

**FREE**  
**LANDRIGHTS NEWS**  
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## EDITORIAL

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## COVER



Shirley Turner from Nyirrpri on a WETT-funded school excursion to Thailand. See story p.10.

## CLC MEETINGS

**9-11 May**  
Tennant Creek

**29-31 August**  
Location TBA

**7-9 November**  
Location TBA

# Utopia first test of Gunner's promise



Lena Pwerl is looking forward to moving into one of Arlparra's three new emergency shelters (insert and in the background).

UTOPIA'S residents have heard the Northern Territory Government's election promise to hand back control over housing loud and clear.

Arlparra community has received three small 'emergency shelters' but the

widely dispersed residents.

"Not everyone wants to go to Arlparra to live," says Michael Liddle, a member of the Labor Party and the Central Land Council executive.

Mr Liddle is also a director of Urupuntja, a local corporation that hopes to take over repair and maintenance of the region's houses in the future.

"Three or four people are happy to get houses at Arlparra," he says.

One of them is elder Lena Pwerl who shares a humpy with her daughter Nora, her granddaughter and her two great grandchildren.

Ms Pwerl looks forward to moving into one of the emergency houses and plans to "keep the humpies for the puppy dogs".

"I've lived here for a long time. I never had a house," she says.

But Mr Liddle says the government should focus on

members of her family.

"I want to live at Rocket Range, on my father's country. My brother is there, I want to look after the land," she says.

"People do have families and their kids have to move out, there is nowhere for them to go."

Even though she shares a broken down house at Soapy Bore outstation with her daughter, her daughter's partner and three grandchildren she does not want to move to Arlparra.

"I want to stay in Soapy Bore. This is my children's homeland and I want to be with my children."

"I have been working for years and don't have a house of my own. Some people are not working and they live better than me. It's not fair," Ms Chalmers says.

Susan Chalmers teaches senior students at the school in Arlparra to read and write in Alyawarr. **Continued p.14**



CLC delegate Michael Liddle.

**"Nearly 20 kids live in our house and about 15 adults. Some sleep outside, some in the living room."**

government is yet to start on the 12 new houses promised by the previous Country Liberal government.

Like its predecessor, the Gunner government appears to want to build all of the new houses at Arlparra, where most of the Utopia region's services are concentrated, rather than in the overcrowded outstations.

This puts it at odds with many of the neglected region's

building and fixing up houses in Utopia's outstations where most of its growing population sleeps rough.

"They haven't had repairs and maintenance for 15 years, so the houses are quite destroyed."

"I'd like a new house because we are too many people", says Lucky Morton from Rocket Range outstation.

Ms Morton shares the shed she calls home with seven

## Help for Yapa students



Did you know? Yapa from remote communities in the CLC region who go to secondary school outside their community can get funding support from the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust (WETT).

**WETT**  
WARLPIRI EDUCATION AND TRAINING TRUST  
**EDUCATION IS THE KEY**

To apply please contact Louise Stanley at the Central Land Council on 8951 6366.





## CDP Penalty Record Aboriginal coalition wins campaign for Senate inquiry

THE AUSTRALIAN Senate is investigating the disastrous outcomes of the Australian Government's Community Development Program (CDP) following a successful campaign by the Peak Aboriginal Organisations of the Northern Territory (APONT) and others. APONT members, including the land councils, welcomed the support of Labor and the Greens for the inquiry. APONT was among more than 30 organisations to express strong concerns about the work-for-the-dole program last December.

"We wrote to Senator Scullion asking him to acknowledge the problems and work with us to review and improve the program, but he hasn't responded and now we are seeking a Senate inquiry as a last resort," said CLC director, David Ross.

The call comes as more remote community residents than ever before are being penalised and follows a review of the controversial work-for-the-dole scheme by the Australian National Audit Office.

Critics of the scheme said the latest data, for the September quarter, prove that the scheme is doing more harm than good to an estimated 34,000 CDP participants in poor communities where jobs are few.

"Many indigenous CDP job seekers are clearly unwilling to work in 'bullshit jobs' 25 hours (a week) just for the dole," Deakin University professor Jon Altman, who has studied remote indigenous jobs programs for decades, told *The Australian* newspaper.

Prof. Altmann said that any gains under CDP were "more than offset by the massive rejection of CDP evidenced in growing rates of no-show no-pay penalties".

### "Many indigenous CDP job seekers are clearly unwilling to work in 'bullshit jobs' 25 hours (a week) just for the dole."

Researchers at the Australian National University studied government data and found that almost 55,000 penalties were imposed on CDP participants between July and September last year - about 5000 more than in the April - June quarter of 2016.

Compare this with about 48,000 people penalised during the same period under the Jobactive scheme, which applies in the rest of Australia and is more than 20 times larger.

The vast majority of CDP penalties - 45,000 out of 55,000 - were for failing to turn up.

By comparison, there were only about 30,000 non-attendance penalties imposed on the 760,000 Jobactive participants in the September quarter.

Each "no-show" penalty means 10 percent less fortnightly Centrelink pay. This adds to the hardship of which many CLC constituents who work for the dole complain.

Despite the growing number of calls for immediate action the Federal Government insisted the CDP was getting jobseekers off the dole and into work.

A spokesman for Senator Scullion told the newspaper the program had placed about 12,400 people in some form of job and about 4200 of them were still employed six months later.

He said between July and September last year, almost all serious CDP "failures" were either fully or partly waived.

CDP participants must do 25 hours of "work-like activity" a week for dole payments. Work rules under Job active are not as tough.

The CLC hopes a Senate inquiry will put pressure on the Turnbull government to do things with, rather than to, Aboriginal people to create more real jobs.

"The number of positions in our ranger program has stagnated for many years despite the great and growing demand for these jobs," CLC director David Ross said.

"When the government ignores opportunities to create real jobs that are meaningful to people it's no wonder those people are resisting make-believe work."

# What do you want to do when you grow up ?



**Sherla Rubuntja  
Ntaria**

I want to be a scientist because I like to do cool experiments like mixing chemicals and watching them blow up!



**Aisha Casie  
Yuendumu**

I would like to be a Centrelink worker like mum. She does everybody's payment every day on the computer.



**Talisha Williams  
Yuendumu**

I want to be a school assistant to help the kids from the bullying.



**Marley Kantawara  
Ntaria**

I would like to be a basketball player for the Sydney Kings. I am playing here and in town.



**Menam Malbunka  
Ntaria**

I would like to be a health worker here at the local clinic to help people and to share stories.



**Renay Loy  
Arlparra**

I want to work in sports and rec to be with children. I play basketball at Arlparra.



**Shedrick Nelson  
Arlparra**

I would like to work in a garage, to be a mechanic to fix the cars of Arlparra.



# Asbestos fears in Yuendumu and Tennant Creek town camps



Warlpiri Ranger Preston Kelly puts up warning signs near the Yuendumu air strip.

TWO Central Australian communities have been rocked by asbestos fears.

An Aboriginal corporation from Yuendumu has asked the federal government to fund the removal of asbestos from the community while Tennant Creek town camps residents want children exposed to the deadly fibres to be tested for signs of any asbestos-related diseases.

The Central Land Council has supported the Yapa-Kurlangu Ngurrara Aboriginal Corporation to apply to the Aboriginals Benefit Account for clean-up funds of more than \$300,000.

The application follows a community meeting at the CLC's Yuendumu office in February that discussed asbestos-containing material near a path at the airstrip of the community, 300 kilometres north-west of Alice Springs.

The CLC had called the meeting to alert residents about previously buried legacy asbestos that became exposed following heavy rains in December and January.

"The fibre cement sheet fragments and piping that contain asbestos appear to have been dumped on the Yuendumu Aboriginal Land Trust many years ago, possibly several decades, and their origin has yet to be determined," CLC director David Ross said.

"We don't know who dumped the waste and are not interested in finger pointing," he said.

"What matters is to remove it safely and quickly and make sure nobody is harmed until this happens."

The meeting was attended by residents and staff of the CLC, the Central Desert Regional Council, the school and mediation centre.

Invited representatives of the Territory and Commonwealth governments did not attend.

"Recent ABA funding rounds have been plagued by lengthy delays and I am very concerned that this not happen in this case because peoples' health is at risk," Mr Ross said.

The CDRC had earlier fenced off an

area near the airstrip and the CLC's Warlpiri rangers put up warning signs, advising of the asbestos risk.

As long as the material remains exposed to the elements the fibres present a danger because they can become airborne and people are in danger of inhaling them.

Mr Ross said even though legacy asbestos is a major problem in remote communities a lack of funds for its removal is putting residents at risk.

"The scope of the Northern Territory Government's previous asbestos removal program appears to be limited to some public buildings in remote communities, while a clean-up like that needed near the Yuendumu air strip will be very costly."

The CLC plans to hold further community meetings in Yuendumu.

It is working with community organisations to explain the risk to residents and to ensure everyone understands to stay well away from the contaminated area.

## Why is asbestos so dangerous?

Asbestos is a name for natural minerals that can be spun and woven like wool into useful fibres and fabrics.

Asbestos was mined and turned into different materials until the late 1980s.

It is very common in Australia and was used in many buildings in remote communities.

Asbestos fibres are 50 to 200 times thinner than a human hair. When disturbed they can float invisibly in the air for a long time.



Blue asbestos is the most dangerous of the three types of asbestos because its fibres are the longest and thinnest.

When people breathe in the dust of these tiny fibres it can travel deep into their bodies where the fibres pierce the lining of the lungs.

Because our bodies cannot get rid of materials from this deep within our lungs they stay there for life and can cause deadly asbestos-related diseases such as asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma, often many years down the track.

Although experts have known since the early part of last century that exposure to asbestos has caused deaths of asbestos workers through respiratory diseases the importation, production and use of asbestos was only banned in Australia in 2003.

Over 2,500 people are diagnosed with asbestos-related diseases in Australia each year and the number is rising.

## Tennant Creek kids exposed to asbestos?



Shari-Lee Foster was one of the children who played in the wrecked building. Photo ABC.

MEANWHILE, Tennant Creek residents have called for health checks for Aboriginal children who played in vandalised demountable buildings that also contain asbestos.

For years children such as Shari-Lee Foster played in wrecked dongas that had been bought by Julalikari Council Aboriginal Corporation.

Julalikari bought 11 dongas eight years ago with a Commonwealth grant for use as community centres and accommodation in town camps.

When it failed to put them to use some of the buildings were vandalised.

"The structure was all smashed up into tiny bits, as you can see those bits on the ground, kids were playing in here for months and months using it as a cubby house," resident Linda Turner told the ABC.

Families living near one of the dongas told the broadcaster they are worried that their children could develop asbestos-related diseases.

"We'd like for government to come

and talk to us, and what all the dangers are for us and especially for those kids that were playing in those buildings," Christine Morton said.

Christine Grant wants her children to be tested, "to give them a check-up, to see how they feel, whether they're alright or not".

Lab tests of some of the dongas

**"We'd like government to come and talk to us, what all the dangers are for us and especially for those kids that were playing in those buildings."**

commissioned by residents revealed the presence of asbestos in November, but the NT Government's Worksafe authority only confirmed this in February.

"The whole lot of them should have got off their backsides and done something a hell of a lot earlier than this," said Andrew Ramsay from the Asbestos Disease Support Society.

Julalikari, which has been under investigation by the Commonwealth about the dongas and other issues for three years, said it did not know about the asbestos.

It said it hired an asbestos removal company, was working with NT Worksafe to fence off all the buildings and put in place other measures to

protect the public.

The dongas were imported from China despite Australia's total asbestos ban in 2003.

Ms Morton told the ABC that residents now have a horrible wait to see whether they will suffer asbestos effects.

"I can't stop thinking about it. All the time, especially for the kids," she said.



# Pipeline benefits package trumps fracking worries



Wakaya Aboriginal Land Trust member Tony Willy shakes on the agreement with Jemena's Russell Brookes. Photo: Jemena.

TRADITIONAL owner groups along the route of the Northern Gas pipeline to connect Mount Isa and exporters on the east coast to the Northern Territory's gas supply have agreed on land access terms.

Jemena, the company building the pipeline, announced in late March that the agreement included members of the Wakaya Aboriginal Land Trust whose earlier refusal to sign documents forced the company to delay the start of construction from April to June.

Part of the agreement is a jobs and training package worth \$6 million.

**"If and when a moratorium [on fracking] is lifted the Jemena pipeline will be happy to move fracked gas as long as it's subject to regulation."**

Jemena said the pipeline will deliver approximately 600 jobs in the Tennant Creek and Mount Isa regions.

However, the company said it could not guarantee that it would not carry gas won through fracking, a controversial technique to extract gas trapped in deep rocks.

"If and when a moratorium [on



CLC delegate Dianne Stokes: "We feel Jemena is speaking with a forked tongue."

fracking] is lifted the Jemena pipeline will be happy to move fracked gas as long as it's subject to regulation," Mr Spink told the ABC after land trust member Tony Willy signed the agreement.

"It wasn't really a big part of the discussions we've had with the Wakaya people."

In mid-February, a group including Mr Willy lodged an emergency objection to land clearing with the Northern Territory Government, saying it had not been consulted properly.

The group's objection came even though it had earlier agreed to a negotiated benefits package which the Commonwealth had approved.

The group's lawyers informed the Central Land Council last October, after the CLC held more than 20 meetings with traditional owners and native title holders, that it agreed to the package.

"We've had the consultations and agreement from all the people involved and their lawyers on their behalf and that went off to the Commonwealth to be signed off," CLC director David Ross said.

However, the group told the media in February that it objected to the pipeline because it would encourage fracking.

It asked for guarantees that the pipeline will never transport fracked gas and accused Jemena of misleading traditional owners by downplaying plans to do just that.

CLC delegate Dianne Stokes is a member of the group.

Ms Stokes said the company had denied that the pipeline is linked to fracking.

"We feel Jemena is speaking with a forked tongue," she said.

"Jemena are keeping landowners in the dark to silence concerns about fracking."

Max Priest, another member of the group, explained why he is opposed to fracking.

"The impact it has on the environment would be devastating both for our water, community, animals and landscape."

The Commonwealth has given the pipeline the required environmental approvals.

It is now up to the NT Government, which has put a temporary stop to fracking, to decide whether Jemena will get the green light to start construction.

Mr Spink said the pipeline is on track for the first gas to flow east by the end of next year.

## What is the Northern Gas Pipeline and what does it have to do with fracking?

### Tennant Creek

Mt. Isa

Warumungu  
Aboriginal  
Land Trust

Wakaya  
Aboriginal  
Land Trust

IT WOULD link Tennant Creek and Mount Isa through a 620 kilometre pipeline to carry gas from the Northern Territory to the gas market and export terminals on the east coast.

Jemena is the foreign company that won the tender to build it.

The Territory Government promotes the gas pipeline as a major economic project.

Critics say the pipeline would open up vast areas of the Territory to commercial fracking, a technique that releases gases (fugitive emissions) contributing to dangerous global warming.

