

Neville Bonner

The Jagera people

His early life and his role as a Senator

Date of interview: 1995

Interviewer: Robyn Buchanan

Interview available on CD

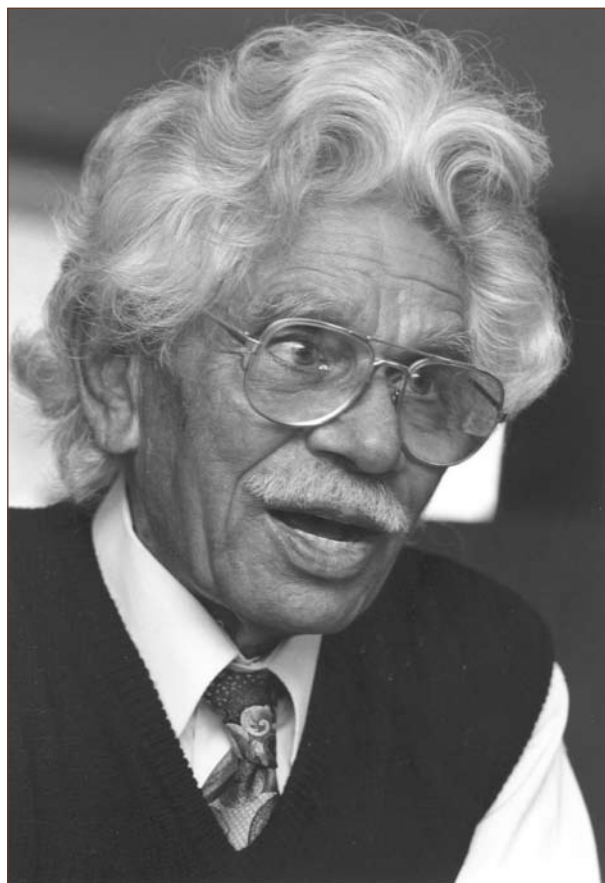


Photo courtesy Lyle Radford

Track 01

Hello. My name is Neville Bonner. I live in Ipswich, I've lived here for almost 34 years now. I'm back to where my roots began. I've enjoyed the last 34 years of re-acquainting myself with the district and looking at places that my grandparents and my mother told me about.

My mother was born on a little place just outside of Ipswich. It was an Aboriginal community set up by the government. It was a place where people were brought from all over Queensland. According to the authorities in those days, they'd misbehaved themselves and they were sent to either here or Cherbourg or Woorabinda or places like that. But my grandparents were from around the area. My grandfather was the last initiated member of the Jagera tribe. His Aboriginal name was Jung Jung but he lived with a family who owned a station called Bellevue Station up on the Brisbane River. He and his younger brother Dimee were both given Anglicised names by the Lumley Hills, the name taken after Bell. My grandfather was named Roger Bell and his brother was called Stanley Bell. Their correct Aboriginal names were Jung Jung and Dimee. That's what happened in those early days.

My grandfather left Bellevue Station as a young man. He was sort of, I suppose lost, because the tribe had disintegrated. There was a tremendous war between the Jagera people and the white settlers just out at Gatton and most of the tribe were wiped out. So grandfather was kind of a wanderer in a sense. He wandered around and

left Bellevue Station and met up with my grandmother at an Aboriginal community just outside Beaudesert. They got married and then came and lived in Deebing Creek, which was in grandfather's territory.

My mother was born in Deebing Creek under a big old pine tree that still stands out there. I often go out there - I often used to go out there - and sit there and commune in the Aboriginal way with the spirits of my people that had gone before. Unfortunately, I am denied that now because the whole area in the last few years has been developed with housing estates and things like that. It now bears really to me no relation to what it used to be when it was just virgin forest as it were. But the old pine tree is standing where my mother was born.

So, those kinds of things leave a lasting wound I suppose and many, many Aboriginal people have been wounded that way. We still carry the scars of the atrocities that were perpetrated against our people and someone once said that history is like memory to man. Well, our memories aren't always very pleasant. Some of them are bitter memories. We overcome those and we go on. I believe we have adjusted more than most non-Aboriginal people give us credit for.

When you consider that in just 207 years, we have adjusted into the atomic age whereas it took the non-Aboriginal people more than 2000 years to get to the same thing.

So, I don't think we have a lot to be ashamed of. We have a lot to be proud of. We have a lot to be.. in some sense, apprehensive of what is happening because for so long, all the decisions for we, the indigenous people of this country, have been made by non-Aboriginal people. We haven't made our own decisions since the time our tribal elders were in charge of things. With the advent of settlement and people taking up land and dispossessing our people - our tribes dispossessed and dispersed - a lot of that has been lost.

But the young people today, fortunately, are now in my opinion anyway (for what it's worth) are now searching out their roots and their background and trying to learn as much as they can. There's the opportunity now with modern transport and communications of talking with a lot of our people who are still living in a tribal situation in the Northern Territory, the Kimberley's in Western Australia, the north-west of South Australia, the Pitinjara people, in north Queensland, Aurukun, Mornington Island, Doomadgee and places like that. So the young people are now searching and finding their roots. Fortunately, the culture is the same regardless of where the tribe or where the people may come from. There's a phenomenon which white man doesn't seem to be able to understand that whilst we talked, there were five to six hundred tribes and we talked as many different languages, the culture was exactly the same across the board. And that is very hard for other people to understand.

Track 02

What you had here in Australia prior to 1788 was almost a mini-Europe. All the tribes were distinct tribes unto themselves; they spoke a distinct language unto themselves. There was little or no communication very widely. Neighbouring or bordering tribes there was some communication - particularly for ceremonies and things like that. And even though they spoke different languages, they could still partake of the ceremonies because the culture and the beliefs and the truths were exactly the same.

Whereas in Europe, there was none of that. You had the Chinese, the Italians and the Spanish, the French, the English and the Germans - they all spoke different languages but there was nothing that united them in the cultural side of things. They all had their own separate cultures. So, it's very difficult for people to understand that.

Unfortunately, one of the things, I suppose, that happened .. and I'm finding it difficult here in the Jagera country .. where white anthropologists come in and they allege to study Aboriginal languages, and culture and that sort of stuff. Sometimes I wonder because we have a number of anthropologists in this area and some say this country belongs to such and such a group. I'm going on what my grandfather and grandmother told me. So, I'm getting it directly to me which was the way Aboriginal history came down through thousands of years. By word

of mouth. By dances and songs. I'm telling people what my grandparents told me. But they say "Oh, no! The anthropologists say that's different, that's wrong."

Now who do we believe, the anthropologists or the Aborigines? We're talking about our culture, we're talking about our land, our tribal area. But he comes along and says "No". And because he has all these letters behind his name, he's an anthropologist who's studied archaeology and that sort of stuff, they're the authorities.

I'm finding in my own particular situation - we have an anthropologist at the university who is saying this is not my country - how dare he! He's a Canadian. He's been in this country about three years. And now he had the audacity to tell me where my country is. But these are the things that happen. You learn to live with it and battle with it. Whilst he might convince some other people, he won't convince me.

Interviewer: Can you explain what Jagera means, what area it means.

The Jagera - spelt Ja (this again is anthropological sense of spelling names) - it's pronounced "Jug-era". I would have spelt it Ju but the anthropologists say no, it's a matter of phonetics. I don't know anything about this phonetics business - that's whiteman stuff. I'm talking about blackfella stuff. Jagera is the name.

