

## Dalai Lama Visit to Castan Centre Sold Out

The Castan Centre, in conjunction with the Australia Tibet Council, is proud to announce that His Holiness the Dalai Lama will present a keynote address to the centre on 8 June at the Robert Blackwood Hall, Monash University. The event was sold out within two days of tickets going on sale.

This is the Dalai Lama's second visit to Australia in five years. During his last visit, he received much support from the Australian public, and it is expected that during this year's visit, approximately 200,000 people will hear him speak around the nation.

His Holiness had a collaborative relationship with Ron Castan, after whom our centre is named. Ron had a passionate concern for the rights of the Tibetan people and during the 1960s

he worked to build dialogue between the Dalai Lama and the leaders of the People's Republic of China. Tibetan self-determination is a right that the Dalai Lama has been promoting and fighting for since his exile from Tibet to Dharamsala, India in 1959. Born on 6 July 1935, he was found to be the fourteenth Dalai Lama at the age of two, and he became Tibet's head of state in 1950. The Dalai Lama was



*His Holiness, the Dalai Lama*

awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986 for his non violent efforts in pursuing the liberation of Tibet. As documented on his official website the Dalai Lama has travelled to more than 62 countries, "he has received over 84 awards...and has authored more than 72 books."

The CEO of the executive committee organising the Australian tour, Dr. Allan Molloy, said "His Holiness has three important messages to convey, and our goal is to have those messages heard by as many Australians as we possibly can. Besides, anyone who has ever been in close proximity to the Dalai Lama will testify to his amazing presence. You can't see him and not be somehow moved." The Dalai Lama will be joined on stage by a panel of eminent Australians.

## Positive Changes in Wadeye

*By Katie Mitchell*

In the Northern Territory township of Wadeye, change is in the air. The Tharmarrurr Regional Council, established in 2003, has steadily worked to merge traditional and contemporary structures of governance to create a central voice in the community. This Council presents a positive opportunity for the community to reclaim its ability to enjoy a degree of self determination and to heal some of the fractures which have emerged within the community.

These fractures are deeply embedded and can be traced back through the history of Wadeye. In the 1930s a Catholic mission was established in the area, severely compromising the ability of clan leaders to govern the community. The feeling of disempowerment and growing sense of dislocation within the community was exacerbated by the "protection era" and the various Acts of Parliament which further undermined their autonomy and ability to enjoy and practice their culture. The impact of these experiences upon the community has been devastating, undermining their ability to exercise control and influence over the direction of their lives.

However the Council represents a new era for the community as it works towards building the capacity of the young people of Wadeye. The Council, with the support of the Castan Centre and Arnold Bloch Liebler (ABL), is focusing on improving the educational opportunities for young people in the community. Current data has revealed that, for every dollar spent on the education of a child in the Northern Territory, just 47 cents is spent on the education of a child in Wadeye.

Ms Melissa Castan, and David Yarrow of the Castan Centre, and Peter Seidel of ABL have been working closely with the Council to address and to remedy this gross inequality. Ms Castan comments that "the failure to provide basic education is a fundamental violation of human rights." Action taken by the Castan Centre, ABL and Tharmarrurr Council has included investigating and, if necessary, pursuing litigation options against those responsible for the under-funding of education in the Tharmarrurr region. Further, assistance with corporate governance and leasing issues has been provided and corporate entities have been established for the purpose of economic and social

development.

Sean Bowden, Tharmarrurr's legal adviser, has pointed to the results so far which include a commitment from the Northern Territory of \$5.6 million for infrastructure development at the primary school and \$4 million towards the construction of a secondary school.

He explained that "we have broken new ground in terms of understanding and challenging the way education is delivered (or isn't delivered) in the Tharmarrurr region. We have now engaged with decision makers at the highest level. The Prime Minister and Chief Minister of the Northern Territory are personally engaged in these issues and the Prime Minister has indicated a very significant policy shift, which is the basis for future efforts at reform. The importance of this work should in no way be underestimated. It is still a work-in-progress, but the Arnold Bloch Liebler-Castan Centre-Tharmarrurr Council alliance is shaping as a very effective one. It has certainly given Tharmarrurr great confidence and some renewed faith that it is not alone."