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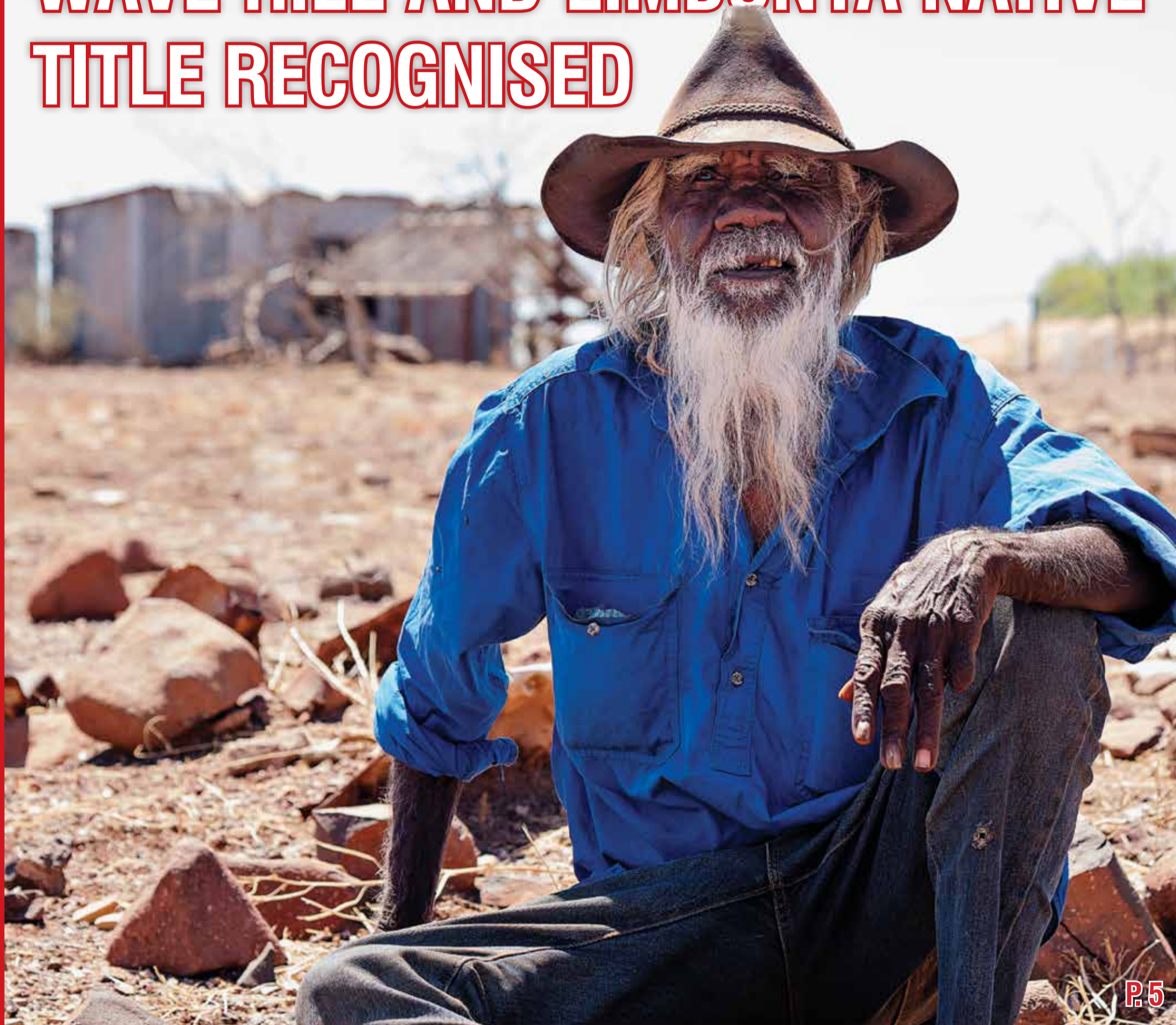
# LAND RIGHTS NEWS

October 2020

VOLUME 10. NUMBER 3.

## CENTRAL AUSTRALIA

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**EDITORIAL**

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**COVER**



Paddy Doolak at the old Wave Hill homestead.

Photo: ABC News, Michael Franchi.

**CLC MEETINGS**

**27 - 29 October 2020**  
Council  
Kintore

**27 - 28 December 2020**  
Executive  
Alice Springs

# Land councils call for community housing model

THE NORTHERN Territory's land councils want the Morrison and Gunner governments to replace the NT's failed public housing system with a new Aboriginal-controlled model for remote communities, homelands and town camps.

Meeting in Darwin with Indigenous Australians Minister Ken Wyatt and NT Chief Minister Michael Gunner before the Territory election, the land councils demanded a return of responsibility for housing design, construction, maintenance and tenancy management to Aboriginal people.

The land councils agree that this is essential to closing the yawning gap between Aboriginal Territorians and the rest of the country.

They support a careful transition to a community housing system governed by Aboriginal people at the local, regional and NT levels that maximises Aboriginal employment and training and delivers professional and responsive services to all tenants.

Part of the model is a statutory NT-wide Aboriginal-controlled body, together with regional housing organisations, that would allow the Territory's diverse regions to participate.

"The new model is not one-size-fits-all, but it allows for flexible service delivery and choice," Northern Land Council chief executive Marion Scrymgour said.

The NT-wide body would manage housing funds and implement housing regulation and standards. An independent Aboriginal-controlled peak body would monitor its performance.

Central Land Council delegates directed staff to



The chairs of the four NT land councils tell ABC TV News about their community-controlled housing model.

keep negotiating with both governments about the model.

When the delegates met in Ampilatwatja in late August they were so worried about the lack of progress on the new rooms and houses they had been promised under the national partnership agreement on remote housing

We now have a roadmap for real action," he said.

"It's encouraging that Minister Wyatt understands and embraces our model. We welcome his support and call on the NT Government to commit to working with us to implement it," Mr Martin-Jard said.

and NT governments to see it implemented," Ms Scrymgour added.

In the Groote Archipelago, they are already implementing one of the building blocks of the new system, a regional Aboriginal community housing organisation, according to Anindilyakwa Land Council chair Tony Wurramarrba.

"We support the new model because we believe only Aboriginal accountability and control will resolve the national disgrace that is the current NT housing system," he said.

"We welcome the model's support for our neglected homelands that haven't seen any new houses for more than a decade," Tiwi Land Council chief executive Andrew Tipungwuti said.

"COVID-19 has taught us that working and living on our land is essential for the health and safety of our peoples."

**"It's encouraging that Minister Wyatt understands and embraces our model. We welcome his support."**

that they have asked staff to write to the NT and the Australian governments about their concerns.

CLC chief executive Joe Martin-Jard is optimistic about the response.

"Both governments have invested substantial funds in NT Aboriginal housing and are willing to move towards a community housing system.

"We look forward to working closely with the NT Minister for Remote Housing, Chansey Paech, on implementing our model," he said.

"The land councils will continue to consult with traditional owners and residents across the NT to find out how the model can meet their needs and negotiate with the Australian



Josie Douglas explained the land councils' community-controlled housing model at the CLC's Ampilatwatja council meeting.



## Ltyentye Apurte's Supreme Court win set to lift remote NT housing standards

Enid Young's sister Annie Young was one of the tenants who successfully took the NT Government to court in 2016.

THE LATEST court victory of tenants from Ltyentye Apurte (Santa Teresa) in their long battle with the Northern Territory Government is setting new standards for liveability that all houses in remote NT communities must meet.

The landmark NT Supreme Court ruling in September has put the government on notice to lift its game. The ruling came a day after

A lower court, the Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NTCAT), last year agreed with the NT's housing department that having no back door did not make her house insecure.

Supreme Court Justice Jenny Blokland disagreed.

She increased the compensation the department has to pay to Ms Young from the \$100 the NTCAT had

agreements in up to 70 remote communities could come into question.

"We expect that NTCAT will award renters in Santa Teresa compensation for the period of time where their rental properties didn't meet the standard of 'humaneness, suitability and reasonable comfort' set by the Supreme Court," Daniel Kelly, from Australian Lawyers for Remote Aboriginal Rights, said.

He said the win could mean that residents in other remote NT communities could be owed similar levels of compensation.

The NTCAT will also have to work out what the new definition of humaneness and reasonable comfort must look like on the ground.

"We know it doesn't look like the current scenario in remote communities, where there is massive overcrowding and a failure to carry out repairs and people living pretty horrendous conditions," Mr Kelly told ABC TV.

"This is far from over," he said.

"Other First Nations communities with almost carbon copies of the same housing issues, have been monitoring this case very closely," he said.

"We're acting for Laramba, and expect that others will now look at how the standards established by the Supreme Court could be transferred to their communities.