Jagera country, according to my grandfather, is all of the land within the watershed of the Brisbane River. All the waters that run into the Brisbane River, that country is Jagera country. From the mouth of the Brisbane River to the foot of the Dividing Range. The whole Brisbane Valley is Jagera country. But of course, this anthropologist says that I'm wrong. There's another group that comes in somewhere - I don't know. That's it.

Interviewer: Is that one family group?

It's numbers of families, what we call "clan groups" - that's white man's terms, not ours. Within a tribe, there would have been between 1000 and 1200 Jagera people in this area. The war destroyed a whole lot of those. In that group, there could have been 40 or 50 families.. or 20 or 30 families, I don't know. It's a bit far back for me! I wasn't around in those days.

For the sake of argument, say for 1200 there were 20 or 30 families. The tribe would not always all be together at one place at one time. Families would move out and visit and travel in one area.

Track 03

The whole attitude towards Aboriginal people was that we were nomads. My understanding of a nomad is a person who wanders aimlessly around everywhere, a wandering people. We were not a wandering people in that sense. We were a crop rotating group of people, in so much as that we rotated while the crops stayed put. You'd live here for a while - maybe two or three months - and the elders

would find that the food supply was diminishing. They'd say "Hey, come on. We can't do that. We'll have to move on." So we'd move, say down to Inala.. that area, and live there for a short space of time. And as the food started to diminish again...and so around and around allowing nature to rebuild the food supply. So we never ran out of food. But if we stayed in the one place and killed everything, that would be the end of it. We rotated around allowing nature to provide and crops to rejuvenate.

So, these family groups would all be doing the same thing. But every now and then, we'd have to come together at certain times of the year, depending where the moon was or whatever, for various types of ceremonies.

Then, of course, there'd be another time when all the tribe would be together for a short space of time during the initiation ceremony of the young males. And, vice versa with the women folk and girls. So there'd be a separation there of the whole tribe into male and female. So that would go on at certain times of the year. Maybe not every year, maybe every three or four years according to how the generation was coming on. You wouldn't have it all children born at the same time in the same place. Naturally, the age group at a certain time had to go through the initiation. So they wouldn't all be going through in the one year. There may be a two year span - 1977, 1978 and 1979 - those lot have all come together for initiation. It's a three year span probably. Don't hold me to these figures but I'm giving you an approximate idea.

Interviewer: Were there special places for the ceremonies?

There were special places for the ceremonies. You hear people now talking about a bora ring. That was the main stage of the initiation. But, they all seem to think that the bora ring is a round circle. I'm not quite sure what they mean by that but the bora ring is whiteman's terminology. We don't refer to it as the bora ring. Well, we do now because that's what the whiteman accepts. Okay?

After that, they'd have to travel. Hunting and everything taught. You see, our education was by role model. We today go to school and sit in the classroom and are taught by teachers and everything. In our way, nothing was competitive. In a school situation, everything's competitive. You're competing to do this, to do that. You're searching, you're asking questions.

In our education system, you don't ask questions. You listen. You understand what the elders are telling you, because they know how. They're teaching you how to hunt, to track, how to find this, how to find that. They know about the weather, the seasons, the hunting time, the wrong time and all that. That's all being taught to the young men.

On the other side, the women are doing that for the girls. What they have to do. Their way of finding various types of food - insects and all of those kinds of things that they had to do. How they had to take care of themselves for their time of marriage and childbearing and all that. That's

all taught to the girls. So, we went to school.

So, the initiation at this bora ring place, it's the initiation into the tribal structure and the rights and wrongs, the hows, the dos and don'ts and all that. Most Aboriginal people - men and women in their respective area - had gone through not only kindergarten, primary, secondary and university in our form of education. When you came out the other end, you were a fully qualified tribal man, a hunter, provider. On the other side, the young girls came out fully grown women ready to be married, to have children, to raise children and know what to do and how to do it.

Track 04

One of the things that annoys me is when people come up and say "tell me about your culture, what is your culture?". Well, there's two people here now, there's you and that young man there [photographer Lyle Radford]. Now let me ask you: Tell me about your culture?. That's right. What about you? Can you explain to me your culture? No? It's because your culture is in here and in here. It's the way you think, the way you talk. The way you act. Your priorities. Your values. Your art. Your dance. Your singing. All those things are part of your culture. So I get annoyed when someone says to me "Well, Neville, tell me about the Jagera culture". I've been for the last ten minutes telling you about my culture. But don't just say to me, tell me about your culture.

As you said in the beginning, tell me something about yourself and your living, your parents and your grandparents. That's all part of my culture. It's not like that piece of paper. I can't give you my culture on a piece of paper and say "Here, that's my culture." Neither can you. Neither can anybody else. Your culture is not some commodity, some article that you give to someone - "Here's my culture" or "give me your culture". "Oh yes, thank you very much" and walk away and take your culture.

You would have to live in the area where I lived and other Aborigines lived. You meet with us, you talk with us. You dance with us, you sing with us. Do sport with us, you share a meal with us. We sit and talk. That's the way we learn to understand each other's culture.

It's been unfortunately a division between us - Aborigines and non-Aborigines. We lived on the outskirts of the cities in little government missions and things like that. So, how could you learn about my culture? And yet, we the indigenous people, were forced to learn and understand your culture. I know as much about your culture as you do. We were forced to live it. I've had to adapt to it. You didn't have to adapt to my culture. And so people have the cheek to say "Oh, they're different." Yes, we are different. We are different in the fact that we come from a totally different culture. Totally different values and priorities. But, if you learn to understand that, then we can come together. There should be no difference between us at all.

The fact that you're white and I'm black ...that's nothing. That's only a different colour.

Now, I might like a red shirt better than I like a black shirt. But what is that? The thing that used to disturb me was that people used to condemn we black people. And yet I've worked with men on the station who come to town and buy a beautiful black hat for their wives. I'd say "If your reckon black's no good, what do you want to buy a black hat for your wife for?"

You know, they don't hate a black shirt or a black pair of shoes or black trousers, and yet they have the cheek to draw back from a black person. Why? They told me here in the mind, it's not understanding culture and understanding human behaviour; human values and human priorities. Human feelings. You cut me and I bleed. I cut you, you bleed. Your precious cat dies, you grieve. My precious cat dies, I grieve too. So where's the difference? My child gets sick and I'm devastated and I want that child to a doctor as quick as I can so the doctor can cure him. Your child gets sick - the same thing. So what's the difference? We have emotions, we have hurts, we have love, we have hate, anger. You have the same thing. So what's the difference?

Interviewer: Do you think the situation is improving?

I've got to say it's improved enormously since my days as a child. But there's still a lot of bad feelings out there. Mabo's grave was a classic example of the most horrific, shocking, disgusting things that I've ever seen happen. [Mr Bonner is referring to recent vandalism at the grave of Eddie Mabo in Townsville.] Why should that be? Because there's a hard core of racists out there. Sure it's against Aborigines but it's also against other nationalities. You hear people talk about the boat people, the Vietnamese and they say it so degradingly. Why? They are fellow human beings, running away from a fate that's worse than death, looking for sanctuary and they come here. We should accept them and say "Come, my brothers. We have full and plenty for all."

You have people say "I hate the bloody Irish, I can't stand a bar of them". Why? "Look, I wouldn't have anything to do with a Scot the tight-fisted cows", or whatever. Why? We all have our faults. We all have our disadvantages. We all have our hurts, our anger, our sorrow, we all have our joy. The same as anyone else. Why can't we live together? We should be sneering hurtfully against another person because of their colour, slant of their eyes, the colour of their hair, whatever. It shouldn't be.

