

Permits still required on Aboriginal land



The NLC has replaced the old sign (right) as you leave the Nhulunbuy Special Purpose Lease on the Melville Bay road that leads from Nhulunbuy to Yirrkala and Katherine. The original sign was erected more than 30-years ago. Above: The NLC's Alan Timms and Richard Singh at the new sign.



Permits are still required for all visitors to enter onto and to remain on Aboriginal land throughout the Northern Territory. To apply please contact the relevant Land Council

Central Arnhem Highway talks

Meetings have been held at many communities and outstations serviced by the Central Arnhem Highway to seek the opinions of Traditional Owners and residents about possible upgrades.

The 760km highway that passes near Barunga, Wugularr, Mainoru Store, Weemol, Bulman, the Ram-inging turnoff and Gapuwiyak.

At this stage these meetings are not about making decisions. Some of the possible upgrades TO's are being asked to consider include:

- bridges over the Mainoru, Goyder, Little Goyder and Dointji crossings (these upgrades could cut roads closure from 4 – 6 months to 1 – 2 months);
- a 150 metre wide corridor to allow for services and drainage – one option they want considered is for this corridor to be leased via a negotiated agreement with TO's for long term (50 years plus) to the NT Government. This

option would ensure TO's retain access control of the Central Arnhem Highway; and

- the progressive upgrade of the road to two lane sealed standard.

"The NLC plans to visit the region again after the Wet to undertake a Social Impact Assessment study. This process will give people time to consider all factors in deciding what they believe should happen in the longer term.

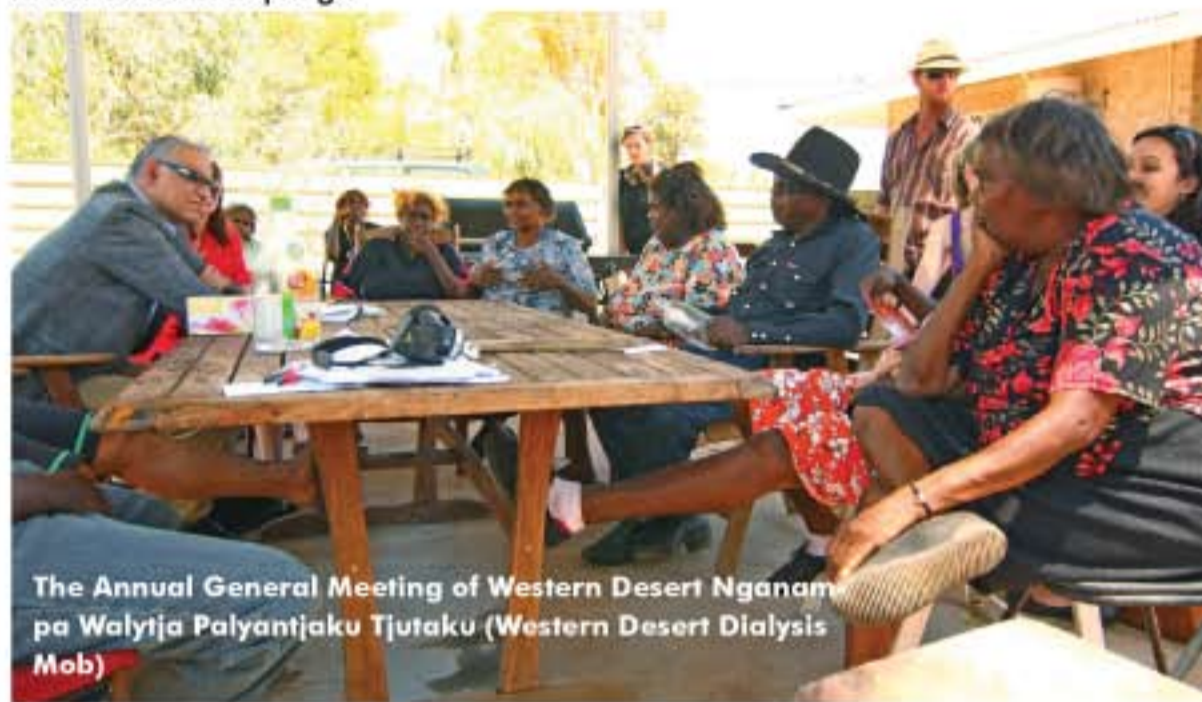
"A key thing for them to consider is the possible impact of having more outside people using the road and visiting the area.

