

# Blue Bush chooks lay golden eggs



Above: Trevor Byrnes and some of his chooks on the Iwapataka Land Trust near Alice Springs

The cackling of some 400 hungry chooks is overwhelming. They are racing - really racing - across their vast pens to meet us. All of them.

The man they are all so keen to see is their owner and carer Trevor Byrnes who says that while he feeds them everyday, they just want more and more because chooks just don't have anything better to do with themselves.

Except lay about 400 eggs a day.

Trevor lives on the Iwapataka Land Trust about 20 kilometres west of Alice Springs and for the last two years he has been building a free range egg business.

Now he sells 100 dozen eggs on a good week.

"There's been a bit of battling here and there but it pays for the food and electricity I guess," he says.

"I'm on CDEP at the moment until I build it up a bit more so I can earn a wage out of it.

"That's the main idea - to create employment for myself and my family," he said.

"It's hard work - it's seven days a week - collecting the eggs, feeding the chooks and filling the water.

"You also have to clean up the waste which we are selling to a landscape supplier in town for garden fertiliser."

"We've had a lot of help from the NT Department of Business and Employment, Arrernte Council when we first started and Ingkerreke Outstation resource Services.

"Now JET employment in town help us market them," he said.

Trevor says the big money is in the private sales around town but they do sell wholesale to Charbray Meats and Aboriginal caterers Kungkas Can Cook.

He says that building a small business on your Land Trust is the way to go.

"I reckon it would be a good idea for people to get into this sort of thing - you can do it on your own place and create your own wage.

"It's getting a bit hard in town with CDEP but if you've got your own business you can build it up and make your own wage and get your family to help.

Trevor says eating his own free range eggs has spoiled him for shop bought caged eggs.

"They just don't taste the same," he said. "When I went on holiday I had to buy some and they were no good."

However don't expect to be eating Trevor's free range chooks.

"Our chooks eat layers pellets.

"They need to be fed different stuff if you are going to eat them.

"But I have eaten one or two myself. Leghorns are tough but these chooks are good," Trevor said.

Free range eggs from Trevor's beautiful chooks are available by ringing JET employment phone 89526665

# \$50 a fortnight for bush humpy



The intervention has a new head. Canberra bureaucrat Mark Zissler took over from Major Chalmers recently and has already been asked to justify the actions of the Federal Government by the angry community at Utopia.

Utopia, north east of Alice Springs, is classified as an outstation, and as such doesn't qualify for the housing money that is promised to communities who sign up for long term leases.

The 100 or so residents are furious.

"Over the last 30 years, I only see 20 brick buildings on the whole in Utopia, 20 brick buildings, the rest of it's all rubbish, tin sheds, the oldest, dogs, not fit for dogs now, you know?," resident Dennis Kunoth told ABC Radio.

"People, people think Aboriginal people have got a lot of money; a lot of money might have been released but as I said a lot of it never got right here to where people need it," he said.

Furthermore the new shire is now charging rent for the existing broken down shacks and humpies.

Mr Zissler saw for himself the terrible state of housing when he visited Lena Pula in her humpy which boasts one tap and a small fridge. Ms Pula pays \$50 a fortnight to live here with four others.

The community is also outraged at the big blue sign erected outside the community.

"This is a model social structure. And the fact that we've been blanketed as being rapists, woman bashers, paedophiles and pornographic-consuming people and alcoholics, that's not us," Rosalie Kunoth Monks told the ABC reporter.

"And if you want us to break the Federal law, we will get an angle-grinder and we will cut down those signs. Unless you show us the proof of us being what you describe on those signs. It's not true," she said.

Mr Zissler said he will brief the Minister when he returned to Canberra.