You know, I've told this little story many times. It was told to me when I attended an Aboriginal evangelical conference in Adelaide. We had an American, an African and an Indian from overseas, Christians. One of them stood up to give us a long talk. When he finished, he said "Now, my brothers and sisters, always remember you are very, very important." He said "I'm going to tell you a story. Many, many years ago, when Queen Elizabeth and her sister were taken by their parents to Scotland for a holiday - they were only young girls at the time - they

got up early the following morning and they went for a walk. They walked, and they walked and they walked until finally, Queen Elizabeth said to her sister Margaret, "Hey, we're lost. I don't know how to get back to where we are living." So they saw a cottage, and they went and knocked on the door. An elderly gentleman came out and said (I can't mimic their accent so I'll say it in good old Aussie) "Well, my dears, what can I do for you?" And Elizabeth looked up with beautiful blue eyes and a lovely smile and said "Sir, we are lost. Could you tell us how to get to.." and she named the place. And he kindly gave them all the directions. So, they said thank you and turned away and he said "Excuse me, girls, but what are your names?" And the Queen with her lovely, big beautiful, blue eyes and smile and said "Sir, our names would mean nothing to you but we are the daughters of the King". He said now remember, each and every one of you, you are the children of the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the Host of Hosts. And that's what we are. So why, and how dare we look down on one of God's children.

I think this is the lesson that a lot of foolish Australian people need to learn. Don't look down upon one of God's children, because you'll answer in time to come.

Interviewer: Do you think Aboriginal culture changing?

What I see happening which is coming out now with the suburban Aboriginal people, is that there appears to be developing what one might call a subculture. It's not the true deep culture of the Aboriginal tribal situation, it can't be. There's so much in Aboriginal culture that could not be now practised in urban situations. So, a lot of what can't be done now is being dropped out. But the main basics of Aboriginal culture is still there.

There are a lot of people who talk about customary law and why can't we have customary law. Well, Justice Michael Kirby and a group of people had been looking at that for years and years and years. This is what has caused a lot of conflict and is still causing a lot of conflict in the Northern Territory and in those areas where Aboriginal people are still living in a semi-tribal situation. It's that the whiteman's law is super-imposed over the top of Aboriginal law. There are some things in Aboriginal law that if you did now would conflict with whiteman's law. There's a conflict. It's very difficult now to be able to pick out which parts of Aboriginal law can be used and can't be used. So, in essence, what is happening, is that Aboriginal law is being destroyed.

The most important part of Aboriginal culture ...you see there were no jails, no place to incarcerate people so most of the really serious punishment was physical and you can't do that now, anymore than my sons can do to their children. When I was a kid and I did something wrong, my grandfather took his razor strop and gave me a good tanning of the bottom, and I never did it again. You can't do that anymore because now you're held up for child abuse.

Track 05

I was born on a little island in the mouth of the Tweed River called Ukerebagh Island. My mother had left Deebing Creek and she'd moved down around the Tweed Heads, Murwillumbah, places like that. She met a chap there and was married. The oldest boy, my eldest brother was born in a place called Murwillumbah. After he died, my mother was carrying me. Her husband cleared out and she hasn't seen him again so she went up to the Tweed and lived on that little island called Ukerebagh Island.

In those days, Aboriginal people were never allowed into the town after sundown and before sunrise in the morning. So, they lived on that little island where I was born. I have learned since that there was quite a number of babies that never survived and they were buried in the sand on that little island. I was fortunate, I survived.

My mother moved from there towards Lismore and we lived down near Lismore and she met up with another chap there and they lived in a de facto relationship and three children were born from that. Then my grandparents also came down looking for her. They had Aunt Janet, Aunt Mary and Uncle George. My eldest uncle, Uncle Jack never came down this way. He lived in Taroom Mission and from there to a place called Woorabinda and Uncle Jack went with them. My grandma and grandpa came down and we lived around Lismore, Casino, Kyogle, Grafton, round the fringes of towns, things like that.

In that area where we, the Aboriginal student children, were never permitted to go to the normal schools. They had little segregated schools. They had one at Cabbage Tree Island and one at Corakai, one at Tuncester just outside Lismore, one at Stony Gully, one at Woodenbong. We never lived close to them for any length of time. We lived for a short time, for three or four months, at Tuncester. I went to school there for about two months, I suppose. Then when mother died, my grandparents took over the responsibility for raising myself and my younger brother. My sister went with her father's people down on an island in the Maclean River.

So, I lived with grandma and grandfather and this is where I learned a lot about my Jagera country. I was a young kid, no school so I sat with grandfather and went hunting, looking for wild food. He told me a lot of our culture, our way of life and our tribal situation. He was a fully initiated Aboriginal man.

Interviewer: *Was he leading, to some extent, a tribal life then?*

No, we were living on the fringes of town. But he still knew all about it because he had been through the initiation and lived in a tribal situation when he was a boy. Then grandma decided that Jim and I should get some education. So she came back to where she was a girl and grew up before she met grandfather in Beaudesert.

When we came back we were all allowed to go to normal schools. See, despite the fact that the southerners used

to say that Queensland is the deep north - in those days, Aboriginal children couldn't go to normal white schools but in Queensland, they always could. If you didn't live on a mission or settlement and lived in a small country town or city, you were permitted to go to the normal schools, the same as anybody else. So, I got what I term my only full year's formal education at Beaudesert.

Then grandma died, my Aunt looked after Jimmy and I then left school just after grandma died. When I started school I was 14 and they allowed me to go on for that year. But after I turned 15, they said I couldn't go on. So, I went working and went back into New South Wales, then came back into Queensland. My mother's oldest brother came down and he'd heard that mum had died and that grandma had died so he came looking for the children. He found Jim with Aunt Tilley so he was okay. My eldest brother had grown up and was looking after himself and he found me and took me back with him to an Aboriginal community called Woorabinda outside Rockhampton, west of Rockhampton. That was in 1937.

Track 06

In 1939 I left there and went west ...jumping trains and things like that (very foolish). And then in 1939, I was working on a station and I'd gone into Longreach and met up with some other Aboriginal chap who was coming down to Cherbourg to be married. So we were all chequed up so we caught a train down with him for his wedding. It was in Cherbourg, when I was there over Christmas in 1940, that a group of us enlisted in the army. There was about eight or nine of us. We were all set up to go down to the camp and we were told to hang on for a while, they couldn't take us in and that went on and on until they finally told us that they weren't taking any more Aborigines. So, I went back out west and worked in cattle stations.

It was out there that I met my first wife, Mona. She was working on a cattle station as a housemaid as many Aboriginal girls from settlements were sent out to work. We got together. Finally, in 1943, we decided to get married. She was a Palm Island girl so we went down to Palm Island and got married, went back out west and worked various places, she as a housemaid and me as a stockman or whatever. Then I decided that I'd go and stay in Hughenden in the town itself. I got a job there cordwood cutting. You don't hear much about cordwood cutting now. You cut wood a certain length, a certain width, a certain height and then a bloke would buy it off you, put it on his truck, take it up town, cut it into blocks and sell it. I got so much a cord for doing that. I used to go out on the Monday and camp out and come home on the weekend. My wife was working at the ambulance station. We were renting a house with another young couple. They had no children and we had no children at that time. Mona was ironing. She'd done all the ironing and was just onto the hankies. Something distracted her and she had the iron like that on the hankies and it started to scorch.

Of course, the lady of the house came up and said "You silly, black bitch. You watch what you're doing." And of course my wife, Mona, just hauled off and slapped her across the face! She was picked up by the police and put in the lockup and the police went up, she packed her port, they put her on a train and sent her back to Palm Island. Despite the fact that we were married.

