

red arts

STEPPING STONES INDIGENOUS ART PROJECT



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EXHIBITION (week July 13)

Naim Buluk (Bay Mob) 2006,
Cube 37, Frankston Arts Centre

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A cultural revolution is taking place in Frankston and the Mornington Peninsula. What began as a two-year initiative promoting cultural cohesion among disparate Indigenous communities has quickly developed into a thriving arts program uniting the local population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. In 18 months the Stepping Stones Indigenous Art Project has seen more than 200 participants discover a contemporary context for their traditional art. Ancient traditions of symbolising identity and mapping stories come largely from traditional landowners, the Boon wurrung people, who have lived along the northern, eastern and southern shorelines of Port Phillip Bay ('Naim') for some 40,000 years.

This week (NAIDOC week), Stepping Stones culminates in an inaugural showcase of local artwork reflecting Indigenous connections to community, culture and the Peninsula. The range of works, by a diversity of artists, was produced in a series of workshops facilitated by mainly Indigenous artists. These included talk with Anangu Pitjantjatjara artists from Ernabella and shell necklacing with Cape Baran Island elders. More recently, a stencil art workshop (pictured), facilitated by Andy Mac of Citylights Projects, resulted in the 'Naim Djanbana' (Bay Gathering Place) exhibition at Melbourne's City Library.

The Stepping Stones project – funded by VicHealth and supported by Frankston Arts Centre, Frankston City Council, Inter Council Aboriginal Consultative Committee and City of Melbourne – concludes this year, but its vision looks set to continue. Building on the success will be a new, incorporated arts organisation known as the Aboriginal Corporation for Frankston and Mornington Peninsula Indigenous Artists (ACFAMPIA).

By generating income and employment opportunities for Indigenous artists, ACFAMPIA promises to strengthen communities and continue the Indigenous cultural revolution enriching the lives of all Victorians.