

# Hope Vale uses the modern to tell the ancient



HOPE VALE Elders and young people have come together to use the most modern of digital equipment to record ancient storytelling traditions.

They did so in the idyllic setting of a month-long beach camp program on the sands of Cape Flattery in Queensland's far north.

In an initiative driven by the Hope Vale community in partnership with an organisation called Pelican Expeditions, community members learned how to script, edit and produce their own stories and attended a bush cinema screening of the 18 stories at the end of the camp.

The program, now in its fifth year, started as a plea from a local woman who, grieving the loss from yet another suicide in the community, saw a documentary about Pelican's expedition to Bass Strait with a group of disenfranchised young people from Melbourne.

They felt something similar could help to 'inspire positivity and give back a sense of hope to the community'.

Part of a larger cultural and environmental education project, other components throughout the month led to six local trainees sailing to Cape Flattery for their coxswain certificate, for which Pelican has a purpose-built 62-foot catamaran which it uses for sail and other training ventures.

Locals joined a kayaking crew that re-traced a traditional sea route. 'Speak Out' was also invited along to hold music and dance workshops as young locals gained confidence with performance.

## Forefront

Elders Des and Estelle Bowen have remained at the forefront of the project since its infancy, with digital storytelling co-ordinators Natalie Davey, from Pelican Expeditions, and University of Qld Indigenous health lecturer Samia Goudie encouraging people to tell their stories in their own way. They were supported by trainers James Leech, from the State Library of Queensland, and Toni-Jayne Northcott.

Ms Goudie's work with the community has helped to inform her PhD proposal (through Southern Cross University) titled *Stories of hope and resilience: using new media and storytelling to facilitate wellness in Indigenous communities*.

She said she was particularly interested in the way telling stories could be used to promote social and emotional well-being and to assist the recovery from trauma.

One of the most important aspects, she said, was to ensure the stories were handed back to the community, and this would be achieved when they were archived at the Indigenous Knowledge and Technology Centre, which is connected to State Library's *Keeping Cultures Strong* project.

"It created a platform for young people to interact with community Elders," Ms Goudie said of the camp. "The digital medium is a wonderful way to bring old ways and new ways together for our future generations."

"Through digital storytelling training, the Guugu Yimithirr people now have the skills to tell their own stories in their own words and document their own history."

"Digital storytelling offers communities a contemporary means to collect and archive oral histories, cultural heritage and stories and develop self-determined cultural safe-keeping of Indigenous knowledge."



University of Qld Indigenous health lecturer Samia Goudie with Caralyne Bowen.



Hope Vale youngster Brodie interviews Joseph Palmer for a digital story.



Estelle Bowen has a yarn with Caralyne and Brodie.



## Health the topic for NT Oration



WORLD Vision Australia Chief Executive the Rev Tim Costello, pictured, will deliver this

year's Menzies School of Health Research (MSHR) Oration in Darwin next week.

Mr Costello's focus will be the socio-economics and health problems of Indigenous Australians.

MSHR Director Professor Jonathon Carapetis said most government programs aimed at improving socio-economic conditions were focused on education and employment.

"But socio-economic status in Australia is also underpinned by home ownership, personal savings, community engagement and political representation," he said.

"These dimensions generally sit beyond the mandate of health professionals, but unless we understand their effects, gains in Indigenous health will be limited."

The 2008 Menzies Oration will be held on Tuesday 25 November from 5.30pm - 7pm at the Darwin Convention Centre. Contact Yvonne Coleman on (08) 8922 8982 or yvonne.coleman@menzies.edu.au to register attendance.

## Nathan Foley leaving HI-5



HI-5 founding member Nathan Foley has become the last original member of children's

entertainment group to quit.

Foley, who has Aboriginal heritage, announced last Wednesday that he would depart the group at the end of the year after 10 years.

"I'll always love Hi-5 and I'm very proud to be one of the original cast members, but after 10 years in the group it's time for me to move on and explore other opportunities," Foley, 29, said in a statement.

It comes just a couple weeks after his ex-fiance and fellow original member, Kellie Crawford, announced she'd also leave at the end of 2008 to pursue an acting career.

They'll both perform together with Hi-5 for the last time at the Christmas Carols on Christmas Eve in Melbourne. -AAP