

FREE

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## CENTRAL AUSTRALIA



EDITORIAL

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COVER



The CLC has kicked off its campaign for a 'yes' vote in the voice referendum later this year.

CLC MEETINGS

- 18–20 April 2023**  
Council  
Atitjere (Harts Range)
- 16–17 May 2023**  
Executive  
Alice Springs
- 20–21 June 2023**  
Executive  
Alice Springs

# New CLC chair ready to campaign for the voice

THE FIRST thing new Central Land Council chair Matthew Palmer did after his election was to acknowledge his predecessor, the late Kunmanara Hoosan. "My brother will always be in my heart," Mr Palmer told the land council delegates at their meeting at Tennant Creek in February.

Then Mr Palmer announced that he will urge everyone to support an Aboriginal voice to parliament.

"I will campaign for a big yes vote in the referendum because when we are being heard we will achieve positive change on the ground, in Alice Springs and in the bush," he said.

Mr Palmer, from Corkwood Bore outstation, half an hour's drive from Alice Springs, was one of the youngest CLC delegates ever when outstation residents chose him to represent them on the land council.

"I was busy and I loved it. I was on the executive and I'm happy to be back," he said.

Mr Palmer plans to "talk up for better housing".

"It's really important. We still live in a tin shed – me, my family, my children and their children," he said.

The former court interpreter speaks Central Arrernte, Alyawarr and English and has co-founded and chaired Alice Springs native title representative body Lhere Artepe.



"Open your heart to our voice": new CLC chair Matthew Palmer.

"I've worked all my life, since I was 16, and it's kept me out of trouble. I have been looking after my people since my twenties."

Mr Palmer grew up at Ltyentye Apurte (Santa Teresa) and believes it is important for people to tell the stories of where they were raised.

"We get the stories from our grandparents and I'm really proud of that. We keep the land strong."

Warren Williams, from Yuendumu, is staying on as the CLC's deputy chair.

The NT Electoral Commission carried out the election and the presiding officer was Northern Territory Aboriginal Investment Corporation co-chair Barbara Shaw.

The council also elected Dianne Stokes and Jimmy Frank to represent the CLC on the grants committee of the NTAIC. Geoffrey Matthews was elected as the CLC's representative on the board of the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority.

## Report predicts Singleton Station water licence will damage sites

FORTUNE Agribusiness' massive horticulture proposal is a serious threat to the culture and precious water sites of Kaytetye traditional owners.

That is the conclusion of a new report which forms part of the Central Land Councils' submission seeking the strictest-possible environmental impact assessment for the controversial proposal.

The report by independent anthropologist Susan Donaldson found the water licence would "almost certainly" damage cultural and ceremonial values and diminish sites.

The CLC has called for the highest level of environmental scrutiny for the record-breaking water licence for Fortune Agribusiness.

The company plans to use the 40,000-megalitre licence to grow fruit and vegetables for export south of Tennant Creek at Singleton Station.

Independent water experts have warned that the plan would significantly lower the region's water table, in turn damaging sacred trees, soakages and water holes that depend on the same groundwater the company wants to use.

**"Kaytetye traditional owners have maintained their country for millenia and we owe them the highest level of assessment."**

CLC executive manager policy and governance, Francine McCarthy, said the proposal should undergo a strict 'tier-three' assessment.

A tier-three assessment is the most rigorous assessment possible.

It would give the traditional owners and the public three opportunities to have their voices heard. A tier-two assessment would give them only one chance to have their views taken into account, while a tier one assessment is little more than box-ticking.



Traditional owners protested against the water licence in front of the NT Supreme Court in 2022.

"Kaytetye traditional owners have maintained their country for millenia and we owe them the highest level of assessment," Ms McCarthy said.

A report commissioned in 2021 by the CLC found up to 40 sacred sites in the region affected by the water licence relied on groundwater.

The follow-up report in February found those sites were not protected by the NT's

Fortune Agribusiness said the concerns of the traditional owners were not justified.

Environmental groups and conservationists made their own submissions to the NT's Environmental Protection Authority in support of a tier-three assessment.

The chief executive of the Arid Lands Environment Centre and former NT government water planner, Adrian Tomlinson, told the ABC the community deserved no less.

"It's essentially a longer process with a number of steps along the way where community input can influence the decision," he said.

"It's the biggest groundwater extraction licence we've seen in the territory and in my view the existing processes we have aren't designed to assess something like this."

Public consultations about the level of scrutiny to be applied to the horticulture proposal closed in mid-February.

The Environmental Protection Authority has until the end of March to decide.

# What can we do to help stop violence against women?



## Valerie Martin, Yuendumu

Be aware of the violence around us, don't walk past and ignore it. We need to be strong about it. It can't go on. Violence is not our way of life. We MUST deal with it. Get together, talk with the family, and carefully discuss the problems that they have, work with them step by step towards solving their problem. Be with them. If we let it go we are not helping our people.



## Raymond Walters Penangke, Mparntwe (Alice Springs)

Education around respectful relationships comes to mind, and understanding why individuals act out violently. Is it unresolved trauma? Is it stress related to impacts of social determinants of health? Research suggests it would be a combination of many complex reasons. But regardless, women need to feel safe. Children need to feel safe and people in general need to feel safe. It's important for men perpetrating violence against women and children to be held accountable for their actions, take responsibility as individuals for their behaviour and seek the right help and support because the long term damage associated with family and domestic violence is affecting all of us, whether directly and indirectly.

Us men need to hold each other to account with a louder voice. We need greater opportunities to make a stronger contribution in our communities and for our families. We need to believe we are important to our children, our families and our communities.

## Luke Adams, Mparntwe (Alice Springs)

What we can do is start educating kids that violence is no good, as well as teaching them early to stay out of a situations that could get violent. There are good programs within schools.

For adults there are programs that we should support and promote more, such as King's Narrative, where we can just talk to other men about problems.

I heavily support Red Tail Right Tracks that's about us men and women coming together working as a team, and not just in a sporting area. It's about not dividing men and women, but about teaching them to work together.



## Rosalie Morton, Ulpnyali

This problem is too big for the land council. I come from Yuendumu. In those [olden] days there was peace because the old people had strong voices. If someone made trouble they speared them. Today I can't even go back there for a couple of days to see my family because I'm scared of the violence.

I want to be a strong voice towards not only my little family, but to the others. I run when a woman gets beaten and grab the woman and [shout] "call the police, ring 000". Sometimes in the town camps it's very, very hard. That person can turn around and say "hey you, don't interfere or I hit you". Sometimes the police take it seriously and that person ends up in jail. We don't want to live with violence. I moved back to Ulpnyali [outstation] where peace is. It's time to wake up and stand up and raise our kids without the fighting.



## Mildred Inkamala, Ntaria (Hermannsburg)

For both men and women domestic violence is a very bad sickness, [both] need programs. Maybe anger management? Programs in language to keep them strong and keep them away from trouble, have happy families. Women are sometimes violent too. Angry men do bad things to them. Little kids suffer too.

We land council delegates should support each other in a community where there is violence. Speak up for strong rules, like no grog coming in, no ganja coming in, no gambling with our kids' money. Grog is the one that makes people fight and murder each other. It causes violence in the community. We want the government to turn the tap off. Some people will hate that.



## Peggy Granites, Yuendumu

Men beat their wives up over and over, and it just goes around in circles. The husbands get convicted, they come out again. They should have an anger management course. Sometimes, as people get older, their marriage slowly improves. I've seen it.

The only way is to come to know the Lord. For some it changes their lives completely and they are being transformed from that wild person they used to be. It's the only answer for everybody.



## Tyson Carmody, Mparntwe (Alice Springs)

Where the work needs to be done is with the men. It's a tricky conversation to have, to go in and unpack their life and see what has led to them to this point, but you have to do that without judging and without taking responsibility away from their actions.

Kings Narrative is having those conversations with our men. Aboriginal men having these conversations with Aboriginal men. A way to reduce the violence is men taking responsibility and other men holding other men accountable. So men can take up roles as carers and providers instead of harming our families. We can't beat around the bush or tip toe around it. However if they're feeling judged, blamed then they're not going to respond to that.



# The time for our voice to power is now!

THE CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL has kicked off the Central Australian campaign for recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and enshrining a voice in the constitution.

The voice is an advisory body to the parliament and the government that will allow Aboriginal people to be consulted. “No more and no less,” CLC chair Matthew Palmer said.

He is urging everybody to vote ‘yes’ in the referendum about protecting the voice in the constitution.

“I want to put the voice of my people

“By listening to our voice politicians will make better policies to help close the gap.”

The council’s support of the ‘yes’ vote in the referendum later this year builds on its long advocacy for all three parts of the Uluru Statement from the Heart – voice, treaty and truth.

The CLC’s executive meeting in Tennant Creek in February endorsed an information and advocacy campaign about the voice referendum.

Staff are setting up a campaign office and training a team of community



Former CLC deputy chair Barbara Shaw and former CLC executive member Vincent Forrester at Uluru in May 2017, when they were chosen to represent the southern half of the NT on the national Uluru Statement working group.

He said we need to change the constitution to enshrine the principle of the voice – a body that will tell the government and the parliament the truth about what is working and what is not.

was an important milestone on the three-decades-long road to the Uluru Statement and this year’s referendum about the voice.

“This year, the people of Australia will finally have the chance to say

## What is the voice?

- The voice will be an assembly of Aboriginal people, chosen by their communities and meeting a few times a year for a few weeks.
- It will debate matters of importance to Aboriginal people, make specific proposals, and respond to government policies.
- It will only give advice, have no law-making powers and will not administer programs.
- Australians will be asked to vote in a referendum about protecting the voice in the constitution, so future governments cannot abolish it.
- Voting ‘yes’ in the referendum will allow the Australian Parliament to make the law that will put the voice into the constitution.
- The parliament will then consult with Aboriginal people and make a law about how exactly the voice will look.

**“If the voice referendum is successful, the details of how the voice will look like will be worked out later by the parliament, in consultation with Aboriginal people.”**

to the parliament. It’s time for us to have a say in the laws and policies that affect us,” Mr Palmer said following his election in February.

“We’ve tried everything else – promises, petitions, marches – and nothing has closed the gap.

He said the voice is a tool to improve the lives of Aboriginal people on the ground.

campaigners so they can go out to all nine CLC regions to provide information about the referendum and encourage people to enrol to vote.

“A lot of the information will be in our local languages, delivered by local Aboriginal people,” said CLC chief executive Les Turner.

**It’s time to work together with all people of good will for a resounding ‘yes’ vote.**

“If the voice referendum is successful, the details of how the voice will look like will be worked out later by the parliament, in consultation with Aboriginal people,” said Mr Turner.

In February, he met with CLC staff to answer the questions about the referendum and encourage them to get informed and involved.

Few at the staff meeting were around in 2017, when the CLC organised one of the 13 regional dialogues that took place across Australia and led to the Uluru Statement.

Not many of the current council members and staff were at the historic joint land council meeting in 1988 that endorsed the Barunga Statement.

The statement, with its calls for a national Aboriginal organisation and treaty,

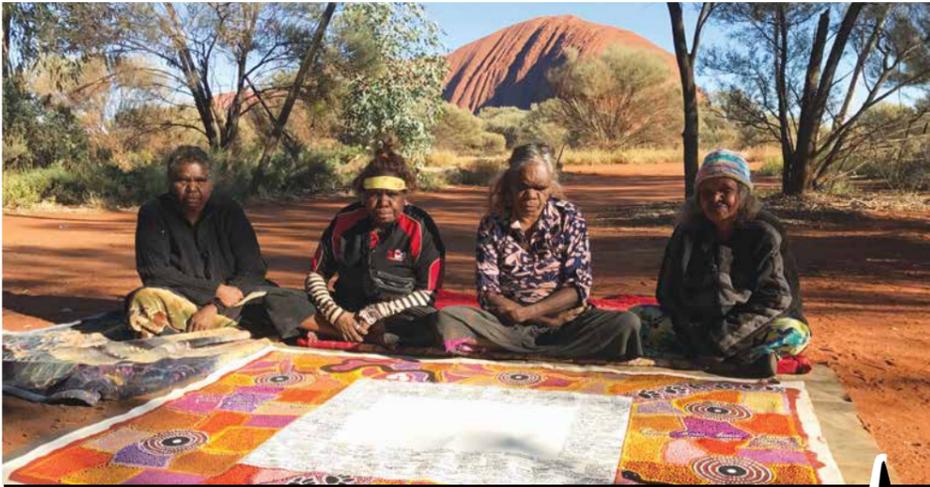
‘yes’ to recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the constitution with a voice to parliament,” the co-chair of Australians for Indigenous Constitutional Recognition, Rachel Perkins, said at the national launch of the ‘yes’ campaign in February.

