THE Yorta Yorta people achieved a major victory at the World Indigenous Peoples Summit held in advance of the G8 Summit in Hokkaido, Japan. In a call on the G8 to implement Indigenous peoples’ rights, the Yorta Yorta won significant support from Indigenous representatives from Asia, the Pacific, Europe and the Americas in their struggle for land justice and the right to practice and to enjoy their cultural heritage.

They have also achieved support for the right to ‘Free Prior and Informed Consent’ by governments and other parties on Indigenous matters, which is an important mandatory provision of the Declaration that has replaced the outdated and often exploited consultation process.

The Declaration provides minimum standards for the protection and the enjoyment of Indigenous people’s rights to land justice, culture and self-determination.

Support for the Yorta Yorta struggle for land justice and the right to practice and to enjoy their cultural heritage was overwhelmingly ratified by the grand gathering at the end of the summit, which was held in the Hokkaido Convention Centre. Signatories to the resolutions that support the Yorta Yorta came from representatives of more than 600 participants from Ainu Mosir (Hokkaido), Uchina-anchu (Okinawa), the United States, Canada, Hawaii, Guam, Australia, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Norway, Mexico, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Taiwan, and Aotearoa (New Zealand), including the Chairperson of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Populations, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, of the Philippines.

The Declaration is a major inspirational boost to the Yorta Yorta and their attempts to achieve land justice and cultural rights through legal and political processes from within Australia.

Given that Japan and the other countries represented contribute generously to the tourist economy in regional Australia, (an industry that is said to be worth $10 billion a year and which sustains 150,000 jobs of which Victoria receives a substantive share of nearly 30 per cent), this augurs well for Indigenous cultural tourism in regional Australia and the concept of national parks owned and jointly managed by Indigenous peoples.

If anyone knows of Barbara or her family’s whereabouts, I am seeking to contact Barbara in relation to a family matter.

I request the assistance of the Koori Mail’s readers in locating a family member of a client of SA Link-Up. I am seeking Barbara Joan Parter, who was born in Rockhampton, Queensland, and who was 63 years of age.

Link-Up.

Barbara Parter

The Koori Mail welcomes your Letters to the Editor. Preference is given to submissions of interest to Indigenous Australians. Please include your town and State of residence, and daytime telephone number for checking purposes. Items may be edited and reproduced.

Celeste Liddle writes that Dixie Crawford (pictured) is not the first Indigenous female on the TV show, Big Brother, and then takes Channel Ten to task for showing little respect for Indigenous culture.

Dr Wayne Atkinson

Yorta Yorta delegate to the World Indigenous Peoples Summit (Jawun, July) Victoria

Searching for Barbara Parter

I am a caseworker with the SA Link-Up Program of Nunkuwarrin Yunti of South Australia Inc in Adelaide. I request the assistance of The Koori Mail’s readers in locating a family member of a client of SA Link-Up.

I am seeking Barbara Joan Parter, who was born in Rockhampton, Queensland, and would be roughly 63 years of age. I am seeking to contact Barbara in regards to a family matter.

If anyone knows of Barbara or any of her family’s whereabouts, please contact the NSW Minister for the Arts, should upgrade facilities for Mr Syron to an acceptable level and in line with art conservation practices.

Andrew Woodhouse

President

Australian Heritage Institute Inc.

Potts Point, NSW

Dr Wayne Atkinson

Yorta Yorta delegate to the World Indigenous Peoples Summit (Jawun, July) Victoria

Creating a ‘vanilla society’ in Redfern

Minister Frank Sarton’s plans to demolish some of the Eveleigh Railway Workshops in Sydney, a site of World Heritage significance, are heresy here and will have a ripple effect across New South Wales.

They will transform Redfern into ‘Redfern Heights’ and create a ‘vanilla society’.

In their wake, distinguished Indigenous artist Gordon Syron will be evicted to make way for a multi-million dollar development of apartment blocks as tall as the nearby former TNT towers.

The status of Mr Syron’s lease is unclear, but he has done nothing wrong. He was provided with a large, leaky shed which he repaired himself, an allowance now revoked, and a computer with no personal identification number (PIN) which fails to function. He is preparing a dossier of the stories behind the 1300 artworks he is preparing a dossier of the stories behind the 1300 artworks he is curating on site.

Mr Syron’s most famous work ‘Judgement by his Peers’ (1978), for which he was recently offered – but refused – $1.5 million, leans casually and forlornly on an easel but refused – $1.5 million, leans casually and forlornly on an easel but refused – $1.5 million, leans casually and forlornly on an easel but refused – $1.5 million, leans casually and forlornly on an easel

The Age, 23 February 2008

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A big thanks to all of our readers for sending letters, poems and other feedback; we love hearing from you. We try to fit in as many reader contributions as we can. You can help us by making sure that your letters are 400 words or less and poems generally no more than 25 medium-length lines. We’d prefer addresses upon request.

We will publish ‘Looking For’ letters as long as they do not breach the privacy of individuals mentioned. Lastly, remember too that we’re happy to consider photos alongside letters – as long as they’re of a high enough resolution and standard, and as long as copyright requirements are met.