There are also concerns that fracking could pollute groundwater and endanger threatened species such as the Bilby and the Gouldian Finch.

Proponents say the pipeline will help develop the Territory through increased gas exploration and production.

At a mining conference in Darwin last September senior Jemena manager Antoon Boey called the pipeline "the first step of a much larger picture" and called for "more incentives for upstream developers to develop gas, which would enable us to make an expansion of the pipeline."

Gas company Origin Energy earlier this year claimed that the Beetaloo Basin, 500km south east of Darwin, may hold five times as much gas as the Inpex gas field in the Browse Basin.

Unlike the conventional gas that would be transported by the pipeline in the beginning, the Beetaloo Basin gas would be extracted through fracking.

The Territory Government has put a temporary stop, also known as a moratorium, on fracking until a panel of independent experts reports about the risks later this year.

The moratorium only stops fracking, not the building of the pipeline.



Jemena delivered pipes earlier this year. Photo: Jemena.

## Fracking inquiry to consult only two remote communities

THE CENTRAL Land Council has invited the independent inquiry into fracking to its May Council meeting so that more community representatives can have a say.

The CLC extended the invitation when it found

out that the inquiry is planning to visit only Ntaria and Yuendumu.

However, the controversial technique potentially affects many more communities in its region whose residents will find it very difficult to take part in the

inquiry.

Their participation "is crucial as the remote communities are likely to be most affected by the shale gas industry and the use of hydraulic fracturing techniques," the CLC's submission to the inquiry reads.



Some locals worry that Jemena's pipeline will encourage more fracking. Photo: ALEC.



# Mutitjulu celebrates innovative town lease

MUTITJULU has signed off on an innovative township lease that will put traditional owners and residents firmly in control of their future.

"This is a profoundly important settlement between residents and traditional owners, a negotiation about future roles and responsibilities for land use in a community that we hope will be widely copied," Central Land Council director David Ross said at the signing ceremony in March.

Traditional owner Judy Trigger said the sublease was a good idea that has been a long time coming.

"We were sitting down long time, asking government mob for help, we've been to Canberra.

"Today we were really happy because all government mob were helping us, and land council and all the members."

Ms Trigger hopes the new deal will help Mutitjulu achieve its goal of "keeping kids strong and looking after community".

Meanwhile former CLC chair Bruce Breden called for the promised new houses



Bruce Breden, Sammy Wilson and Nigel Scullion watch Reggie Uluru sign the Mutitjulu sublease.

constituents," he said.

"Our model keeps decision making in local Aboriginal hands, but also acknowledges the need to build community capacity and strong governance.

The signing ceremony near Mutitjulu's 'handback hill' follows the ratification of the sublease by the board of the jointly-managed Uluru Kata

a yet-to-be-established community corporation when the CLC is satisfied that the new corporation has the capacity to manage it.

If the corporation runs into trouble, the sublease can be transferred back to the EDTL.

"From today, the EDTL must consult with a committee of residents and traditional owners before making

fund community-driven projects similar to the Mutitjulu pool and the many other successful projects pioneered by our community development program," he said.

There will be no rent payments to individuals and Parks Australia will not charge rent for the sublease.

When the CLC first proposed its community leasing model in 2010 the Commonwealth

resoundingly rejected it.

"We persevered because traditional owners consistently opposed the Commonwealth's township leasing model and we are very pleased Indigenous Affairs Minister Nigel Scullion has accepted our model at long last," Mr Ross said.

"We also welcome the additional benefits the Commonwealth has agreed to make available upon signing of the sublease, such as the \$10 million investment in community housing, modest accommodation for visiting traditional owners, and \$2 million for a community business centre."

Over the next two years, the EDTL and the community consultative committee must agree on a development master plan for Mutitjulu and the CLC will remain closely involved.

The Mutitjulu Community Aboriginal Corporation (MCAC) asked for a sublease six years ago but the community's location inside a national park leased to the Commonwealth made the negotiations difficult and time consuming.

**"This is a profoundly important settlement between residents and traditional owners, a negotiation about future roles and responsibilities for land use in a community that we hope will be widely copied."**

to be built at last: "We've been talking about that for many years," he said.

Mr Ross said the CLC has worked with Mutitjulu since 2010 to devise a community-driven leasing model.

"Handing control over the community to a Commonwealth officer was never going to fly with our

Tjuta National Park.

Last December, traditional owners and the CLC agreed to grant a sublease until 2084, when the head lease for the park expires.

Initially held by the Commonwealth's Executive Director Community Leasing (EDTL), the sublease must transfer to

any land use decisions in Mutitjulu," Mr Ross said.

For the first time, organisations such as the clinic, the school, the store, or a community housing provider will be given legal permission to occupy premises in Mutitjulu and start to pay rent.

"These rent payments will



Bessie Liddle and Judy Trigger at the signing ceremony.

## Radical approach needed to fix "broken" youth justice system

MOST people agree that the Northern Territory's juvenile justice system is failing, but the consensus stops there.

Many victims of juvenile break-ins, thefts and attacks think the system is too soft on children who commit crimes.

Then there are the families of perpetrators who feel their cries for help to deal with their children, who get into trouble with the law, go unheard.

Meanwhile, Aboriginal communities and organisations, along with many experts, think the regime lets everyone down, the youngsters

**"Locking young people up doesn't do anything but criminalise them and makes them less able to fit in with society when they get out."**

who find their way into the justice system and the community as a whole.

"Broken's the only word you can use really, broken is a good term and I think that's because those [Royal] Commission recommendations that demanded a sanction of prosecution as a last resort, particularly for Aboriginal youth,

were never implemented," says Professor Harry Blagg of the University of Western Australia.

Professor Blagg has been researching Aboriginal justice issues since 1991, the year the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody reported.

He's given evidence to the ongoing Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory.

"Locking young people up doesn't do anything but criminalise them and makes them less able to fit in with society when they get out," he says.

With Aboriginal youth disproportionately represented in the justice system, a broken system can wreak havoc on communities.

"We need a complete paradigm shift [change in thinking]," Professor Blagg says. "There's a need to break out of this law and order model and to invest in the Aboriginal community. There's a need for more on-country initiatives run and managed by Aboriginal communities.

"Bush Mob and that wonderful Mount Theo. These people know what they're doing. We need to get the mainstream organisations out of it and use the Aboriginal organisations, using on-country, using outstations."

**Continued on p.15**



Sylvani and Dixon are part of the BushMob rehabilitation program. Photo: BushMob.





# Central Australians elect champions of substantive constitutional change

A MEETING of around 100 Central Australian Aboriginal delegates at Ross River elected 10 representatives to argue for substantive constitutional change on a national stage.

The three-day meeting chose Richard James, Barbara Shaw, Geoffrey Shannon, Owen Torres, Valda Shannon, Pat Brahim, Jody Kopp, Rachel Perkins, Natasha Abbott and Damien Williams to represent the region's priorities for meaningful constitutional reform at the national convention at Uluru on 24-26 May.

The meeting supported a statement of acknowledgement in the constitution, dealing with the race power in a way that prevents discriminatory law making, a representative voice to parliament, prohibition of racial discrimination and treaty.

"I was so pleased to see everyone grab this opportunity with both hands and get involved," said Central Land Council director David Ross.

"It was one of those great moments where everything fell into place and everyone, young and old, participated. The interpreters at the meeting did a great job of



Delegates from across Central Australia met at Ross River to discuss constitutional reform.

translating complex legal ideas."

Mr Ross said the meeting was respectful with everyone having an opportunity to voice his or her opinions.

"Having male and female co-chairs and local facilitators helped make everyone feel comfortable," he said.

Barbara Shaw, the general manager of Anyinginyi Health in Tennant Creek, chaired the meeting with Mr Ross.

She said the meeting elected mostly young and middle aged people to seek consensus at Uluru on a referendum question to put to all Australian voters.

"I was quite overjoyed that we had a number of

young people who had the confidence to stand up and make comment. They want to learn more.

"They were really engaged and really excited to be part of this journey," Ms Shaw said.

"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," she said.

"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'."

The 10 delegates plan to meet in the coming weeks in order to prepare for the Uluru convention.

The Referendum Council last year asked the CLC to help organise both the Ross River and the Uluru gatherings, following the CLC's request in 2015 to former Prime Minister Tony Abbott for an Aboriginal-only meeting in its region.

One of 12 so-called First Nations Regional Dialogues across the country, the Ross River meeting was a chance for Central Australians to debate their preferences for constitutional reform.

The CLC's Dr Josie Douglas and Francine McCarthy facilitated workshops along with Peter Renehan, Misha Cartwright and Graham Dowling.

The joint meeting of the Central and Northern land councils at Kalkaringi last August reaffirmed the delegates' commitment to the principles set out in the 1988 Barunga and 1998 Kalkaringi Statements.

"Constitutional reform must deliver meaningful and enduring benefits for our peoples. We are prepared to examine models for constitutional reform that deliver such benefits," read the resolution they passed.

"Any progress towards constitutional reform must not endanger our rights to negotiate treaties to finally achieve self-determination."

## THE TREATY RACE IS ON !



The first state government to commit to open-ended treaty negotiations with different Aboriginal groups. An independent commissioner is to negotiate treaties with several dozen groups.



The state government is discussing treaties with Aboriginal leaders, though not negotiating with specific groups. Expected to work towards treaty legislation if directed to do so by the leaders.



The government's Indigenous Affairs Subcommittee has been tasked with "progressing public discussion about a treaty with indigenous Territorians".



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships Minister Curtis Pitt has described a treaty as the "logical next step" after constitutional recognition.

Australia is the only Commonwealth country, current or former, that does not have a treaty with its indigenous peoples. It is not the Australian Government, but the Labor states who are leading the charge, and South Australia is way out front.

## Real reform or nothing: meetings want treaties and elected body

TREATIES and an elected body with veto powers have become make-or-break demands as a nationwide round of indigenous discussions on constitutional reform rejects the minimalist 'politician's' recognition model.

A round of 12 meetings called First Nations Regional Dialogues in Melbourne, Perth, Darwin, Dubbo, Broome and Hobart declared treaties with the Commonwealth the starting point for constitutional recognition of Aboriginal peoples.

A meeting in Melbourne in March warned that Aboriginal

leaders will campaign against the referendum if all that is on offer is a model that avoids a treaty and a new, elected voice in parliament, similar to Maori seats in the New Zealand Parliament.

Referendum Council co-chair Pat Anderson told The Australian: "People are being clear-eyed here, we don't want to forgo history by just taking whatever is on offer."

The mood was similar at meetings in Perth and in Darwin, when around 100 Top End Aboriginal people discussed changes to the constitution in February.

Some of them had been

involved with the historic 1988 Barunga statement that prompted then Prime Minister Bob Hawke's broken treaty promise.

The Darwin meeting also talked about the 'race power' in the constitution, which allowed the Howard Government to suspend the Racial Discrimination Act during the 2007 Intervention.

Participants said that without a guarantee against racial discrimination in the constitution politicians could continue to make racist laws.

They wanted to ensure they are included in negotiations with politicians after the

national convention at Uluru in May when the 16-member Referendum Council, appointed by Malcolm Turnbull and Bill Shorten in 2015, reports back to the parliament in July.

They agreed with the earlier regional dialogue in Dubbo, where a similar number of Koori delegates said Aboriginal input should not end with the Uluru convention and rejected constitutional recognition in favour of treaties and a directly elected "First Nations voice to parliament" with veto powers.

The Dubbo meeting demanded greater participation in, and leadership

of, programs and services designed to drive Aboriginal development.

The meeting called for Aboriginal people to lead the process, including a decision on whether a referendum should be held at all.

Ms Anderson said participants wanted "to ensure the outcome ... is not a rubber stamping of a decision that has already been agreed to by politicians".

"People don't want endless consultations, they want change," she said.

The Referendum Council's discussion paper is at [www.referendumcouncil.org.au](http://www.referendumcouncil.org.au).



# High flying student takes off Research to help reform royalties distributions



Qantas trainee Quaneisha Williams from Ti Tree boards in Sydney.

TI TREE's Quaneisha Williams is off to a flying start as a Qantas trainee.

The determined Year 11 student known as Quinny to her friends, won a place in the airline's traineeship program and will soon pack her bags for Europe.

Quaneisha is not only juggling the demands of the traineeship with her schoolwork at Meriden, an Anglican boarding school in Sydney's Strathfield, but as one of five Aboriginal students she is also a

follow my dreams."

As a little girl, she hardly missed a day at the community's primary school.

Aged 12, she won a scholarship with the Ngurra Jirrama Foundation, which partners with Ti Tree and whose motto is nweren atherr-angkwer kalty-irrem (we are learning two ways).

The Centrecorp Foundation also contributed to Ms Williams' education costs, including by paying for flights.

**"I was going to quit but my dad persuaded me to stay. He didn't get a chance to follow his dreams of being a geologist, so I wanted to be able to follow my dreams."**

cultural ambassador of sorts.

"I have to educate my friends and teachers about the culture I grew up in," she said.

"The girls here don't seem to know about what my life was like before I came to Meriden. They think it was just like theirs."

The accomplished dancer and softball team captain wants to be the first in her family to finish year 12.

As a Qantas trainee she will be able to leave school with a Certificate II in Business Services that could open the door for further education or a job with the airline.

Her next flight will take her to France and Italy for a history tour.

As a lover of art and architecture she plans to visit the Louvre, a famous art museum in Paris, and the ruins of Pompeii, an ancient city in Italy's south that was buried in ash after the volcano Vesuvius erupted 1,938 years ago.

Ms Williams credits Meriden with opening her eyes to "stuff that kids in Ti Tree don't know anything about".

She has become more confident and independent, but it hasn't always been plain sailing.

"It was very hard coming to Sydney at first in year six and to be away from my family and community," she said.

"I was going to quit but my dad persuaded me to stay. He didn't get a chance to follow his dreams of being a geologist, so I wanted to be able to

MOST of the Central Land Council's royalty distribution meetings and payments do not seem to affect school attendance, however, some of the larger meetings and payments in the Tanami region are disruptive and some kids miss school as a result.

These are some of the early findings of research into the impact of royalty distributions, which the CLC has shared with the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

The CLC's analysis of the Northern Territory Government's school attendance statistics shows that different meetings and payments have varying impacts on schools and communities.

The research also suggests that sports carnivals, funerals, show weekends and footy grand finals also impact school attendance.

David Ross said.

Under the Land Rights Act, the CLC distributes income traditional owners earn from their land through mining and exploration agreements, tourism operations, grazing licences, and rent from leases over communities and national parks.

"We encourage traditional owners to make wise decisions about these funds, either through our community development program, or by helping Aboriginal corporations to manage the distribution of this income to individuals," Mr Ross said.

The CLC embarked on its own research and requested school attendance data from the NT Department of Education for Lajamanu, Nyirrpri, Willowra, Yuendumu, Papunya, Alekarenge, Epenarra, Tennant Creek Primary and



Ampie Paddy at the launch of the Kaji Petermann Indigenous Protected Area in 2015.