"We want to make sure the government fully understands the views of Aboriginal people about this issue. It's about them being in a position to make a fully informed decision."

If you, your community or group would like further information about these consultations, please contact Syd Stirling at the NLC telephone: 8920 5113.

Renal ban leaves lives in the balance

The organisation that runs renal dialysis services for Aboriginal people from the Western Desert says it remains deeply worried about a Northern Territory Government order that patients from the West Australian side of the border travel to Perth for treatment rather than Alice Springs.



The Annual General Meeting of Western Desert Nganampa Walytja Palyantjaku Tjutaku (Western Desert Dialysis Mob)

Western Desert Nganampa Walytja Palyantjaku Tjutaku (Western Desert Dialysis Mob) has been running dialysis, advocacy and patient support services in Alice and Walungurru (Kintore) for five years. Its co-ordinator Sarah Brown said people are deeply worried for their family members who need dialysis.

"They want to be able to look after them in Alice," she said. "In February this year the NT Government banned patients from Central Australia who live on the other side of whitefella borders in WA and South Australia from coming to Alice Springs for dialysis.

"Desert people in communities such as Kiwirrkurra, Tjukula, Ernabella and Amata have always looked towards Alice for family and support. Now they are being told that they must move to Perth or Adelaide. Many are choosing to die on country rather than move so far from home."

Ms Brown said WDNWPT has received support from all over Australia with people writing letters to politicians asking them to change the policy, but as LRN went to print, the policy still stood.

The Central Land Council is among the organisations that have come out in support of scrapping the policy.

CLC director David Ross said it is a national disgrace and an act of unconscionable cruelty that Patrick Tjungurrayi, who painted for the fundraising campaign to provide dialysis equipment for Western Desert people, is unable to receive care in Central Australia.

Mr Tjungurrayi has been refused dialysis treatment in Alice Springs because he lives in Kiwirrkurra in Western Australia.

Mr Ross said the NT, SA and WA Governments need to sort the issue out as a matter of urgency.

"For Aboriginal people, state borders are arbitrary, just lines drawn by somebody across their traditional lands. They certainly don't align with Aboriginal cultural or linguistic boundaries or traditional Aboriginal land ownership," Mr Ross said.

In a letter to Greens Senator Rachel Siewert that she read in the Senate, manager of Papunya Tula Artists Paul Sweeney laid out the insulting way Mr Tjungurrayi had been treated after helping to raise \$1 million for dialysis

services in Central Australia.

"The tragic irony of this situation is that Patrick was one of the main contributors to the initial fund raiser by overseeing the collaborative painting done by the Kiwirrkurra men that went on to raise \$300,000 and now he is unable to access the facilities resulting from his effort," Mr Sweeney wrote.

A member of the renal fundraising campaign, the Art Gallery of New South Wales' Hetti Perkins wrote in a letter to Paul Sweeney of her father Dr Charlie Perkins' own personal battle with renal disease.

She wrote: "It was made profoundly apparent to my family through our experience that my father's relative longevity was greatly enhanced by his family being close to him. The mental health issues associated with end stage renal disease are well known and significantly curbed by family support," Ms Perkins wrote.

If you would like to help with the campaign to reverse this ban, please email Western Desert Dialysis on wdnwpt@bigpond.net.au or ring the Purple House in Alice Springs on (08) 89536444 and ask for Sarah.