

# UNCLE REG BLOW (1939-2012)



Uncle Reg Amos Blow was in the later 20th century and early 21st century, a Senior Elder of the Melbourne Aboriginal community. Born and raised at Rockhampton in Queensland, Reg's father, Amos, was a Kumbumerri man and his mother Edith from the Gureng-Gureng people.

Although having little formal education, Reg throughout his life always proved himself to be a deep thinker, visionary innovator and articulate communicator. He was for instance the first Aboriginal person in Australia to be Chairperson of an Inter-Faith Group. One of Reg's enduring interests throughout his life, was in defining the basic tenets of Wandjinism, the Australian Aboriginal religion.

On moving to Melbourne in the 1960's Reg soon met and married Yorta-Yorta woman Walda Walker, and they proved to be a dynamic and inspiring team. Reg quickly established his name as a pioneer in Aboriginal community services in the Melbourne area. He set up the Dandenong Aboriginal Co-operative, which provided services such as a youth hostel, life skills training, child care and employment support services. In this time Reg also assisted in setting up the Aboriginal Health Service.

In the 1970's Reg then worked as a research assistant at Monash University, where he initiated a student social action program against the destruction of significant Aboriginal sites in southwest Victoria. In this period Reg also provided advice to the federal department of Social Security (now Centrelink) on how to set up the first Aboriginal Liaison Service in Australia, which helped mediate the delivery of its services to Aboriginal clients. At this time, Reg was also Chairperson of the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency.

In the 1980's Reg was headhunted by the Victorian Government and became Aboriginal Advisor to the Minister for Housing. His work there soon saw Reg invited to become a Senior Advisor in the Department of Premier and Cabinet, and he was then responsible for setting up its Office of Aboriginal Affairs. Subsequently, Reg took up the role of Program Development Officer in the Office of Corrections, and over a six-year period he introduced Aboriginal Community Justice Panels across the state.

In the 1990's and 2000's Reg worked with several key Aboriginal organisations, including being CEO of the Aborigines Advancement League. Reg was also a Councillor in ATSIC for many years. Reg was also a pioneer of Spiritual Healing practices within community services and in 1995 was recognised as 'NAIDOC Aboriginal of the Year'. In 2012, only a fortnight before his death, Reg was most deservedly inducted onto the Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll, an honour his wife Walda was soon to also receive.