A final report, to be released in May, will help with the development of strategies to tackle problem areas and test whether they are working.

The report will also recommend improvements to the royalty distribution process.

The CLC launched the research in response to concerns that distribution meetings and processes can disrupt community life and sometimes cause harm, such as reducing student attendance during the school term.

Indigenous Affairs Minister Nigel Scullion has been writing to the CLC about these concerns since 2014 and suggested solutions.

"We will need the support of the members of Aboriginal corporations that receive royalty and other payments in order to solve this," CLC director

Tennant Creek High schools.

As well as looking at the attendance numbers, CLC staff interviewed school and Remote School Attendance Strategy staff and held focus group discussions with Yapa.

"We know that improving education is one of the most important things we can do to overcome the extreme problems facing our communities," Mr Ross said. "Through our community development program we have supported a great many educational and school attendance initiatives.

"Aboriginal people are investing significant amounts of their own income in educational projects, which goes to show how much they value education and how determined they are to secure a better future," he said.



**"Young people need to learn what the land is called in Arrernte, how they are related to the land, what they are to the land, and what the land is to them, the dreaming for that place, which skin group they are, who is the owner of the land and the keeper of the land. You've got to tell the right story. It is important to get this right. It has to start with the elders. If we don't do it now, it will all be lost."**

MK Turner



# Families central to boarding school success

IF YOU live in a remote community and want to make a success of boarding school you need a family that has your back.

A family friend, or 'broker', can make a positive difference too.

This is one of the main findings of the first study to map boarding opportunities for Aboriginal high school students in the Central Land Council region.

The researchers found that the most important asset a student can have is their family and that students who board interstate need someone who can liaise between their family, their community and their boarding school.

"When we interviewed families of boarders we heard again and again that committed parents, family friends or teacher advocates opened the doors for students who got into a boarding school," said Sam Osborne, a former remote school principal who is now part of a research team from UniSA, Central Queensland University, Batchelor Institute and Charles Darwin University.

The team found that up to 250 young people (about seven percent of around 3,000 Aboriginal high



The Osborne - Ken family celebrating the year 7 graduation of son Jakob (with tie). Sam Osborne is first from the left, back row.

school-aged young people in the CLC region) are in boarding schools and most of them board within the Northern Territory.

Dr Osborne says three out of four of the interstate boarders are supported by the Smith Family and the Alice Springs-based Centrecorp Foundation.

"Between them their participation rates from remote and very remote communities from the CLC region dwarf those of the more visible and better funded scholarship programs," he said.

The Centrecorp Foundation

uses investment profits to provide flexible and accessible financial support to Aboriginal students on request from families.

The students often have a parent who went to an interstate boarding school, or a family friend with professional links to such a school.

The Smith Family supports nearly half of all interstate boarders from the CLC region through the Commonwealth's Indigenous Youth Leadership Program.

Dr Osborne said the Smith Family acts as a go-between

who opens the door to boarding opportunities inside and outside the Territory.

"They act as the 'family friend' with strong connections to boarding schools and work between the schools and families to help students get a place and support them during their stay."

The study also found another group they called 'hidden' boarders, "students who access away-from-community schooling and sporting opportunities through family arrangements."

"Often they have relations

living in the city who look after extended family members, allowing them to live with them so they can attend school or sports programs in the city.

There is no way to count how many families have made these arrangements, but we know that these families continue to champion education for young people in their extended family - and that makes a huge difference," said Dr Osborne, who should know.

Through a family arrangement he has a nephew staying with him to attend school while another son is at boarding school.

He said although boarding schools have been an important part of many Central Australian young people's education for decades, the 2014 Wilson review into Aboriginal education in the Territory raised fresh questions about how these schools might improve educational opportunities for students from remote and very remote communities.

"There is limited evidence about the outcomes of boarding school programs for remote students, which is why studies like this one are so important."

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## Shirley's "most amazing life-changing experience"



Shirley Turner and a class mate dress up in hill tribe clothes.

EVERYONE is talking about getting Aboriginal kids to school but Yapa are walking the talk.

Each year remote communities in the Tanami region north-west of Alice Springs are spending

While the trip may sound like a dream holiday, Ricardo said it was also a learning experience and meeting the locals was not as hard as he had imagined.

"Meeting people in Chiang Mai was very easy," he said.

**"The most fun I had in Thailand was riding the elephants, white water rafting and playing with the kids in the orphanage."**

hundreds of thousands of dollars of their own money on their kids' education.

For more than a decade they have invested much of their mining royalties in the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust (WETT), a community driven program that supports lifelong learning.

WETT is opening the eyes of Yapa boarding school students to the big wide world around them.

Just ask Shirley Turner, Ricardo Gallagher and Shimayla Turner from Nyirrpri community who study at Kardinia International College in Geelong.

Last year 15-year-olds Shirley and Ricardo visited Chiang Mai, the biggest city of Thailand's mountainous north.

"The Chiang Mai journey has been the most amazing life-changing experience I've ever had," Shirley said.

During the eight week journey her class made friends with children who had lost their parents and visited "many wonderful markets, schools and the hill tribes" (indigenous peoples).

"The most fun I had in Thailand was riding the elephants, white water rafting and playing with the children in the orphanage," she added.

"I am really appreciative to all the people that supported me to go to Thailand."

"Everyone has a smile on their face even though they are working really hard and get only a small amount of money."

While Ricardo was in Thailand, Shimayla Turner (14) was discovering a work by his grandmother during an art excursion to Ballarat in Victoria.

"I saw Ricardo's grandma's Aboriginal painting," Shimayla said. "I kept looking around the room and I spotted more paintings that were done by Aboriginal people, it was really nice seeing it."

"It was a great excursion and I really enjoyed it, because I like art and seeing famous artists' incredible paintings."

Each year the WETT Secondary School Support Program allocates \$200,000 to help Yapa boarding school students.

Each boarder is eligible for up to \$2,500 per year for uniforms, laptops, sports gear, school excursions, sports and music lessons as well as family visits that help to keep homesickness at bay.

WETT also funds early childhood, school language and culture and youth development programs, as well as community learning centres in Nyirrpri, Willowra, Yuendumu and Lajamanu.

Contact the Secondary Student Support Program on 8951 6366.

## When going to town is a major excursion

WHEN you live hundreds of kilometres from the nearest town, it can be difficult to give your children a wide range of experiences to prepare them for adulthood.

Fortunately for the primary students from Walungurru School at Kintore, near the West Australian border, the traditional owners have their back.

As a reward for good attendance and effort at school, Walungurru year six students were able to cap off a successful 2016 with a three-day excursion to Alice Springs, more than 500 kilometres east of their community.

They visited the aquatic centre, the airport, the Old Telegraph Station and Anzac Hill.

Other rare treats included a movie at the cinema, a camel ride, restaurant dinners, Christmas shopping and a tour of the town's Christmas lights.

The \$7,500 project marks the fourth time Kintore has allocated its community lease money to school excursions.

Local teachers Monica Robinson and Lorna Jackson thanked Kintore's traditional owners, the community's



Walungurru students enjoy their reward for good school attendance and effort: a trip to the Big Smoke.

working group and the Central Land Council for supporting the excursion.

"The kids enjoyed the trip and were really happy," Ms Robinson said. "We all enjoyed the trip."

It's a sentiment supported by Ms Jackson.

"It's great that lease money is giving children a chance to do different things," she said. "Hopefully other teachers will have a chance to do more trips with the children this year."

"Thanks to everyone for making this happen," she said.

## Students share songs and snow

"THE KIDS sang some songs to us in their language and it was very emotional for the Border Aboriginal people."

When 15 Yuendumu students visited Albury in New South Wales the idea was that they would become more rounded individuals through what they learnt on the trip.

However, as the above quote from local teacher Michelle Milthorpe suggests, they didn't just learn, but also taught.

The students' visit to Xavier High School in the city on the



Kamen Cook on Mount Buffalo.

**"For the kids here, to be able to see how vibrant and alive Aboriginal culture is in this country, that's a really important opportunity."**

border between Victoria and NSW refreshed a relationship between the two schools going back to 2010, when students from Xavier started making annual visits to the Central Australian community.

As Xavier's social justice and mission co-ordinator, Ms Milthorpe knows the high level of respect in which the New South Welshmen held their hosts in Yuendumu.

"For the kids here, to be able to see how vibrant and alive Aboriginal culture is in this country, that's a really important opportunity."

A teacher at the Yuendumu School, John Kitchener, said the cross-cultural experience and reinforcing of friendships

had also brought great benefits for his students.

"Forming a bond with Wiradjuri people was a culturally empowering experience for all of the kids and adults," Mr Kitchener said.

"The cultural similarities helped our kids to connect with what was largely a very foreign place for them and these relationships brought comfort and a sense of family."

Yuendumu students also visited Melbourne and the snowfields on Mount Buffalo.

Teacher Dowreen Sundarjit said the excursions help to keep them focused.

"The students were selected on the trip based on their



Penny Rice's first taste of snow.

school attendance and behaviour," she said.

"We want more and more students to come to school every day and take part in all the exciting things happening in school. For many students the school is a safe place."

"With opportunities like this students are motivated to come to school and they get an education," Ms Sundarjit said.

Funding for the excursions was provided by the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust, which itself is funded by Yapa gold mining royalties.



# Lajamanu kids are hungry for knowledge

SCHOOL lunches, trips to country with the elders and a bus service for the little kids - Lajamanu community is giving its children a great start to their education.

The community has invested heavily in programs that put Yapa children on a path of life-long, two-way learning.

Take Lajamanu's school nutrition program as an example.

Local students enjoy healthy meals twice a day courtesy of the community's compensation income from The Granites goldmine.

Lajamanu's Granites Mine Affected Areas Aboriginal Corporation (GMAAAC) Committee decided to fund around 150 school meals a day for three years.

"We really want to see the kids go to school," GMAAAC committee member Tracey Patrick said.

The Northern Territory Government contributes by paying for the cooks and the kitchen, helping to make Yapa money go further.



A great start to life-long learning: GMAAAC funds 150 healthy school meals a day in Lajamanu.

Recent trips have seen the pre-schoolers travel out bush with the elders, learning about tracking and bush tucker as well as songs and stories for their country.

The new 12-seater bus the community has bought with lease money helps the crèche to offer exciting and stimulating excursions for the little children and their carers.

Project partner Life Without Barriers also uses the bus to pick the community's youngest learners up in the mornings, which is great when it's very hot or wet, but it also keeps everyone safe.

"There's a risk of children being attacked by cheeky dogs, especially in the morning when the dogs are more aggressive," crèche worker

Azaria Ross said.

No wonder crèche attendance in Lajamanu is up.

The Central Land Council also helps Yapa to run a youth development program in four communities through the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust (WETT).

"We decided to vote and discuss what's best for us," said Roger Jurrah, a director

of the WETT Trustee, the Kurra Aboriginal Corporation.

"This is self-determination at work," CLC director David Ross told ABC TV.

"The program is managed by the people themselves, the CLC staff are basically the conduit."

Policy experts agree that community-driven development is the way to go.

"This is modelling how really successful work with Aboriginal people can be undertaken," Dr Janet Hunt, from the Centre of Aboriginal Economic Policy Research at the Australian National University said.

Dr Hunt told the ABC a mounting body of evidence shows that traditional owners working with the CLC are changing their lives for the better.

"It's an excellent example of what we could achieve more broadly if people were able to have much greater say about the programs, priorities and activities that are going to improve their lives," she said.

## Julalikari attacks special administration order

THE BARKLY's largest Aboriginal corporation has called an order placing it under special administration "baseless".

The Registrar of Indigenous Corporations placed Julalikari Council, the region's biggest employer of Aboriginal people, under administration in February, after an independent investigation revealed "a significant breakdown in its relationships with members, key stakeholders and commercial partners".

The Registrar said this loss of support had made it hard to fix serious governance and operational problems.

Julalikari rejected findings of impropriety and lack of due care and diligence and

hit back at a finding that most of its directors were also employees.

The corporation said it had resolved complaints about a failure to properly monitor and manage the work-for-the dole program (CDP).

The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet "did raise concerns to the corporation with respect to the delivery of the CDP program in 2015 and early 2016 ... all concerns were met and finalised and the corporation's performance is now consistently sound," Julalikari told the ABC.

But registrar Anthony Beven said the corporation was "facing significant pressures and criticism about its ability

to perform effectively".

"The special administrators will provide an opportunity for all parties to restart conversations in good faith, restructure the corporation's governance, and refocus its energy on delivering high quality services," Mr Beven said.

He said a Cairns-based accounting firm "will focus on restoring confidence in the corporation's governance processes, improving communication with key stakeholders, and ensuring services to the community are not compromised".

The corporation has been funded by governments for close to 30 years and delivers a range of housing,

community and social services for communities in the Barkly region.

It also has investments in a number Tennant Creek businesses.



"A significant breakdown in its relationships": Tennant Creek residents at a protest against Julalikari last year. Photo: Jordan Gillard, Papulu Apparr-Kari.

## Government probe into Zodiac contract

THE NORTHERN Territory Government has launched an independent investigation into the awarding of a controversial \$1.87 million town camp tenancy management contract and vowed not to renew it when it runs out in May.

An independent probity auditor is looking into the reasons why the NT Department of Housing, under former housing minister Bess Price, chose Zodiac Business Services, the company that now employs her, to provide tenancy management services for 17 Alice Springs town camps.

When Ms Price was the NT Housing Minister, her department awarded Zodiac an estimated \$6 million worth of contracts to provide housing

services in Alice Springs and remote communities.

While the NT has no law against former ministers taking jobs related to their portfolio, the NT Cabinet Handbook advises against it.

The housing department said in February the audit would "take some time" and the decision not to renew Zodiac's contract was "the fairest manner of allowing all potential suppliers to compete in an open competitive tender process".

Its decision under former Minister Price to strip the Central Aboriginal Affordable Housing Company (CAAHC) of the tenancy services contract for town camps and to give it to Zodiac triggered street protests

in early 2016.

The Central Land Council was among the critics.

"We called on the CLP government to reveal its reasons for favouring a non-Aboriginal business with a poor track record out bush, but it failed to do so," CLC director David Ross said. "That's why we're pleased that the Labor government is trying to provide some transparency at last."

The CLC is a member of the CAAHC and supports the creation of community-controlled housing organisations adhering to national standards.

"The whole failed NT housing system needs to be overhauled so community housing providers are not

only supported and win contracts, but have the flexibility and independence to run a quality service," Mr Ross said at the time.



Former NT Housing Minister Bess Price.





# Teenagers lead fight against family violence

COUSINS Connie and Kitana Shaw, from Mt Nancy town camp, are standing up for young people.

Two years ago, the teenagers learned how to spot signs of unhealthy relationships and protect themselves against violence at Tangentyere's Family and Domestic Violence Prevention Program.

who she is talking to and then you get the explosion which just blows up out of nowhere, start hitting her, calling her this and that and then you've got the remorse, feeling sorry for himself and saying sorry to her," she explains.

