



Media Release

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Celebrating Indigenous Culture at the Embassy of Australia

In partnership with the National Aborigines and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC), the Embassy of Australia is offering a number of free public programs from 6 to 13 July in honour of NAIDOC Week 2008.

The weeklong festival will kick off at 6 pm on Monday 7 July with a guided tour of the current exhibition at the Gallery at the Embassy of Australia, "Utopia – A Picture Story". Curator Beatrice Gralton will lead visitors through this important collection of 31 batiks by leading Aboriginal Australian artists. On Tuesday 8 July, Dr Margo Smith, Director and Curator of the Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection at the University of Virginia, will present an introductory lecture on Australian Aboriginal art. Dr Smith is a leading scholar on Aboriginal art and culture. The Kluge-Ruhe collection of Aboriginal art is the most comprehensive in the United States.

The Embassy will close the program with two critically acclaimed films, "Yolngu Boy" and "The Tracker". "Yolngu Boy" will be screened at 6 pm on Wednesday 9 July and follows the story of three indigenous boys caught in a collision between popular culture and the oldest living culture on earth. "The Tracker", screening 6 pm on Thursday 10 July, is the story of an aborigine (David Gulpilil) who is paid to lead three mounted policeman in pursuit of another indigenous man suspected of killing a white woman.

NAIDOC strives to raise awareness and celebrate the history, culture and achievements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The committee first formed in 1957 as the National Aborigines Day Observance Committee. Aborigines Day grew out of the Day of Mourning, which marked a major civil rights demonstration by Australian indigenous people in 1938. The Day of Mourning was originally observed on the Sunday before Australia Day (26 January), but in 1955 was shifted to the first Sunday in July. In 1991, growing awareness of the distinct histories of the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders led the committee to change its name to NAIDOC. Today, NAIDOC Week is celebrated by Australians all over the country through cultural festivals, a national poster competition and educational outreach activities. For more information about NAIDOC Week, please visit www.naidoc.org.au.

For a detailed listing of the Embassy's NAIDOC Week offerings, please see the attached program or visit www.usa.embassy.gov/events.html.