“The campaign now has tremendous momentum as we head towards a referendum later this year that offers a chance for a moment of national unity unparalleled in modern Australia.”

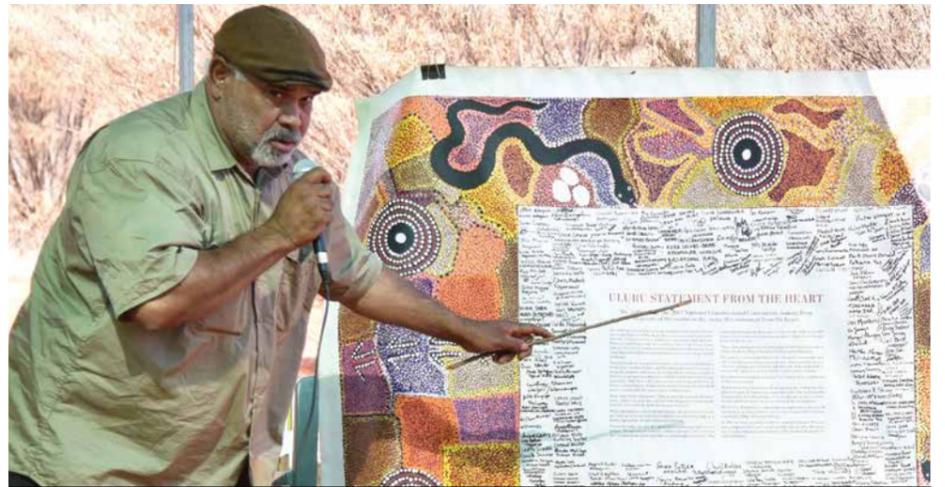
Participants at the Central Australian Regional Dialogue at Ross River in 2017.



# Our road to the voice referendum



Artists (from left) Christine Brumby, Charmaine Kulitja, Rene Kulitja and Happy Reid painted the Uluru Statement canvas. Photo courtesy of Maruku Arts.



Former CLC chair Sammy Wilson talked about the Uluru Statement at the CLC's 2019 council meeting at Yulara Pulka.

FILM MAKER Rachel Perkins, the daughter of the CLC's first chair Charlie Perkins, likes to remind everyone that the voice has a long history.

"It has been driven by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders and encouraged by the support of political leaders of all traditions for more than a generation."

The CLC has been part of all of it. Here are some milestones from the land council's journey towards the referendum over the past decade:

## 2016

The Referendum Council, set up by former Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull in 2015 to consult with Aboriginal people about constitutional recognition, proposes 13 regional dialogues to hear the views of Aboriginal people.

In August 2016 the CLC chose the site of the famous 1966 Wave Hill Walk-Off to gather with the Northern Land Council and reaffirm their members' commitment to the principles of the Barunga Statement.

"Constitutional reform must deliver meaningful and enduring benefits for our peoples. We are prepared to examine models for constitutional reform that deliver such benefits," the land councils resolved.

The delegates questioned, they argued and they settled on a way forward. Participants supported a statement of acknowledgement in the constitution, dealing with the constitution's 'race power' in a way that prevents discriminatory law making, a representative voice to parliament, treaty and the outlawing of racial discrimination. It also chose 10 delegates to travel to the historic convention at Uluru.

The co-chair of the dialogue, former CLC director David Ross, called the gathering "one of those great moments where everything fell into place and everyone, young and old, participated".

His co-chair Barbara Shaw, the former general manager of Tennant Creek's Anyinginyi Health Service, said she was "quite overjoyed that we had a number of young people who had the confidence to stand up and make comment. One of the things that was quite moving was that we had a lot of people who were starting to get the fire back in the belly. They were saying 'this is the first time we were able to get together from all around the country to talk about an issue that is important to all of us'".

Delegates from the regional dialogues met in May 2017 with other Aboriginal leaders from around

## 1988 Barunga Statement

## 2016 Referendum Council recommends regional dialogues

### April 2017 CLC hosts Ross River regional dialogue

### May 2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart

### August 2017 Brumby Plains Statement

### 2019 Yulara Pulka CLC meeting

### 2021 Tennant Creek CLC meeting

### May 2022 Prime Minister promises to implement the Uluru Statement in full

### February 2023 CLC executive endorses voice campaign strategy

The CLC passed its own endorsement of the Uluru Statement in August 2017.

Named after the meeting location, the council's Brumby Plains Statement included these words: "We want to be part of designing the voice to parliament to ensure it represents people from the bush, and to ensure it is powerful. This work should be progressed before we go ahead with a referendum. A successful referendum requires the support of non-indigenous people, and we invite all Australians to join us on this journey to achieve constitutional reform."

It reaffirmed its support at its council meetings at Yulara Pulka in 2019 and at Tennant Creek in 2021.

## 2022

In May 2022 Prime Minister Anthony Albanese promises to implement the Uluru Statement in full, starting with a referendum to enshrine a voice in the constitution.

The executive committees of the Northern Territory's four Aboriginal land councils met at Kalkaringi in August 2022 to call for a referendum on the voice "within this term of government".

Mr Turner asked in an opinion piece in *The Guardian* a few months later, "how many more times do they need to say it?"

It's time for action, time to work together with all people of good will for a resounding 'yes' vote.

**"This year, the people of Australia will finally have the chance to say 'yes' to recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the constitution with a voice to parliament."**

## 2017

In April almost 100 Central Australian Aboriginal people took part in the Ross River Regional Dialogue, the last of the 13 regional dialogues held around the nation since 2016.

For three days they gathered with local facilitators and constitutional law experts at the Ross River Resort, east of Alice Springs, to educate themselves about Australia's founding law.

They explored what constitutional changes would most likely deliver positive change to their communities. Well-briefed interpreters translated complex legal ideas into local languages.



Francine McCarthy, Peta Breaden and Misha Cartwright signed the Uluru Statement in 2017.



# Voice referendum – next steps

IN MARCH the parliament will debate the referendum bill, a law about holding a referendum later this year to change the constitution.

The law will include what voters will be asked to say ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to. The wording of the change to the constitution Prime Minister Anthony Albanese suggested at last year's Garna Festival was:

*“There shall be a body, to be called the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.*

*The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice may make representations to parliament and the executive government on matters relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.*

*The parliament shall, subject to this constitution, have power to make laws with respect to the composition, functions, powers and procedures of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.”*

Mr Albanese has invited the opposition to suggest changes to the wording. As a result it may change before the parliament votes on the referendum bill.



The CLC encourages all Aboriginal people to enrol to vote, so they can have their say in the referendum.

## Will the voice win in the referendum?

TO CHANGE the constitution more than half of all voters across Australia need to vote ‘yes’ in the referendum. Also, more than half of all voters in four out of six states need to vote ‘yes’ to the voice.

It will be a big challenge to achieve this so-called double majority.

Earlier this year, a majority of voters (57 out of 100) were for the voice and 37 per cent were against.

More than eight in 10 Aboriginal people supported the voice, with one out of 10 against and another one out of 10 undecided. They have yet to make up their mind.

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Cassidy Uluru, Malya Teamay and Reggie Uluru watch inma following the proclamation of the Uluru Statement at Mutitjulu in May 2017.



# Native title holder camp will be back in June

NATIVE TITLE holders from the Central Land Council region will again be able to learn about their rights and how to run the corporations they set up to hold and manage their native title.

These corporations are called prescribed bodies corporate, or PBC for short. The Central Land Council (CLC) helps native title holders to set them up after the Federal Court agrees to a native title claim.

“At the camp, PBC directors share stories with other native title holders and get information they can understand, both in English and their languages,” said the CLC’s Francine McCarthy.

The next PBC camp, from Monday 26 to Friday 30 June at the Ross River Resort near Alice Springs, will be the third time the CLC organises the popular professional development and networking event.

Ms McCarthy said the directors have come a long way since the first PBC camp in 2019 she attended.

“Then, many directors did not understand what a PBC is and how it works. Directors who came to the second PBC camp in 2021 knew and talked about it in their languages.”

**“At the camp, PBC directors share stories with other native title holders and get information they can understand, both in English and their languages.”**

Those discussions helped the CLC to develop the multi-lingual *PBCmob* app which will be launched at the camp.

The app is for people with limited English language skills and will have local languages.

When the app has been downloaded to a phone or tablet, *PBCmob* works offline. This is important for people in remote communities with little phone reception and internet.

“The app will explain to native title holders what rights they have and how to use them,” Ms McCarthy said.

“Anyone can use it to listen to the *Native Title Story* and *Native Title on Cattle Country* booklets in Kaytetye, Pitjantjatjara, Warlpiri, Warumungu, Western Aranda and more languages are coming. The app also lets native

title holders know what support they can get for their PBC.”

A short animation about what happens when a mining company wants to mine native title land is also being made.

The PBC camp happens every two years, hosted by the CLC, the National Indigenous Australians Agency and the national peak body for the native title sector, the National Native Title Council.

“It is always important for me to listen to the priorities and concerns of PBCs so we can take those up to government and argue for a better deal for everyone on the ground,” NNTC chief executive Jamie Lowe said.

For more information, email [pbccamp@clc.org.au](mailto:pbccamp@clc.org.au) or call 08 8951 0515.



PBC Camp participants workshopped native title resources in their languages.



Cheyenne Lewis (with grandmother Margaret Orr) was one of the youngest PBC Camp participants in 2021.



# Return to Uluru: ending the unfinished business that began with a 1934 police shooting

ON THE day Yukun was returned to Uluru, his descendants leapt into the deep, narrow grave to help ease him to rest as their elders looked on, weeping.

The ceremony, at the base of the rock on an unusually cold and rainy morning, helped ease the pain of almost 90 years of unfinished business that began with a Northern Territory police shooting in 1934.

**“We are really, really sad and upset. That part of history is really cruel and sad for us.”**

The Pitjantjatjara men in the grave were Yukun’s great nephews and great-grandsons, some of whom had only recently learned that after Yukun was killed by police, his remains were exhumed and taken away to institutions in Adelaide. On Thursday, they interred a small box containing Yukun’s skull, which is all that the University of Adelaide and the South Australian Museum could find of him, despite a long forensic search.

Some of Yukun’s families had travelled 470km from their community of Areyonga (Utju) to receive his remains, in a deeply moving ceremony.

“We are really, really sad and upset. That part of history is really cruel and sad for us,” Joy Kunia, Yukun’s great-niece, says. “Some people will carry it on for ever. We feel it really deeply.

“The policeman came with his gun,



Yukun’s burial ceremony took place at the foot of Uluru. All images courtesy Dean Sewell.

with a weapon, and shot him in cold blood.”

In 1934, mounted constable Bill McKinnon was sent to find the men who had killed an Aboriginal stockman at Mount Conner, in central Australia. Travelling west, McKinnon and his Aboriginal trackers, Paddy and Carbine, came across a group of men hunting, and arrested them. There was a violent interrogation. They were chained and beaten. Confessions were extracted. After about a week the men escaped, and Yukun was shot.

Two of the men were recaptured, one

eventually spending 10 years in jail for murder. But four others, including a badly wounded Yukun, headed for the sanctuary of Uluru. The police trackers, following his blood trail, eventually found him in a cave about 40 metres up in the rock, near the Mutitjulu waterhole.