The cousins recently brought staff at Yirara College up to speed about the effects

**"All the men should sit down with the youngfellas and tell the youngfellas straight."**

Now they are sharing their knowledge with their communities through forums and workshops and held a presentation during a day of training for teachers and staff at Yirara College.

"I wanted to be involved," says 18-year-old Connie.

"A lot of young people are getting into a relationship and most of them would listen to elders, but they need someone young to have their back as well."

She helps young women to recognise the 'cycle of violence'.

"You've got first the honeymoon stage, all happy and then the build-up with him checking the phone to see

of family violence on the students.

They would like male and female elders to teach respect for women.

"All the men should sit down with all the young fellas and tell the youngfellas straight. 'What you're doing is not good, you shouldn't be hitting, you shouldn't lay a hand on a girl'," says Connie.

"Talk about violence and marriage before they get older and learn themselves," Kitana adds.

By the time young people form relationships it is often too late as bad behaviours become more difficult to control and the damage is done.



Connie and Kitana Shaw: "A lot of kids are traumatised by family violence."

The cousins have watched many kids become tense, fearful and worse.

"A lot of kids are traumatised by family violence," Kitana says. "Some would act up at school, most of them walk around in the streets to get away from it."

"It scars them for life," Connie adds.

Parents who drink, threaten, demean or abuse each other physically or sexually are

teaching their children such behaviour is normal and when the children follow that example another generation suffers.

Kitana wants to stop this cycle and asks parents who are worried that they may be repeating their own family trauma to "sit down and talk to someone, like counselling".

Connie agrees parents need support.

"Help the parents out, they

can help the children out, fix them," she says.

She says instead of waiting for the adults to change, young men and women should "stand up" and join her workshops.

"Come and enjoy the program, don't be shame, be game," she says.

**For more information call 8952 1430.**

# School kids study camel damage at Ilpili



Students collect small water animals used to monitor water quality at Ilpili. Photo: Tangentyere/CSIRO.

PRIMARY school kids from Western Desert communities have visited Ilpili Springs to learn first-hand about the damage feral camels wreak on the desert.

Camels have badly damaged the once pristine spring pools surrounded by paperbark forest, 400 kilometres west of Alice Springs, and their dung pollutes the water that kept generations of the students'

nomadic ancestors alive.

CLC rangers and traditional owners guided the visit by 35 students from Kiwirrkurra, Kintore and Watiyawanu (Mt Liebig) and scientists.

"The springs dried up last year, because they were blocked by all the dung," said senior Luritja Ranger Terrence Abbott.

"We have started to dig them out again. And we have dug a

dam that is filled from a bore, so the camels can drink there instead."

Mr Abbott lived at Ilpili for a time when he was a boy.

"The three day trip to Ilpili Springs provided wide-ranging lessons about country for students in their first language," said head teacher from the Watiyawanu School, Larry Kenny.

The rangers taught the

children how to measure and record water quality.

The students gathered small water animals which are a sign of good water quality and practised how to set traps for small mammals.

The students also learned that there are an estimated up to 400,000 feral camels in Australia, most of them in remote WA and the NT.

After the trip, the Watiyawanu students wrote a bilingual booklet in Pintupi/Luritja and English about what they found out.

"It is really good to take school kids on bush trips, showing them the country, and make books about these trips. So the kids can know the rock holes and other places when they grow up," said Rita Turner, a senior assistant teacher at the Watiyawanu School.

"It's good for their minds to know how to write their language and write about their culture."

The visit to Ilpili was part of a two-way learning program called Science Pathways On Country which is delivered by Australia's main science organisation, the CSIRO, and Tangentyere Council.

The program builds on the knowledge and strengths of bush communities that combines Aboriginal ecological knowledge with Western science.

This year, Science Pathways plans to expand its program from three to six communities in Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

**This is an edited version of a story first published by NITV.**

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# Painting a scene without bullies

WILLOWRA'S new recreation hall won't be built until later this year, but it already has a mural with a strong message against bullying and violence.

Almost 60 young people between the ages of 10 and 24 have created the large artwork on a timber backing, ready for display in the hall.

The project grew out of a "Stand Together, Respect Each Other, Don't be a Bully" workshop where they learned how taking a respectful stand for each other can make the 'bully poison' go away.

As the young men made letter stencils to print a message onto the timber backing in English and discussed what words to use they had good conversations about bullying.

On planks of wood they also painted images of themselves or someone they admired.

The young women then made the stencils for the Warlpiri words while the younger kids joined in the painting.

The Warlpiri Youth Development Aboriginal Corporation (WYDAC) delivered the anti-bullying workshop with funding from the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust (WETT).

Last year WETT invested more than \$650,000 of mining royalties in youth development activities in Willowra, Yuendumu, Nyirripi and Lajamanu.

WYDAC plans to roll out the program in the other three Warlpiri communities later this year.

It hopes the workshops will allow even more young people to express their artistic skills and their ideas about how to stop bullying.



These messages by young people are waiting for the new Willowra rec hall to be built.

# Barkly blokes build better campground



Rex Morrison and Ethan Jones worked with Tangentyere Constructions to build the shelters.

THREE men from the Barkly have used their building skills to improve a traditional owner campground at Karlu Karlu (Devils Marbles).

Andrew Seccin, Ethan Jones and Rex Morrison worked with Tangentyere Constructions to build separate shelters and showers for men and women.

The project has allowed families living around Tennant Creek to spend more time on their country.

Karlu Karlu traditional owner Michael Jones said local elders came up with the idea.

"We were sitting under the tree and had an idea to build a shelter and toilets," he explained.

"Then we had another idea to make it better with men's and ladies' shelters and showers. We decided to use our own money for our country and community."

Five years ago, the

traditional owners hired the Centre for Appropriate Technology (CAT) to build a meeting shelter and toilets at the campground.

The Central Land Council's Community Development Unit planned the latest works with traditional owners, spending more than \$280,000 of their Northern Territory Parks rent money.

They used some of the money to also fund solar street lights and bore pumps at Wakurlpu, Kalinjarri and Greenwood outstations.

Traditional owner Sandra Morrison said benefits range from improved safety at night and a more reliable water supply to employment for locals.

"We wanted the young people to participate in the project and get some work," she said. "Now they know how to do building work".

# Mt Liebig sanctuary gets some love



Cedric Dixon and Yuella Miller.

THE CHURCH in Mt Liebig, 330km west of Alice Springs, will continue to be a lively sanctuary for locals to worship and hold community meetings, concerts and singalongs after recent renovations.

Local laborers Cedric Dixon and Yuella Miller helped to repair six large sliding doors to make the church weatherproof and to protect the sound equipment and furniture.

They also assembled 12 new pews fabricated in the CAT Enterprise workshop in Alice Springs.

The church got a new blue floor, a colour selected because it

"reflects the heavens above", said Pastor Roderick Kantamarra.

A local working group drew up a brief for the renovation with the help of the Central Land Council community development team after Mt Liebig traditional owners committed more than \$50,000 of their community rent money to the project.

The Centre for Appropriate Technology (CAT) developed design options and costings before managing the project.

After the first service in the upgraded church, Pastor Kantawarra said the improvement "makes people feel happy, everyone is happy".



Local workers assembled 12 new pews.





Sisters Audrey, Ruby and Lucky Morton from Rocket Range want houses to be built at outstations, not in Arlparra.

### Continued from p.2

Residents say three of the outstation's dwellings don't have any facilities, so many residents and visitors are forced to share one rusty, mouldy shower and toilet.

"Nearly 20 kids live in our house and about 15 adults. Some sleep outside, some in the living room," says Nicole Jones.

Mark Sheals reckons they might as well sleep outside.

"It's pretty much raining in my house."

Following recent rains most of the outstation residents sheltered in Arlparra's undercover basketball court for weeks says Michael Liddle.

He says Utopia residents want the

government to improve housing repair and maintenance, municipal services and roads.

"None of this has happened. There hasn't even been a consultation process and people are getting quite frustrated. They elected them to government and they are doing nothing," Mr Liddle says.

"This is a very authentic area; nowhere in Australia is like this. Let's look after it and let's promote healthy outstation living on people's homelands.

Instead of all these people living at Arlparra let's fix up the roads so they can access the clinic and services and shops."

He says some kids in Utopia

outstations can't get to school because of the roads.

"The bus won't go out there because the road is stuffed. They're not getting an education. That happened at three



Many dwellings at Soapy Bore don't have a shower, toilet or kitchen.

outstations. The clinic car struggles to get to an outstation where 15 kids live."

How well the government listens to the bush about housing will be the first test of its promise to devolve control.

Remote community residents everywhere are letting Mr Gunner know that they want to work with the housing contractors.

Mr Sheals says having control of their communities means locals learning how to fix the houses themselves - with a little help from the government.

"I have the skills to fix some things but I don't have the materials and the money," he says.

"Black and white together do the business and do the work," Harold Nelson adds.

Mr Gunner agrees.

"We do need to generate economic activity in remote communities, just as we do in Darwin and Alice," he said.

He better get a move on, according to Michael Liddle, who has warned his comrades that the election honeymoon is over.

"I'm quite frank with them: 'You're not delivering what you promised'.

If they want to be a one-term government they should keep doing what they're doing."

# The Territory's housing heartbreak worsens

ABORIGINAL communities in the Territory are at breaking point, with housing shortages at critical levels and homelessness at 15 times the national average.

"This means children living in houses with 20 other people, the elderly sleeping on kitchen floors, tents pitched on verandas, and women suffering violence with nowhere safe to go," CLC director David Ross said.

All eyes are now on the federal budget in May, because the Australian Government has made no commitment to remote housing beyond June next year.

Instead, it announced an independent review of the national agreement and program that has funded Aboriginal housing, following a damning report in November that confirmed that half of Aboriginal community residents across the country live in overcrowded and poor houses.

The Productivity Commission's report *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage* (OID) also showed no significant improvement in water, sewerage and electricity services in communities.

If any more proof were needed that this sorry state blocks progress in health and education, child safety and family violence, look no further than the dismal *Closing the Gap* report in February.

"Health is a major hurdle for

Aboriginal people, but the heart of the problem is the home," Mr Ross said in an opinion column co-written with the Human Rights Law Centre.

While he welcomed the \$1.1 billion the Territory government committed to address the housing shortfall over the next decade, he pointedly reminded Chief Minister Michael

**"Children living in houses with 20 other people, the elderly sleeping on kitchen floors, tents pitched on verandas, and women suffering violence with nowhere safe to go."**

Gunner to keep his election promise to hand back control over housing to communities.

"The chronic crisis of overcrowding can only be addressed through a collaborative approach, with a view to ultimately giving control back to Aboriginal communities," Mr Ross said.

The Northern Territory government has promised to spend \$10 million on renovations for remote houses before the end of June.

"We're doing very practical things to houses," Chief Minister Michael Gunner said when he announced the Room to Breathe program in March, before any contracts had been signed.

"Verandas, outdoor kitchens, granny flats.

Simple things that can transform

the living spaces we've got and relieve pressure in the community."

Communities have made it clear they want to be involved at every level.

Aboriginal Housing NT is a new body that supports them by advocating for better housing, more local control and employment of local people in repairs and maintenance.

Meanwhile, a federal housing review, chaired by Aboriginal co-chairs Rachel Towart and Robert Griew, also looks at creating jobs for locals rather than contractors, according to Indigenous Affairs Minister Nigel Scullion.

The review is consulting with communities, land councils and peak bodies such as the Aboriginal Peak Organisations of the NT (APONT).

Senator Patrick Dodson agreed the review must involve affected residents if it is to make a difference.

He singled out asbestos removal, a big problem not only in Territory communities (see also stories page 4).

"In Western Australia there are communities where asbestos is prolific and there appears to be no plan for either the State or the Federal Government to remove the asbestos

and remediate the housing."

Eleven years ago, the United Nations labelled the housing crisis in Australia's remote Aboriginal communities a "humanitarian tragedy".

One year later, the Little Children are Sacred report, which led to the Intervention, described it as "nothing short of disastrous and desperate".

It estimated that some 4000 additional houses were needed immediately, and another 400 each year until 2027.

Fast-forwarding to 2017, that means 8000 more houses.

Mr Ross called government investment in Aboriginal housing under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing "a drop in the ocean compared to the need".

As worrying as the uncertainty about Commonwealth investment beyond 2018 is that decision makers still don't know which housing programs make a lasting difference and why.

Perhaps the most shocking finding of the OID report was that only 34 of 1000 government-funded Aboriginal programs had been properly evaluated.

"The lack of evaluation is a direct result of the Turnbull government's funding cuts to this portfolio," Senator Dodson said.

Nothing positive can come if we don't thoroughly examine what works and what doesn't."



# Amoonguna parties go back to court



THE LONG running dispute over the control of Amoonguna community is headed back to the Federal Court.

In February, at the request of the Central Land Council, Justice Mortimer ordered the Federal Court to investigate whether the dispute over the grant of leases for service delivery in the community by the Amoonguna Aboriginal Land Trust can be settled through mediation.

Justice Mortimer ruled that any mediation of the legal action against the leases brought by Marie Ellis and Imwernkwerne Community Limited (ICL) had to take place by 24 March.

CLC director David Ross welcomed Justice Mortimer’s decision.

“The ongoing uncertainly over Amoonguna’s future is hurting residents and holding up community-driven development,” Mr Ross said.

“That’s why we sought mediation and we’re pleased the judge listened to common sense. We hope the other parties will enter into discussions so that the Amoonguna community can finally move on.”

**“The ongoing uncertainly over Amoonguna’s future is hurting residents and holding up community-driven development.”**

However, no progress was achieved by the deadline and the matter will now go to a hearing in the Federal Court in June.

ICL had requested an effective lease for 297 years (3 x 99 years) over the entire land trust.

The traditional owners last September instructed the CLC to grant leases over small lots in the community to the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, the MacDonnell Regional Council and the NT Government.

# Inspirational stories of community-based solutions

*“LOVED hearing the success stories and the challenges they overcame to get where they are.”*

*“Inspirational stories about how some corporations have set up their structures and governance systems.”*

Many conference organisers would kill for praise such as these comments from participants at the Innovating to Succeed Forum for leaders of Northern Territory Aboriginal organisations.

Judging by the feedback forms left behind by more than 80 senior managers and board members after the event in Alice Springs in March, its mix of positive case studies and presentations hit the spot.

The winner of the National Indigenous Governance Award, the Western Desert Nganampa Walytja Palyantjaku Tjutaku Aboriginal Corporation, kicked off a full day.

CEO Sarah Brown took everyone on a journey of the ever-expanding network of dialysis rooms in remote communities.

Southern Tanami Kurdiji Indigenous Corporation, now well on its way to independence from the Central Desert Regional Council, was represented by Enid Gallagher, one of its directors.

