

# KARLU KARLU

It was an emotional day for Aboriginal traditional owners and hardened journalists alike when the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Jenny Macklin handed back one of the most significant sacred sites for Warumungu, Kaytetye, Warlpiri and Alyawarr people in the Tennant Creek region on a hot day in October



As the Minister poured sand into the hands of "Black Hat" Leslie Foster, one of the Territory's longest claims for justice came to an end, 28 years after traditional owners first made their claim for title to Karlu Karlu (The Devils Marbles), 100 km south of Tennant Creek.

The Minister also handed back title to the Alyawarr, Kaytetye, Warumungu and Wakaya traditional owners of the Davenport Range National Park.

CLC Chair Lindsay Bookie said it was a proud moment.

"This is good to see. People have waited a long time for this. Old Black Hat started this when he was a young fella and he lost all of his brothers along the way. I'm proud for them. The CLC's done a lot of work to make this happen," Mr Bookie said.

The Ayleparrantenhe Aboriginal Land Trust will hold title to 17.75 square kilometres of land at Karlu Karlu and the Erterlapentye Aboriginal Land Trust will hold title to 1119 square kilometres of the pro-

posed Davenport Murchison Range National Park.

The neighbouring Anurrete Aboriginal Land Trust will also lease 156 square kilometres of its land to the national park.

CLC Director David Ross said he hoped the hand backs would provide a sense of relief and peace for the traditional owners.

"In the case of Karlu Karlu, these people have fought for years to protect this place against developments which would have seen road detours and a railway line cut through the site," Mr Ross said.

"Many people who fought hard passed away.

"The proposed Davenport Range National Park has also had a painful past, especially in its establishment when sites were bulldozed and desecrated and traditional owners completely disregarded during the clearing of the park boundaries.

"I congratulate all of them for their courage, persistence and resilience - it's been a tough, and often a very sad road for all of them and I sin-

cerely hope that these hand backs will provide a sense of peace and relief.

"I also look forward to the joint management arrangements that follow giving them the level of recognition and involvement in the management of these areas that they deserve for many years to come," Mr Ross said.

The hand backs will benefit about 300 Aboriginal people from surrounding communities.

The parks were handed back as a result of settlement of long standing land claims over some national parks under the Parks and Reserves (Framework for the Future) Act. The Land Trusts immediately signed 99 year leases with the Northern Territory Government which allows these parks to continue as national parks with public access under joint management arrangements.

**Top: Both groups of land-owners with their titles and above: the Minister pours sand into Leslie Foster's hands**

**Right: the dancers completed the emotional ceremony**

