



New CLC chair ready to campaign for the voice

Matthew Palmer, from Corkwood Bore outstation near Alice Springs, has been elected chair of the Central Land Council.

He follows in the footsteps of former CLC chair and Anangu youth worker Kunmanara Hoosan, who passed away late last year.

“My brother will always be in my heart,” Mr Palmer told the land council delegates at their meeting at Tennant Creek.

The former chair of Alice Springs native title representative body Lhere Artepe announced he will be campaigning for an Aboriginal voice to parliament.

“I want to put the voice of my people to the parliament. It’s time for us to have a say in the laws and policies that affect us,” he said.

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

“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.”

The former court interpreter speaks Central Arrernte, Alyawarr and English.

“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 was one of the youngest CLC delegates ever when Alice Springs 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 also 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 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, remains 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 chose two CLC representatives for the grants committee of the NTAIC.

Today’s council meeting will be followed by a meeting of the CLC’s 11-member executive committee tomorrow, which will discuss the council’s voice campaign.

21 February 2023

Images available on request