Ms Gallagher explained how Kurdiji (Warlpiri for shield) uses mediation to

**“One of its strengths is the wide range of participating organisations.”**

keep the peace in Yuendumu.

The Warlpiri Youth Development Aboriginal Corporation, having recently changed CEOs after a decade, had tips for finding one who fits in with the local community and culture.

The forum is an annual highlight for organiser Wes Miller, himself new to managing the Aboriginal Governance and Management Program, which provides customised support for the leaders of NT Aboriginal organisations.

## New approach to broken youth justice system

**Continued from p.6**

General manager of Northern Territory Jesuit Social Services Jared Sharp has also made submissions to the NT Royal Commission.

He agrees that the current juvenile justice system fails to consider an Aboriginal approach to dealing with offenders.

“The NT doesn’t have any Aboriginal justice programs at all for both adults and for kids and I think that has to fundamentally change,” Mr Sharp says.

“In my opinion, you need to reverse the current way of operating in the Northern Territory where the mainstream model is really the non-Aboriginal model.

“I think that needs to be turned on its head so the mainstream model becomes a culturally strengthening model which is trauma informed and harnesses the power of elders and senior people in a person’s home community to help them get back onto the right path.

“Using connections to culture to build people’s identity, self-esteem and encourage them to get back onto a law abiding path.”

Both agree that political leadership is desperately needed to drive a radical



“One of its strengths is the wide range of participating organisations,” Mr Miller said.

“This year they came from sectors as diverse as arts, health, women’s centres, justice and mediation, community development and outstation resource centres.

“They shared stories about what is working, not just with each other, but also with government representatives - the NT Chief Minister and two of his

MPs as well as public servants from Canberra,” he said.

Corporations from the desert swapped notes with Top End outfits such as Wadey’s Palngun Wurnangat Aboriginal Corporation, whose name means ‘women together’.

It’s been successfully selling local art, textiles and coffees and renting out meeting spaces while also running a bush plum harvesting business that brings employment and money to the

community.

A presentation about the board of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress sparked discussion about how community representatives can benefit from the specialised skills of independent directors.

Rounding off the forum, the Central Land Council’s Georgie Stewart explained how communities are making good decisions about using their rent and royalty income for large community development programs.

The history of one of these programs, the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust, came alive when four members of the WETT advisory committee presented their painting about the program’s 10-year journey.

As one of the feedback comments read, “a great way to showcase self-determination and community-based solutions”.

**For more information go to [aboriginalgovernance.org.au](http://aboriginalgovernance.org.au) or contact [info@agmp.org.au](mailto:info@agmp.org.au).**



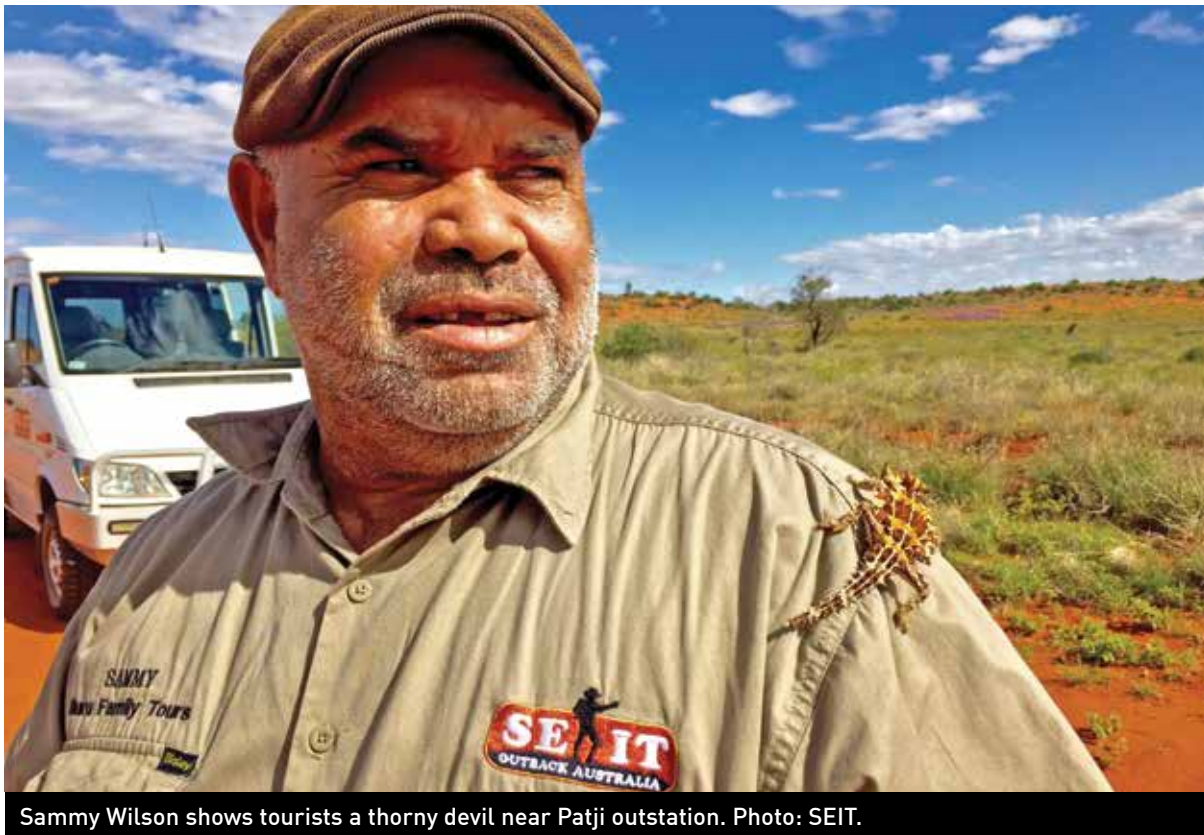
**Any questions about CLC business?**

**Call your regional officers:**

	<b>1. ALICE SPRINGS</b> Nigel Lockyer, 8951 6264
	<b>2. SOUTH WEST</b> Allan Randall, 8956 2119
	<b>3. NORTH WEST</b> Vacant (Marty Darr), 8951 6255
	<b>4. TANAMI</b> Alan Dickson, 8956 4118
	<b>5. WEST</b> Vacant (Marty Darr), 8951 6255
	<b>6. TENNANT CREEK</b> Darryl “Tiger” Fitz, 8962 2343
	<b>7. EASTERN SANDOVER</b> Jesyjames Carr, 8956 9955
	<b>8. EASTERN PLENTY</b> Richard Dodd, 8956 9722
	<b>9. CENTRAL</b> Vacant (Marty Darr), 8951 6255



# Great year for Uluru family tour



Sammy Wilson shows tourists a thorny devil near Patji outstation. Photo: SEIT.

TRADITIONAL owners of the Petermann Aboriginal Land Trust have given the Uluru family the go-ahead to run their tourism business at Patji outstation for another three years.

The licence agreement caps off a successful year for Sammy Wilson and his family, who have been showing visitors another side of the rock since the 1980s.

"It's good to be able to go back to our homeland and take visitors too," Mr Wilson said of the new tour that offers a unique opportunity to experience Patji, a waterhole south of Uluru, with a traditional owner.

"It makes the country happy to have people there and you come back happy," he said.

The tour also won the Centrecorp Indigenous Tourism Award at the 2016 Tourism Central Australia Awards.

Mr Wilson is chair of the Uluru Kata Tjuta Board of Joint Management and an executive member of the Central Land Council. He and tour company SEIT Outback Australia launched the tour last year.

During the cooler months they take tourists on the old road where the original gates of the Uluru National Park once stood. Along the way

they see wildflowers and smell and taste kalinpa-kalinpa, the honey grevilleas.

At Patji Mr Wilson treats his guests to a personal perspective on Anangu culture over afternoon tea while watching the sun set from a red sand dune.

Guests learn about his grandfather Paddy Uluru, his life near the rock and his fight for Aboriginal land rights in the 1970s.

Last year the tours ran on three afternoons a week, with a friendly message that never changes: Pukulpa ngalya yanama, nganampa ngurakutu... Welcome to our country.



Otto Sims at the Melbourne Cup with a model wearing a dress by Amanda McMillan and Brigida Stewart, based on his fabric design.

## From Yuendumu to a frock shop near you

YUENDUMU artist Otto Sims has his sights set on a global fashion career.

Since Mr Sims entered a dress he designed in the Melbourne Cup's Fashions on the Field award the former Central Land Council employee has been dreaming of international fashion fame.

"My dreams are to be national or international," he said.

He would like to be his own boss and start a business that brings his designs to life on fabric.

"It is about ownership, creating jobs and employing young people," he said.

It all started when the Batchelor Institute for Indigenous Tertiary Education, where Mr Sims is studying visual arts, taught him to sew and encouraged him to enter a dress made from a fabric he designed.

"The design is part of my totem. It is an important totem. We call it 'witi'. It belongs to the skin group of the Japaljarri and Jungarrayi," he said. "I did the design myself, the cutting

and the size. I never sewed before in my life.

"We entered and I came 14th out of 80th."

Trips to Asian countries have set Mr Sims' imagination racing and opened his eyes to the endless possibilities of fusing fashion and culture.

"I see different people with different clothes that stand out," he said.

An artists exchange program to China in 2013 and an art exhibition in India in 2009 led him to search the internet for inspiration.

"I look at the websites of first nations overseas and they do their textile. Maybe selling to Myer or David Jones, this is my prospect," he said.

"Hopefully we put Alice Springs on the map with Aboriginal design, fabric and textiles. So we can compete in the near future with other designers."

Mr Sims hopes that the next generation of artists will also follow their dreams.

"I say to young artists good art can take them to places where they want to go."



Sammy Wilson and Kathy Tozer (centre) with SEIT representatives at the Tourism Central Australia Awards. Photo: TCA.

## CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL ONLINE

CLC digital photo archive: <http://clc.keepingculture.com>



CLC Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/CentralLC>



Land Rights News Central Australia  
<http://www.clc.org.au/land-rights-news/>

CLC website: [www.clc.org.au](http://www.clc.org.au)

CLC FREECALL 1800 003 640







Traditional owners from Imanpa and Mutitjulu had a look around Santos' oil and gas exploration camp between Eridunda and Angas Downs before checking out the seismic trucks in action. Sandra Armstrong and David Wongaway, from Imanpa, and others wanted to know how Santos protect their sites. In February, the CLC also took traditional owners from Titjikala to visit seismic tests at Maryvale and Horseshoe Bend.

# Size of the Alyarpere task won't throw these Ryders



"The good thing about the Ryder family is that they're planning first."

UNAFAID of hard work, the Ryder family has taken on a big task in developing its Alyarpere outstation, but they have many reasons for seeing it through.

"Alyarpere is part of our grandfather's and Dad's area," traditional owner Chris Ryder says. "It's where the good drinking water is."

His brother Damien adds: "I try to get more of my family to move back to country. Happy to support them and get more houses put up."

The Ryder family is using its rent money from the East MacDonnell Ranges National Park to develop Alyarpere.

Apart from revitalising their connection to country through their presence at the outstation, they're also hoping to grow employment opportunities in the spectacular region.

Using their own money and time they've built a stockyard for their horses, which is part of their plan to create jobs on country.

They're doing much of the work themselves

with family members helping to build a house and a fence to keep the neighbour's cattle out.

But they've also called on experts when they've needed to.

One of them was soil erosion consultant Col Stanton, who the Central Land Council's community development team recommended to help the family work out where to locate future infrastructure and how to maintain the natural flow of water.

"The good thing about the Ryder family is that they're planning first," Mr Stanton said.

"They are taking the initiative to call in people [for work] they haven't got experience with ... and they get to learn when they walk alongside. It's top stuff."

They're taking a slow and steady approach to the development of Alyarpere, more focussed on getting it right than the pace it's done, as Chris Ryder explains.

"It is better to start small and grow to get bigger," he says.

# From too homesick to learn to uni success



Cherisse Buzzacott is the only Aboriginal midwife at the Alice Springs Hospital. Photo: ABC.

ALICE SPRINGS midwife Cherisse Buzzacott is the Australian Catholic University's Alumni of the Year.

Not bad for a young woman who was once labelled a 'uni dropout' after quitting her studies because she felt homesick.

One of the first graduates of the university's Away From Base Midwifery program, Ms Buzzacott is the only Aboriginal midwife

experiences back here," Ms Buzzacott told the ABC's One Plus One program.

She said the women she supports often forget to look after themselves during pregnancy.

"When they become pregnant, often they're too busy looking after other family members to really think about [themselves]."

"They don't see the baby as an actual person until the baby's actually born,

**"I have really strong role models, my grandmothers, my mum, they all really pushed me to go really far in school and just to keep at it all the time."**

at the Alice Springs Hospital, and one of fewer than 100 Australia-wide.

She also looks after new mums and their babies in Yuendumu.

When she graduated from Centralian College, Ms Buzzacott scored the highest tertiary entrance rank out of all the Aboriginal high school students in the Territory.

After her first unsuccessful attempt at university study in Adelaide she went to Melbourne to finish what she started, completing a Bachelor of Midwifery course in 2014.

One year later, she won the Northern Territory Young Achiever's Award for Health and Wellbeing.

Her journey included a stint as a management trainee at McDonalds and as a graduate student at the Melbourne's Royal Women's Hospital, but she always wanted to work in her home town to help turn around the dismal trends around life expectancy and infant mortality in remote communities.

"I wanted to go away and experience some high risk in a large hospital and then come back and bring my

so they continue with their lifestyle, they're not eating the right foods, or maybe they're not taking pregnancy vitamins, which is what we recommend them to take."

Ms Buzzacott dreams of having her own practice, supporting Aboriginal midwives and staff.

She knows Aboriginal women trust an Aboriginal midwife because they know they can talk openly about their problems without being stereotyped.

"I've got heaps of family that have had problems with domestic violence and suicide, alcohol problems, lots of family with drug problems," she told the ABC.

"I don't discriminate against anyone who has any sort of social problems."

"Just because I'm educated, just because my skin's a bit lighter, doesn't mean I don't have those same problems."

She said one of the keys to her success has been having good role models.

"I have really strong role models, my grandmothers, my mum, they all really pushed me to go really far in school and just to keep at it all the time."



# Rising ranger fears for future funding

AN AWARD-WINNING ranger has warned that Central Australia's Indigenous Protected Areas face horror fire seasons without secure funding.

Josephine Grant fears that some of the IPAs that make up 40 percent of Australia's national reserve system could literally go up in smoke when the money for the IPA program runs out next year.

The ranger program support officer from Tennant Creek supports some of the 2600 Indigenous rangers working across the country under contracts with the Commonwealth to protect IPAs and other Aboriginal land from fires, feral animals and weeds.

After winning the Northern Territory Ranger Award for Leadership in Protected Areas Management Ms Grant is preparing to become the first Aboriginal woman to co-ordinate a Central Land Council ranger group.

In the CLC region rangers look after four IPAs - almost 200,000 square kilometres of very remote country that now resembles a powder keg.