But that was the law in those days. She had struck a white woman, despite what the white woman had said to her, she had no right to strike a white woman because she was a black gin. That's what she was classed as. So she was sent to Palm Island.

I got a job back on a station as head stockman and I went to down to Palm Island and spent a little time down there. Then came back and Mona was there for approximately 12 months and my first son was born there. Yes, it was about 12 months. He was four months old when I brought them back.

We lived in Hughenden for some time and I worked on a cattle station - I was head stockman. She came out and my baby contracted an illness called amoebic dysentery and because we were out there and it was a wet season, it took us a lot of time to finally get into town, we nearly lost him. That scared Mona so she wouldn't live out there anymore. She just wanted to go home. So I finally took her back to Palm Island and lived on Palm Island for 15 years.

I did well. I got involved with the community quite well. I finished up becoming the Assistant Settlement Overseer with a workforce of 250 people under me. Then in early 1960, I attended a conference with the director of Aboriginal affairs in those days, Con O'Leary in Cairns. He had invited me up. He sent me up by train from Brisbane. He flew up. Of course, a blackfella couldn't fly in those days, it was too expensive for that. We met up to Cairns and attended the conference. I joined in the conference and made what someone said were quite remarkable speeches for an Abo.

Con said "look", he said "I'm going to do something for you." I said, "What are you going to do?" He said "I want you to come to Cherbourg and I'll set you up with a artefacts factory. You'll be in charge of it. You'll be one of my staff and you'll live in the staff quarters the same as all the other staff." I thought oh yeah. So he said "You've got three weeks to let me know if you're coming."

I went home to Palm Island and the superintendent called me in three weeks after I'd got home and said "Have you made your decision. Are you going down to be with Mr O'Leary?" I said "No. No thank you. I'll stay here." So he said "Why?" I said "Look, if I go down there and I'm made a member of staff I would have been the first Aborigine on the staff of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs." They'd never had one before. I said "That would separate me from the people."

You see, if I was in the staff quarters, I couldn't have other Aborigines come into the staff quarters and I

couldn't have a meal up at their house. It was completely segregated. I said "I couldn't live like that and neither could my wife and children."

So he got on the phone. We had radio telephone in those days. He got on the phone and said "Mr O'Leary, Neville Bonner has refused to come down."

He said "Alright, put him on the phone." I got on the phone. He said "Well, Neville, what's your decision?"

I said "No, Mr O'Leary. No thank you very much. I'm honoured that you want to do that but I couldn't do it."

He said "Well, my boy, you're either with me or against me. It appears that you're against me so put Barton back on the phone".

So Barton got back on the phone. He said "Neville, I'm sorry. The boss says I've got to throw you off tomorrow."

I said "What, tomorrow?"

He said, "Yes. But he's not going to know so you can have a week."

So I packed my gear and had a bit of a send off.

He said "I'll give you six months start to go down, find yourself a job and a home and then I'll send the family down."

That was in early 1960.

Track 07

The day I arrived in Brisbane on 19th September 1960. My friends met me at the railway station. On the way back to their home, we pulled up at a little shopping centre. A chap came over and said "Giddy, Ernie." and they introduced me to him and his name was Ramsay, Alan Ramsay. He was an earthmover in Brisbane. He'd just bought a farm at Mt Crosby, out at Lake Manchester out there. We were telling him I was down looking for work and he said "What sort of work do you do?"

I said "Anything. Basically a labourer."

And he said "Do you know anything about dairy farming?"

I said "Oh yes, I cut my teeth on that in New South Wales when I was a boy."

He said "Can you use milking machines?"

I said "Yeah. No trouble."

He said "Right. You've got yourself a job. I just bought a dairy farm."

So I went out about the 21st or something. Before Christmas, I had enough money. I rang Barton at Palm Island and said "Put my family on a boat, put them on a train. Send them down. I've got a home and everything for them."



"I started a little boomerang factory .."
(Photo courtesy QT)

They came down and joined me. We lived on the farm for about two years and that cracked up and I moved into Mt Crosby where I worked with the Brisbane City Council out at Lake Manchester for about 12 months. I used to travel from Mt Crosby out to Lake Manchester.

Then I left that and started a little boomerang business for a while. That wasn't panning out too well. So I went back and worked on the construction gang at Mt Crosby building new sedimentation basins. Then I had a set to with the foreman there and threw my job in and came in and started a little boomerang factory. I had that going just out at North Ipswich, Tivoli.

Then my wife and I called it quits, my first wife. She went back north and I lived down here with two of my boys putting them through school.

Then I got a job with Moreton Shire Council. I closed my factory because I couldn't compete with the Japanese imitation stuff. I worked for Moreton Shire as a bridge builder and from there, history will tell the rest of it.

That's where I got into the Senate and served 12 years in the Senate. I was representing Queensland in 1983 and the Liberal Party pulled that silly stunt and put me number three when I should have been number one.

I told them to go jump in the lake and ran as an independent and damned near beat them all. If only for the preferences I would have. I lost that election by .05 per cent of the quota in my own right. If the Aborigines in Queensland had all supported my (they make up two percent), I would have been home and hosed. But it didn't work out that way.

Track 08

Interviewer: What started you looking towards politics?

It was a funny thing actually. When I came down here I joined an organisation called OPAL - One People of Australia League. I served on that through the Ipswich branch of it and I got onto the state executive of that organisation. My wife now was in OPAL as well. I became president of the organisation and she became my confidential secretary. So, on the way back and forth from work, I used to call in at her place and do the correspondence and then go on home.

I often used to meet with her daughter Robyn and her husband Noel who members of the Liberal Party. We used to talk politics. All my young life I naturally, like a lot of people because I was a working man, I naturally thought I should support the Labour Party. We used to argue about Pig-Iron Bob and all that sort of stuff. I used to get all upset about it and they used to get all upset about it. Anyway, it was good training for me. Then the 1967 referendum ...they were preparing for that. Robyn and Noel asked me if I'd hand out how to vote cards for them.

I said "Cut it out! Me handing out Tory how to vote cards. No way."

They said "No. Hang on. The Liberal Party are supporting this."

"Well. That makes a difference". They said "Look, we're short of people." I said "Okay. I'll hand them out." They put me at Leichhardt School. I started there at eight o'clock in the morning and they came around and gave me a cup of tea and a scone or something then they'd go off.

I was there on my own. There was no one else there. There was a box with the Labour Party cards on it, another box with the National - Country - Party cards on it and there's me handing out the Liberal cards.

A big car turned up and two blokes got out of it. An elderly gentleman and a younger bloke, tall bloke. This tall bloke walked over and he said "What are you doing handing out those how to vote cards? We do more for you bloody Aborigines that those bastards do."

I said "Excuse me, but who the hell are you?"

He said "I'm Bill Hayden, I'm the Member for Oxley".

I said "Are you?" What went through my mind was how dare someone come up to me and presume that because I was black I had to support one particular party. So I said "Look, Mr Hayden, it's like this. I'd look bloody silly handing out your cards when I'm a member of the Liberal Party."

"Hmmp!" he said and he and Jack Perrott walked off. Jack Perrott was his campaign manger.

So when Robyn came to pick me up I said "Hey, you've been wanting me to join the Liberal Party, haven't you?"



She said “Yes. Noel and I would love to have you in our branch.”

I said “Give me a nomination form and I’ll fill it in.”

So I went on to the Liberal Party in that branch and we used to attend the area executive meetings. It was a small branch, there was only about eight of us in the branch. I was nominated. With Robyn being the secretary, I was nominated to the area executive.

