

News

# Fight for their right

Recognise tour stops in St George to drum up local support

THE recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in our country's constitution is the core focus of the Recognise movement.

St George locals met with Recognise campaigners during their national tour at the weekend, where they also shared a cricket match during Sunday's White Ribbon Day event at St George State School.

Recognise co-ordinator of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement Charlee-Sue Frail said the movement was about raising awareness of the discrimination within the highest legal document in Australia.

"We're trying to create as much awareness as possible about constitutional recognition and the race powers within our constitution - it's about getting people warmed up to the idea of change," Ms Frail said.

"When you say that there's no mention of the first peoples (within the constitution) or there's a



**ANTI-DISCRIMINATION:** NAB Gatton branch manager Michaela Hanncent and Recognise campaigners Ruby Langton-Batty, Charlee-Sue Frail and Patrick Batchelor meet with St George locals as part of the national Recognise tour.

PHOTO: DAVID BARWELL

section that gives states the right to ban people from voting due to their race - that hits home and tends to shock a lot of people."

Written in 1901, the formation of the constitution also excluded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from

discussions and today the document can only be amended through referendum.

Campaigner Patrick Batchelor said amendments to the constitution would recognise the first people of Australia.

"The first Australians

have more than 40,000 years of history in this land and both non-indigenous and indigenous people seem very proud of that fact - it's what makes us unique in the world sitting," he said.

"Why is there not a single word to honour that in our constitution?"

# Blokes into bat against violence

MEN across the region have combined a game of cricket with signing an oath to stamp out domestic and family violence within the community.

On Saturday, service providers and families gathered at the St George State School for a "hit DV for six" event, which was held alongside a cricket match.

The day was part of the 2014 National White Ribbon Day initiative, which sends a message about putting an end to domestic violence.

Making his pledge on the day was Centacare's Brian Hunt, who is a counsellor for male perpetrators of domestic violence.

Mr Hunt said the event was about raising awareness within the community.

"It's about planting the seed of awareness and it's great to see so many men come along to support it," he said.

He said even within small communities, domestic violence can go unnoticed, especially when they occur on rural properties.

"I have worked in the



It's about planting the seed of awareness and it's great to see so many men come along.

— Brian Hunt

Northern Territory where cases of domestic violence are on the surface," he said.

"In areas such as St George it can be a bit more hidden - so it's important to get the word out and raise awareness."

St George police liaison officer Gavin Waters added it was great to see so many young people in attendance.

Pledges were made on a banner that will remain on display at the St George Centacare office, including on National White Ribbon Day on November 25.

The event was a collaboration between the Far West Indigenous Family Violence Service and Centacare Toowoomba.

## Helping business online

KARENA Wilson's Dirranbandi business The Linen Cupboard has been nominated in the Rescue My Site competition run by David Koch's Business Builders initiative.

Mr Koch said the competition is aimed at helping small businesses launch online stores to broaden their target market.

To help The Linen Cupboard, visit [www.rescuemysite.com.au/nomination/thelinen-cupboard-com-au](http://www.rescuemysite.com.au/nomination/thelinen-cupboard-com-au).

## Relief packages show people do care

A COLLABORATION between the city and bush is seeing drought relief care packages dispersed across the Balonne Shire this week.

National Malaya and Borneo Veterans Association member Graham Brewer and Forest Lake National Seniors Branch's Dan Baldwin arrived in St George with eight pallets of drought relief items earlier this week, with many more on the way.

With transportation assisted by St George Freightliners and Avis, the care packages were

assembled at the Care Balonne offices ready for dispersal.

Commencing with a road run to Bollon and Dirranbandi on the weekend, Mr Brewer said the response from the region's landholders had been overwhelming.

"We found out a lot by driving through the region, but you don't get the full story until you sit down and talk with people," Mr Brewer said.

"The response has been wonderful - but we've also been shocked at just how bad the drought is in the west.

"This is a token to say that people care and are thinking of them."

As well as delivering hundreds of care packages, senior groups have also donated money which has been spent on vouchers in local shops and businesses.

"We wanted to do something to benefit the whole town," Mr Brewer said.

"Small businesses are doing things very tough and shops need to stay open."

Care packs also included hand-written notes with messages from the people who had donated them.



**HELPING HAND:** Graham Brewer, Dan Baldwin and Care Balonne's Robyn Fuhrmeister assist with drought relief packages.

PHOTO: DAVID BARWELL

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