

Mparntwe Alice Springs Community Foundation Community Builder of the Week



Participation is key

ENCOURAGING, supporting and amplifying positive community action.

Name: Eric Neil

Who long have you lived in Alice Springs?

33 years.

Favourite sports teams, band or movie and why...

Like most sports and enjoy watching. Was a basketball referee for 40 years in SA and NT. Classical music is my favourite past time.

What role do you play in your community group/activity/action?

Being in the NT provides many opportunities to get involved. I have been the Vice President of the Chamber of Commerce, served on an Alice in 10 committee, and have been and still on Uniting Church committees. Being on the Board of St Philips College was one of my most rewarding activities.

Why is your community group/activity/action important?

Being part of a community group means you are contributing to supporting people and allowing them to also participate in a worthwhile activity.

Why do you volunteer? (or why did you initiate the activity/response)?

As a volunteer you meet so many more people that you may not otherwise get together with and your participation allows you to help your community.

What achievements are you most proud of?

Presenting a radio program of classical music for 8CCC, on a Sunday evening, for a number of years (even if you are not sure if anyone is listening) was a delight and rewarding to bring my favourite music to that audience.

Anything else you would like to say?

Be involved! Even if it is just helping on a Buntings BBQ or handing out water on a fun run, it is all part of being part of your community. Being a participant in any activity can be rewarding for you.

If you'd like to nominate someone to be the Mparntwe Alice Springs Community Foundation Community Builder of the Week, email editorial@centraliantoday.com.au and let us know who, why you think it would be great for the community to know about what they are doing and how to contact them.



Faces of Australia Ted Egan



Foundation Day

DEAR Readers

This week I am proud to announce a new book that Nerys and I have published. It is titled Foundation Day.

It records the circumnavigation of Australia in 1802-3, through the eyes of Captain Matthew Flinders, his First Australian Ambassador Mr Bungaree and his renowned cat, Trim. The famous three, of course, were accompanied by a large crew on HMS Investigator; their journey is arguably one of the greatest feats in Australian history. Flinders was able to report to Governor King on 8 September 1803 that he had established an island continent, Terra Australis, which he now suggested be called Australia. He reported that he now had charts and maps of the entire Australian coastline – some western regions had previously been charted by Dutch explorers. Previously British and Dutch explorers had used two names for the total land mass: New Holland and New South Wales.

Innovatively Flinders, in his wonderful

Journals, referred to the Aboriginal people as Australians, so perhaps we should honour Bungaree, a famous Elder from the Sydney region as The First First Australian? Flinders and Bungaree were indeed close friends; Bungaree had travelled with Captain Flinders on several journeys prior to the circumnavigation. He was particularly valuable on the many occasions when they met Aboriginal tribes during the epic journey.

I first became aware of the awesome skill of Flinders in the early 1950s when, as a Patrol Officer, I was involved in many sea journeys along the Northern Territory coastline; we were using Matthew Flinders excellent original maps! I was given a set of his Journals, maps and illustrations and regularly marvel at the achievement to this day.

In 2022, aged 90, I composed my song Foundation Day; later that year the inimitable Chris Tangey filmed three wonderful local singers – Chris Phillips as Flinders, Nicholas Njalka Williams as Mr Bungaree and Gleny

Rae as Trim the cat, as they sang my song to record the detail of the famous journey. What a thrilling day it was at Araluen.

Gleny Rae amazed us all with her musical skill as she played piano, violin and piano accordion as the backing track for the film. Musical director Ross Muir is a hard man to please: he was absolutely delighted. One take! That's a wrap!

But wait, there's more. Watching with great interest that day was Thor Jensen, a Danish born adventurer who now lives in Darwin. Thor himself is deservedly famous for his circumnavigation of Papua New Guinea in a traditional canoe; he is also hugely talented as an illustrator. We are nominating our book for all appropriate recognition.

So we now have a delightful book, illustrated by Thor, with a wonderful device called a QR Code, that enables the reader to read the book and study the video simultaneously, either on a mobile phone or YouTube. Even inept Ted Egan can do it!

Here's the last verse of the song

*I am Matthew Flinders
My name's Bungaree
I'm Trim the Cat
We have made history
We sailed around Australia
Made friends on the way
So the 8th day of September
Is Foundation Day*

Yes, the 8th day of September is Foundation Day! A day for all Australians to celebrate.

The book is priced @ \$19.95 and will be available at Red Kangaroo Books. The perfect stocking filler! We will be having a launch at RKB on Saturday 11 November 2023

Next week I'm going to introduce many of you to a renowned Territorian, Jimmy Herreen – famous as a prospector, bush jockey, raconteur, publican, lover. None better!

See you then. Aritjinanga.