**Continued p. 18**

**"This is far from over. Government must work with Aboriginal peaks to ensure all housing is climate change resilient, is culturally appropriate in design and control is devolved to communities."**

re-elected Chief Minister Michael Gunner declared that improving houses in the bush is "one of the government's most important commitments".

The ruling in the test case means that it is not enough for houses to just be 'safe' – they must also meet contemporary standards of "humaneness, suitability and reasonable comfort".

It means that living in a house without a back door, a situation elder Enid Young endured for six years, breaches the standard for habitable housing to which all remote community tenants are entitled.

awarded to \$10,200.

She also found that the NTCAT had not listened properly when Ms Young and another plaintiff, the late Mr Conway, complained that the department had engaged in unconscionable conduct when it made tenancy agreements with them.

Justice Blokland asked the NTCAT to reconsider what the plaintiffs had said about not understanding the contracts and feeling under pressure to sign anyway.

The case will now go back to the tribunal.

If it finds that the rental agreements were entered into unfairly other rental

## Chansey Paech is open to land council housing model



Minister for remote housing Chansey Paech said he will study the land councils' housing model.

"I'M happy to explore the model further."

That was the response first-time minister Chansey Paech gave when asked whether he supported the four NT land council's community-controlled housing model (see story p. 2).

One of the five ministerial portfolios of the new member for Gwojja is remote and town camp housing.

In his first ABC interview as minister he said he wanted to study the community-controlled housing model of the land councils closely.

"I support the community

having a say in housing models," Mr Paech said.

"I am looking forward to continuing to build my strong relationship with the four land councils and housing will always be a hot topic.

"I want to make sure that the future of remote NT housing is driven by remote Territorians," he said.

Central Land Council chief executive, Joe Martin-Jard, would like to discuss the model during his first meeting with the new minister.

**Continued p.18**

# Wave Hill's long wait for native title rights ends

MORE than half a century after the late Vincent Lingiari led the strike on Wave Hill Station, the native title rights of the strikers' families have been formally recognised by the Federal Court.

Justice Richard White handed down the historic

kilometres of land.

Francine McCarthy, the CLC's manager of native title, said the determination recognises their rights to hunt, gather and teach on the land and waters and to conduct cultural activities and ceremonies.

**"It's important to the legacy of the old people who worked here. I'm carrying on in my father's footsteps, he was a stockman and I am a stockman. I was born on New Wave Hill Station, I've worked here [Wave Hill Station] like my father did."**

determination at Jinbarak, the site of the old homestead, and acknowledged the historic significance of Wave Hill as the site of the 1966 walk off that sparked the land rights movement.

"I think all of us here today would recognise that this is a particularly special determination of native title," he said.

"We're not returning land, what we're doing is recognising that the Jamangku, Japuwuny, Parlakuna-Parkinykarni and Yilyimawu land-holding groups have had interests in this land at least from the time of European settlement, probably for millennia."

The non-exclusive consent determination means that the native title holders and Wave Hill pastoralist share access to almost 5,500 square

"It gives them the right to negotiate exploration and mining agreements, but unlike on Aboriginal land, they have no veto right," she said.

To those who took part in the walk-off, recognition of their enduring connection to country is about telling the truth about our shared history and how it shaped Aboriginal lives.

"I was born on Wave Hill Station. It means everything to me and my family," said native title holder Pauline Ryan, who at age 10 was put to work at the homestead cleaning, ironing and washing bedsheets by hand.

Her mother taught her how things were done on the

station. Pauline never went to school.

"I was about 15 years old in the walk off in 1966, I remember that day. My stepfather, mother and grandpa were there too.

"My uncle and grandpa and grandma passed away here. We bring our young kids here to talk about their memory."

Many people who took part in the walk off made the journey to Jinbarak to witness the latest chapter in their quest for self-determination and to honour those who had passed away.

Strikers Paddy Doolak and Jimmy Wave Hill welcomed everyone to Gurindji country. Timmy Vincent, Mr Lingiari's only surviving son, acknowledged his father and "those old people who aren't here today".

The last time Milton Splinter, who lives in Alice Springs, set foot on his country was 1966.

"I was six years old when my people walked off the station. I was born right over there. As a kid I used to play along these creeks, so this place is very important to me. Today is the first time I've been back."

Wave Hill Station was established in 1883 by drover Nathaniel Buchanan, and in 1913 became part of Lord Vestey's British cattle empire.

By 1966, generations of stockmen and house servants had endured years of drought, deprivation and exploitation.

Instead of wages, they were doled



Cedrina Algy and her son Tom took part in the ceremony.

out tea, sugar and tobacco, even after pastoralists had to pay them a wage set at half of the wage of non-Aboriginal workers. Vestey's refusal to pay triggered the strike.

Pauline Ryan said life at Dagaragu, where the families settled, was better.

"We had what we needed there. We could go hunting and grow vegetables and camp together."

The families wanted to use a section of land to start their own cattle business on their own country.

Their petition for a grant of a pastoral lease of 1,300 square kilometres around Dagaragu stated "We feel that morally the land is ours and should be returned to us."

They did not win the right to run cattle until 1975,

when Prime Minister Gough Whitlam poured a handful of earth into Vincent Lingiari's palm.

Native title holder Matthew Algy said native title matters to his family today.

"It's important to the legacy of the old people who worked here. I'm carrying on in my father's footsteps, he was a stockman and I am a stockman. I was born on New Wave Hill Station, I've worked here [Wave Hill Station] like my father did."

"It's important to my family, but I'm also sad for the people who didn't live to see this," he said.

(Foreground) Gus George, Paddy Doolak, Patrick Jimmy and Jimmy Wave Hill.



# Limbunya native title holders celebrate recognition

A FEELING of celebration was in the air as everyone present for the Limbunya native title determination jostled for space under the marquee for a group shot.

Native title holders posed with representatives of the Federal Court for photos marking the long awaited determination over the childhood home of land rights leader Vincent Lingiari.

Justice Richard White handed down the determination at the Karungkarni Arts and Culture Centre in Kalkaringi, witnessed by the Nawurlala, Parayi-Kakaru, Tjutamalin and Central Limbunya land holding groups.

The more than 5,000 square kilometre determination area, northwest of Kalkaringi, belonged to Lord Vestey's cattle empire and was run as part of Waterloo Station until the 1980s.

As on all Vestey stations, conditions were extraordinarily difficult for Aboriginal workers and their families.

Despite being paid in rations and shifted around from station to station and across state and territory borders, they maintained a very rich cultural life against the odds.



Limbunya Station native title holder Becky Peters with Justice Richard White.

to attend ceremonies.

After Mr Lingiari led striking Aboriginal workers off Wave Hill Station in 1966, families working on Limbunya and other Vestey-owned stations joined the strike.

Pauline Ryan's husband Banjo Ryan Jangala, a former Limbunya stockman, was recognised as a native title holder.

The celebration brought together people who had not returned to their country since the strike with members of the Stolen Generations – descendants of those who were taken away from Limbunya as children.

Josie Crawshaw and her sister had travelled from Darwin to attend the determination in memory of their grandmother who was born on the station.

When her grandmother was four, she and her three siblings were separated and removed from their family at Limbunya.

"They were taken away by a policeman, all four kids were on one horse, with the policeman sitting behind. They rode all the way to Darwin."

"It means so much to us to be here," Ms Crawshaw said.

Many of the native title holders live in Kalkaringi and Daguragu and continue to visit the station for cultural and ceremonial reasons.

"I was from Wave Hill Station, he was from Limbunya Station. We met in Kalkaringi many years ago and now we are both native title holders in a week," Ms Ryan said, referring to the Wave Hill determination Justice White handed down two days earlier.

Many of those present were born on one of the stations, and walked off in 1966.

**"Before he passed, I promised my uncle, he asked me to see this through. It was very important to him."**

They kept their songlines alive as they travelled around, and as relatively distinct cultures intermingled, the Vestey stations became a crossroads of many song traditions.

It was not uncommon for station workers from the vast north-west region to walk hundreds of kilometres to Limbunya during the wet season



John Leemans addressed the crowd at the determination ceremony.

"We'll take our children to learn the dances on country," John Leemans, who had travelled with his wife from Katherine, said.

"Before he passed, I promised my uncle, he asked me to see this through. It was very important to him."

The native title holders will exercise their rights through their prescribed body corporate, the Malapa

Aboriginal Corporation.

They nominated directors on the morning of the determination and started their first meeting by identifying inappropriate or derogatory settler place names, such as 'Nigger Creek'.

The corporation will ask traditional owners to choose better local language names to submit to the Northern Territory Place Names Committee.



# Aboriginal alliance fights against 'cultural property crime'

RIO TINTO'S blasting of the 46,000-year-old caves at the Juukan Gorge in the Pilbara has badly damaged the relationship between the native title sector and the resources industry and will take much time and major reforms to repair.