McKinnon told a subsequent commonwealth inquiry he fired into the cave without taking aim at Yukun. He said Yukun died from his wounds several hours later and they buried him there.

The inquiry exonerated McKinnon but expressed concern about his harsh methods. They exhumed Yukun’s remains and one member, Dr JB Cleland, took the body to Adelaide. At some point over the years, Yukun was sent to the University of Adelaide and later the South Australian Museum.

Anangu (the word for people in Pitjantjatjara) held a very different story.

Joseph Donald was among the men chased by McKinnon, and was the only eyewitness. One day at Docker River in 1986, Donald told film-maker David Batty what had happened when they

got to Uluru:

“We came over a rock and saw our friend who had been shot by those bad men. A 44 bullet went through his chest and tore at his side ... He walked towards us. We got him by the arm, poor bugger. We put him in a cave to look after him. He was my brother-in-law. We have the same grandfather.

“I could see the policeman, McKinnon. He got out his rifle and loaded it. Then he fired it at me. He missed me. Then he fired again. I looked up and saw all the rocks rolling down towards me. Then McKinnon started running towards me with two rifles. I was sitting there wondering what to do. Shall I go down? So I jumped down and landed on the sand. I stood up and saw the police running towards me.”

Donald says he hid and held his breath.

“The policemen went into the cave. They found the one who had been shot [Yukun]. They grabbed him by the arm and brought him outside. They asked my brother-in-law [Yukun], where are the other three? My brother-in-law didn’t tell the police where the others



Wilbur Poulson, from Utju, prepares to lay his grandfather’s remains in his grave.



Yukun’s great-niece, Joy Kunia, places flowers on his grave.

were, so they shot him. The police shot him in front of me.”

Other men who survived the attack, including senior traditional owner Paddy Uluru, fled the area and did not return for years, for fear of being killed by McKinnon. When Paddy returned in the 1950s, he brought his young sons Cassidy and Reggie with him, and they saw the rock – their birthright – for the first time.

Now in their 80s, Cassidy and Reggie are in the Mutitjulu aged care home, where Reggie vividly remembers the story his father told him – that they were travelling and hunting when the police came and assumed they were “the ones who made the trouble”.

“They didn’t understand English, they didn’t know what the tracker was saying, they didn’t know what was going on. That tracker kept telling them, pushing them to tell the ‘truth’, that they were part of the trouble group,” Reggie Uluru says. “But the policeman decided to blame them and started to arrest them on the day. They knew he was a bad man, he was a rough man, he had that tracker [Tracker Paddy] with him, he was a bad man too.”

The story is deftly told by historian Mark McKenna in his 2021 book, *Return to Uluru*. Bringing together the threads of these many histories, McKenna also uncovered crucial new evidence that corroborated the stories long told by Anangu – tucked away in a Brisbane garage.

McKenna had made contact with McKinnon’s daughter Susan, who generously gave him access to her father’s papers. The policeman had been a meticulous record-keeper. At the bottom of one trunk, McKenna found a journal in which McKinnon admitted he had “fired to hit” Yukun, a different story to the one he had told the board of inquiry in 1935.

In 2019, McKenna asked the South Australian institutions to search for Yukun’s remains. Since then, he has met families and uncovered more detail.

On the day of Yukun’s burial, he walks down the path to the Mutitjulu waterhole among the descendants of McKinnon and the descendants of Yukun, thinking about how “rare and extraordinary” it is that the book has led them all here.

“To be here again, the third time now, is overwhelming, the significance of the whole story for the families, first and foremost, but also its just incredible for me as a historian and a writer to be able to follow this right thought to this moment,” he says. “And I keep feeling that the whole thing is just bigger than all of us. Trying to take it all in is really going to take some time.”

As well as Yukun himself, there has been a repatriation of knowledge, which has been essential for helping families come to terms with their histories, answer questions and resolve doubts they have been carrying for decades.

At Areyonga, a few days before the ceremony, Hilda Bert cried when she said her mother told her a story about Yukun, a story that she didn’t quite believe.

For almost 30 years Hilda says, she doubted her mother. She was “shocked” when she read Mark’s book and realised her mother had been telling the truth all along.

“Mum told me the story of how

her father speared Tracker Paddy as payback for what he did to Anangu. She knew what happened at Uluru. I thought she was making up stories,” Bert says. “It makes me cry just thinking about it.

“I knew that story all this time. Mum knew. Her father told her what happened to him. I was shocked because my mother told me that story when I was young and I kept it secret all these years.”

In the lead up to the repatriation this week, many other strands of the story have been brought together, telling a complex history that has resonated in a deeply personal way for hundreds of people, from the direct descendants of Yukun and the other men who fled McKinnon, to the policeman’s own descendants who made their first visit to Uluru – to pay their respects at the service.

This is truth-telling, unfolding in real time.

McKinnon’s brother’s grandsons, Alistair and Ross McKinnon, and Alistair’s wife, Ruth, stood quietly at the back as the ceremony unfolded, at times visibly moved. Along with Anangu mourners they filed past the small casket at the beginning of the

## This is truth-telling, unfolding in real time.

service and again at the end, to toss a handful of red earth into the grave.

The McKinnons made the trek because “it was the least we could do”, Alistair McKinnon says. They were “overwhelmed” by the moment, and the generosity they had received from

Anangu present.

“We were unsure how it would go,” Ruth says, “but they were so generous. We are so glad we came.”

Unplanned, at the end of the service a steady stream of Yukun’s relatives came to meet them. There were handshakes and hugs. “Palya,” they said. “God bless you. Thank you for coming.”

But the story is not finished. Anangu are thinking about how they will mark the site. Descendants are thinking about future meetings.

“We got to teach our children,” Paddy Uluru’s son Sammy Wilson told the gathering.

“We got to bring our generations here, to learn, to understand what happened here.”

by Lorena Allam, *The Guardian*



The ceremony helped the family to answer questions and resolve decades of doubt.



Uluru traditional owner Reggie Uluru drops soil into Yukun’s grave. His father, Paddy Uluru, survived the 1934 attack and fled, fearing for his life.

# Artefacts to come home to the Barkly

CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL delegate Jimmy Frank and emerging leader Laurance Williams have brought treasured Warumungu cultural items from Aotearoa (New Zealand) back to Australia.

The artefacts will find a permanent home at the Nyinkka Nyunyu Art and Culture Centre once a multi-million dollar upgrade to the centre has been completed. Until then the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) will look after them in Canberra.

Mr Frank and Mr Williams joined the AIATSIS cultural heritage team and Maori representatives in mid-November for the formal return of four artefacts from the Tāmaki Paenga Hira Auckland War Memorial Museum.

The kupija (adze), ngurrulumuru (axe/pick), and two wartilykirri (hooked boomerang) were collected around a century ago by anthropologist Walter Baldwin Spencer, who worked with Francis Gillen. The more than 6000 items from Central Australia they collected in the early 1900s are dispersed in institutions across the globe.

“These objects left our country 120 years ago. In those artefacts there

are signatures that are Warumungu,” Mr Frank told the iwi of Tāmaki Makaurau (local people of Auckland) after a pōwhiri (welcoming ceremony).

“When I look at that I find that the signatures – that artefact that I’m seeing today, 120 years later – the similarity is there,” he said.

**“I was really impressed how Maori people have influence in their country. Even non-indigenous people are speaking their language and singing their songs at events.”**

“My ancestors made this out of rock. Today I’m using a steel axe and

a grinder. But the significant shape, the signatures are still the same. Even though we are living in two different eras.

“And that goes for our culture. We might live in different worlds today but we are still the same people.

“Today’s a very unique day, a unique and historical moment. This object could have been anywhere in the world but it’s with the Māori people. And the Māori people, their cultural practice and their beliefs are very similar to us.

“And they take a lead in repatriation and also in a treaty. That’s first nations people taking control of their country and their culture,” Mr Frank said.

Matua Bobby Newson, representing the Tāmaki Makaurau iwi, replied:

“Ko te tapu o te tangata, ka tūtaki ki te tapu o te tangata, ki te tapu o te whenua, o ngā taonga ki raro i te tapu o te Atua!

“Today was an important meeting of cultures. People meeting people, people meeting land, and people meeting the taonga (treasures) of their ancestors under the guidance of tikanga customs and protocols.

“We’ve looked after these taonga like they are our own and we are proud to be returning them to the Warumungu

people on this momentous day.”

After a farewell blessing at the museum in Auckland, Mr Frank and Mr Williams travelled to Dunedin, a coastal city on Aotearoa’s South Island, to collect six more items.

In both cities the visitors practiced the Warumungu custom of ngijinkirri. “We take something from us that, when we enter someone’s country, is a gift that’s like a promise: when we go there we respect their law and a thank you for them to let you in. And sometimes they give you something back. It’s like a contract. Our elders asked us to make up two number sevens [boomerangs] and two shields that I gave to our hosts.”

Tennant Creek elders hope Mr Frank’s Maori hosts will visit Nyinkka Nyunyu once the objects return home.

“They are really keen to come to our opening,” Mr Frank said. “Not only can we do cultural exchanges, we could really work on that relationship. We can learn from them.”

“I was really impressed how Maori people have influence in their country. Even non-indigenous people are speaking their language and singing their songs at events. We’ve got a long way to go educating people, let alone speak our language and sing our songs. They made a pathway that we could follow.”

**“We take something from us that, when we enter someone’s country, is a gift that’s like a promise: when we go there we respect their law and a thank you for them to let you in.”**

Mr Frank was also “blown away” by the huge Maori carvings he saw. “These fellas over there take carving to another level. We’re talking about 10-metre-long boats and totem trees with marking that represent their clan groups.”

He said AIATSIS was “the backbone” of the repatriation trip. “I’d like to thank Shaun Angeles and the whole team for bringing us all together,” he said. “They were instrumental in getting our artefacts back.”



Jimmy Frank and Laurance Williams present gifts from the Barkly to their Maori hosts. Photo courtesy of AIATSIS.

## Redress Scheme Support Services

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# Water warriors win awards, wow Canberra crowd



CLC delegates Jackie Mahoney and Pam Corbett with Georgia Stewart and Evie Rose from the CLC policy team presented in Canberra. Photo courtesy Water Services Association of Australia.

CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL delegates Pam Corbett and Jackie Mahoney are finally reaping the recognition their decade-long battle for safe and drinkable water for their community deserves.

The community leaders from Alpururulam (Lake Nash), near the Queensland border, have been honoured with one of the 2022 Northern Territory Human Rights Awards.

The patient, persistent and persuasive couple are joint winners of the Fitzgerald Social Change Award, which celebrates the achievements of the individuals and organisations who work to promote and protect human rights in the Territory.

It's very special for me and Jackie, because we have been doing a lot of things for Alpururulam," Ms Corbett told the ABC after the award ceremony in Darwin in December.

She said residents are still fighting for the good Georgina River water on the neighbouring station they used to drink before the 1970s. The cattle still enjoy that water while the community has to rely on poor quality bore water.

"The water is making people sick and doesn't taste like water," she said. "We

have to buy water from our local store. We are worried about our kids and old people.

**"I've been to remote communities where it is cheaper to buy a bottle of coke than a bottle of water. It is not right."**

"There is a dialysis there as well and the water is not good for the dialysis. [Patients] have to go to Alice Springs and interstate, like Mount Isa and Townsville. Some of our people get homesick. They want to come back."

In November, the couple spoke at the Water Services Association of Australia's launch of the report Closing the Water for People and Communities Gap at Parliament House in Canberra.

They talked about how the community decided in 2013 to invest \$150,000 of its community leasing income to improve its poor quality

water supply, with the help of the CLC's community development program.

Alpururulam's own investment was only a fraction of the cost of the only sustainable solution to the community's water woes – a new bore field on the neighbouring station.

The CLC helped the community win a \$4 million Aboriginals Benefit Account grant – "Aboriginal money for essential services that we all take for granted," CLC senior policy officer Georgia Stewart clarified.