"We've had record rains during the holidays and our country is now bursting with dangerous loads of dry grass and scrub," Ms Grant said.

The four IPAs include Australia's largest terrestrial IPA in the Tanami and its newest - the Kaititi Petermann IPA that surrounds and dwarfs the Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park.

The traditional owners of the latter are already concerned that visitors could start out-of-control wildfires that could threaten native animals and plants.

Six Kaltukatjara rangers look after the enormous western half of the IPA, waiting to be joined by a new ranger group in Mutitjulu.

"Our 11 ranger teams are very small and run on the smell of an oily rag," she said.

"Because there's so few of us we really have our work cut out trying to prevent large dry season wildfires later this year and beyond."

"Traditional patch burning during the cooler times is important because wildfires trigger waves of extinction of



Josephine Grant supports CLC rangers who look after four Indigenous Protected Areas.

threatened plants and animals.

"We can't do this work without our elders who guide us through IPA management plans."

Traditional owners of the Northern Tanami IPA have invested a quarter of a million dollars from their mining compensation income to translate

**"Because there's so few of us we really have our work cut out trying to prevent large dry season wildfires later this year and beyond."**

their IPA management plan into a digital storybook format that literally speaks their Warlpiri language.

Late last year elders and rangers from the 100,000 square kilometre Southern Tanami IPA led the way with the first digital storybook management plan, which was co-funded by gold miner Newmont.

Since the Howard Government era the Commonwealth has funded the governance and planning on IPAs.

The CLC wants Josh Frydenberg, the current minister responsible for the program, to respond to urgent requests to continue and expand IPA contracts in the forthcoming federal budget.

Ms Grant says secure IPA funding is critical to the future of Indigenous

rangers and their communities.

"If we don't manage our country now, then our kids and grandkids won't be able to enjoy it in the future," she said.

"We do really important work for maintaining cultural knowledge and strength, but without secure funding how can we plan ahead?"

"Unless there is long-term commitment to our work we will lose biodiversity, many cultural sites will

be lost or damaged and our plants and animals will disappear altogether.

"No matter where we live, there are threats to our country from weeds and feral animals or wild fires."

Ms Grant joined the Muru-warinyi Ankkul Rangers in Tennant Creek in February 2012. Her job has taken her to ranger groups across the CLC region.

"I like helping other rangers to get better at their jobs," she said. "As I learn the co-ordinator role, this variety helps me to stay motivated and to learn from different team members."

"I know a lot about bush medicine and I really enjoy sharing that knowledge, but most of all I like the way that working on country strengthens the rangers' cultural connections."

Ms Grant celebrated a stellar year in 2016 with additional awards for excellence in indigenous natural resource management.

She wants to inspire female rangers who now make up a third of the CLC's ranger teams.

"I have been able to help groups where the women rangers needed encouragement and support to better understand the work expectations and I really enjoyed that," she said.

Ms Grant credits her family for instilling in her a lifelong love of learning.

"Growing up in the bush north of Tennant Creek I walked about 10 kilometres to school at Banka Banka Station with my 12 siblings. My father walked with us and then we walked all the way home in the afternoon," she said.

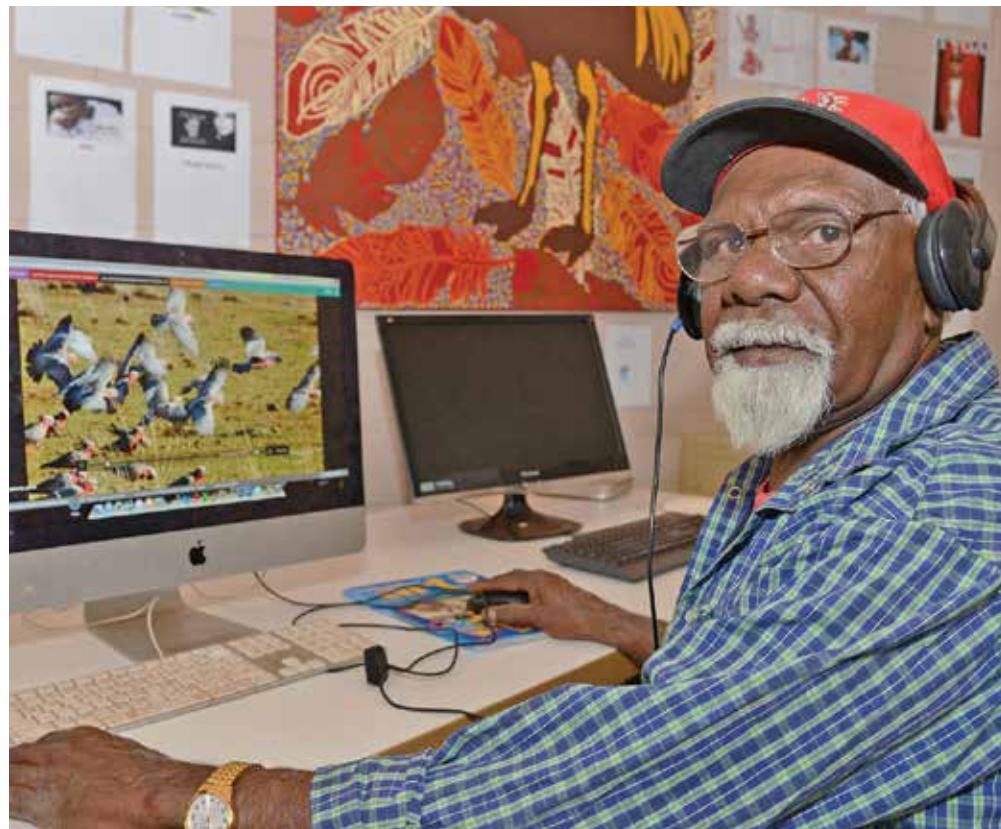
She says the value her family placed on a good education has set her up for success at high school and beyond.

The support she received at the CLC has helped to turn her into one of the rising stars among hundreds of indigenous rangers around the country.

Their families will be anxious to find out before budget night what the future holds for their country.



Kaltukatjara rangers and traditional owners plan a burning trip at Tjunti (Lasseter's Cave).



Robin Granites works on the Southern Tanami IPA's digital storybook management plan.





# Burning business to bank first carbon credits

THE FIRST income earned from carbon credits by a Central Australian Aboriginal business will be realised later this year and the custodians of the Karlantijpa North Aboriginal Land Trust are looking forward to the rewards for their fire management.

Fresh from securing a contract for carbon credits in exchange for strategic savannah burning, the Karlantijpa North Kurrawarra Nyura Mala Aboriginal Corporation is planning to use the money to grow its new carbon enterprise.

Secure in the knowledge that the business is off to a flying start, traditional owners and rangers from Daguragu and Tennant Creek are getting ready for the burning season.

"Everyone is a winner here," Central Land Council director David Ross said. "Their new enterprise will create seasonal jobs and help to mitigate dangerous climate change."

"It allows the custodians to burn their country in a controlled manner in the early dry season in order to reduce the greenhouse gasses that large wildfires in the late dry season would otherwise cause."

Mr Ross said before the CLC started to work with the traditional owners the rarely visited ultra-remote 3000 square kilometre area near Elliott had suffered out of control fires that had depleted endangered animals and plants and threatened neighbouring pastoral properties.

He said years of careful preparation and planning with the CLC's fire management and ranger teams have paid off for



Helma Bernard earns carbon credits through ground burning near Daguragu.

the traditional owners.

"They've put in the hard yards over the last three years, doing ground and aerial burning, monitoring weeds and identifying significant sites, so we're only too pleased to help them to

set up the business when a new methodology for savannah burning made the northern most area of their land trust eligible to bid at the Emissions Reduction Fund auction.

Late last year, the corporation

Mr Ross said the benefits don't stop there.

"A dozen Aboriginal people will be hired to work alongside our rangers, but we also expect wider social and environmental outcomes, such as improved biodiversity and reinvigorated cultural traditions," Mr Ross said.

"We could achieve even better employment outcomes if the Turnbull government invested in what everyone knows to be working well and funded a ranger group in the region."

The CLC rangers will help the corporation to carry out burning on a cost recovery basis for the next five years while other CLC staff will co-ordinate the project on behalf of the corporation and build its governance capacity.

**"Their new enterprise will create seasonal jobs and help to mitigate dangerous climate change."**

develop a carbon business," Mr Ross said.

"We hope it can become a model for other groups who want to carry out financially sustainable fire management that meets safety, cultural and environmental needs."

The traditional owners jumped at the chance to

secured a deal at the Commonwealth clean energy regulator's auction allowing it to turn its fire management work into dollars.

Under the deal, the Commonwealth pays for the carbon abatement and uses the credits to meet its international emissions reduction commitments.

## MEET OUR RANGERS



**Cleveland Kantawara**

**What strengths do you bring to your ranger group?** I bring my computer and communications skills.

**What projects have your ranger group been working on?** We are fencing off two big springs and providing outside water for animals to drink.

**What language(s) do you speak?** I speak Arrernte and English.

**What made you want to be a ranger?** I love working outside with others.

**Why is it important to work on your country?** If country is not taken care of it goes downhill.

**What is the type of work you do as a ranger?** Protection of sacred sites and maintaining country.

**What are some of the hard things?** Trying to control feral animals and weeds.

**How would you explain ranger work to other people?** It is the best job in the world.

**What is the best thing about being a ranger?** Being a ranger, you get to see other country and take care of your area. It keeps you fit and gives you a lot of fresh air.

**What would you say to the Prime Minister about rangers?** If we run out of funding it's going to be hard for people to take care and protect the important sites.

**Anything else you want people to know about you?** Geelong cats are the best team in the world.







# Pokies backdown a big win for traditional owners



Anslem Impu Jr. says gambling at Kings Canyon Resort would have meant kids in local communities missing out on food and clothing. Photo: Amos Aikman/Newspix.

THE KINGS Canyon Resort has listened to Watarrka communities and dropped its plan to install poker machines in the national park – for now.

The resort delivered an early Christmas present to traditional owners and

national park.

“I was quite happy actually for children and schools around here. Also for the tourists. They come here for other reasons, not for gambling,” Anslem Impu Jr. told the ABC when he found

money on that and wouldn’t have enough money for food and clothing for children,” he said.

Mr Impu Jr, who travels between Watarrka and the Mereenie oil and gas field for work, was one of the

legal advice and then went from there.”

CLC director David Ross backed Watarrka communities strongly, even comparing gambling with drug addiction.

“The only difference is that poker machines are legal,” Mr Ross said. “The downside of these things is the same for families and individuals.

“People have their houses broken into and all sorts of other issues stem from these bad behaviours. Tobacco is legal as well but look at what Tobacco does to people. It’s bad enough people having to put up with alcohol at the resort.”

Mr Ross credited lobbying from traditional owners for

the resort’s change of heart.

“It certainly helped the resort to realise there’s a lot of opposition to this. If you are going to run a resort in this part of the world these are your neighbours and we all need to get along, so let’s have a relationship that we can all live with rather than one where we’re knocking heads,” he said.

Like Mr Impu Jr he believes tourists come to look at the spectacular cultural landscape, not to gamble.

“If you want to gamble come to Alice Springs,” Mr Ross said. “You don’t need to be tinkling machines in the middle of the desert.”

**“I was quite happy for children and schools around here. Also for the tourists. They come here for other reasons, not for gambling.”**

residents in and around Watarrka late last year when it withdrew an application to Licensing NT that would have paved the way for machine gambling in the remote

out the gambling plan had been shelved.

“It wasn’t a good idea. It would have a huge impact on the local communities around here. They would spend their

traditional owners who instructed the Central Land Council to oppose the resort’s application.

“I spoke with the CLC and they helped me out. I got some

## Joint management of NT parks under review

A DECADE of joint management of the national parks in the southern half of the Northern Territory seems like a good time to check whether it’s working for the parks’ owners.

The Central Land Council is gathering the views and opinions of custodians, partners and other stakeholders ahead of a report to be released in September.

The research will ask whether the three big hopes traditional owners had for joint management have been realised.

They were:

1. Recognition of traditional owners and inclusion in power sharing and decision making;
2. Employment, training and economic development outcomes; and

3. Opportunities for the younger generation to learn from older family members on country.

In 2003, the government of then Chief Minister Clare Martin agreed to manage parks and reserves jointly with their traditional owners, in a spirit of partnership.

It promised to recognise, value and incorporate their culture, knowledge and decision making processes and to deliver benefits to them, such as rental payments and employment.

Two years later, it passed the Parks and Reserves (Framework for the Future) Act and included the principles and objectives of joint management in the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act.

The CLC consulted with traditional owners and completed joint management plans for half of the 20 parks and reserves in its region.



The West Macdonnell Ranges (Tjoritja) National Park has a joint management plan.





# If we don't work, we won't learn

JANET Inyika was born in the Musgrave Ranges of South Australia. Her parents Tinimai and Jacob Puntaru were shepherds for Ernabella Mission.

One of Janet's earliest memories was from late 1953.

Snuggled between her parents, they made an epic journey by moonlight, on the back of a donkey, escaping the fallout from the Totem 1 nuclear bomb at Emu Field, Maralinga.

She attended Ernabella School, and was one of the first Anangu children learning how to read and write in Pitjantjatjara and English and to draw on paper.

Later, Janet studied painting and batik in Ernabella. One of her batiks is on show at the National Gallery of Australia. She was also a consummate wood carver.

She grew up, married and had her children in Amata. Despite being a busy young mother, she trained as a health worker at the Amata clinic which cared for the health of 300 Anangu.

Assisting the National Trachoma and Eye Health Army field hospital in 1976, Janet said: "If we don't work, we won't learn".

The formation of the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council (NPYWC) in 1980 was a defining and empowering moment for Janet.

For the next 36 years, she almost never missed a meeting. She became a staff member in the emotional and social wellbeing team, and later a director of the NPYWC. She campaigned over decades for renal dialysis services and against alcohol abuse and petrol sniffing, the scourge of the NPY lands.

"Her family was being impacted by sniffing. She



Mrs Never Give Up: Janet Inyika - 1952 - 2016.

was seeing people die around her, become brain injured, disabled for life, and she put herself right in the middle of the fire," NPYWC's Andrea Mason said.

Her work ethic and tenacity earned her the nickname, 'Mrs Never Give Up' and, as a member of the Opal Alliance, the Prime Minister's Award for Excellence at the 2007

performed in Germany with the the Central Australian Aboriginal Women's Choir. She kept their spirits up with her cheerful temperament.

She produced baskets for

participating in patch burning and cleaning rockholes.

Janet never lost her passion and as a deeply respected senior law woman with a vast store of knowledge about the cultural and natural world she also advised the Ara Irititja digital archive project.

Although terminally ill in 2016, she still braved the hot dust storms to attend what would be her last NPYWC meeting.

In her last weeks, she was the guest of honor at the 10-year anniversary of the rollout of Opal fuel, her most cherished achievement. Janet passed away peacefully on the 30th of December in Amata, surrounded by close family.

