the broader interests of Aboriginal people in South Australia.

"He was part of the Ngarrindjeri delegation that successfully negotiated the return and repatriation of ancestral remains from overseas and was recently part of a group to initiate dialogue with the Premier about the Letters Patent," said Mr Wanganeen.

He was a member of many committees including the State Aboriginal Heritage Committee, the South Australian Aboriginal Tourism Committee and was Regional Councilor to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, Patpa Warra Yunti Regional Council.

Minister Portolesi said, "As a respected cultural elder and Leader of the Ngarrindjeri Nations, Mr George Trevor was deeply committed to his people, the Ngarrindjeri, and his country, the Coorong. He was a statesman and leader, a man of great vision and grace and a cultural attaché, a humanitarian and an environmentalist."

Mr Wanganeen said he led the way for his people and was instrumental in establishing the Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority.

"As the inaugural Chairperson of the Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority he forged partnerships within government and successfully negotiated the signing of the Ngarrindjeri Regional Partnership Agreement between the Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority and the Australian and South Australian Governments on 18 July 2008 at Camp Coorong," said Mr Wanganeen.

"These agreements focus on building social and economic assets in the Ngarrindjeri region that provide opportunities for economic development and increased involvement in Caring for Country activities."

"I knew Mr Trevor well and supported many of the initiatives he led. "

"He continued to build positive partnerships with government which was demonstrated in the signing of the *Kungun Ngarrindjeri Yunnan* ('Listening to Ngarrindjeri people talking') Agreement in June 2009 between the Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority and the Ministers for Environment and Conservation, and the former Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, for the River Murray, and for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries."

Ms Thomas said Mr Trevor was a well respected elder and leader of the Ngarrindjeri people.

"He will leave a legacy for the benefit of future generations. He was known by many and will be sadly missed," said Ms Thomas.

One of 12 children, his late brother Bruce was the first member of the Stolen Generations to receive compensation.

He is survived by his wife Shirley and five children as well as a number of foster children who they raised together.