Even that sum fell short of what is needed, and the community and the CLC are in negotiations with the NT Government and the National Indigenous Australians Agency to overcome what they hope will be the final hurdles.

The drawn-out saga demonstrates why Aboriginal people need a voice to parliament.

Being heard at last was "very exciting", Ms Corbett said. "Parliament is a special place and politicians should listen to us. Linda Burney was there, supporting us."

**"Parliament is a special place and politicians should listen to us. Linda Burney was there, supporting us."**

Ms Burney, the Minister for Indigenous Australians, told the audience: "Most of you in this room get up in the morning, put on the jug and make a cup of tea or coffee".

"Most of us, when we go to bed in the evening, get a glass of water and sit it beside our bed and don't think twice about it.

"In many parts of remote Australia those things are just not possible.

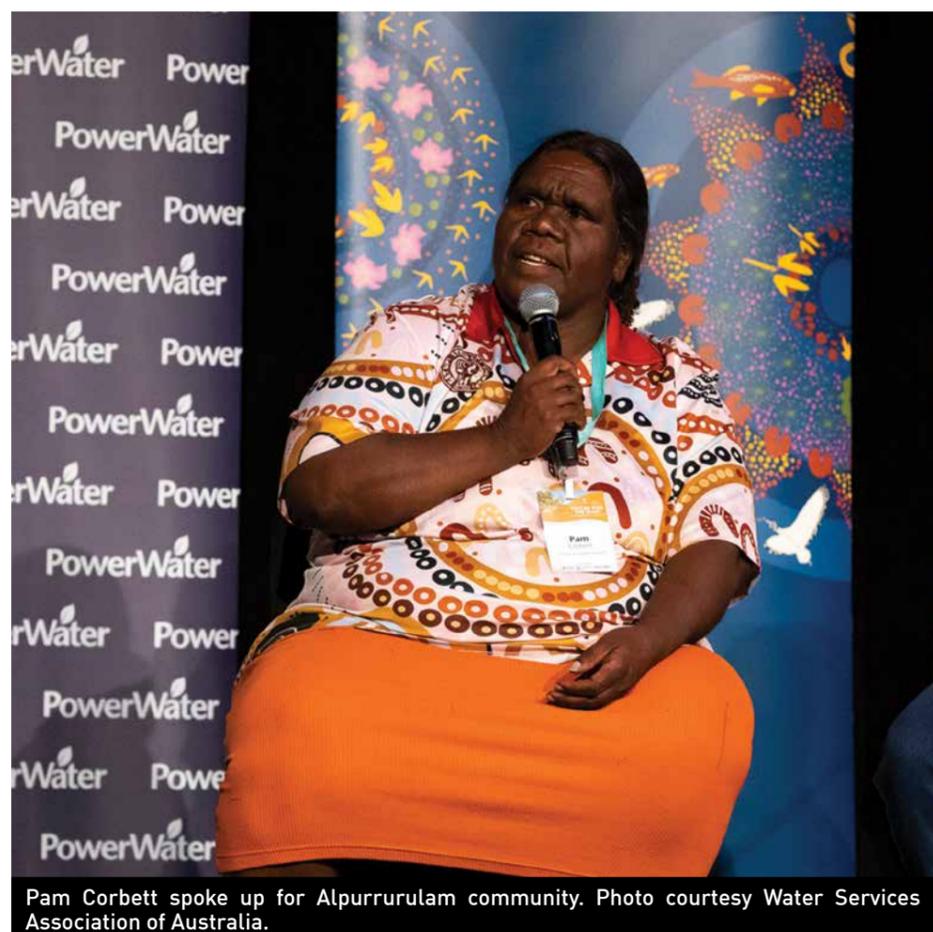
"I've been to remote communities where it is cheaper to buy a bottle of coke than a bottle of water. It is not right," Ms Burney said.

While Mr Mahoney and Ms Corbett enjoyed the attention, their real reward will be tasting clean, fresh tap water back home and weaning the residents off the sugary drinks that make them sick.

Ms Corbett expects to see work on the new bores to start in 2023 "not for me, but my people".

She hopes dialysis patients "can come back home" at last.

"Everybody is looking forward to it and really want to see things happening. Not just promises, but action!"



Pam Corbett spoke up for Alpururulam community. Photo courtesy Water Services Association of Australia.



CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL

**LOOKING FOR WORK?**

The CLC's employment support team helps job seekers to write resumes and job applications and to prepare for interviews.

We support employers to develop strategies to find and keep Aboriginal workers.

We also talk to schools and community groups about job opportunities.

Contact the CLC on 8951 6211 or [employmentunit@clc.org.au](mailto:employmentunit@clc.org.au)

# THE 90 DELEGATES OF THE CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL



**GEOFFREY MATTHEWS**  
Lajamanu



**DANIEL ALGY**  
Daguragu outstations



**NATASHA GEORGE**  
Mistake Creek



**LEAH LEAMAN**  
Daguragu outstations



**PETER PATTERSON**  
Lajamanu outstations



**JUANITA ROGERS**  
Bamboo Springs



**DIANNE KING**  
Daguragu



**SHARON ANDERSON**  
Lajamanu

3

YOUR EXECUTIVE MEMBER

North West



**VALERIE MARTIN**  
Yuendumu



**GIBSON LONG**  
Mount Denison



**TERENCE PAYTON**  
Willowra



**NEWTON LONG**  
Mount Barkly



**NED HARGRAVES**  
Yuendumu

4

Tennar

Tanami

Centra



**ROSS ROCKMAN**  
Tanami Downs



**TEDDY LONG**  
Willowra



**SIMON FISHER JNR**  
Yuendumu outstations



**WARREN WILLIAMS**  
Yuendumu outstations



**RICARDO GALLAGHER**  
Nyirpi

Western

5

South West



**RODERICK KANTAMARA**  
Mount Liebig outstations



**DALTON MCDONALD**  
Papunya



**MONICA ROBINSON**  
Kintore



**ARNOLD BUTLER**  
Ikuntji outstations



**NEIL PETERSON**  
Mount Liebig

2



**MARTIN JUGADAI**  
Ikuntji



**TERRENCE ABBOTT**  
Papunya outstations



**JOSEPH ZIMRAN**  
Kintore outstations



**TERRY MORRIS**  
Mbunghara



**JENNIFER BREADEN**  
Ukaka



**VACANT**  
Kaltukatjara



**SAMMY WILSON**  
Mutitjulu



**VACANT**  
Aputula



**GORDON ABBOTT**  
Wallace Rockhole



**VACANT**  
Kaltukatjara outstations



**JACOB CARROL**  
Utju



**CHARLES GIBSON**  
Imanpa



**LILLIAN INKAMALA**  
Imanpa



**RENE KULITJA**  
Mutitjulu



**JANINE CLYNE**  
Kings Canyon outstations



**MATTHEW PALMER**  
Alice Springs outstations



VACANT  
Purrukuwarra



RONALD BROWN  
Kunayungku



GRAHAM BEASLEY  
Alekaenge



JIMMY FRANK  
Tennant Creek  
native title holders



ANNIE MORRISON  
Tennant Creek



MICHAEL JONES  
Tennant Creek



ELIZABETH DOBBS  
Imagara  
(Murray Downs)



SANDRA MORRISON  
Karlajarriyi



GREG MURPHY  
Ngurratiji



DIANNE STOKES  
Mangalawarra



JEREMIAH CORBETT  
Epenarra



DEREK WALKER  
Alekaenge



BASIL MICK  
Canteen Creek

6



GRAHAM LONG  
Utopia Homelands



MALCOLM CLUB  
Arlparra



JACKIE MAHONEY  
Alpurrulam



JOHN LEWIS  
Atnwengerrpe



JOYCE JONES  
Utopia Homelands



PAMELA CORBETT  
Alpurrulam



ROGER MORTON  
Ampilatwatja



ESAU NELSON  
Arlparra



ELDON ROSS  
Irrultja

7



NEVILLE PETRICK  
Irrerlirre



ANDREW ALICE  
Akarnenhe Well



KEVIN BLOOMFIELD  
Alcoota



HERBIE BLOOMFIELD  
Mount Eaglebeak



PEPPI DROVER  
Atitjere

8



RON HAGAN  
Yuelamu  
outstations



DAVID MCCORMACK  
Yuelamu



TIMOTHY PRICE  
Tara outstations



VACANT  
Nturiya



ROSS PURVIS  
Adelaide Bore

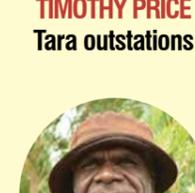
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RAYMOND PALMER  
Ltyentye Apurte



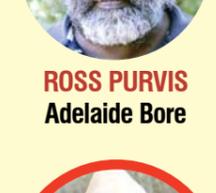
GERRY PRICE  
Wilora



MALCOLM ROSS  
Pmara Jutunta



PETER STAFFORD  
Laramba



KIM BROWN  
Barrow Creek  
outstations



MILDRED INKAMALA  
Ntaria outstations



BARBARA SHAW  
Alice Springs town camps



BYRON (TROY) RATARA  
Ntaria outstations



ROSEANNE ELLIS  
Amoonguna



PATRICK OLIVER  
Yateman's Bore  
outstations



CONRAD RATARA  
Ntaria



CHRISTIAN MALBUNKA  
Ntaria outstations



DAVID SILVERTTON  
Uruna



DARRYL STEVENS  
Alice Springs  
native title holders



KRISTY BLOOMFIELD  
Alice Springs  
native title holders



GLEN SHARPE  
Iwupataka



RODNEY KATATUNA  
Titjikala



# New ABA grants program to start in March

THE NORTHERN Territory Aboriginal Investment Corporation (NTAIC) is setting up shop in Darwin's Smith Street, ready to bring the Aboriginals Benefit Account (ABA) back to the Northern Territory

Starting in March, the new corporation's grants program will deliver up to \$60 million in funding to NT Aboriginal corporations for projects supporting culture, country, communities and business.

The corporation is replacing the former federal government-managed ABA grants program with its own process.

The process is being developed by the board which has a majority of representatives from the four NT land councils.

"The new program needs to be easy for people to use and get money into the community quickly," acting NTAIC chief executive Leeanne Caton said.

"Our grants process will continue to develop over time. Keep an eye on our website [www.ntaic.org.au](http://www.ntaic.org.au) for more updates and how you can apply."

Ms Caton said the process will strengthen cultural maintenance and self-determination through grants and sustainable investments.

This will enable Aboriginal people to create jobs and grow their businesses for the betterment of Aboriginal people in the territory.

The Aboriginal-controlled board appointed Ms Caton in November and will make a permanent appointment in the coming months.

The former senior public servant and chief executive of the Yilli Rreung Housing Aboriginal Corporation led the NT government's Indigenous Economic Development Unit from



Derek Walker and Barbara Shaw (centre) represent the CLC on the board of the NT Aboriginal Investment Corporation, while Dianne Stokes (right) and Jimmy Frank were elected to the corporation's grants committee.

2007-2010 and headed its Aboriginal affairs office in 2015.

At the time she was the territory's most senior Aboriginal public servant.

She won both an NT Telstra Business Award and a Top End NAIDOC Lifetime Achievement Award in 2020.

"The corporation is shifting control of decisions over a significant amount of ABA funds into Aboriginal hands," she said.

"We are placing decision-making back in the hands of Aboriginal representatives, empowering the board to approve, not just to advise, on grants," she said.

The board is setting up a grants

**"The new program needs to be easy for people to use and get money into the community quickly."**

committee with representatives from each land council to ensure local perspectives from across the NT continue to feed into grants decision making.

At the first full board meeting last November Barbara Shaw was elected as chair until the next board meeting in March, when the board will elect a chair for the next three years.

The board's next task is a strategic investment plan, which will set out the principles and priorities for its investment and grant programs.

Ms Caton plans to consult widely with Aboriginal people in the NT to hear what they want the corporation to fund.