Writing in the *Saturday Paper* about the Juukan Gorge caves, Professor Marcia Langton said "along with several other places, they held evidence of the astonishing antiquity of human occupation on this continent".

"The religious significance of the sites and the archaeological evidence for their preservation was raised with Rio Tinto before the destruction. It is my belief that Rio Tinto wilfully ignored and suppressed this information."

And while the company has been condemned for destroying the caves so it could mine \$135 million worth of iron ore, Ms Langton argued the power to stop resource companies from vandalising the cultural heritage of Aboriginal people lies firmly with governments.

She said the Australian Government could have prevented this "cultural property crime" if it had nominated the caves for world heritage status.

France succeeded in listing its much less ancient Lascaux Cave on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1979.

Ms Langton said the reason the Australian Government didn't do the same for the Juukan Gorge caves is simple: "They were not valued in the same way by Australian governments".

"The settler obliteration of our landscapes is so normalised that the laws protecting the company are greater than those protecting our most important religious places," she said.

"The very idea that Rio Tinto has committed a cultural property crime – and that mining companies that destroy significant cultural heritage places across Australia are engaged in criminal activity – would not be countenanced in Australian legal and political circles."

Ms Langton said "neither Rio Tinto personnel nor the responsible minister in the federal government considered the cultural and heritage value of the Juukan Gorge before it was destroyed".

"The minister had the power to intervene, and was cognisant of [knew about] the importance of the sites, but did nothing."

"The complicity in this and hundreds of other cases is a failure of the Australian regulatory systems for mining and cultural heritage," Ms



Professor Marcia Langton wants the Australian Government to take the lead in protecting cultural sites. Photo: Belinda Mason



The Juukan Gorge caves before and after the blast.

Langton said.

CLC Chief Executive Joe Martin-Jard believes that law makers have a strong responsibility for reforming cultural heritage laws that permit the destruction of

to allow Aboriginal people to make decisions on their own cultural heritage, based on free, prior and informed consent," he said.

The CLC's submission to the federal parliamentary

**"The laws protecting the company are greater than those protecting our most important religious places."**

places other civilised nations would be proud to call their own.

"Our heritage laws need

inquiry into the destruction of the caves argued that responsibility at the federal level belongs not with the

environment portfolio but with Aboriginal affairs.

The minister responsible for this portfolio, Indigenous Australians Minister Ken Wyatt, agreed with Ms Langton's comment to the ABC's Radio National Drive program that Aboriginal custodians "must have the power to say no" to the destruction of significant sites.

He told the same program that Ms Langton's call for a veto right was "very valid".

Until heritage laws are reformed to better protect Aboriginal sites, the CLC submission argued, governments should stop making decisions that will damage them.

In the Northern Territory, sacred sites are protected by the Aboriginal Land Rights Act (ALRA), the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection (ATSIHP) Act, the Northern Territory Sacred Sites Act (NTSSA) and a few other laws, but there is still a risk that what happened in the Pilbara could happen here.

The NTSSA gives the relevant NT minister the power to let developers and miners desecrate or destroy a sacred site and history has shown that it will be used.

When the Northern

Territory Government wanted to build a dam in the late 1990s that would have flooded the Atniltye, Atnyere Arrkelthe and Urewe Aterle sites at Junction Waterhole near Alice Springs, the NT minister issued an Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA) certificate to allow the dam.

The federal Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs at the time used the ATSIHP Act in 1992 to override the NTSSA and protect the sites.

The CLC wants to prevent a repeat by:

- removing the NT minister's power to make decisions that could lead to the desecration of a sacred site

- inserting a right to review the minister's and the AAPA's decisions if custodians ask for it or if more information comes to light, and

- giving greater recognition to the CLC's sacred site clearance certificates and the NT land councils' important role in protecting sacred sites under the ALRA.

"The international attention on the flaws of our cultural heritage protection should give the NT Government a strong reason to make long overdue reforms to the NTSSA," Mr Martin-Jard said.

# Big increase in ceremony and funeral support

CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN families are now getting more than three times as much support with the high costs of funerals out bush than in previous years.

They will also get a bigger contribution towards their ceremony expenses.

Since July, the Central Land Council has contributed \$5,000 per funeral, up from \$1,500, thanks to a budget increase approved by Indigenous Australians Minister Ken Wyatt.

**“From this summer we will be able to contribute \$14,000 per region towards the costs of organising ceremonies.”**

“The increase is the result of years of lobbying by the CLC for more funds from the Aboriginals Benefit Account to help families with these crushing costs,” CLC chief executive Joe Martin-Jard said.

“I hope it will reduce the pressure on them during a very difficult time.”



Rohan Long and David Stafford performed the *ngatijiri purlapa* at Yurkurru.

Up to \$2,400 of the contribution can be used to help transport deceased loved ones to the funeral.

Many communities also invest income from royalty, leasing and compensation payments in funeral funds

administered by the CLC.

Funeral funds can be set up by the community development team and provide additional support.

The CLC’s contribution for ceremonies has also increased by \$5,000 from the previous

figure of \$9,000, for each of the nine CLC regions.

“I am really pleased that from this summer we will be able to contribute \$14,000 per region towards the costs of organising ceremonies,” Mr Martin-Jard said.

“The council meeting at Yulara Pulka last October passed a unanimous resolution calling for these increases and delegates and staff should be proud of their successful advocacy.”

## New CLC executive member boosts women’s voices

EDUCATION champion Sharon Anderson, from Lajamanu, has been chosen to represent the Central Land Council’s northwest communities on the council’s executive committee.

The decision of the Region 3 delegates at the CLC meeting at Ampilatwatja in August means there will now be three women on the nine-member executive for the first time.

Ms Anderson is a teacher’s assistant at Lajamanu’s school, an interpreter and mediator.

She is also a member of the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust.

Ms Anderson replaces temporary executive member Andrew “AJ” Johnson, whose brother and longterm delegate passed away last year.

The CLC executive meets in Alice Springs or through video conferencing and governs the land council in-between the council meetings held out bush.



Sharon Anderson joined the CLC executive in August.

# Bush communities tell NT Government: Council backs Alpururulam in water battle

THE CENTRAL Land Council has written to Indigenous Australians Minister Ken Wyatt to ask for an urgent decision that would help to solve Alpururulam's water problems.

While considered 'safe', the salty taste of the community's water means many residents drink unhealthy soft drinks instead of tap water.

The water is unsuitable for dialysis treatment in the 400-strong community that suffers from a high rate of kidney disease.

Its high level of calcium also wrecks solar hot water services, appliances, taps and shower heads.

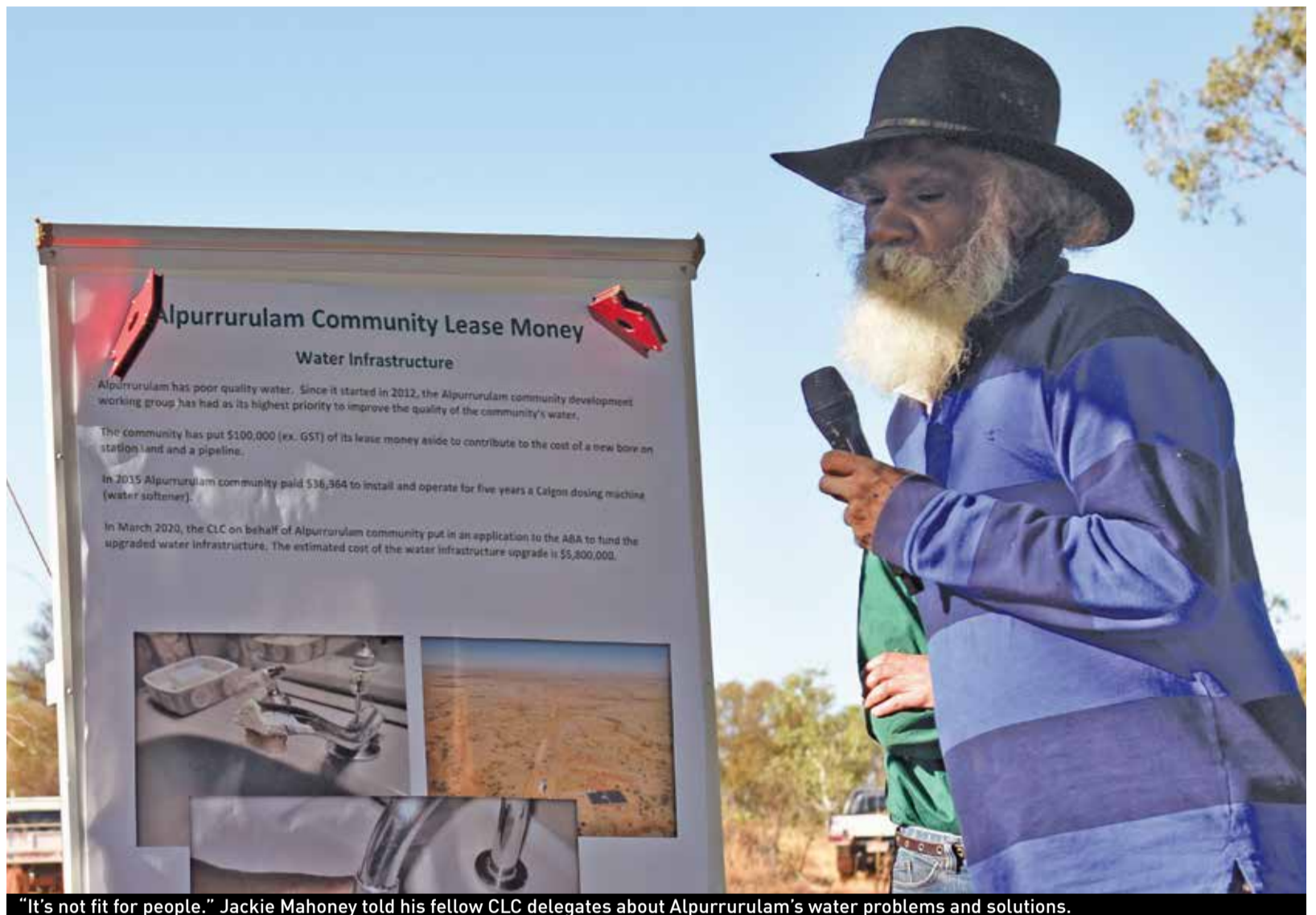
"It's not fit for people. It makes people feel not good," CLC delegate Jackie Mahoney said.

