

Top job for Aboriginal advocate

The Port's high-profile Aboriginal advocate, Carol Ridgeway-Bisset, has been elected to the board of the NSW Reconciliation Council.

A Maaiangal traditional custodian born at Soldiers Point, Ms Ridgeway-Bisset said she was honoured to be elected along with six others representing Aboriginal Affairs, Aboriginal elders, juvenile justice and the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

"I have always been a firm believer in social justice for everyone, and I see my role as trying to get all the relevant departments working together for

a fairer system," she said.

"I was approached by local church groups to submit an application for election, and as such I will be pushing issues for everyone."

The board's agenda also takes in environmental, heritage, education, correctiveness and youth reconciliation issues.

Mr Ridgeway-Bisset can trace her family in the Port Stephens area back to the 1860s.

She is a vocal critic of the "bureaucratic" land council system and believes reconciliation is only achievable if Australians as a whole learn from past mistakes.



■ Carol Ridgeway-Bisset – links with the Port back to 1860.

Museum exhibition tracks heritage of Hunter Aborigines

By ALEXANDRA SMITH

STORIES of Hunter Aboriginal communities have been woven into a new permanent exhibition housed at the Newcastle Regional Museum.

The *Mixed Mobs: Indigenous Australians and the Hunter* exhibition was unveiled recently by Democrat Senator Aden Ridgeway.

The exhibition tracks the story of the first Australians from the earliest times to the present day.

Archaeological evidence dating from 2750 years ago at Swansea and 1500 years ago at Birubi is featured.

On display are rare Awabakal and Wonnarua wooden implements, as well as the story behind the universal sky spirit Biame, who appears in Hunter rock art.

More than 140 members from the Aboriginal community attended the opening of an exhibition that was



● Past, present, future . . . the first Aboriginal publican in NSW, at Catherine Hill Bay, Dorothy Wotherspoon, left and on the TV screen, with Carol Ridgway-Bissett, who helped with the bush tucker and medicine display.

years in the making.

Newcastle Regional Museum director Gavin Fry said many people were involved in the production of the exhibition.

'We felt we had a need to tell the Aboriginal story of Newcastle,' Mr Fry said.

The exhibition was developed with the help of the Aboriginal com-

munity, Newcastle City Council and the museum.

Newcastle Awabakal Cooperative chief executive Ray Kelly and Guraki Committee chairwoman Laurel Williams both had an important part in the development and the opening of the exhibition.

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