The first time they set up the area - the different areas - there’s Oxley area and such and such - they talked me into running as area chairman. It was funny as a circus. We had the meeting and John Moore from the state executive came up and he presided over the meeting. There was two candidates, me and another bloke. I won handsomely.

John Moore had his pencil and he threw it down and said “Shit,” he said. “They’ve elected a boong.”

Robyn, who was sitting beside me, she was very unhappy. Anyway, that put me on the state executive of the Liberal Party.

That’s how I started getting into politics. Because I was with OPAL, it put me on the state executive where I was rubbing shoulders and on first name terms with Alan Hume and the State Minister for Health.

Anyway, there was one federal member and three or four - Gordon Chalk ... people like that. I started to think, “Hey, this is good. I’m rubbing shoulders with these blokes. This is going to help me to get finance for my organisation OPAL.”

OPAL’s work at that time was basically involved with underprivileged whites and Aboriginal people with education, employment, housing clothes, food parcels and all that sort of thing.

I said “This is great.” So, I did well. I got a lovely big hostel at Mt Gravatt. I got that through Gordon Chalk and a few others because I was on the state executive of the Liberal Party and on first name terms with them.

Then, there was a by-election on the Gold Coast and Bill Heatley was the candidate. Bill Heatley had been a senator for a short term and lost it and he ran for the seat down there which he won.

That night Eric Robinson on the Isle of Capri put on a big party, one of those fork dinners where you stand around eating while the votes were being counted. The results were coming in. They’d sing out “so and so got so many”. Anyway, I was standing with a group, there was Glen Lyons, he was secretary of the party at that time and his wife. And Alan Hume and his wife. Fred Campbell and his wife. We were all standing in a circle. And Ruth, Glen’s wife said “Hey, Neville, when are we going to be doing something like this with you?”

At that time, they were calling nominations for the half-Senate election. There was Ellis Lorrie and Ian Wood and they were calling nominations for the third person to fill the third spot.

And so, just to be in the swim of things, I said “Sooner than you think.”

They stopped talking and said “Why Nev.” I said, “I’m

going to throw my hat in for a Senate nomination.”

Well, the news went around that place like a house on fire. People were coming up - I hadn't given faced up for selection yet - congratulating me. Fred Campbell said "You'll get it boy, we'll see to that, blah, blah, blah." Lo and behold, I won the pre-selection.

But I didn't win the seat. Vince Gair was the key man at that time - we all knew that. They knew I couldn't win it. I knew I couldn't win it. But what a wonderful experience. I travelled around, did a lot of campaigning on branches and all that. I go pretty well known throughout the Party.

So, the following year, there was a ... you'll remember the business about John Gorton and McMahon, how John Gorton was under fire and they reckoned that Gorton should go. Eric Robinson, who was President of the Party in Queensland at the time, supported Billy McMahon.

Of course, John Gorton finally did go. He had the casting vote but didn't take it so he was thrown out and Billy McMahon got in. Because of this enormous work that Eric Robinson did for Billy McMahon, ...Billy McMahon, in my opinion (now I have no facts to this but this in my opinion anyway) kicked Annabelle Rankin upstairs to become High Commissioner for New Zealand leaving a casual vacancy which should have been and normally would have been filled by the President of the Party.

But they forgot one thing. There was little black duck. And I screamed. And the newspapers supported me. In my files in Canberra, in the library, there are two letters. One from what used to be the Telegraph ... oh, three, one from the Telegraph, one from The Courier-Mail and one from the Truth.

Three letters went to Eric Robinson saying "Back off, or we'll crucify you." And he backed off. And history again...take it from there.

Twelve years in the Senate. And here I am today. No richer, no poorer. But a little wiser.

Track 09

Interviewer: Was it worthwhile?

Oh yes. It proved something I think. I don't think I'm sure. It proved to the community that given an opportunity, and encouragement and the right kind of people to support you, there's no end to where an Aboriginal person can go.

I served 12 years down there. When I went there, I asked no quarter and I gave no quarter. I was treated equally in the chamber as any other senator. When I was on my feet, the opposition gave me just as hard a time as they gave any of my colleagues. They never nursed me at all.

They didn't say, "Oh, he's a poor, blackfellow. We'll give him a go." No way. And, I copped it and I handed it out. I gave as good as I took, I'm sure. So, I proved that.

The other important factor.. People say, "What do you think



you achieved?" I think that's something I achieved.

Now forget Neville Bonner, the fact that he's an Aborigine. I never really achieved that for a start. I debated things of national and international importance. I spoke on issues that were important to all Australians. Sure, there was lots of times I spoke on Aboriginal issues and rightly so.

Secondly, for the first time, an Aboriginal voice was heard in the place where everything happens, where all laws are made, where all policies are implemented. The Federal Parliament.

I had the opportunity...for the first time in history, a backbencher introduced a piece of government legislation and took it through all the stages in the Parliament. That was the Aboriginal Development Commission Bill.

I introduced, I proposed a Bill of my own - Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders Admissibility of Confessions Bill - which unfortunately I never got through. I was thrown out before I had time to get it through.

I moved a motion of compensation which was carried without dissent in the Senate, and buried by Whitlam in the Upper House. Now this is the government which is supposed to be all for Aborigines.

The motion "The Senate unanimously adopted the following resolution on the 20th of February, 1975 moved by Senator Neville Bonner. That the Senate accepts the fact that the indigenous people of Australia now known as Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders were in possession of this entire nation prior to the 1788 First Fleet landing in Botany Bay. It urges the Australian Government to admit prior ownership by the said indigenous people, and introduce legislation to compensate the people now

known as Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders for the dispossession of their land.”

That was in 1975. If that had've been accepted then, there'd have been no need for Mabo.

What I was aiming at was compensation for dispossession which would have meant in actual fact, no more than what the government is doing now. The money that's set aside for Aboriginal advancement. The difference would have been accepting that .. it would have been a right.

At the moment, what we get now is the charity of the government of the day. One government says we'll give you \$10 million, the next government comes in and says that's too bloody much \$9 million or vice versa. But it's charity because it depends on the goodwill of the government of the day. Under that, it would have been a right. Not charity.

All Aborigines would have stood tall and dignified because what money was allocated for various things - health, education, housing, employment, business enterprise - all of those things, would have been a right because it was our compensation for dispossession of our land. They had that opportunity in 1975. And the Labor Party muffed it.

I'm not trying to make this a political debate but these are facts. I have to say this because these are facts, they're true. It's all there. You only have to pick up the Hansard and see my speech introduced in that...

It was funny as a circus. The day I was introducing that, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs at the time, Jim Cavanagh, was trying to prevent me from bringing it on. And God bless him, Peter Ray from Tasmania, came rushing into the Senate and boy, he sewed them up tightly. They couldn't prevent me from bringing on a motion. It was already passed that I could speak. Actually, one of Cavanagh's own mates yelled out to him, "Shut up, you bloody fool." But he wouldn't, he kept going. Poor old Jim, he was a nice bloke really.

Track 10

Interviewer: *What do you want to see happen in Ipswich?*

No more than I want to see happen everywhere. It's a two way thing. We have given a lot of ground as I said earlier about our culture and all that and adapting to the alien culture which came in here and dispossessed us and all of that. What I want to see, is that we can all come to terms with the things I said earlier. Aborigines and non-Aborigines accepting each other as fellow Australian citizens. Justice must not only be seen to be done, it must be done. We have suffered so much. We are a wounded race. We are still bleeding. Start to look at us as fellow Australians and give us the same opportunities.