He and his wife Pam Corbett, also a CLC delegate, won the other delegates' support for another letter to the minister at the Ampilatwatja council meeting in August.

The couple have been waiting since March 2020 for a decision on an application for a grant from the Aboriginals Benefit Account for a pipeline to the nearby Georgina River, where the water quality is better and where their ancestors lived before they were forced off their land.

"Some of the people who have been waiting for this water for a long while have now passed on. Others are sick on dialysis," Ms Corbett said.

She said if the grant application is approved and



"It's not fit for people." Jackie Mahoney told his fellow CLC delegates about Alpururulam's water problems and solutions.

the pipeline built the dialysis patients forced to live in Alice Springs and Mount Isa will be able to return home for treatment.

"They can come back to their homeland. That's why we are speaking on behalf of the community. We really need this water, to get it up and running."

The Power Water Corporation (PWC) estimates the works to cost between \$3.9

and \$5.7 million. Ms Corbett said the project is worth every cent.

"It's important for our kids' future," she said.

"It's just a one-off thing we are asking, the main one, water to run from the pastoral lease to our community. The bore is already there, being built. We have an agreement with the pastoral."

The letter from the council comes almost a year after

Jackie Mahoney went on a six-hour round trip to personally implore the minister to support their quest for drinkable water, and the CLC wrote to him for the first time.

Minister Wyatt, at Ampilatwatja to hand back a portion of station land to its traditional owners in October 2019, promised to help.

In 2012 the Alpururulam community working group put \$140,000 of its community

lease money aside for a project to fix its water problems.

It spent the next eight years working with the PWC and the CLC's community development team on planning the pipeline project, but the plan can only be implemented if the minister approves Alpururulam's ABA application.

Better drinking water was, and remains, the number one priority of the residents.

## Land Councils demand Safe Drinking Water Act

THE DISAPPOINTMENT of Laramba tenants at losing their safe drinking water court case against the Northern Territory Government is palpable, and the worry about their health lingers, but their representatives say the fight has only just begun.

The tenants took the NT's housing department to court because their drinking water contains almost three times the level of uranium considered to be safe under the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines.

They wanted the government, as their landlord, to fix the problem, for example, by installing water filters for household taps.

"We are worrying about

contaminated water. We're in high risk. We have a lot of kids, old people. How long can we keep going? We might not make it for [more than] another couple of years," Ron Hagan, who represents Laramba and surrounding communities on the Central Land Council executive, said.

The Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal dashed his immediate hopes for a healthier future when it ruled that the department has no legal duty to provide safe or adequate water to his community.

The tribunal found that under the Residential Tenancy Act the landlord is only responsible for things such as pipes, taps and sinks, but not

for water supply or quality.

"We just want to live a little longer," a heartbroken Mr Hagan told the ABC after the decision.

He was speaking from Darwin, where the executive members of the four NT land

**"All Territorians, not just those living in major towns, have a right to safe and adequate drinking water."**

councils were meeting with NT Chief Minister Michael Gunner and opposition party leaders.

"Who can we see? Who can

we get help from? It's not just us. Water is a big problem in every community," Mr Hagan said.

Most communities in the CLC region are at risk of running out of water, have poor water quality, or both.

Laramba's problem is not just uranium in the water.

The Power and Water Corporation says it is also at high risk of running out of

drinking water.

There are another five communities at extreme risk of running dry and in another 15 that risk is very high.

The government will not build new houses in communities where water is scarce.

It is also not clear whether additional rooms can be added to existing houses.

The four land councils are extremely concerned by the unacceptable lack of protection for safe and adequate drinking water and asked "whoever forms the next the NT Government" to urgently legislate a Safe Drinking Water Act.

They want the government to have a legal duty to



# We have a right to safe drinking water!

## Can anti-discrimination laws solve our water woes?

LARAMBA tenants may be fighting against being slowly poisoned with uranium-contaminated water as well as against racial discrimination.

A Sydney University researcher says the community may be able to use the *Racial Discrimination Act* to achieve a healthier future.

Dr Liam Grealy, from the university's Housing for Health Incubator, said failing to provide safe water to remote Aboriginal communities "might be understood as a matter of racial discrimination" because Australians living in towns and cities rarely have such problems.

The *Racial Discrimination*

**"The Racial Discrimination Act makes it illegal to refuse or fail to supply goods or services, such as water, by reason of race, even if race is one of a number of reasons."**

Act makes it illegal to refuse or fail to supply goods or services, such as water, by reason of race, even if race is one of a number of reasons.

While the Northern Territory does not have minimum standards for water supply and quality, water regulation applying to NT towns is stronger than water standards in the bush.

This unequal situation may strengthen Laramba's racial discrimination case.

"Protections for safe

drinking water vary significantly across NT communities," Dr Grealy said.

The law that sets drinking water standards in the NT only applies in the 18 towns and major communities where most non-Aboriginal Territorians live.

In the 72 remote communities and 79 outstations where mostly Aboriginal people live, however, the drinking water supply is unlicensed and unregulated.

"As the NTCAT found, this means that at Laramba there are no protections against uranium in the drinking water in the *Residential Tenancies Act*," said Dr Grealy.

It works like this: the

housing department, which is the landlord of public housing at Laramba, funds Indigenous Essential Services (IES), a not-for-profit arm of the PowerWater Corporation.

The IES then pays PowerWater to deliver water and power services to Laramba.

Dr Grealy said the IES "functions with reference to a memorandum of understanding and a customer contract that are both legally unenforceable".

"In the remote communities serviced by IES, there are no legal protections for safe drinking water.

"There is one system for drinking water provision in major towns, where PowerWater is the licensed utility," he said.

"And there is another system for remote communities, even where PowerWater is paid by IES to provide water services.

"This situation is unequal in its outcomes, and there is potential to explore whether it is discriminatory under law."

The funding and service arrangements between the government agencies protect the government from legal action by remote community tenants, leaving them in a no-win situation.

"The department funds the utility provider responsible for delivering drinking water with high levels of uranium into homes.

"IES operates without a license and without the legal protections for water quality that exist in towns where PowerWater is the licensee," said Dr Grealy.

"These arrangements shield the department and PowerWater from responsibility for failing to provide safe drinking water to households."

He said these arrangements lead to a lack of accountability.

"It is not an acceptable situation that both the landlord and the utility provider are able to hold at arm's length the responsibility to supply safe drinking water to remote households.

"This lack of accountability



Racial discrimination: water supply and quality is much better in NT towns than out bush.

highlights the importance of the recent call by all four Northern Territory land councils for a safe drinking

water act, to protect drinking water for all NT residents."

put in place enforceable drinking water standards and to guarantee enough safe drinking water for everyone.

"All Territorians, not just those living in major towns, have a right to safe and adequate drinking water," Northern Land Council chair Samuel Bush-Blanas said.

"The lack of legislative protection out bush is discriminatory and constitutes negligence by the Northern Territory Government," CLC chief executive, Joe Martin-Jard, said.

"That's why we want legally enforceable minimum standards for drinking water quality and security."

The Tiwi Land Council is also demanding action.

"These legislative changes must be supported by an overarching water security strategy to protect our most

precious resource," TLC chief executive Andrew Tipungwuti said.