"Investing ABA funding boldly and wisely will support Aboriginal culture and community for future generations," she said.

The NTAIC will invest a \$500 million endowment of ABA funding in projects that will grow long term

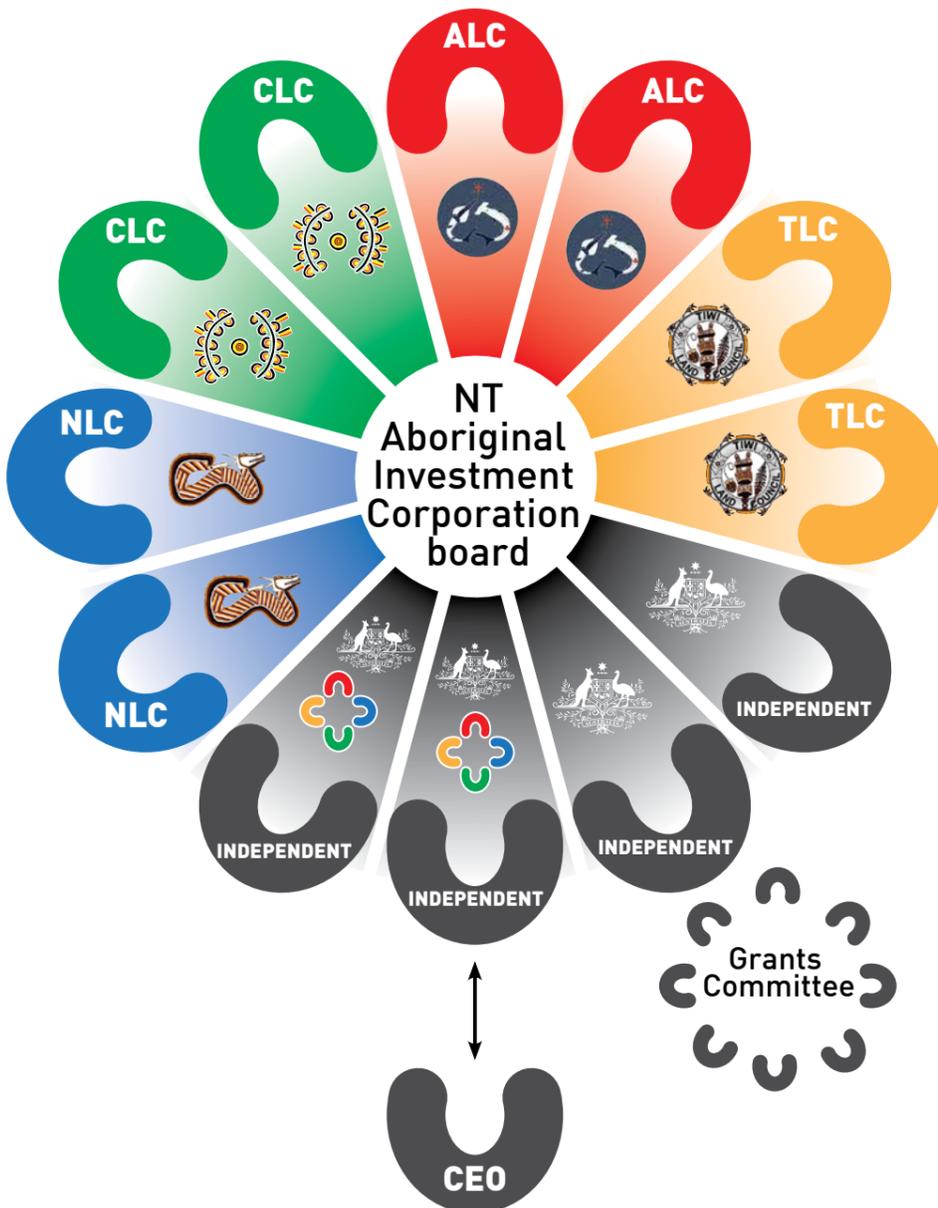
wealth and support Aboriginal jobs and businesses, social and cultural priorities.

The ABA is worth close to \$1.4 billion.

The NT land councils fought for more than 30 years to bring these funds under the control of the people whose land generates the ABA's income.

With the last federal government-run ABA grants round now closed, the end of this long journey towards self-determination is in sight.

The National Indigenous Australians Agency will continue to manage grants approved before 2023, until these funding arrangements expire.



Northern Territory Aboriginal Investment Corporation acting chief executive Leeanne Caton.

# With the stroke of a pen: NT government scraps independent Treaty Commission

THE NORTHERN Territory government claims it remains “committed to” a treaty with Aboriginal people even though it quietly scrapped the independent NT Treaty Commission over Christmas.

Treaty Minister Selena Uibo said the government could not afford to keep funding the independent commission.

She said public servants would take over the work of the commission and hold fresh consultations with Aboriginal people across the territory.

The announcement angered Aboriginal leaders.

Independent MLA Yingiya Guyula accused the government of deliberately delaying a treaty, and of wasting the \$4 million and time spent on consultations already.

“The government is just running around in circles and back again,” he told the ABC.

“They are just delaying this purposely because they don't want to see a treaty go ahead straight away.”

“The treaty commissioner came out and conducted [consultations], the government should say yes,” he said.

He also accused the government of trying to bury the news during the quietest time of year.

**“They are just delaying this purposely because they don't want to see a treaty go ahead straight away.”**

“The government snuck it out, during the Christmas holidays quietly so it didn't wake up the ears of the public,” he said.

Ms Uibo held no press conference after the announcement and gave no interviews until mid-February.

The decision came as a surprise to CLC delegates, who heard from former acting independent treaty commissioner Tony McAvoy about his final report during their council meeting in November.

In his report Mr McAvoy recommended the government keep funding the independent commission.

Ms Uibo told the ABC in February that the extra consultations were necessary to “test” whether Aboriginal Territorians agree with Mr McAvoy's recommendations.

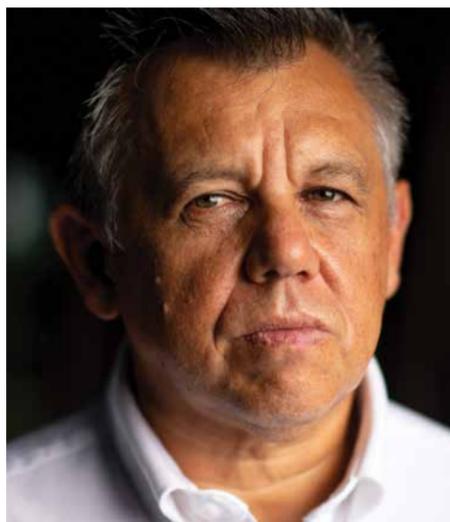
She said the government's additional consultations are expected to run for the next 18 months to two years and

would show “what are the practical steps of making those words turn into actions in the territory, and what's the implications of those actions?”.

Ms Uibo also announced that she will ask the Aboriginal Interpreter Service to start a truth telling process.



Selena Uibo says the NT government will keep working towards a treaty. Photo Che Chorley, © 2023 ABC



Tony McAvoy submitted his final report in June. Photo Che Chorley, © 2023 ABC



Independent MLA Yingiya Guyula. Photo Michael Franchi, © 2023 ABC



The NT Treaty Commission has been closed. Photo Ian Redfearn, © 2023 ABC



## Northern Territory Aboriginal Tourism Strategy 2020-2030

ANNUAL REPORT CARD ENDING JUNE 2022



The Northern Territory Aboriginal Tourism Strategy 2020 – 2030 outlines key initiatives to achieve a sustainable Aboriginal tourism sector and build on the Territory's strengths and cultural assets.

Grouped under five strategic pillars, the strategy aims to lead the development of the sector in partnership with Aboriginal people and operators, to deliver cultural and economic benefits for Aboriginal people.

To find out more about the NT Aboriginal Tourism Strategy report card contact: 08 8999 7420.

[www.tourismnt.com.au](http://www.tourismnt.com.au)



### Living cultures



Respectfully sharing our Aboriginal cultures



### Living communities



Strengthening knowledge and understanding in Aboriginal people and across networks



### Living lives



Nurturing skills and developing support tools to create better business, job and industry success



### Living landscapes



Providing better access and services to destinations



### Living interactions



Improving communication, engagement and monitoring our connections with visitors and the industry

# Rangers train on bobcats to protect sacred women's site

ON THE far side of the sandhill behind Aputula (Finke), the community's sprawling rubbish tip is slowly but steadily encroaching on a sacred women's site known as the kungka tree.

Not far from it rusts the abandoned wreck of the old community truck. Ranger Elisha James remembers riding on its tray as a girl, back when the tip also served as a playground of sorts.

"We used to hang around there playing, but we were not going near the tree," she says. "It's never been cleaned. It's been like that since I've been little."

"People didn't really realise that that is a sacred site and they started dumping there, a lot of dirt and hills of trash," her niece Kitana Shaw explains.

"Me and my auntie Elisha and another auntie, Lorraine, we are the only female rangers. Our job is to look after the kungka tree behind the tip. She gives us strength. I'm still learning and understanding about her."

"I also want to learn from her and the old ladies to tell me their stories what the kungka tree is about. I just want to clean that up and tidy around her and maintain that area."

Before the rangers can clean and protect the site under the watchful eyes of their elders they need to learn how to operate some heavy machinery.

Ms Shaw points to the bobcat trainer Steve Scheyer has parked on a large flat area surrounded by piles of red sand mixed with dead shrubs and all manner of rubbish.

"I can't wait to get in one and just go for it!"

"I wanted to learn how to drive bobcats and trucks," Ms James adds. "I'm just so interested in stuff like that. I just want to do it!"

The women are joined by three male rangers and three Alice Springs-based land management staff.

Everyone is hoping that the trainer will sign off on their bobcat certificates at the end of the week.

He takes them through the safety preparations and machinery checks before he assigns pairs of drivers and spotters.

**"I've been waiting for this for a long time', and now I'm doing it and I feel proud of myself."**

Ms Shaw, acting as the first spotter, is to use a walkie-talkie to direct her auntie while she works the controls of the bobcat.

Ms Shaw dons her mirror glasses and big black hat and climbs a mound of dirt for a clear view of the area. From here she guides Ms James to push the shovel of the bobcat into the dirt below, lift it up, turn and dump it a few meters away. Her encouragement clearly does the trick.

"I get a bit nervous", Ms James admits during a break, "But when someone is on the microphone talking to me I feel calm. I can do it. The training is going great."

Half an hour and a round of applause later the rangers swap sides. Ms Shaw buckles herself into the driver's seat and attacks the nearest dirt pile with gusto.

"I'm just like 'gosh, I've been waiting for this for a long time', and now I'm doing it and I feel proud of myself," she beams.

"You mess up a bit, but you've got your spotter there which is good."



Rangers Kitana Shaw and Elisha James (picture below) learned how to operate a bobcat.

"Once I got the hang of it I just couldn't wait to get back in it and just go crazy with the dirt and I can't wait to start cleaning up with it."

"I really love it. I'm learning new things and I'm getting my way through it. Loving it!"

She posts pictures on Facebook and relishes the instant feedback from her Alice Springs relatives.

"They're all tradies and they drive bobcats for a living, and they go: 'ah, the bobcat girl!'"

She loves the comments: "that we look deadly, of course, that they're proud of us. That we're doing work and we need more women like us to join and do the work."

The real payoff comes at knock-off time, as she drives the bobcat

back over the dune and through the streets of the community in a kind of victory lap.

"The best thing about it is driving through Finke and seeing all the uncles and the families and the little cousin brothers just looking at me and putting their thumbs up," she admits.

"We see a lot of men in a bobcat and now it's time to change the gender stereotype. We can do it if we put our mind to it. Yes, we're strong enough to do it."

Ms James says her family is pleased. "My partner is happy because I'm the woman. Me and Kitana, we drive vehicles and bobcats and later probably be driving a truck," she laughs. "Even the men are freaking out: 'she can do this!'"