Sure, some of us are going to fall by the way. But, this continual looking at one Aborigine who has gone bad and

wiping us all with the same brush is not on.

I used often to speak to groups and they say, "Ah, yes. I had an Aborigine working for my team, he was bloody hopeless. I've never had another one."

I say to them, "Hey, how many other people of other nationalities have you had that haven't been any good?"

"Oh, lots of them."

"Does that mean that if it was an Irishman, you wouldn't have any more Irishmen?"

"Oh, no you can't do that."

"It if was a Scot.."

"No, you can't do that."

Well, why because one Aborigine was bad, would you condemn all the rest? This had got to come to an end. People have got to start looking. There's a lot of criticism about this so-called enormous amount of money that's gone to the blacks. If that enormous amount of money that they talk about was shared each year by all Aborigines, by God, I'd have a lovely three-storey brick home or something.

All money that's allocated for so-called Aboriginal advancement - 70% of it goes into administrative costs. And most of those administrative costs go to non-Aboriginal people. 30% gets down to what it should be.

Interviewer: *How do you cut that problem out?*

How? It's an enormous problem. I'd need time to sit down and really work on that. It's a curly question. Not a question that can be answered on the spur of the moment. You'd need a group of people to come together and surely we have the wits and the brains in this country to be able to sit down and say how this can be done without all this wastage.

But it doesn't matter that it's only in Aboriginal Affairs. It's everything. Social Security, health, education. They say "Billions of dollars spent on education." But how much of it is spent on education. The teachers, the inspectors and all the staff. Look at all the money that goes into that. But you've still got to have them to have educated children.

When I think of the little bit of schooling I had in New South Wales, there was one teacher and she taught first, second, third, fourth grades or classes. One teacher. She had about 40 kids. She taught the lot.

Teachers now have one subject and they can't have more than 25 children. Now, does that mean that the people of the day are less intelligent that Mrs Hiscock was? Less capable that Mrs Hiscock was? After all, I had a short time with her and I became a Senator. So God bless her!

Interviewer: *You are supposed to be retired now - are you actually retired?*

Well, not really! After I came out of the Senate twelve years ago in 1983, I joined the Australian Broadcasting

Corporation on the Board of Directors. Because I was the only member of the Board who didn't have a full-time job, I was told if there was something to do with Alice Springs or Darwin I had to do it. I travelled quite extensively around doing work for the ABC.

Apart from that, I also became an official visitor to all prisons in South East Queensland.

As well as that, I'm on the Board of References of Fusion.

I'm also on the advisory committee for Old Parliamentary House and I still do a lot of talking to various conferences and things like that. I still do a lot of advising and counselling to a lot of Aboriginal organisations.

I still launch a book or two here and there. Open a few art exhibitions and things like that. The only difference now is a lot of what I'm doing, except for the Corrective Services, I do for love.

I'm almost as busy now as I was in the Senate, but as I tell a lot of people, the only difference is that when I was in the Senate I got paid for it. Now I do it because I feel that I'm making a contribution in one form or another. So, I'm kept fairly busy. I thank God for that. I couldn't think of anything worse than retiring and just sitting and wasting away.

I keep active, keep my brain stimulated and on top of that, my wife will tell you anyway, I'm an addicted golfer. I try to play golf three times a week - Wednesday mornings, Friday mornings and Saturday mornings and I'd play Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday if I could. But, that's a bit much and a bit costly! So, by and large, I'm kept busy enough to keep me out of mischief. And I think that's a good thing.

Ipswich has been good to me. It's a city where there is a very small amount of what you'd call racial problems. There's not a lot of that and that's a good thing.

Basically. Ipswichian people are a nice people, they'll meet you more than half way. They'll accept you into the community.

My son lives at Riverview and all his neighbours around there think he's a great guy. Now all his neighbours are not Aborigines, they're non- Aboriginal people. So, it gives you an example of the kind of people that Ipswich people are.

I've been accepted in the community in which I live. I live in Short Street, Ipswich, and all my neighbours are wonderful people. We say giddy to each other across the road or next door. We're not in each other's pockets or anything like that. We accept each other as fellow Short Street-ans and that's how I like it. There's no discrimination, no prejudice or anything like that that I can see. Not as far as I'm concerned.

I'm still recognised wherever I go in Queensland and in other states. People still come up to me and call me Senator and say "How are you doing Senator?"

I try to say, "Well, look, I'm retired."

"But, yes, you'll always be a Senator as far as we're concerned."

It's like your second name or your first name or something. And that gives me a lot of joy. To know that what I did while I was there was appreciated, not only by the people in my own city and my own state but in the nation generally.

I once did a tour with the Managing Director of the ABC, David Hill. When he got back, he said to his colleague, "I'll never travel again with that so and so."

They said, "Why?"

He said, "Everybody knows him. You can't walk down a street without someone pulling you up and wanting to talk to him."

I don't say that in a nasty prideful way. I say it with a great deal of pride because that's Australia.

The unfortunate part about it is that there are times when that works in a way that I don't like. There are occasions where I can do something and go somewhere and people do it because I was a Senator or because at the time I was a Senator. And I sometimes wonder whether they would have done that for Neville Bonner as an Aborigine. But there wasn't a lot of that but there was some of it and that makes me sad that people say, "but he's a Senator black" or something like that.

But there wasn't a lot of it but unfortunately, there was some of it in Queensland.

I'm told there was some of it elsewhere but never up to my face. Behind my back. "He's a nice fellow, Bonner. Nice fellow for an Aborigine." That adds insult to injury.

Interviewer: Is there a need for more role models?

There are a lot of role models out there. A lot of people out there doing good work. When you consider we know have fine doctors, MDs, Aborigines - men and women. We have eight to ten barristers. We have numerous lawyers. We have heads of departments. Lois Donoghue is the head of ATSIC. All those on a board - high profile people. We have Dr Eric Wilmot, Dr Eve Fesl. We have a professor in South Australia ... Professor Colin Burke and Elma Burke who's very high in education over there. We have lots of role models out there. They're so busy doing what they're supposed to do that they're not.. you see, in my situation, I was travelling everywhere and I had a high profile and everybody knew. Whereas these people are quietly going on doing their job and doing it magnificently well.

Ernie Bridges in Western Australia, he's a role model in Western Australia. He's the only Aborigine ever elected into State Parliament in Western Australia. He was even made a Minister.

Hyacinth Tungutalum in the Northern Territory who was in the Legislative Assembly up there.

Neville Perkins who was in the Legislative Assembly doing a magnificent job in Sydney at the moment.

You've got Pat O'Shane who's a magistrate in New South Wales.

You've got Yothu Yindi who's got the band that's travelled all over the world. The only place he didn't make a dint was in Ipswich. I must say that, that really sticks in my craw. There was a band and a man who was world renowned. I was in London for the Aratjara art exhibition at the Hayward Gallery. In the Elizabeth Theatre alongside was Yothu Yindi and I was the guest of honour at that. Two thousand people just packed in there and they stood from the time he started to when he sat down. And he took the place by storm. Every night he showed there it was packed out.

In Ipswich, there was about 200 people. I mean, my God. Now there's a role model for the young people. Non drinker, non-smoker. No dope. Clean cut. Lovely young fellow and his band is all magnificent people. What more of a role model can you get than that? He's a role model for white and black. Now for these street kids and dope addicts, he's a role model for all of those. Look, they can see what he's reached. From a tribal situation to one of the most renowned entertainers in the blasted world. You can't get much more than that.