Tony Wurramarrba, the chair of the Anindilyakwa Land Council, wants all funding decisions about remote community water infrastructure and services to be transparent, and involve the land councils.

"Too many of our communities are running out of water or are forced to drink polluted water. We need to be involved in deciding on water infrastructure and services on Aboriginal land," he said.

The CLC delegates echoed the call at their August council meeting at Ampilatwatja.

"The government should find money. If they don't fix it we will be stuck in the middle and go nowhere," Mr Hagan said.



CLC delegates Conrad Ratara and Ron Hagan reckon everyone has a right to healthy water.

# Bright star comes full circle



Sera Bray is the manager of the CLC's new economic participation (jobs and business) unit.

NOT MANY people have been 'head hunted' by the late Tracker Tilmouth and again by one of his successors, and the manager of the Central Land Council's new economic participation unit may well be the only one.

Sera Bray was one of a handful of bright young women from large and prominent Central Australian families graduating from Centralian College in Alice Springs in the mid-90s who were recruited for cadetships at the land council.

Ms Bray, who re-joined the CLC in August to set up the economic participation unit, admits that back then she thought she'd never leave the town of her birth.

When Mr Tilmouth, the former CLC director, asked what she wanted to do with her life she felt put on the spot.

"I remember saying that I wanted to help people," she says. "He saw the potential in us that I don't think we even saw."

She is still grateful for the door he opened for her and the group of women who have become life-long friends.

They all enrolled in courses at Flinders University and the University of Adelaide and moved together into a flat in the southern suburbs that the CLC had organised.

Ms Bray, the second-youngest of five girls, was the first in her hard-working family to go to university.

She says living with her

friends put her parents' minds at ease and stopped her from becoming too homesick.

"We never did anything by ourselves," she said. "We had classes together, we cooked for one another, I played sport and they'd come and watch. It was like a little family, a bit of a sisterhood. It was a great path that the land council had

identifications, understanding the genealogies - very complex work," Ms Bray explains.

"My mother and my grandmother were going through the claim at Loves Creek and I was absolutely enthralled and intrigued by the anthropologists and the work they were doing, especially with the women.

the discipline and picking and choosing what I wanted to learn."

Ms Bray explored everything from psychology and the law to women's studies, but it wasn't enough.

"And then I landed in the business space and that was something I felt really truly comfortable with. Economic

more than 20 years away from her Arrernte roots, of climbing the ladder in Australia's corporate sector and traveling the world.

"I've seen so many successful business enterprises on country all over the world. Economic participation has a big future," she says.

Ms Bray never forgot what her CLC cadetship had taught her about the importance of having a 'critical mass' of other Aboriginal colleagues when it comes to sticking with a career path in a mainstream business.

"You work and grow in numbers. I don't think I would be where I am today if it wasn't for that little cohort of cadets. We all leant on each other, we supported each other. Trying to venture out of Alice Springs and the safety bubble of my family - if I did that by myself I don't think I would have stayed interstate. Numbers really do work where you are in the minority."

That lesson came in handy when she recruited more than 400 Aboriginal people for the Ichthys onshore gas project in Darwin a few years ago. It's where she crossed paths with the CLC's chief executive, Joe Martin-Jard, and kept in touch.

Earlier this year Mr Martin-Jard lured her from global consultancy firm GHD, where she supported and promoted a network of Aboriginal professionals. Ms Bray says she shares his vision for the land council's future.

**"I don't think I would be where I am today if it wasn't for that little cohort of cadets. We all leant on each other, we supported each other. Trying to venture out of Alice Springs and the safety bubble of my family - if I did that by myself I don't think I would have stayed interstate. Numbers really do work where you are in the minority."**

set for us."

For three years, the cadets would fly home during the holidays to work on projects across almost every section of the CLC.

The cadetship paid their first wage and gave them a sense of responsibility.

"We had a job to do. That was the [CLC's] return on investment and it was the first time I understood what investment really meant," says Ms Bray.

The CLC's anthropology section interested her most.

"There were two trainee anthropologists. We worked on traditional owner

They had a lot to say. It put a bit of fire in my belly because they were never really listened to, but they knew a lot about the country.

"My mother and grandmother were my role models and it was because of them that I wanted to gain a greater education and put myself on a path of doing good for my family and community."

She also learned not to limit herself at uni.

"It was a whole other world, one I looked at from afar and asked myself: can I really do that, am I smart enough? It really built my confidence - being independent, having

development for me is where innovation can really happen," she explains.

Her first job out of university was with an employment agency in Maningrida.

"That was really hard-hitting, the vast difference between central desert and saltwater people. It was like learning a whole new culture. The challenges of working in a remote community. Even though the jobs didn't exist right in front of you, you had to create those opportunities and that's where I really wanted to be."

Little did her family know that it would be the start of

“We’ve done an amazing job with land rights and won a good portion of this land back,” she says. “I’m now on a listening journey to find out what is it that the traditional owners really want to do with this land”.

Ms Bray has three years to build a new economic participation unit, a “very tight ship with a very committed, experienced team” that expects commitment from its clients in return.

“There are going to be very

## “There are huge opportunities in renewables, around solar farms, in the hydrogen space, carbon farming and green initiatives.”

direct and respectful conversations and relationships that we’re going to build, and they’re going to get a much stronger voice in the business world.”

She wants her unit to become a jobs and business incubator

that bridges the gap between where CLC constituents are at and the opportunities she is sure awaits them if COVID-19 continues to spare the Territory.

She describes the unit she wants to build as a place where anyone with an idea will find an open ear, straight answers and, if they want to go through with it, tailored support. It won’t give people the run-around many constituents have complained of in the past.

Ms Bray has been exposed to “some really innovative thinking”, both in North America and regional Australia, and sees “huge opportunities in renewables, around solar farms, in the hydrogen space, carbon

farming and green initiatives”.

A self-confessed ‘tech head’, she wants to foster a stronger relationship with the Centre for Appropriate Technology around “how we introduce more technology onto country”.

Returning to Central Australia meant keeping a promise to her late father to bring her experience back home and, of course, her return to the CLC gives Ms Bray the opportunity to complete the circle and help young Aboriginal people get their start like Tracker Tilmouth did for her all those years ago.

This means more investment in the ranger program, secondments from “the great network of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander professionals” and – of course – more Aboriginal cadets and interns.

“I’ve placed more than a hundred interns in corporate Australia and I’m really keen to take Uncle Tracker’s path and go and talk to the kids at school, just like he did with me.”



	<b>1. ALICE SPRINGS</b> Aaron Kopp, 89 51 6264	<b>Any questions about CLC business?</b> Call your regional officers
	<b>2. SOUTH WEST</b> Wayne Clarke, 89 51 0577	
	<b>3. NORTH WEST</b> Charlie Hodgson, 89 51 0627	
	<b>4. TANAMI</b> Amos Egan 89 51 0581	
	<b>5. WEST</b> Dale Satour, 8951 0591	
		
		<b>6. TENNANT CREEK</b> Darryl "Tiger" Fitz, 89 62 2343
		<b>7. EASTERN SANDOVER</b> Jesyjames Carr, 8951 0606
		<b>8. EASTERN PLENTY</b> Richard Dodd, 8951 0622
		<b>9. CENTRAL</b> Michael Turner, 8951 6250

# Government money for community development trial

ABORIGINAL groups working with the Central Land Council’s community development program have a chance to double their dollars, thanks to a ground-breaking CLC initiative funded by the Australian Government.

The ‘matched funding’ initiative means that groups that use their royalty, community leasing, mining compensation or pastoral income for community development projects will be able to make their investments go much further.

“A federal government contribution of \$9 million over three years will be a great incentive for community groups to boost the income they are already investing in projects they drive,” CLC chief executive Joe Martin-Jard said.

The trial starts with \$2 million in the current financial year and ramps up over the following two years, including a total of four new positions in the CLC’s community development program.

The initiative is the result of many years of CLC lobbying and will be independently evaluated after three years.

“Since 2005, Aboriginal groups in our region have invested more than \$139 million of their royalty, rent and compensation income in almost 2000 projects,” said Mr Martin-Jard.

“These projects are improving the lives of their families and employ around 470 Aboriginal people per year.

“This new initiative will make many groups think



Local men worked with Tangentyere Construction on the Willowra learning centre in 2013. The federal government co-funded this project.

## “This new initiative will make many groups think hard about investing an even greater portion of their income for the common good because the government’s matching contribution will make their own investment go a lot further.”

hard about investing an even greater portion of their income for the common good because the government’s matching contribution will

make their own investment go a lot further,” said Mr Martin-Jard.

The CLC has sought government co-contributions to

projects prioritised and funded by communities from the earliest days of its community development program.

Successful examples

include the Mutitjulu pool, the Willowra learning centre and Kalkaringi’s sports and meeting place, but these jointly funded projects were the exception rather than the rule.

It took the CLC more than a decade of lobbying to get the government to agree to a matching funding trial.