"It was really good seeing all my uncles real proud of me and they said they haven't seen a kungka, a girl, driving a bobcat," says Ms Shaw, who has worked as a horse riding mentor with Bushmob. "Hearing them say that makes me want to achieve more."

"I can show the young girls that you can do anything if you put your mind to it. There are hard jobs, but we're women. We're strong enough. We can do the work as men can."

"There's two-way learning as well, and deep listening. I want to teach the young people, for them to listen to the older ladies."

For Ms James it's all about culture and confidence.

"I want to look after the country and be strong. When you are looking after the country, the country is looking after you and you become strong."

Time to give back to the country, Ms Shaw says with a nod to the kungka tree.

"We go up to her, talk to her and she heals us in a way. Hopefully we will be able to tidy her up a bit. I want to look after her and clean her up, and other sites that need cleaning up. We can do it because we've got the certificate."





# IDA conference brings extinction fighters together

THE INDIGENOUS Desert Alliance conference at Yulara – Australia’s largest gathering of desert rangers – was as big as the challenges the rangers are facing.

Seventy-six Central Land Council rangers shared their ideas about how to fight the twin crises of plant and animal extinction and climate change with representatives of 46 ranger groups.

The CLC’s Anangu Luritjiku Rangers presented on how their fire and feral animal management is bringing the endangered central rock rats on Ulumbarru (Mount Edward) near Papunya back from the brink.

Jeremy Kenny, Tjakura rangers and Alice Henwood-Michaels, Warlpiri rangers along with 70 other participants took part in a field trip and spoke about how they track and protect threatened tjakura (great desert skinks), night parrots and bilbies.

Warlpiri Ranger Madeleine Dixon talked about how Yapa use yitaki maninjaku (what you need to know to track an animal) mind maps to pass on ancient knowledge.

Mind maps are posters with pictures of animals and information about their behaviour and stories.

“The more you know about the animal, the better you are going to be at tracking that animal,” she said.

One of the greatest threats to native animals is the introduced buffel grass.

The conference declared war on the weed which has already displaced native plants across large swathes of the desert.

Receiving unanimous support at the conference, the Umuwa Statement presented by the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Warru Rangers, called on governments to help Aboriginal people manage buffel grass.

“For too long we have been pushed to the side when making decisions about this tjanpi kura (bad grass). We need serious action taken to reduce this threat to our country, our culture and our communities,” the statement read.

Another big message from the conference was the need for more rangers, especially women, to care for country.



IDA conference participants on a field trip at Uluru. Photo Michael Douglas

**“Our beautiful desert doesn’t work without us connecting and helping each other as we have done for thousands of years.”**

“Our beautiful desert doesn’t work without us connecting and helping each other as we have done for thousands of years,” IDA chair Nyaparu Rose said.

Three of the CLC’s rangers were singled out for special recognition.

Bronwen Cavanagh, from the Ltyentye Apurte Rangers, and winner the IDA Female Ranger of the Year Award said, “It felt good to get the award because I’ve worked really hard, I’m looking forward to going out on country with more women because I want to be a leader and a role model for the new ladies who have joined to show we are equal in the work place.”

Kitana Shaw from the Aputula Rangers was declared Female Emerging Ranger of the Year. Kevin Malthouse from the Tjuwanpa Rangers won Male Emerging Ranger of the Year.

Conference participants heard plenty of encouragement and praise for their achievements.

Fred Chaney, a former federal Aboriginal affairs minister, said the rangers and their alliance were the best things to have happened in the desert for a long time.

“The ranger program shows that you can do anything,” he said

Northern Territory Minister for Desert Knowledge Chansey Paech even compared the rangers to superheroes and urged them to speak up about climate change.

“Our desert people will be the first climate refugees if we don’t address climate change,” he said.



Bronwen Cavanagh won the IDA’s Female Ranger of the Year Award.



Tjanpi kura – rangers told the IDA conference they want buffel grass to be declared a weed. Photo courtesy IDA.



Any questions about CLC business? Call your region’s office

	<b>1. ALICE SPRINGS</b> Aaron Kopp 8951 6264
	<b>2. SOUTH WEST</b> Wayne Clarke 8951 0577
	<b>6. TENNANT CREEK</b> Darryl “Tiger” Fitz 8962 2343
	<b>3. NORTH WEST</b> Peter Liddle 8951 0627
	<b>7. EASTERN SANDOVER</b> Edward Foster 8951 0606
	<b>4. TANAMI</b> Lazarus Gallagher 8951 0581
	<b>8. EASTERN PLENTY</b> Richard Dodd 8951 0622
	<b>5. WEST</b> Amos Egan 8951 0581
	<b>9. CENTRAL</b> Michael Turner 8951 6250

# Ltyentye Apurte Rangers finish strong

THE LTYENTYE APURTE RANGERS completed a digital technology training course and celebrated their success with a barbeque lunch.

"We learned how to use the computer for Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and how to make graphs. I reckon it will help us make presentations and Healthy Country Plans," ranger Anton McMillan said,

He's got a message for his fellow rangers.

"I'd encourage you to learn this. It's not only a hands-on job, you also need to learn the planning. It makes it easier on yourself."

Robyn Ellis from Ninti Training (front right) had nothing but praise for the rangers.

"You finished strong, your attention to learning, how much effort you put in, how you helped each other, how you helped me.

"You are good natured, the fact that you enjoyed doing it and your outcomes were just fantastic," she said.



## What made you want to become a ranger?

My grandfather and my uncle inspired me. My grandfather used to work for the land council. When I was growing up he took me to meetings. My uncle was a ranger at Papunya for more than 10 years.

## What projects has your group been working on?

Camping out and burning. Sometimes I light the matches. I also hop on the aeroplane, maybe for three hours, doing the incendiary burning. We look after the waterholes and we make the country clean so the animals come back to the green areas.

## How would you explain ranger work to other people?

It's good fun and you learn about cultural ways and western ways. It give me a deep understanding of the country we work in. When you work in someone else's country to keep it clean, it's mostly about respect for their country.

## What would you say to a young person who wants to become a ranger?

Go for it, youngfella. It's not all work. It's about learning about country and culture and keeping it strong. You will learn more and develop more and you can bring that to your people.

## What strengths do you bring to your ranger group?

Working together and courage to work when it's hot. Not many want to do that for a full day and the next day. Sometimes you got to work through the hotness.

## What's the best part of your job?

I like to attend all the group meetings. And camping out.

## What do you like to do outside your ranger work?

Look after my family. And be friendly. Care for each other.

## What would you say to the PM about rangers?

That's a tricky one. I would tell the Prime Minister to understand why we must keep the bush strong. We would love to do more but we need help from the high level. It's mostly understanding and respect for what we do.

## Why do you think being a ranger is so important?

To keep the countryside strong and healthy. If the land is healthy, we are healthy. If it's not, we are not. It's a bit like a person who has a great house. He will keep it good and clean and that will make him feel alright. It's the same for us with our country. Looking after our land.

# MEET OUR RANGERS



## Ananias Wood





Conrad Ratara congratulates the newly elected CLC chair Matthew Palmer.



CLC delegate Michael Jones' granddaughters, great-grandchildren and great-great-granddaughter at the February council meeting in Tennant Creek.



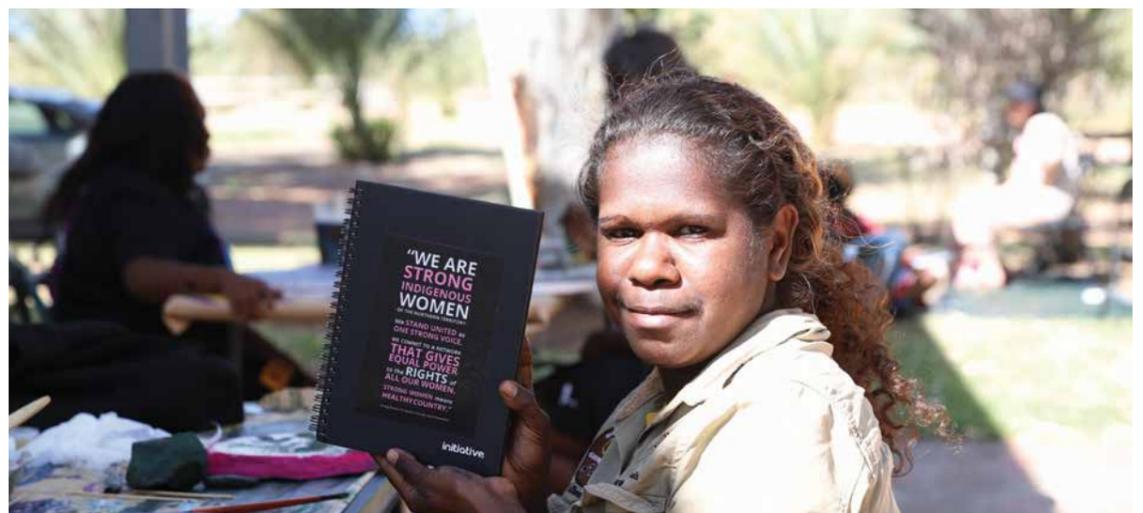
Fiona Gibson reads to students at the Nyirripi community launch of her bilingual oral history book.



Yuendumu elder Robin Granites with Minister for Indigenous Australians, Linda Burney.



Ranger Kitana Shaw followed her IDA award with a bobcat certificate.



Going from strength to strength: MurnkurruMurnkurru Ranger Helma Bernard at the Strong Women for Healthy Country Network at the Ross River Resort.



Rangers Gladys Brown, Helma Bernard, Rhonda Rankin and Salbena Cleary came together at the women's wellbeing workshop at Tilmouth Well.

# Young Alice artist portrays family elders

DANAE MOORE'S mum Barbara Shaw is super-proud of the family portraits Ms Moore produced for the Exit Art exhibition in Darwin.

Ms Moore, her mother and her great-grandfather Tommy Walkabout travelled from Alice Springs to see her paintings on a wall of the Museum and Gallery of the Northern Territory.

"Danae has been doing art since primary school and won lots of art awards," Ms Shaw said.

"She is really talented. It just goes

**"Me and my mum had a conversation about how important family was, and the elders are the most important members of the family."**

to show that if kids stay at school they can achieve anything."

Ms Moore painted Mr Walkabout and her grandfather Harry Moore, two Central Land Council delegates who have represented communities in the CLC's central region for many years.

"Me and my mum had a conversation about how important family was, and the elders are the most important members of the family," Ms Moore told the ABC at the exhibition opening.

Barbara Shaw said her daughter's

portraits were now in hot demand.

"They were like, 'Wow, why didn't she do me one? My turn next, my turn next,'" she said.

"So there's a big line-up of our family members wanting portraits done."

The exhibition, which closed to the public in March, showed off the best student works from year 12 graduates.



Danae Moore (centre, next to mum Barbara Shaw) painted family elders Tommy Walkabout (left) and Harry Moore. Photo Felicity James, © 2023 ABC

# Tjoritja women stand up for themselves

KWARRITNAMA means 'women standing' in Western Aranda and is the inspiration behind the Kwarritnama Women's Circle and its successful first exhibition.

The women's circle is an arts and culture program designed to foster belonging, self-expression and empowerment.

The eight week program was specifically tailored for women from the Inkamala family who are connected to the Tjoritja West community development working group.

Many are elderly, so documenting and gathering their stories for the next generation is vital.

Encouraged to be artistically creative and connect emotionally and spiritually with each other, the women decided to use painting to build the confidence they need to be leaders and mentors within the circle and in their community.

They showcased their paintings in the Kwarritnama art exhibition in Alice Springs.

"Being in the women's circle has helped me find my painting style. Everything relates to me as a woman, to my country," Rhonda Inkamala, one of the exhibiting artists who is also a working group member, said.

The program was run by Tjinatjarra, a local Alice Springs business owned and operated by Aranda women Sharon and Natasha Watkins.

**"Being in the women's circle has helped me find my painting style. Everything relates to me as a woman, to my country."**

The couple have more than two decades of experience working in the support service sector.