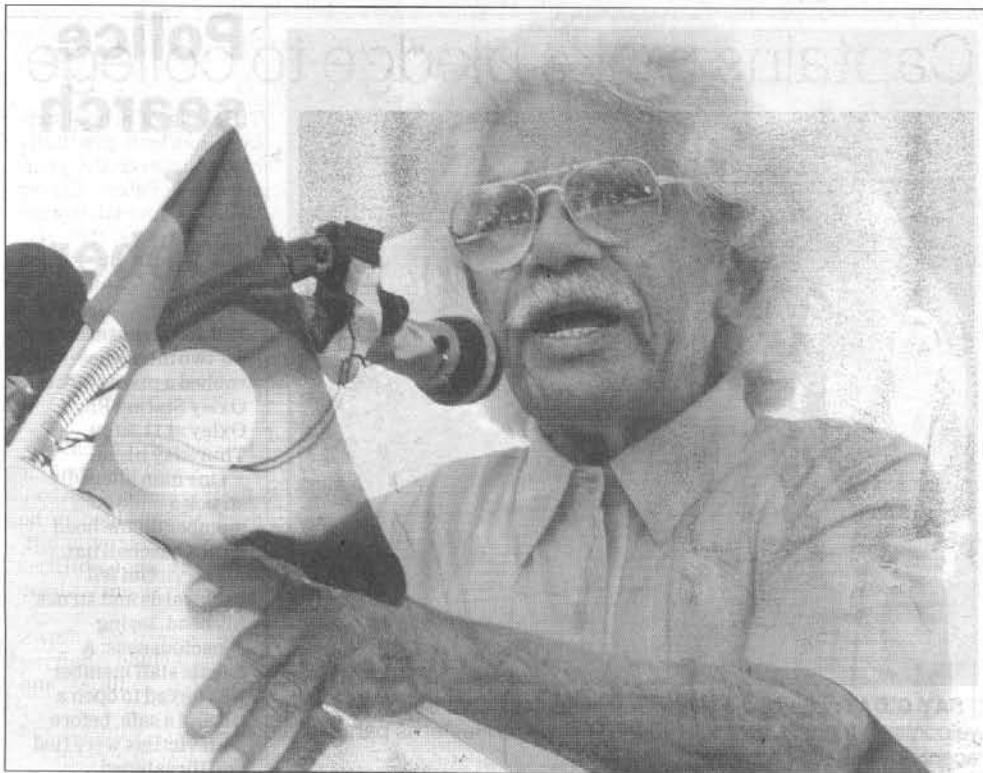
So, all we've got to do is think, think, think. Get our minds thinking. Where are we going wrong? Not just me, you, the photographer, all of us have got to start thinking. Where are we going wrong? What can I do?

You can be a role model in this relationship between Aborigines and non- Aborigines. I am a role model. My wife's a role model. We're all role models if we want to be. But we've got to be, we've got to set the example.

A lot of our racial business begins in the home. If you talk about Abos and boongs, your children will talk about Abos and boongs. You need to talk about that nice Aboriginal family who live down the street. Lovely kiddies. Look how the young fellow - gentleman - is going out to work. The gentleman, not the Aborigine. Not the blackfella. Not the boong, the Abo. Talk to his wife sometime. Say hello. "How are you?"

Interviewer: So it really has to come down to the individual level?

Absolutely. It's like I used to tell the Liberal Party. The best advertising you can get is word of mouth. You can put pictures up on the wall and all that but it's the person to person. I convinced a lot of people. To get the kind of votes that I got, I must have.



REMARKABLE LIFE: Neville Bonner, who died in Ipswich yesterday.

Honest man who never lost touch

OBITUARY

From page 1

ABORIGINAL and Torres Strait Islander Commissioner chairman Gatjil Djerrkura said Neville Bonner was one of this century's truly great ambassadors and statesmen.

Mr Djerrkura said Mr Bonner's death was a great loss to the nation.

"For all of his public life Dr Bonner served his country, his state and indigenous and non-indigenous people alike with great distinction," Mr Djerrkura said. "He will be remembered as an honest and gentle man who never lost touch with his Aboriginal lore, beliefs and traditions."

He said Mr Bonner, as the first Aboriginal voice in the Federal Parliament, made people, including lawmakers, aware of indigenous people.

"A voice for our people, and of our people, has been stilled," Mr Djerrkura said. "But we will continue to hear it in our hearts forever."

State Treasurer and Member for Ipswich David Hamill said Mr Bonner's death was a great loss to the Ipswich community and to Australia.

"His contribution has provided a great inspiration to me and I'm sure to many others," he said.

Opposition Leader Kim Beazley said Mr Bonner had done great service to Aboriginal people.

An elder of Ipswich's Jagera tribe, Mr Bonner served for 12 years as a Liberal Party senator until he was dumped from number one place to third on the Senate ticket in 1983.

He resigned from the party in February 1983 to stand as an independent Senate candidate in the 1983 half-Senate election, but lost.

His outspoken approach to issues such as land rights, Moreton Island protection and the Franklin Dam contributed to him being dumped, but Mr Bonner maintained it also had elements of a racist backlash.

He was recently honoured when a Brisbane government office block was named after him.

Mr Bonner is survived by his wife Heather, 67, whom he married in 1972, and five sons and two foster daughters by his first wife Mona Banfield, who died in 1969.

Born on March 28, 1922, Mr Bonner was raised by his grandparents after his parents died when he was a young child. He lived in poverty in the northern rivers district of New South Wales.

Biographical notes provided by Neville Bonner at the time of this interview

3 Short Street,
IPSWICH QLD 4305
Phone: (07) 281 3487

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

NEVILLE T. BONNER, A.O.; D.UNI.GRIFF.
JAGERA ELDER
RECOGNISED ELDER STATESMAN OF THE
ABORIGINAL RACE.

Mr. Bonner was born on Ukerebagh Island, Tweed Heads, New South Wales on 28th March, 1922. His mother was visiting from her Jagera Country, Q°Land. He is the grandson of °Jung Jung° (Roger Bell), last fully initiated member of the Jagera Tribe, whose tribal °Country° or °Place° takes in the entire watershed of the Brisbane River, Qld. Mr. Bonner, by right of inheritance is the Elder of Jagera Country. His life was that of a fringe dweller, and he know hunger, cold, discrimination of the worst kind, despair and a lack of schooling.

At thirteen years of age, on the death of his mother, he moved to Beaudesert, Qld, and it was there that he received his only formal schooling for one year. Mr. Bonner, is of necessity, self-taught. He strongly advocates education of all young Aborigines.

Mr. Bonner worked on banana plantations, did ring-barking, and scrub-felling. He later became a stockman and rose to be head-stockman on large stations. He was also an expert cane cutter.

In July 1943, Neville Bonner married the now late Mrs Mona Bonner.

After the birth of their first son, who became very ill, Mr Bonner and his little family moved to Palm Island (Aboriginal Community) Qld, in 1945. It was on Palm Island, realising the plight of his people, he became actively involved in community affairs there. It was there he learned racial "togetherness" ... that the Aborigine could trust the non-Aborigine and could be guided by him to a ^{DEGREE} ~~degress~~. He rose to the position of Assistant Settlement Overseer, responsible for administration of works, with a work force of 250.

After 15 years, he left Palm Island, motivated by the desire to further the cause "togetherness". Mr. Bonner managed a diary farm for three years. He finally settled in Ipswich the centre of his Jagera Country and in 1966 he began his own Boomerang manufacturing business. Following this in 1968, he commenced work for the Moreton Shire Council (Qld) as a bridge carpenter.

Since early manhood, Mr. Bonner has been keenly interested in the advancement of the indigenous people of Australia through the common sense approach. He is strongly opposed to violence as an answer.