## Upgraded facilities put Ltyentye Apurte on the sporting map

THANKS to the traditional owners and residents of Ltyentye Apurte, the community is now enjoying a proper basketball court and can look forward to night-time footy matches.

"The basketball court wasn't levelled, some parts had cracks and dips - pretty dangerous for kids, as well as no shade," Nick Hayes said.

"Not good for sports weekend when other communities come to Ltyentye Apurte. It wasn't safe to use."

study, construction and ongoing maintenance.

Once the oval is grassed, courtesy of the Melbourne Demons Football Club, the community will be able to host games after dark.

Traditional owner Nora Hayes said it's not just the kids who are thrilled.

"I reckon it's really pulled the community together. Everyone is very proud of the lights. We did this, we decided to donate this to the community," Ms Hayes said.

**"I turned the lights on, had a little BBQ, and woah! You should of seen it – the MCG of the desert."**

Mr Hayes is part of the working group that determines how community lease money should be invested in community projects.

The \$270,000 basketball court upgrade bought the community a steel shade structure, a reinforced concrete slab with proper line markings, bench seating and landscaping.

Now the school kids have a shaded court to play on during the hottest part of the day.

"It's about giving back to the community what's needed," said Mr Hayes.

The lease money also spent more than \$317,000 for floodlights around the footy oval.

The sum covered a feasibility

Working group and CLC executive member Raymond Palmer was also excited.

"I turned the lights on, had a little BBQ, and woah! You should of seen it – the MCG of the desert," he said.

The enthusiasm generated by these community development projects has inspired the community to keep improving their oval.

"We have more ideas, like putting up a fence to make it secure, grandstands, shadeys ... just like Traeger Park in Alice," said Mr Palmer.

The projects were managed by the Atyenhenge Atherre Aboriginal Corporation, Tangentyere Constructions and Clarklec and employed two local men.



Tessa Palmer, Chelsea Oliver and Jessie Ronson tried out the school's undercover basketball court.

## New GMAAAC committees prioritise training and jobs

COMMUNITIES across the Tanami region have elected new committees to make decisions about projects funded with compensation income from the Granites mine.

Yuendumu, Lajamanu, Yuelamu, Willowra, Nyirripi, and Tanami Downs elected a total of 64 new members of their Granites Mine Affected Areas Aboriginal Corporation committees.

The new GMAAAC committee members immediately got to work, taking part in a day of governance training and planning.

One of them is Robyn Lawson.

Ms Lawson said she joined the Tanami Downs GMAAAC committee because she wants to "support and build the community and see more employment for our people through GMAAAC projects".

Job creation and training, with an emphasis on two-way learning, have emerged as top priorities in all six communities.

A strong Yapa voice in organising and directing services, and supporting elders to preserve and exchange cultural knowledge are also high on their agenda.

Having a good mix of men and women, and people of all ages on the committees has always been important in GMAAAC elections, and this round of elections was no different.

Elder Fiona Gibson was happy to join younger residents on the Nyirripi committee because "it's a good opportunity for young people to learn from being on the GMAAAC committee."

The new committees nominated 15 GMAAAC directors who govern the corporation.

The committees will keep working with the CLC's community development team to turn their communities' project ideas into reality.

Balgo, Billiluna and Ringers Soak will hold their elections once the West Australian border opens.



Michaeline Wilson, Daniel Gallagher, Zenaïda Gallagher, Jacob Spencer, Kieran Michaels and Ben Gallagher take part in governance training and planning at Nyirripi.

# Anangu kids study country and culture at school

STUDENTS in Mutitjulu, Watarrka and Utju are soaking up traditional knowledge at school, thanks to a partnership between Tangentyere Council Land and Learning and the traditional owners of the Uluru - Kata Tjuta National Park.

Each school worked with local elders to plan bush excursions and what they wanted to teach on the trips.

**“It’s better these kids know our stories, our tjukurpa, that’s why we want to do these books.”**

Utju studied bush medicine plants, with students learning to prepare rubbing medicine from the *witjinti* plants they had collected out bush, and drinking and rubbing medicines from *ilintji*.

The elders’ knowledge, along with the students’ drawings and photos of the excursions, were then used to create teaching resources in Pitjantjatjara and English.

At Utju, they made two language books, *Irmangka - Irmangka Palyantja*, about making rubbing medicine from eremophilas, and *Punti, Muur-muurpa, Witjinti munu Ilintji, Utjuku miritjina irititja*

*kuwaritja*, about how to use senna, bloodwood, corkwood and native lemongrass.

“It was a good story and the pictures too. Palya, it’s colourful and a good story,” assistant teacher Rachel Tjukintja said.

Teacher-linguist Leanne Goldsworthy agreed.

“The book is beautiful and informative. It’s a great resource to have and a record

of knowledge so it won’t be lost,” she said.

Anangu elders, the CLC’s Tjakura Rangers and the national park rangers took Mutitjulu students to Kata Tjuta to harvest *urtjanpa* (spearwood).

They also cut mulga wood for wana (digging sticks) and clap sticks from the surrounding woodlands and collected *kiti* (resin) from the mulga leaves.

They also made *kulata* (spears) and dug for *maku* (witchetty grubs).

Back at the school, the elders showed the students how to finish their *punu* (wooden



Mutitjulu primary students harvesting *urtjanpa* with CLC Tjakura Ranger Ashley Paddy.

tools) and prepare *kiti*.

They helped the students to record on worksheets what they had learnt.

“We make *kulata*, wana and music sticks. It was fun, I liked it,” student Sarah Lee Swan said.

“The ladies teach us how to make them from the tree with different tools. I want to go camping next time.”

Nazeera Roesch agreed.

“Yeah, fun. I make stick. I look for *maku*. Yes, let’s go again,” she said.

Maruku Arts provided the tools for this *pununguru palyantja* (making tools from trees) trip.

With some planned trips cancelled due to COVID-19, Watarrka students illustrated *Yaaltji ngiyarilu tjilka mantjinu* (How the thorny devil got his spikes), a story told by Brian Clyne and translated by Julie Clyne.

“This book is good to teach our kids our language,” Ms Clyne said.

“They can see that it is

written in our language. It’s taught in our language so the kids can understand in our language. And it’s also telling a story. It’s better these kids know our stories, our tjukurpa stories, that’s why we want to do these books.”

The Tangentyere Council received \$200,000 from the traditional owners of the Uluru - Kata Tjuta National Park to plan and implement the project, including seven bilingual resources.

# Solar solutions for Ampilatwatja’s church

WORSHIPING in a corrugated iron church in the heat of a Central Australian summer is no small act of faith, but the community of Ampilatwatja has used its lease money to make church services much more comfortable.

Construction of the new church was a community development project that was completed three years ago.

It replaced “a little tin house we had here”, said church volunteer Lulu Teece.

“We built this church to make it bigger for us. There wasn’t room for people when we have funeral, for our families to come. That’s why we wanted a new church and solar light.”

While the new church was built with lights, fans and power points, the budget didn’t stretch to connecting to electricity, so the congregation ran an extension cord to a generator at Elizabeth Bonney’s house, paying her with a power card.

The \$90,000 project paid for Tangentyere Constructions to install solar panels on the church roof with battery storage and now church goers can keep cool as well as power their electric instruments and a sound system.

Ampilatwatja’s lease money also paid for another solar project.

Tangentyere put a solar pump and a water tank near an existing bore that now pipes water to several dwellings.

Before tapping the bore, Honeymoon Bore outstation residents were forced to get their water themselves from town, five kilometres away.

“We used to get water from Ampilatwatja, carrying that water from Ampilatwatja. We got a tap here now,” Ms Teece said.

The residents have committed more lease money for future projects and are discussing ideas.

“We need a little tank [at Honeymoon Bore] now for our garden, so we can grow fruits like mulberries and oranges and mandarins,” Ms Teece said.

Ada Beasley would like to extend the church further.

“We want to make this church bigger and have a little room for the Sunday school for the kids.

“And we want to get little tables and chairs for the little ones, and a table to make sandwiches and tea.”



Ada Beasley, Elizabeth Bonney and Lulu Teece at the community’s church.

# Women's Council leader with red centre roots

THE NGAANYATJARRA Pitjantjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council's new second-in-command owes her success to the strong women around her.

A Warumungu woman who grew up in the red centre, Dr Leisa McCarthy's story radiates hard work and dedication.

The oldest of four sisters, Ms McCarthy credits her upbringing for her academic and professional achievements.

"It was hard leaving the Northern Territory to move to Canberra for studies, but I had my sister Francine with me. I was also fortunate to obtain a cadetship through the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health that paid for my tuition and I also received work experience".

She heard of the Master of Community Nutrition program by chance and was offered a full scholarship for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

**"My mother was very adamant about education. Being formally educated meant job opportunities which also provide life opportunities."**

Her mum always impressed on her daughters how important education is.