"We're determined to make a

powerful difference in assisting our people through a culturally safe, holistic and person-centred approach" Ms Watkins said.

The traditional owners of the Tjoritja (West MacDonnell) National Park contributed \$20,000 of their rent income for the park to Tjinatjarra.

The artists spoke of the increased wellness, pride and sense of purpose they felt in creating their art.

Since the successful exhibition, last November the Tjoritja West working group funded Tjinatjarra to deliver two more cultural programs this year, one for women and one for men.



Vanessa Inkamala with one of the paintings from the Kwarritnama exhibition.



# Engawala artists invite to an adventure back in time

*TIM'S Journey Back in Time* is a children's story in Eastern Anmatyerr and English, written and illustrated by a group of female artists from Engawala.

The women created etchings and prints of Tim, a cheeky boy who travels back in time and meets the giant ancient animals scientists call 'megafauna'.

The book also features beautiful illustrations of Engawala, a community two hours north-east of Alice Springs, near the Alcoota fossil site.

Artist Leanne Dodd worked on the book with the Batchelor Institute for Indigenous Tertiary Education in Alice Springs.

"We have been studying at Batchelor since 2017. When they visited us in Engawala, we all started studying visual arts."

The artists produced the animated film that runs continuously at the Alice Springs Megafauna museum and other artworks. *Tim's Journey Back in Time* was inspired by the animation and launched at the museum last November. At the launch, artists Sabrina James and Dianne Dixon read the story in Eastern Anmatyerr and English.

"We always wanted to create a children's book so we could educate our young people about what once walked around this area," said artist Joy Turner.

"The bilingual story helps children learn about the large animals that lived eight million years ago in Central Australia and their fossils that are found around Alcoota.



Sabrina James and Dianne Dixon read the story in Anmatyerr and English. Photo Lisa Hatz, courtesy Museum and Art Gallery of the NT.

"We want the children to learn about the megafauna fossils that are found here, right in our backyard, and know what these large

animals ate. We also want our children to learn how to read and write in our local language," said artist Mary Tilmouth.

The Northern Territory Department of Education is distributing 300 copies of *Tim's Journey Back in Time* to schools in Arandic language communities.

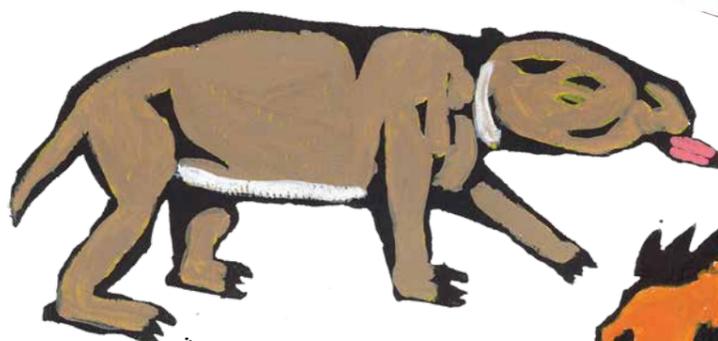
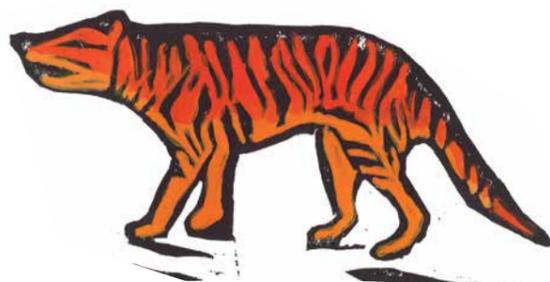
The book is available from Megafauna Central, the Museum of Central Australia or from the Batchelor Institute.

The Centre for Australian Languages and Linguistics and the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory also supported the project.



Deb and Doll — *Dromornis stirtoni*  
Deb and Doll are the biggest birds that have ever existed, with some over three metres tall. They eat plants and have tiny wings, which means they can't fly.

Thea — *Thylacinus potens*  
Thea is related to the Tasmanian tiger, or thylacine. She eats meat and looks like a dog, but is actually a marsupial, like the kangaroo, possum and Tasmanian devil.



Lopsy — *Kolopsis torus*  
Lopsy eats plants and walks on four legs. Lopsy looks like a wombat, but is the size of a sheep.



Penny — *Palorchestes painei*  
Penny is related to Lopsy and has a short trunk and long claws.

Leo — *Wakaleo alcootaensis*  
Leo means lion and Leo looks like a lion. He is also a meat-eating marsupial and very good at climbing trees.



Eleven artists from Engawala art centre helped create *Tim's Journey Back in Time*. Photo Lisa Hatz, courtesy Museum and Art Gallery of the NT.



# A caring and compassionate leader who “has walked in our shoes”

SOME LEADERS are given little time, but their impact on the lives of others is profound and lasting. Kunmanara Hoosan was such a leader.

A highly respected and deeply caring man, his time as the chair of the Central Land Council was cut tragically short. “Only eight months into the job,” deputy chair Warren Williams lamented at Kunmanara’s funeral in January. “We will forever ask ourselves what Kunmanara might have achieved.”

“Kunmanara was the kind of leader we all wish for: a humble and compassionate man with vast life experience and high expectations who put others first. He was always thinking of others, especially our most vulnerable – children, women, sick and old people.”

“I love to listen to people and try to guide them, and I need them to guide me too,” Kunmanara said when CLC delegates elected him as their chair in April 2022 in Tennant Creek. By that time he had already been a member of the land council’s executive committee for three years, his second stint on the council.

CLC chief executive Les Turner paid tribute to the “enormous contribution” he made “with his strength of character, wisdom and leadership”.

The respect Kunmanara commanded at the land council, both among elected members and the staff, came from knowing how much he cared.

“He has walked in our shoes,” Mr Williams said.

Kunmanara was born on 1 July 1963 in Port Augusta, to Ivy Douglas and Alex Hoosan. His aunt Audrey Braedon raised him as a cousin brother of her daughter Lindy, and he grew up and went to school in Aputula (Finke) with his late brothers Joe and Alex Stuart.

Another brother was the late Henry Douglas. Kunmanara learned only later that Stuart and Eileen Hoosan were also his siblings.

He worked on surrounding stations from an early age.

In 1984 he settled down with Sarah Lynch and the couple started a family. Over the years they cared for many youngsters besides their own five children – Ronald, Jacob, Graham, Billy and Jameisha.

Nobody was surprised when, after working as a CLC field officer, community police officer and health worker, the outspoken supporter of young people made a name for himself as a youth worker.

He and other elders took young men out on country to teach them bush skills and always had their backs.

He advocated strongly for the raising of the age of criminal responsibility.

Mr Williams reminded mourners how passionately Kunmanara stood against “all the reasons why too many of our young people end up damaged or dead before their time”.

He hated to see so many neglected and hurting children locked away at ages when, as he put it, “their brains aren’t grown up yet”.

Kunmanara was never content with half measures. When the Northern Territory Government voted to raise the age of criminal responsibility from 10 years of age to 12, he urged them to raise it to 16.

“He called for more programs to help young people in trouble. Action, not talk,” Mr Williams said.

In recent years he became a prominent advocate for anyone affected by violence.

**“Few will forget his advocacy for safe drinking water for all, for a seat at the decision making table, for a say in our future and for a voice to power.”**

“Kunmanara had high expectations for the next generation, for himself and for all of us. Like the true Christian he was, he had endless compassion, but he didn’t make excuses.”

“Domestic violence, whether alcohol-fuelled or not, was abhorrent to him, a non-drinker,” he said. So was police violence.

Kunmanara knew from his own experience that community policing, language and people skills beat guns any day.

“When I was with the police I never needed a gun because I had strong relationships with the community. If I can do that so can other police officers,” he told a rally in Alice Springs.

A valued member of the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women’s Council’s watiku (men’s) team, Kunmanara led many young men on a good path in life.

The spate of killings of Aboriginal women from remote communities and town camps at the hands of their partners drove him to despair.

“We men all need to take responsibility for stopping the violence against women,” he implored late last year. “We’ve got to look after and support our women, to respect and love them .”

In times of trouble Kunmanara drew strength from both his Anangu and Christian cultures.

He was a chair of the Uniting Church of the Northern Territory, a director of the Tyatyekwenhe native title holder corporation, and a board member of the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority.

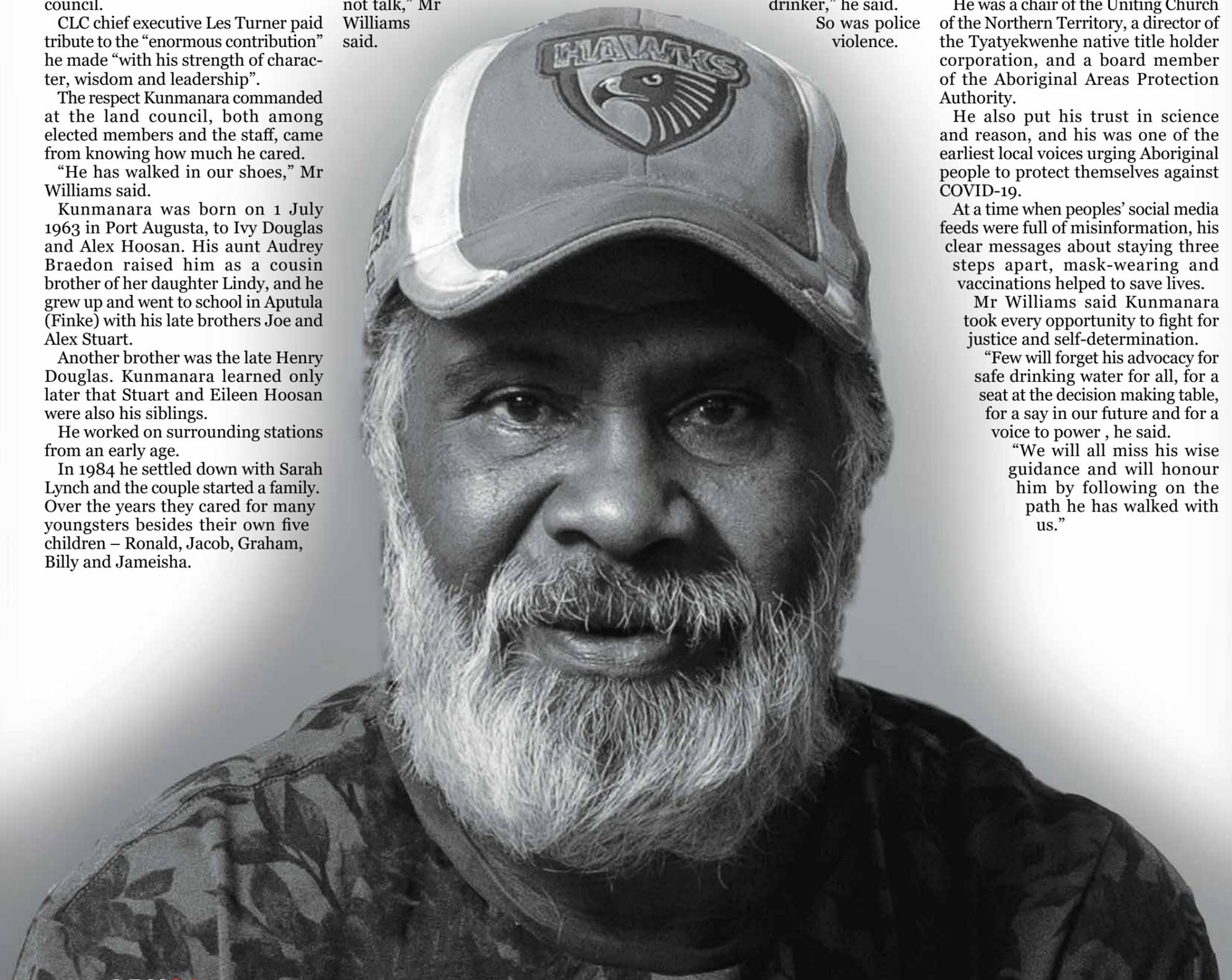
He also put his trust in science and reason, and his was one of the earliest local voices urging Aboriginal people to protect themselves against COVID-19.