Linda Rive

**"She was seeing people die around her, become brain injured, disabled for life, and she put herself right in the middle of the fire."**

Janet was influential in the development and rollout of non-sniffable, low-octane fuel. In 2005 she launched Opal fuel at the BP terminal in Adelaide - and in Amata. Petrol sniffing disappeared virtually overnight, sniffers gradually regained their health and estranged families reunited and reconciled.

National Drug and Alcohol Awards.

As she continued her artistic pursuits over the years, Janet's abundant black hair turned white. She toured Australia for two years with the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* stage production at sold out shows. She sang soprano in a number of choirs and

NPYWC's Tjanpi Desert Weavers social enterprise and joined the boards of Maruku Arts and Desart. Her last paintings were a series of autobiographical works about surviving Maralinga.

She was a valued member of the management committee for the Kaṭiti Petermann Indigenous Protected Area,

## Old Jay Creek Remembering Day

TRADITIONAL owners and past residents of Old Jay Creek will gather at the community's cemetery in May to remember those buried there and restore some dignity to many previously unmarked graves.

A large sign listing the deceased as well as some of the stories and voices of Old Jay Creek will be unveiled during the service on 7 May.

Before the Northern Territory Government funded the Central Land Council to make the sign, restore the cemetery and erect crosses on the graves only seven of the 64

graves were named.

Former residents and custodians have been working with the CLC, the Lutheran Church, Friends of Strehlow and Ingerreke to identify the unmarked graves at the cemetery 50 kilometres west of Alice Springs.

They are inviting the public to join them for the service.

For about 60 years, until the 1980s, Old Jay Creek was the home for many Central Australians from different language groups.

The service will be held on 7th May from 10.30am and will be followed by lunch.



People outside Jay Creek church. Photo: Strehlow Research Centre: Samuel Gross Collection.



# Will NPY communities take the power?

ANANGU have a chance to take back power to run their own communities, thanks to a plan that has received the green light from the Federal Government.

Known as Empowered Communities or just EC, it has been called a “new way of doing business with governments and service providers” that puts Aboriginal people in control of decisions that affect them.

“Although some Anangu organisations in our region already work together, Empowered Communities is about something more – it is about forging a common pathway,” Ngaanyatjarra Council chair Bruce Smith said back in 2014.

“This is our new framework for survival and now is the time to create it.”

After two years of design work and lobbying by Aboriginal leaders from eight EC regions, the Federal Government last June released the funds for consultations and planning with the communities of the tri-state Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yangkuntjatjara (NPY) region.

One of those leaders is NPY Women’s Council CEO Andrea Mason.

Ms Mason first introduced the idea to Central Land Council members at their 2015 council meeting at Yulara Pulka.

She told them the program wants long-term reform of indigenous affairs in the NPY region.

“Empowered Communities seeks to create a genuine and balanced partnership between indigenous



Pastor Roy Yalkatji, Sidney James & Frankie Kunia were some of about 60 Kaltukatjara residents who recently discussed Empowered Communities. Local authorities in Imanpa, Aputula and Mutitjulu residents are next.

## Empowered Communities is about

- Aboriginal responsibility
- Changing the power balance between governments and communities
- Empowering local leaders
- Local services, policies and programmes
- Simpler funding
- More accountable governments and communities

To these goals, add proper housing and good care for the old, the young and the disabled.

The NPYWC co-chairs a regional EC steering committee that includes Regional Anangu Services, Ngaanyatjarra Council, Western

## A community-driven plan for the NPY region that governments agree to support

organisations, government and corporate Australia, where everybody is working together on a level playing field and towards a shared strategy,” Ms Mason said.

In many ways, the priority areas of EC are the same as the Commonwealth’s: a good education, work or “meaningful engagement” and safe communities.

Desert Dialysis and the Central Land Council.

Supported by a small secretariat of four staff working out of the NPYWC’s Alice Springs headquarters, the committee is the program’s ‘backbone’, guiding the EC and letting governments know how they can help.

Anangu have shown during 22 consultation meetings with 13

communities across the NPY region since last June that they “understand we are stronger when we work together”, according to the secretariat.

The aim of the consultations is to produce a community-driven five-year development agenda for the region this year that governments agree to support.

Each community will decide if EC is right for it and determine how to be involved.

**“We are stronger when we work together.”**

Community governance varies across the region and, for now at least, decisions will be made through the arrangements that are already in place.

The EC secretariat hopes to hold consultations in all 24 communities by July.

NPYWC chair Yanyi Bandicha believes a new way of working with governments can become a reality.

“Empowered Communities is an important part of creating a better future for all Anangu and especially for our children,” she said.



NPYWC’s Peter Riley and Andrea Mason discussed the project with CLC delegates at the April 2015 council meeting.

## “Go Sis!” Aboriginal leaders congratulate June Oscar



Former Governor General Quentin Bryce awarded June Oscar the Order of Australia medal in 2013. Photo: Governor-General’s office.

THE APPOINTMENT of June Oscar AO as Australia’s new Social Justice Commissioner, the first woman to hold the position permanently, has been warmly welcomed by Aboriginal organisations around the nation.

“Ms Oscar has an outstanding record of working for our peoples and her community of Fitzroy Crossing has made real advances in recent years. The National Congress of Australia’s First Peoples looks forward to working with Ms Oscar in her new capacity,” Dr Jackie Huggins, the Congress’ co-chair said.

Her co-chair Rod Little called the February announcement “a long time coming”.

The appointment has been hailed as a “landmark moment for Indigenous women” by the National Family Violence Prevention Legal Service Forum.

“It is very often Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander women, who are disproportionately affected [by family violence and child removal],” the forum’s convenor, Antoinette Braybrook, said.

A highly respected Bunuba leader, Ms Oscar made her mark as the CEO of Marninwarntikura, an Aboriginal women’s organisation in Fitzroy Crossing, where she spearheaded the fight by local women against domestic violence.

She also led a successful community campaign to ban the sale of full-strength alcohol in the Fitzroy Valley and initiated Australia’s first study into Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), which affects the unborn babies of pregnant drinkers.

Ms Oscar takes over the Social Justice Commissioner’s position from Mick Gooda, who last year quit to head up the Royal Commission into Youth Detention in the Northern Territory.





# Building a platform for positive change

WHEN Andrea Mason told Central Land Council members about Empowered Communities two years ago she hoped the green light from the Australian Government for the ambitious plan was just around the corner.

Then everything went very quiet while the Liberals replaced then Prime Minister Tony Abbott with Malcolm Turnbull.

Mr Turnbull finally approved the plan in the middle of last year, sparking a flurry of consultation meetings in Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council (NPYWC) communities and the recruitment of a secretariat of four staff.

Ms Mason, the CEO of the NPYWC, will be watching the critical consultation phase of the Empowered Communities program from Sydney.

While she undertakes a 'corporate placement' with Westpac and provides advice as a new member of Mr Turnbull's handpicked Indigenous Advisory Council (IAC), her team back in Central Australia will be "going out to meet with Anangu from across the NPY region to hear from them about what's important".

"We will be sharing data and information to help people understand what's happening in communities and in the region right now and working with Anangu to make a plan for a new future based on Anangu being in the driver's seat and steering the region in the direction that works for Anangu tjuta," Ms Mason says.

With so many false 'new dawns' in indigenous affairs, how will EC's "new way of working" be different?

"It's true people have heard about new ways of working before and then over time nothing has really changed," she agrees, before adding that EC was developed by Aboriginal people rather than government.

Ms Mason also believes there are early "great signs" of a "more collaborative approach from the Prime Minister and Cabinet teams in our region".

She lists fortnightly information sharing meetings and an EC and government working group "to look at financial security for Aboriginal people" in the NPY region.

These closer working relationships indicate "a more consistent understanding and approach" that involves sharing regional data that has not "been available in one place before [and] that we want to share with communities".

This information will enable her

**"I have taken the Prime Minister at his word, that he wants to build his understanding of indigenous cultures as well as work with and not for Aboriginal people."**

team to "work with communities to help them better understand who is visiting and why, have greater control and influence over who is working with them and how, and also provide advice and direction on how they'd like more collaboration between providers as



Andrea Mason, chief executive of the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council, is one of the Aboriginal leaders who developed the idea of Empowered Communities. Photo: NPYWC.

well as greater collaboration with and accountability to the communities".

To many Anangu on the ground the organisations, national structures and frameworks that make up EC must feel like a heavy burden.

How will they be able to genuinely

**"When in doubt, I should reach out to Aboriginal leaders who have the knowledge and understanding to provide me with clear and substantive advice."**

drive such a difficult process that comes with so many expectations?

Ms Mason admits her team is still "grappling with the options and opportunities to do this in a workable way".

Apart from prioritising community engagement she wants to look at "how we work with and strengthen the existing structures and governance in community, such as the [MacDonell Regional Council's] local authorities".

"We are also looking at ways to engage and empower Anangu at a family and individual level, through

things like local EC champions, a focus on young and emerging leaders in the region, and social media and online ways of communication," she says.

"At a national level we are working with other EC regions, our central EC team and with government, to try and

establish a process that has the right balance of governance and control with flexibility and openness to make sure that Anangu voices are heard and listened to."

It all boils down to trying "new and different ways of working" that are

based on "real Anangu control".

"If things work properly we'll do more of them and if they don't we'll stop doing them and try something else," she says.

Ms Mason's platform for advocating positive change has grown considerably.

After a slew of awards - 2016 Telstra Business Woman of the Year, 2017 NT Australian of the Year and Alice

Springs Centralian Citizen of the Year - came the appointment to the 'refreshed' IAC, along with education champion Chris Sarra.

"I have taken the Prime Minister at his word, that he wants to build his understanding of indigenous cultures as well as work with and not for Aboriginal people," Ms Mason says.

She plans to use the IAC to support "evidence-based solutions" and to progress the NPYWC reform agenda of providing "community safety, creating local employment opportunities, preparing young people for leadership and strengthening local and regional governance".

"It gives me the opportunity to ask practical questions that may hold the government to account to ensure Aboriginal people living in the desert communities of Central Australia are included in national policy considerations."

She says she will draw on strong guidance.

"When in doubt, I should reach out to Aboriginal leaders who have the knowledge and understanding to provide me with clear and substantive advice."



Selina Kulitja speaks up at the Kaltukatjara Empowered Communities meeting.





# Appeal to stop pipeline operation fails



NATIVE American tribes opposed to the construction of a pipeline near their sacred lands have lost an appeal that would have prevented oil flowing through it.

The United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit knocked back the appeal brought by the Standing Rock and Cheyenne River Sioux tribes, leaving the way open for the \$3.8 billion Dakota Access Pipeline to begin operation.

An earlier appeal by the tribes against a decision to allow the pipeline to go ahead is yet to be resolved and they had hoped this appeal would prevent oil flowing until the earlier case had been decided.

Any hopes they now have to stop the pipeline seem to rest on that earlier appeal.

The tribes oppose the pipeline, which would move North Dakota oil to Illinois. They say its route was illegally changed to run close to sacred burial sites and will endanger their water.

Former President Barack Obama had encouraged the builders of the pipeline to find an alternative route, but President Donald Trump has signed orders supporting it under the present plan.



Protesters burned their camp at Standing Rock as they left. Photo: Josue Rivas / Honor the Earth.

## Schools around the world packing a big lunch



School meals - not just in Lajamanu (see p.11). Photo: Flickr/Julien Harneis.

IT'S a staggering figure, but some 370 million children around the world are fed at school every day while learning about healthy food and nutrition.

March 9 was International School Meals day and the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation marked the day by pushing for consistent global investments in school meals.

It said that would lead to a generation of children developing healthy eating habits and benefiting from a diverse diet, according to the Inter Press Service news agency.

A quick look around the world shows a varied menu for school meals, including beans and rice in

Madagascar, spicy lentils in the Philippines and vegetable pastries and fruit in Jordan, while in some countries it may be a healthy snack or it could include take-home food such as vitamin A-enriched oil for the whole family.

The UN agency says when combined with diversified school meals and nutrition education, growing and preparing garden food at school increases children's preferences for fruits and vegetables.

It says food and nutrition education is an essential element in the prevention and control of diet-related health problems while also boosting school attendance.

## Citizen River: New Zealand grants waterway legal personhood



A NEW ZEALAND river that is sacred to Maori people has become the first waterway in the world to be recognised and protected as a living being, after a 170-year campaign.

The interests of the 145-kilometre Whanganui River on the country's North Island, which was given the same rights as a citizen by New Zealand's parliament in March, will be represented by a Maori group.

The group, Whanganui Iwi, has fought for recognition of its relationship with the Whanganui River since the 1870s.

A member appointed by the

**"Our landscape is personified, we see the earth, our lands as our earth mother Papatuanuku."**

group and one appointed by the government will jointly speak up for the country's third-largest river.

One of the group's spokespeople, Gerrard Albert, told *The Telegraph* the community had long been concerned about the government's impact on the "health and wellbeing" of the



The Whanganui River is "its own person". Photo: Flickr/ @ks\_marks.

river.

"We have always believed that the Whanganui River is an indivisible and living whole — Te Awa Tupua — which includes all its physical and spiritual elements from the mountains of the central North Island to the sea," he said.

The passing of the revolutionary Te Awa Tupua Bill ended the country's longest-running legal battle after hard negotiations between New Zealand's government and Whanganui Iwi that formally started in 2009.

Professor Jacinta Ruru Told the ABC the bill means that the river and a former national park on the North Island, Te Urewera, which also became a legal person in 2014 now have a voice in court.

"It means that these lands or the river have their own authority, recognised in law

now as having their own presence, their own needs and their own wellbeing."

Granting a river legal personhood is revolutionary because it turns Western ideas of human mastery over the environment on their head and instead embraces the Maori relationship with the land.

"From the Maori perspective our landscape is personified, we see the earth, our lands as our earth mother Papatuanuku," Professor Ruru said.

"We see ourselves very much as being part of the environment and our health and wellbeing as a people being reflected back into the health and wellbeing of the environment or vice versa.

"Maori don't own, the New Zealand government doesn't own this land. It is its own person, it cannot be owned."





# Sacred Song to share choir history with the world

A DOCUMENTARY following the Central Australian Aboriginal Women's Choir on its historic 2015 tour of Germany will feature in this year's Melbourne International Film Festival.

Choir members gathered at the Lutheran church in Alice Springs on a hot night in March to watch the rough cut of the film with film-maker Naina Sen.

"It's fabulous what Naina has done for us, lovely. Our family can see what we did in Germany. We had fun. It's amazing," said Maryanne Swift from Ntaria, who joined the tour with her children Nicolas and Genise.

"Naina did a wonderful job, it made me very happy and proud," added choir member Judy Brumby from Utju who also worked on the documentary as an interpreter.

"I was really nervous because at the end of the day my accountability and responsibility is to them," Naina Sen said after the screening.

"So if they wouldn't have loved it, it would not have meant anything, really."

The women invited Naina and her team to film them in their communities in 2014 as they rehearsed a new show for a tour of Germany.