"My mother was very adamant about education. Being formally educated meant job opportunities which also provide life opportunities in the people you meet and learn from.

"My sisters and I are university-educated and have chosen different careers. Mine happened to be in health. First as a public health nutritionist, then as a health researcher," she said.

Ms McCarthy studied a Bachelor of Applied Science in Nutrition at the University of Canberra and then a Master of Community Nutrition at the University of Queensland.

"I was on a scholarship with the University of Queensland and Queensland Health to study in Australia and Malaysia," she said.

"I also worked in Thailand for a little while. Then came back to Australia because it was a part of the scholarship to work with Queensland Health for two years."

Before joining the NPY Women's Council as deputy chief executive officer, she was a senior researcher with the Menzies School of Health Research and wrote a PhD thesis about the household food security experiences of families with young children.

Working as a nutritionist had sparked a special interest in how families respond



Leisa McCarthy is the NPY Women's Council's deputy chair. Photo: NPYWC

to nutrition promotion messages.

Ms McCarthy was awarded a Doctor of Philosophy from Charles Darwin University in 2017.

Her advice to young Aboriginal people who are thinking about studying is simple: "surround yourself with people who are willing to see you succeed in your journey.

"You'll have varying people or groups of people along the way that'll be encouraging and that could be either in the workplace, friends or family. So, it's just the different ways that you take the opportunity and how you're best supported to achieve what you set out to do," she said.

Her experience in Aboriginal health, research policy and

management have prepared her for her latest challenge.

"What I would like to achieve at NPY Women's Council is what the directors direct. Working towards what the community wants," she said.

"I would see that as an

WA and SA and the directors are very clear in how they reflect what the community wants," she said.

Asked about her vision for Aboriginal people, she responded: "The ultimate is for Aboriginal people to have control in decision making.

**"It was hard leaving the NT to move to Canberra for studies, but I had my sister Francine with me."**

achievement if I actually performed to how people want me to perform."

"The NPY Women's Council is led by the directors who are Anangu women from the NT,

To decide what services are needed and how [they are] delivered. The role of organisations, including government, are as facilitators and supports to achieve this."

# Native title holder forum to return to Ross River

THE PRESCRIBED body corporate (PBC) camp, that was postponed due to COVID-19 in 2020, will be back next year by popular demand.

Following requests by directors of PBCs (native title holder corporations) the Central Land Council decided to hold another regional PBC camp at the Ross River Resort from May 30 to June 4, 2021.

The CLC was planning to

Crafter, a director of the Patta Aboriginal Corporation, said.

The corporation is the PBC that represents native title holders for the township of Tennant Creek.

"We want the next generation of directors to learn about how to manage our native title rights," Mr Crafter said.

"We are also looking forward to sharing our achievements since the last camp, for

governments, and tell them about the support PBCs need," Francine McCarthy, manager of native title at the CLC, said.

The CLC is working with the National Native Title Council

and the National Indigenous Australians Agency to organise a COVID-19-safe event.

If necessary, to keep everyone safe, however, it will

postpone the event again.

**For more information, email [pbccamp@clc.org.au](mailto:pbccamp@clc.org.au) or call 8951 6211.**

**"We want the next generation of directors to learn about how to manage our native title rights."**

repeat the success of the first PBC forum in 2019 in May 2020 but had to cancel the event due to the pandemic.

"The PBC camp in 2019 was very important to help us understand our rights as native title holders," Brian

example amending our rule book."

Directors of the 30 PBCs in the CLC region will receive invitations to the forum.

"The event will help them comply with relevant laws and rules, build relationships with



PBC directors from across Central Australia took part in a workshop at the 2019 camp at Ross River.

# Mutitjulu tourist blockade wins hearts and support

WHEN the Mutitjulu community decided to take matters into its own hands and prioritise the health and safety of Anangu over tourism dollars from the Uluru-Kata-Tjuta National Park, nobody expected public reaction to be so overwhelmingly positive.

Residents blockaded the

the hook.

The vast majority of the messages supported Anangu making decisions to stop the coronavirus from entering their vulnerable communities.

“Please keep the park closed!” wrote Sarah Gardiner. “People’s lives are worth so much more than money!”

particularly the elders living in these remote communities,” wrote Samantha Campbell.

“These tourists could be bringing the virus and if an outbreak were to occur these remote communities could suffer. I fear for the survival of elders if they were to get sick.

“Please consider keeping the park closed until circumstances improve and the indigenous communities are not at risk.”

A director of the Mutitjulu Community Aboriginal Corporation, Craig Woods, told the ABC that residents frequently travelled to Yulara to buy groceries, and flights into the resort “defeat the purpose” of keeping people from hotspots contained. He said the message to tourists was clear and simple: “This virus is not good for our



Parks staff were flooded with messages of support for the blockade.

**“Please keep the park closed! People's lives are worth so much more than money!”**

park entry station, effectively closing it until August 6, after a Jetstar flight arrived from hotspot-declared Brisbane three days earlier.

Parks Australia received almost 200 emails about the blockade and phones rang off

One correspondent expressed a widely shared fear of the risk the virus poses to the older generation.

“I am upset about the news regarding tourism at the Uluru national park. My concern is for the Aboriginal Australians,

people. Please postpone your holiday, stay home and keep the Mutitjulu community safe.”

While MCAC was unable to prevent passengers from Brisbane disembarking at Connellan Airport, the three-day blockade resulted in Parks Australia agreeing to close the park temporarily.

Sidney James, the chair of the park’s board of management, acknowledged the unprecedented public support for Anangu.

“We are happy to know about this support from the public, palya, together we made good decisions to keep people safe.”

## Aboriginal organisations want NT law to safeguard climate

BUSH communities are waiting to hear whether the re-elected Labor government in the Northern Territory will pass a Climate Change Act.

Speakers at the students’ climate strike across the NT in September reminded the government about the open letter the Central Land Council and more than 50 business, Aboriginal, health and community organisations signed before the NT election.

The letter to all party leaders called for a law that would force the government to make decisions in the best

hot for humans.

Among the most powerful of these gases is methane which escapes in fracking.

Unprecedented heat waves, less rainfall, and the loss of native animals and plants are already threatening the very survival of Aboriginal communities.

“Our people are on the frontline of climate change,” CLC executive member Michael Liddle said.

“Our overcrowded hotbox houses are becoming less habitable every year and a falling water table and reduced



CLC executive member Michael Liddle wants the NT Government to pass a Climate Change Act.

**“Our people are on the frontline of climate change. Our overcrowded hotbox houses are becoming less habitable every year and a falling water table and reduced rainfall are threatening our drinking water and the plants and animals we depend on.”**

interests of present and future generations of Territorians.

Under such a law, the current and future governments would have to consider climate risks in everything they do.

They would have to follow a legally binding path towards the target of ‘net zero emissions’ by 2050 that scientists say must be met if the planet is to stay habitable.

Achieving this target means stopping or neutralising the greenhouse gases that are dangerously heating the earth’s atmosphere and making the NT and many other parts of the world too

rainfall are threatening our drinking water and the plants and animals we depend on.

A climate change law would help us to fight those risks and make a faster transition to affordable, clean energy that creates jobs in our communities.”

The impacts of climate change make inequalities Aboriginal people are already facing in housing, health, food, water and energy security much worse.

Mr Liddle said Aboriginal people need better information about climate change.

“We need to educate

ourselves about the causes of climate change, how it impacts on the bush foods that are becoming harder and harder to gather and how that in turn affects our cultures and identities,” he said.

Although the NT faces some of the most extreme impacts from climate change, it lags behind other jurisdictions that are already building a clean energy future.

Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania all have laws to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as do New Zealand, the UK, Mexico, and many states in the US and Europe.

The current NT Government says it also wants to reach net zero emissions by 2050, but Territorians have no guarantee it and future governments will do enough.

“Unless that becomes law, we can’t be confident that the target will be reached,” says Shar Molloy from the Environment Centre NT.

“A Climate Change Act will make sure future governments are held accountable for protecting our futures.”

As the Territory swelters

through the ongoing drought, the need to prepare the community for a heating globe is becoming more urgent every day.

“The rise in extreme heat days is already making more and more people sick and killing them, and if we don’t take action we’ll see even more heat-related deaths,” Simon Quilty, a doctor and senior

lecturer at the Australian National University, said.

“Strong climate legislation would help us create more liveable and resilient communities.

“For example by investing in environmental health – shade, green spaces and cool spots in our urban spaces and remote communities.”



CLC rangers are educating themselves about climate change.

# Tennant Creek gets new ranger hub



Gladys Brown, Jeffrey Foster and Jeffrey Curtis can't wait to trade the shed in Tennant Creek's industrial area for a new ranger hub with space for all their gear.

ABORIGINAL rangers, especially in Tennant Creek, are big winners from the Central Land Council's 2020-21 budget.

