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**Celebrate Intermarriage Day**

*30 December*

**Brisbane, 21 December 2023** —

‘There is no greater measure of reconciliation between two races than that people choose to share their lives. The intermarriage rate between Aborigines and non-Aborigines in Australia is very high.’ Gary Johns, chair of Close the Gap Research

‘There are many days and weeks to celebrate differences in the Aboriginal calendar.

How about one that celebrates people already reconciled?’

Aborigines in Victoria marry outside of their community in very high numbers – 82 per cent for men and women in Melbourne, 72 per cent for men, and 75 per cent for women elsewhere in Victoria. Across Australia, almost 60 per cent of partners involving an Aborigine are with a non-Aborigine.

The Reverend Ernest Gribble, a white missionary whose father established the Yarrabah mission south of Cairns, was keen to prevent the destruction of Aboriginal society and insisted on separation between whites and blacks.

Despite his views, he fell for an Aboriginal woman, Jeannie Brown (getting her pregnant and arranging for her to marry an Aboriginal man). The best-laid plans of missionaries and protectors came to naught when love was involved.

Ernest Gribble’s sister, Ethel, fell for and married Fred Wondunna, trainee preacher and Badjala man of K'gari (Fraser Island), on **December 30, 1907**.

‘This day should be declared a celebration of reconciliation and known as Intermarriage Day, as intermarriage is, after all, the most common form of relations between black and white in Australia.’

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