In May 2015 they got ready to bring the hymns their families learned from German missionaries 140 years ago and sang in Pitjantjatjara and Western Arrernte to German audiences.

"We took what the missionaries taught us back to Germany, so it was like a boomerang message going back to them," Ms Brumby said.

"These songs were given to our great-grandparents, but they are now our songs, part of our story and identity," said Utju's Daphne Puntjina.

The documentary crew followed the choir for almost three years, to Ntaria, Kaltukatjara, Utju, Alice Springs, Darwin, Melbourne, Tasmania and Germany with filming only finishing last October.

One reason the women wanted to perform for German audiences was to show that the hymns their ancestors shared played a role in keeping Aboriginal languages alive.

"So they know we're keeping our culture and language strong," choir member Judy Brumby said.

*Sacred Song* will screen at the Melbourne International Film Festival in July.

Look out for a review in the next *Land Rights News*.



The Central Australian Aboriginal Women's Choir took their "boomerang message" to Germany.

## Bush TV hits town

VISITORS to Alice Springs from bush communities won't have to miss out on their favourite TV station any more.

The new channel 41 allows townsfolk to keep up with family out bush who have been enjoying Indigenous Community TV (ICTV) since 2012.

After many years of lobbying, ICTV secured a digital TV license last year.

Funding from the Aboriginals Benefit Account and Centrecorp has made it all possible.

Viewers will be in for a treat during NAIDOC Week when ICTV will celebrate the week's theme, Our Languages Matter, by broadcasting only in Aboriginal languages from July 2 to 9.

Other highlights from the region are online, on ICTV Play.

A *Place Called Walapunpa*, by Barkly Regional Arts, is a documentary about the Rankine family returning to their homeland of Walapunpa south of Tennant Creek after an absence of more than 30 years.

For many of the younger family members it was the first time they had visited important cultural sites.

*Dragon Dreaming* follows Kushia Young, a profoundly deaf young woman from the APY lands, as she uses her art to overcome enormous disadvantage.

The video by Ninti Media took out the ICTV Our Way Video Award at last year's National Remote Indigenous Media Festival in Yirrkala.

On the *Town Camp Cookbook Series* Jasmine and Millie, from Hidden Valley town camp in Alice Springs, feed big mobs with a delicious, but cheap, kangaroo stir fry.

The cooking series is made by town campers for town campers and shows how to make healthy, fun and easy meals for the family.

**To find out what is playing on ICTV use the electronic programming guide on your television, call 8952 3118 or visit ICTV Play at [ictv.com.au](http://ictv.com.au).**



A *Place Called Walapunpa* is a highlight on ICTV play.

## Alice Springs' search for a National Indigenous Art Gallery and Cultural Centre location

THE DAYS of crowds bursting out of confined Alice Springs art spaces during big Aboriginal art events may be numbered.

Two prominent Central Australians, Philip Watkins and Hetti Perkins, are driving the development of a National Indigenous Art Gallery in Alice Springs.

The gallery is not only expected to provide a major new showcase for Indigenous Australian art, but a spacious one too.

It is a \$50 million election promise of the Territory's Labor Government and has been billed as a major tourism drawcard.

**"This is a great opportunity to celebrate the rich cultural heritage and contemporary artistic expressions of indigenous artists."**

Ms Perkins is a curator, writer and consultant as well as the eldest daughter of first Central Land Council chair Charlie Perkins, while Mr Watkins heads Desart, the peak industry body for Central Australian Aboriginal art centres.

The pair, who teamed up to launch the inaugural Vincent Lingiari Art Award, are co-chairing a project steering committee for the initial consultation work.

One of the committee's first jobs will be to find out where to build the gallery and how it may be linked with another \$20 million election promise: a National Aboriginal Culture Centre.

Mr Watkins said the gallery will

provide better facilities for artists to showcase their work to national and international audiences.

"At the launch of the Vincent Lingiari Art Award last September visitors were spilling out of the entrance of the Tangentyere Artists Gallery into the driveway," he said.

"The size of the crowd at this event showed that our region is more than ready for a dedicated space for big Aboriginal art events."

"This is a great opportunity to celebrate the rich cultural heritage and contemporary artistic expressions of indigenous artists and people from across Australia," Ms Perkins added.

Assistant Minister for the National Indigenous Art Gallery, Chansey Paech, said through a spokesperson the gallery and centre "are distinct facilities but will link in closely with each other".

"It's very important that our mob are recognised for the significant contributions our people have made and we need to make sure we tell this very important story nationally."

Nganampa Anwernekenhe, a corporation associated with Harold Furber, has begun preliminary consultations for the cultural centre.

CLC members strongly endorsed the idea three years ago, when Mr Furber presented it to council.

Mr Paech said the government is open to co-locating the cultural centre and the art gallery and hopes to have a shortlist of sites by the middle of the year.

"No decision has been made as to the location of either facility but we are open to all options," his spokesperson said.





## A dog's life isn't so bad in Yuendumu



Yuendumu has invested in their dog lady Gloria Morales' dog health program. Photo: David Darcy.

LORETTA Lechleitner's dog Stumpy may have lost an eye in a car accident, but she says he hasn't lost his sense of fun. "He's back with his friends now and he is happy," she says.

Stumpy is one lucky camp dog who owes his life to Yuendumu's dog health program.

The community's decision to use its mining compensation money to improve dog health is helping humans along the way.

Yuendumu leaders know that healthy dogs mean healthier people, so they invested more than \$57,000 from their mining compensation income in a project to treat and de-sex local dogs, including a puppy adoption service.

The community's Granites Mine Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation, or GMAAAC, committee told the Central Land Council's community development team that it wants the project to keep dogs healthy, educate Yapa on how to look after them and to improve Yapa health.

Dog lover and assistant art centre manager Gloria Morales runs it in her spare time under an agreement with the CLC.

Yuendumu's 'dog lady' has watched Yapa become much more knowledgeable about dog management.

The number of dogs in Yuendumu has more than halved from around 700 dogs when she moved to the community 15 years ago to an estimated 300 today.

Many more dogs now live to a ripe old age – dogs like Nancie Oldfield's Blackie, who kept his injured eye thanks to Ms Morales' quick action.

"My grandson saw Blackie hiding under the bed and he wouldn't come out," Ms Oldfield says. "We could see he was hurt. We called Gloria straight away. His eye had popped out and he looked bad."

Ms Morales says Blackie was in a bad way.

"We had to put Blackie's eye back in straight away," she explains. "If we left it out then it would get infected."

"His jaw was also broken down his chin. So to help, we tried to tie his bottom jaw together."

She immediately arranged an emergency vet visit.

A couple of months later Blackie was back to his tail wagging, happy self.

"Without the dog program – what would we do?" Ms Oldfield asked.



Loretta Lechleitner and Stumpy.

## Is a sugar tax the answer?

MANY health organisations believe a sugar tax should be part of the solution.

It would make sweet foods more expensive but could also be used to make healthy foods cheaper.

Supporters of a sugar tax are up against powerful forces in business and politics.

The Greens are the lone Australian political party to support such a tax.

That may change next year however, when the United Kingdom introduces a tax on sugary drinks that is expected to raise 520 million pounds.

The Grattan Institute predicts that if a tax of 40

cents on every 100 grams of sugar was introduced in Australia it would generate \$500 million per year, cut soft drink consumption by 15 percent and lead to a two percent reduction in obesity.

Even a small amount of that revenue could help make the healthy foods in bush stores more affordable.

## Sugary foods still killing the bush

THE LATEST census figures have shown that Aboriginal people living in remote Australian communities are still consuming too much soft drink, grog, cakes and sweets.

The figures from 2013 show that people living in those areas are getting 41 percent of their daily energy from sugary food.

Eating or drinking too much of such foods leads to chronic diseases and early deaths.

On a positive note, the results also revealed that Aboriginal residents of remote communities eat half a serve more grain foods and lean meats than those of towns and cities.

On average, Aboriginal adults around Australia ate almost a third fewer vegetables than non-indigenous people -

for making Australians fatter.

More than a quarter of Australian children are now overweight or obese, as are two out of three adults.

"People don't choose this," associate professor of indigenous health at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Kerrie Doyle, told The Guardian.

"They don't wake up and say, 'I'll be unhealthy and fat today,'" Professor Doyle said.

"We haven't made any great leaps forward in the high price of fruit and vegetables in remote and rural areas. When you live in poverty, you buy the cheapest foods."

It is also well known that sugary foods, sometimes called 'discretionary foods', rot teeth and cause dental diseases.

**"People don't choose this. They don't wake up and say 'I'll be unhealthy and fat today'."**

just over two serves - and just one serve of fruit a day.

Aboriginal adults out bush eat even less fruit.

A healthy diet is five or six serves of vegetables and two serves of fruit a day, and no more than six tablespoons of sugar, but Australia's consumption of sugar is much higher than that.

A Sydney University study from 2011-12 showed that Australians had up to 21 teaspoons per day.

Amata community in South Australia is a case in point.

The remote community recently featured in the documentary *That Sugar Film* which looked at the role sugar plays in the skyrocketing rates of kidney disease.

Health experts blame sugar

Professor Doyle said the lack of dental services in remote areas and the high cost of treatments had made the already high rate of dental disease among Aboriginal people worse.

"I have come across many who can't eat an apple because of their dental issues," she said.

"A lot of the discretionary foods, they're soft and easier to eat."

She said housing, social inclusion and food security all needed to improve if we are to achieve better overall health for Aboriginal people.

"Just educating people and telling them to eat foods that may not even be available to them isn't going to work."



Tahlia and Carl Junior Pareroultja sugar up in Ntaria.





Jody Lynch, Cherisse Buzzacott and Josie Douglas during the Oxfam Straight Talk leadership summit in Canberra. Photo: Koori Mail.



Shenaia Watson Nagala, from Yuendumu, and her Australia Day honour. Photo: WYDAC.



Becky Mack (centre) left the CLC for Congress after 15 years - "almost half my life".



Artparra resident Sam Dixon and his new puppy.



Alice Springs girl gang celebrating International Women's Day at Kungkas Can Cook.



CLC policy officer Peta Breaden with grandmother Bessie Liddle at the Mutitjulu signing ceremony.



Reggie Uluru cuts the cake with CLC Director David Ross, Chair Francis Kelly and executive member Sammy Wilson at the Mutitjulu town lease signing ceremony.



Gina Howard and her two daughters Leonie and Aleen.



# JUST IMAGINE, MAYBE I MIGHT HAVE BEEN A DOCTOR OF LINGUISTICS.



My brother Alex had a brilliant mind, he was quite influential. The teacher at Oodnadatta, where Alex got most of his primary education, was my husband's uncle [Bert Haines]. He would have said to Dad, 'Get Alex away from here to finish high school.' Alex became the dux of the school. He topped all the classes from primary right through to high school. Yet that man was born out in the sticks at Horseshoe Bend, a bush kid.

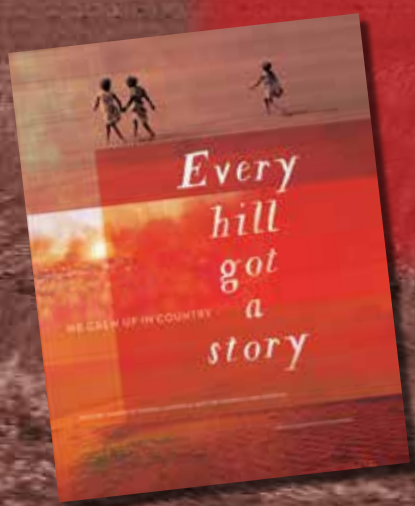
Alex said to Dad, 'Can't have these kids sitting in the bush under a tree all their lives.' And Dad tried very hard, placing me at Hartley Street School [in Alice Springs]. I kept running off! They'd be on the train about to leave, and there I would be, climbing back on the train! I wouldn't be left behind. I ran away like that twice.

Then Alex said to Dad, 'I'm going back to Adelaide and I'm going to organise a place for my sisters and brothers to come down for school.' Dad agreed, so he got us all organised and we went on the Ghan down to Adelaide, to Colebrook Home. It was run by the United Aborigines Mission.

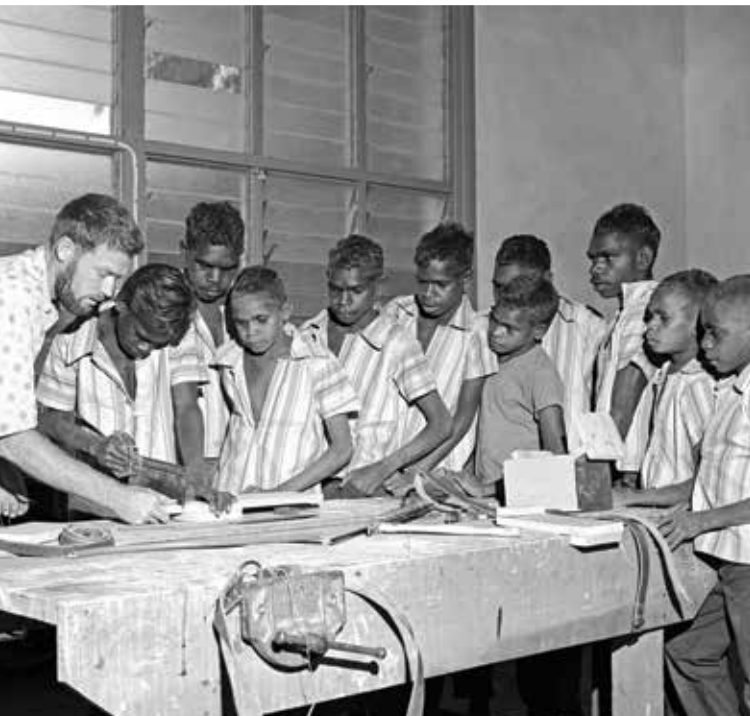
After living out in the open all my life, having to go to school at a place like Colebrook Home, to be inside four walls, it was like, 'Let me out of here!' It felt as though our souls were just closed in. I never lived in a house until I was going on thirteen years old. I couldn't see the stars. I had a big period of adjustment. We hardly knew how to speak English apart from yes and no and thank you.

Dad had eight children. The last lot, we were the youngest of the eight, us four, he didn't have any regrets sending us down south for school. He wanted to see his kids educated. I just haven't had enough education for what I wanted to do. That is my only regret. I often think about it. Just imagine, maybe I might have been a doctor of linguistics.

~ Myra Ah Chee ~  
Excerpt from *Every hill got a story*



For more information go to [clc.org.au/every-hill-got-a-story](http://clc.org.au/every-hill-got-a-story)



Woodwork class at Hermannsburg school, 1966. Photo: Australian News and Information Bureau, photographer J Mitchell.

Playing with clay at the Warrabri Preschool, 1969. Photo: Northern Territory Library, Tschirner Collection.

'We used to make something, animal or native figure.'  
Photo: courtesy of Strehlow Research Centre, SRC Jaeschke 0196 B59.

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