At a time when peoples’ social media feeds were full of misinformation, his clear messages about staying three steps apart, mask-wearing and vaccinations helped to save lives.

Mr Williams said Kunmanara took every opportunity to fight for justice and self-determination.

“Few will forget his advocacy for safe drinking water for all, for a seat at the decision making table, for a say in our future and for a voice to power , he said.

“We will all miss his wise guidance and will honour him by following on the path he has walked with us.”





# Barbara Weir – from stolen generation to international acclaim

ALYAWARR/ANMATYERRE artist Barbara Weir achieved international acclaim for her unique paintings of the grasses, lands and dreaming stories of her Central Australian homelands, yet she had been lucky to survive after her birth and later experiences as one of the stolen generations of the 1940s.

Weir, who founded a family dynasty of artists at her Utopia homelands and became a cultural ambassador for her Anmatyerre people, was born Florrie Weir at Derry Downs Station, 230 kilometres north-east of Alice Springs in 1940.

Her mother was 18-year-old Anmatyerre/Alyawarre domestic worker Minnie Pwerle, and her father, Irish-Australian pastoralist Jack Weir – owner of Derry Downs Station, adjacent to the now Aboriginal-owned Utopia region.

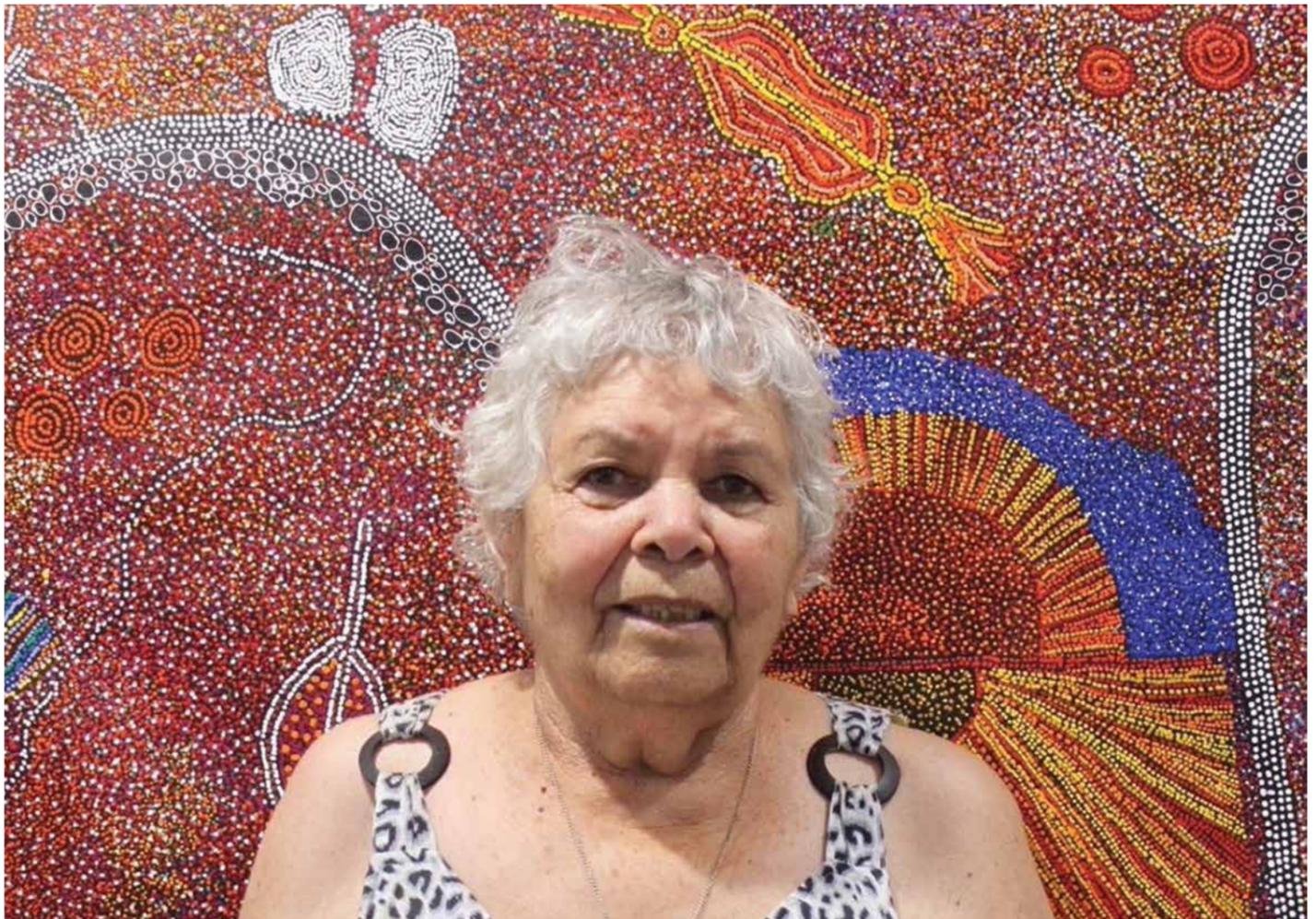
At the time black-white relations were illegal. Shortly after Florrie's birth, her mother left her to be cared for by her aunt Molly Pwerle and then by Emily Kame Kngwarreye – who later became one of Australia's most famous artists. Barbara's mother Minnie Pwerle (who herself also became a star artist) married an Aboriginal man – Motorcar Jim – with whom she had six other children.

Kngwarreye would take young Florrie on bush trips – frequently hiding her from welfare patrols on the lookout for mixed race children. Years later, Barbara described her early life as equally wonderful and fraught. Wonderful as she loved the lands and being looked after by her aunts Molly, Emily, Galya and Lottie Pwerle and Emily Kame Kngwarreye; fraught as she was conscious of her difference to both Anmatyerre people and her white half-siblings. Plus, the ever-present fear of government authorities. The patrol finally caught up with her at the age of 9 when she was seized while fetching water from the station's tank.

First, she was taken to St Mary's Hostel – an Anglican mission hostel on the outskirts of Alice Springs from which she tried to escape on numerous occasions. She was then moved to St John's Baptist Children's Hostel in Alice Springs. Other child inmates of St John's included legendary land rights and cultural leader Charlie Perkins, John Moriarty, soccer player, government advisor and founder of Balarinji Designs and Chicka Dixon, influential unionist, and land rights leader. Her name was changed to Barbara, and she was subsequently sent to hostels in Darwin and Brisbane – from which she also attempted to escape at any given opportunity.

By 18 she was living in Darwin and working as a cleaner. Here, she met and married Mervyn Torres – a Jabba Jabba man from Broome – and had 6 children. By that time, memories of her birth family were buried in her subconscious; she also had no idea where she was from – remembering only that it was "near Alice Springs" and was called something like "Angudipa".

Her husband solved the mystery when, on a visit to Alice Springs, he was talking to an elderly Aboriginal man called Tom Williams and casually asked whether he knew of a 'Florrie Weir' who had 'lived out of Alice Springs somewhere'. Williams told Torres "Florrie Weir ... yes, I remember that one, she was taken away from her



family out at Utopia." [Urupuntja]. Her mother Minnie's still alive."

In 1968 Weir, her husband and her children moved to Papunya where she worked as a fencer, also witnessing the early years of painting of the founding Papunya school artists. She also became a member of the Papunya council.

Regularly she would drive with her children to the edge of the Utopia lands; just to be there, but not knowing how to enter or to reconnect with her birth family. On one visit Emily Kame Kngwarreye saw her, ran to her, and gave her a huge hug. "Without aunty Emily, I probably wouldn't have gone back [to the community]," said Weir years later.

Unable to speak Anmatyerre, it took her several years to relearn the language and to gradually re-establish a family relationship – first with her sisters who she became very close to, and later with her mother Minnie. By 1974 she had re-learned Anmatyerre and its sister language Alyawarre and she played a pivotal, initiating role in the move to return much of Utopia Station to its traditional owners – one of the earliest successful land rights claims.

In 1985 she became the first woman president of the community's Urupuntja Council and was later the first woman on the Central Land Council. Most recently, in 2020, she was Chair of the Urupuntja Aboriginal Health Services Aboriginal Corporation.

Weir's first interest in art was that of the Utopia women's batik making movement in the 1980s. In 1994 she travelled with 9 other batik makers to Indonesia to work with traditional Indonesian batik makers.

Simultaneously she was experimenting with painting on canvas. She started painting professionally in 1990 – exhibiting first at DACOU Gallery, Adelaide (owned by her son Fred Torres (Purla) and shortly after in well-known galleries around Australia and in Europe where

her work was especially acclaimed.

Weir's paintings became famous for their representations of the once fertile lands of her country at a time when plants, animals, and water were plentiful. Themes include grass seeds, bush berry and wildflowers. In gestural, fine brush strokes and brilliant colouration, she evoked the ripple of the once-lush grasses as animals and winds moved through them, causing the grasses to drop their seeds to be collected and ground for damper.

**She would drive with her children to the edge of the Utopia lands; just to be there, but not knowing how to enter or to reconnect with her birth family.**

In a detailed and expansive series called "My Mother's Country" Weir took a different approach – representing her land's sites, travelling tracks and dance lines from an aerial perspective in a myriad of often luminously coloured fine dots.

During the 2000s Weir became an ever more popular and successful artist, travelling frequently to her exhibitions around Australia and internationally – becoming such a seasoned traveller she would give tips to fellow travellers on where to find the best gyoza in the Tokyo markets and similar culinary specialities in other countries. In 2009 she was named as one of the top 50 most collectable Australian artists.

Weir exhibited jointly with other family members including her mother

Minnie Pwerle (who came to painting about 10 years after her daughter); cousin Gloria Petyarre; aunts Galya, Molly and Emily Pwerle; adult children Teresa Purla, Charmaine Pwerle and Fred Purla, grandson Jarrad Kamarre and granddaughter – artist and owner of Pwerle Gallery, Jade Akamarre.

She was also an important contributor to talks and symposia accompanying the major retrospectives of Emily Kame Kngwarreye presented by the National Museum of Australia in the 2000s.

A forthright, strong woman with a great love of painting, the work of other Utopia artists, her culture, country and family, Weir painted continuously until October 2022 when she suffered a stroke. She passed away in the Royal Adelaide Hospital on January 3, 2023.

With works in thousands of private collections as well as public collections such as the Art Gallery of South Australia, Queensland Art Gallery, Artbank, Queensland College of Art Griffith University, University of Adelaide, AMP Collection, the Holmes a Court Collection and Macquarie Bank Collection, Barbara Weir leaves a rich and enduring artistic legacy.

She is survived by her children Teresa Purla, Patrick Torres, Fred Purla, James Torres, Mervyn Torres and Charmaine Pwerle, 18 grandchildren 6 great grandchildren, sisters Eileen, Betty and Dora Mbitjana and aunts/mothers Molly, Galya and Emily Pwerle.

by Susan McCulloch

(With thanks to Teresa Purla, Charmaine Pwerle and Patrick Torres for their assistance with this obituary. With additional material from Stories of My People| Country| Barbara Weir| The Stolen Generation, Red Earth Market, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j5HqLV7D8YA>)

Susan McCulloch OAM is a Mornington Peninsula-based art writer, publisher, curator and gallerist. She had known Barbara Weir for 30 years and interviewed her numerous times for articles for *The Australian*, *Art Collector* and other publications.

# USE YOUR POWER

Later this year, Australians will vote in a referendum about changing the constitution, the nation's rule book.

The change would recognise Aboriginal people by giving them a say about laws and policies that affect them.

All voters will be asked to vote 'yes' or 'no' to the referendum question (see page 6). To have your say you need to be enrolled to vote.



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