A widower, Mr. Bonner remarried on 29th July 1972. His wife is not Aborigine. He has five Aboriginal sons, twenty-two Aboriginal grandchildren, three white step-children, six white step grandchildren and eighteen great-grandchildren.

Mr. Bonner served as a State President of O.P.A.L. (One People of Australia League) from 1970 to 1976. He is now Patron and Life Member.

PUBLIC SPEAKING, COUNTRY MUSIC, GOLF ARE THE MAIN SOURCES OF HIS RECREATION.

Mr. Bonner won the endorsement to the Senate vacancy in Queensland, standing as a Liberal, on 24th May 1971. This position was formally ratified by the Qld State Parliament on 11th June, 1971. He was overwhelmingly elected by the citizens of Qld on a single Senate ticket (with the National Party) in the election of 2nd Dec. 1972.

Senator Bonner had been elected Senate Deputy Chairman of Committees in July, 1974 and served also on the Joint Parliamentary Publications Committee and Senate Standing Committee on Social Welfare, Regulations and Ordinances Committee and the Joint House Committee.

As Chairman of the Joint Committee on Aboriginal Land Rights in the Northern Territory he tabled that Committee's final report in Parliament on 17th August, 1977.

He was also a member of the Aboriginal Affairs (Secretary of Committee) Federal Affairs, Health and Welfare Committee.

A most momentous occasion was on 15th Sept 1976, when he introduced his own Private Member's Bill, entitled 'Aborigines and Islanders (Admissibility of Confessions) Bill 1976. This was history being enacted - Senator Bonner was the first Aborigine to introduce Legislation into the Australian Parliament. Also he was the first back bencher to intro-

duce a Govt. Bill and carry it through all stages, namely °Aboriginal Development Commission°.

Senator Bonner was appointed a Life Member of the Old Young Liberal Movement in January, 1978.

Senator Bonner became °Mr. Bonner° in March, 1983.

A large painting of °Senator Neville Bonner° displayed in Parliament House, Canberra is a tribute from the nation to the first Aborigine in Federal Parliament of Australia.

A building valued at seven million dollars, named °Bonner House° and °Bonner Court° located in Canberra is another tribute, this time from the Aborigines of Australia.

MR BONNER°S AIM IS TO SERVE ALL PEOPLE, REGARDLESS OF COLOUR, CREED OR CLASS. TO ASSIST IN THE BRINGING ABOUT OF THE TRUE TOGETHERNESS OF ALL AUSTRALIANS WITH ETHNIC IDENTITY RETAINED WHERE DESIRED. BY EXAMPLE HE TRIES TO LEAD HIS RACE INTO THE MAIN STREAM OF GENERAL AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY LIVING, WITH AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY.

Mr. Bonner was honoured by the Award of °Officer in the General Order of Australia° in January, 1984. (A.O.)

°Neville Bonner° a biography by Angela Burger, . was published by MacMillan in July 1979.

Mr. Bonner is, and has been, associated with a number of Organisations in Queensland and Australia, and a full list is attached.

He has travelled extensively, and through his Parliamentary career, and privately (and for WORLD VISION) has visited 27 countries.

✓ AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Director: Neville T. Bonner A.O.

LIST OF ASSOCIATIONS AND ORGANISATIONS

Patron	The Multiple Sclerosis Society
"	All Nations Club, Sydney
"	First Settlement Memorial Wall Committee Qld.
"	Blaxland Scouting Reserve, Ipswich, Qld.
"	Queensland Amateur Boxing Union
"	One People of Australia League (O.P.A.L.)
"	Palm Island Aboriginal Diving Club, Qld.
"	Raceview Scouting Group, Ipswich
"	Stoliarsky School of Music
"	Deebing Creek Aboriginal Historical Cemetery
"	Queensland Boxers Trainers Seconds Assoc.
Patron & Trustee	Southern Suburbs Rugby League Football Club, Ipswich.
Trustee	Ipswich Women's Shelter, Queensland Wandarrah Pre-School & Community Centre, Inala, Queensland.
Board Director	Australian Broadcasting Corporation 1983 - 91
Chairman	Australian Broadcasting Corporation: Subcommittee on Aboriginal Broadcasting 1983 - 91
Chairman	Board of Indigenous Trust
Vice President (HON)	National Toc H (Inc) - Current
"	" " Toc H (Inc) Queensland
"	" " Toc H (Inc) Canberra
Vice President	Queensland Rifle Association
Patron	WORLD VISION QLD. 1976-1990

NEVILLE T. BONNER, A.O.; D. UNI (GRIFF)

CURRENT ASSOCIATIONS AND ORGANISATIONS:

VICE-PRES. (HON) TOC H AUSTRALIA

MEMBER AMENSTY INTERNATIONAL

MEMBER ROSEWOOD GOLF CLUB

MEMBER BOARD REFERENCE, FUSION AUSTRALIA

MEMBER COMM. NATIONAL GOALS & DIRECTIONS

MEMBER FORMER FEDERAL PARLIAMENTARIANS ASSOC.

MEMBER IPSWICH (QLD) ABORIGINAL EMPLOY. COMMITTEE

MEMBER MAYOR'S TASK FORCE, UNI. FOR IPSWICH

MEMBER PURGA ABORIGINAL ELDERS COMMITTEE QLD.

MEMBER COUNCIL, GRIFFITH UNI. QLD.

FOUNDATION MEMBER & BOARD DIRECTOR, °AUSTRALIANS FOR CONSTITUTION
MONARCHY °

OFFICIAL VISITOR Q°LAND CORRECTIVE SERVICES COMMISSION (ALL
CORRECT. CENTRES S.E. QUEENSLAND)

CHAIRMAN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES
COMMITTEE, GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY

PATRON IPSWICH ART SOCIETY, QLD

PATRON NATIVE DOG (DINGO) ASSOC.; N.S.W.

PATRON A.C.T.U. (QLD BRANCH) ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT PROJECT

PATRON RIVERMOUNT COLLEGE, YATALA, QLD

TRUSTEE BUSH FRIENDS ASSN. INC

DEPUTY-COMMISSIONER QLD. ABORIGINAL LAND TRIBUNAL

CONSULTANT ABORIGINAL BROADCASTING (T.V & RADIO) A.B.C.

PATRON ALBERT & LOGAN MULTI CULTURAL FESTIVAL Q°LAND

PATRON ONE PEOPLE OF AUSTRALIA LEAGUE, QLD

2.

CURRENT ASSOCIATIONS AND ORGANISATIONS CONTINUED

PATRON ARATJARA ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER AR
EXHIBITION, DUSSELDORF, GERMANY APRIL/MAY 1993
LONDON, U.K. JULY/AUGUST 1993
DENMARK, MARCH 1994
ON INVITATION FROM AUSTRALIA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS



THE SENATE UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION
ON 20TH FEBRUARY 1975:

"THAT THE SENATE ACCEPTS THE FACT THAT THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF AUSTRALIA, NOW KNOWN AS ABORIGINES AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS, WERE IN POSSESSION OF THIS ENTIRE NATION PRIOR TO THE 1788 FIRST FLEET LANDING AT BOTANY BAY, URGES THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT TO ADMIT PRIOR OWNERSHIP BY THE SAID INDIGENOUS PEOPLE, AND INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO COMPENSATE THE PEOPLE NOW KNOWN AS ABORIGINES AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS FOR THE DISPOSSESSION OF THEIR LAND."

MOTION MOVED BY: SENATOR N.T. BONNER