The CLC has secured \$2.16 million for a purpose-built new ranger hub in the remote town in July.

"This will allow the Muru-Warinyi Ankkul Rangers to move from a basic shed in the industrial area into a proper office with meeting facilities and enough space for their

Rangers in Atitjere (Harts Range) will welcome a \$765,000 house for their co-ordinator and a \$650,000 upgrade of the CLC's regional office in the community.

The Tjakura Rangers in Mutitjulu will be supported with a \$450,000 unit for their ranger group co-ordinator.

"These investments will set our ranger program up for the expansion people out bush are calling for," Mr Martin-Jard said.

**"This will allow the Muru-Warinyi Ankkul Rangers to move from a basic shed in the industrial area into a proper office with meeting facilities and enough space for their cars and machinery."**

cars and machinery," chief executive Joe Martin-Jard said.

The CLC will also build a \$1 million multi-unit block in Tennant Creek that will offer free accommodation for staff working in the Barkly.

The Arltapilta Ineleye

Indigenous Australians Minister Ken Wyatt also approved a total of just under \$1 million for new CLC staff accommodation or accommodation upgrades at Kaltukatjara, Lajamanu and in Alice Springs.





# Look after your horses this summer!

HORSE owners must look after their horses – especially during the summer heat.

The Central Land Council has reminded horse owners that as well as being the right thing to do, it's also the law.

“If you brand a horse, ride a horse, have a horse in a yard or fence, or just sometimes give a horse food and water, then you are its legal owner,” Sam Rando from the CLC’s land management team said.

“This means you have to provide the horse with enough food, water and shade and make sure it gets medication and medical treatment if it gets sick.”

Owning a horse means animal welfare laws apply to you and you could be punished if you break them.

Many remote community residents also care about horses that don't have owners.

The CLC is working with Ltyentye Apurte, where nobody wants to see a repeat

of the disaster of early 2019, when dozens of feral horses perished at the Pwerte Uyerreme water hole and many more starving horses had to be shot because they were too weak to survive.

Residents formed a committee with the CLC’s rangers and staff from the Atyenhenge Atherre Aboriginal Corporation’s horse program in August to manage horse issues on the Santa Teresa Aboriginal Land Trust.

The committee is looking at solutions, from fencing a large area with cattle grids for all owned horses to limiting the number of horses that each person can own.

Another idea is to muster feral horses regularly so they can be sold, or culled if no buyer can be found.

The committee plans to meet every few months to develop a horse management plan for the land trust.

The plan will need to be



Ltyentye Apurte is planning to prevent a repeat of the mass feral horse deaths of 2019.

approved by the traditional owners.

Ntaria residents are also planning how to manage feral horses during the continuing drought.

The traditional owners of the Ltalaltuma and Roulpmaulpma land trusts

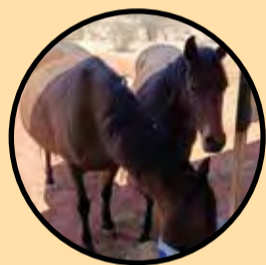
recently discussed how to control feral horses that are damaging their country.

Anyone needing assistance with managing feral horses, camels or donkeys should call the CLC.

“We will investigate if they can be removed or culled so

they don't suffer like those poor horses near Ltyentye Apurte,” said Mr Rando.

“We can also help communities to set up horse management committees or to develop their own horse management plans.”



Feed and water horses



Ride or work them



Keep them in a yard or fence



Brand them



Use a bridle or lead rope

**If you do ANY of these things, you are LEGALLY RESPONSIBLE for these horses and animal welfare laws apply to you. You could get a big fine or go to jail if you are not looking after your horses properly.**

## MEET OUR RANGERS



Helen Nungarrayi Wilson

**How long have you been working for the North Tanami Rangers?** I have worked with the rangers for about five and a half years, and at times was the only woman in the team. We have three women at the moment which is much better.

**What projects has your ranger group been working on?** Lately we have been working with Territory Natural Resource Management, doing surveys for Bilbies. Most of our rangers are also involved in the Reading Country Project, where we learn from the best animal trackers. The women rangers have been teaching the older girls from the school and designing their own ranger shirts.

**What made you want to be a ranger?** I wanted to be a ranger when I was living in Balgo but there were no ranger groups there. I grew up on the outstations at Mission Creek, Border Springs and Homestead Station with my parents and stayed out bush.

**What strengths do you bring to your ranger group?** Good support and encouragement to do work out bush, to not be afraid of speaking in front of people. Supporting women in the community, getting them out bush, to mix with other ranger groups and CLC staff.

**What is the best thing about being a ranger?** Getting out on country and looking after country, then country is looking after you. Staying out bush and getting a break from the community.

**What have been your personal highlights?** Getting the NT Natural Resource Management Ranger of the Year award in 2018. Also going overseas to Nepal for the World Ranger Congress, which was amazing. I was a little bit shy before. Now I have the confidence to stand up and speak in front of people. I would like this to happen for other rangers.



Continued from p.3

“Government must work with Aboriginal peaks to ensure all housing is climate change resilient, meets housing for health principles, is culturally appropriate in design and control is devolved to communities.”

has validated the complaints about grossly inadequate repair and maintenance regimes the CLC has heard from its constituents for too long.

“Our constituents want a thorough overhaul of the remote housing system – one in which they have a major

## “They bravely took on the powerful NT Government, and leave an enormously significant legacy.”

Mr Kelly paid tribute to Mr Conway, a lead plaintiff from Ltyentye Arpute.

“Sadly, during the four-and-a-half-year legal battle, both he and his wife passed away,” he said.

“They bravely took on the powerful NT Government, and leave an enormously significant legacy of advocating for housing rights that could improve the lives of remote communities across the Territory.”

The Central Land Council welcomed the historic ruling.

CLC chief executive Joe Martin-Jard said it has profound implications for the housing quality, condition and maintenance standards to which all remote community tenants are entitled.

“Justice Blokland has echoed the concerns our delegates and constituents have voiced for decades and challenged dated assumptions about what constitutes acceptable housing standards for Aboriginal people,” he said.

“Her ruling sets an important precedent and belatedly establishes new standards for all NT remote Aboriginal communities.”

He said the Supreme Court

say about what is provided and how it is provided, and in which the government invests enough to maintain their houses,” Mr Martin-Jard said.

He said the ruling adds impetus to the call of the four NT land councils to the Australian and NT governments to work with them on their proposal to return housing services to community control over the next decade.

“Chief Minister Gunner has already served one full term in government and remote communities are still desperately calling for action after decades of neglect,” Isabelle Reinecke, Executive Director and Founder of the Grata Fund, said.

“The success of this commitment will ultimately be up to him as Chief Minister and the Treasurer. It’s a challenge I hope he meets.”

The fund helped to finance the court action of the Ltyentye Arpute tenants after they took the housing department to the NTCAT in 2016 over the poor condition of their houses and delayed repairs.

It is standing ready to help other communities get justice.

Continued from p.3

“We congratulate Minister Paech on his appointment to this critical role and look forward to working with him on improving all aspects of remote Aboriginal housing,” he said.

Mr Paech was sworn in on the same day the Supreme Court handed down a ruling that set higher standards for remote housing.

## “I have spent a vast amount of time staying with family in those communities in remote housing and I can tell you that the condition of this housing is improving.”

Announcing Mr Paech’s appointment as remote housing minister, Chief Minister Michael Gunner, said that housing is one of his government’s most important commitments.

still overcrowded and their condition “continues to be a problem”.

“Just last year there was a fire in an air-conditioning unit in one of the homes and the air conditioner was removed

# WHEN TO WEAR A MASK

Wearing masks are an **extra** thing we can do to protect our mob from the coronavirus.



Masks stop others from breathing in the virus that floats around for a long time in tiny bubbles of air (also called aerosols) when we speak, sing, laugh or sneeze.

Think about wearing a mask in small and crowded spaces, for example indoors, and when you are in close contact with others, for example in the store, a vehicle or at the footy.



Make sure it covers your mouth and nose, keep it very clean and never share it with **anyone**.



Don’t stop washing your hands often with soap and water, coughing and sneezing in a safe way, and staying two big steps away from others.



“The housing in Santa Teresa is now at a very good standard,” Mr Paech commented on the Supreme Court ruling. “It wasn’t when the case was lodged four years ago.”

The Grata Fund, a charity supporting the Ltyentye Arpute tenants and Australian Lawyers for Remote Aboriginal Rights with the court case, said houses in the community are

but a hole was left in the roof for way too long,” Isabelle Reinecke, the fund’s executive director, said.

Mr Paech said the Territory government had invested a significant amount of money in remote housing during its last term and things are looking up.

“I have spent a vast amount of time staying with family in those communities in remote housing and I can tell you that the condition of this housing is improving,” he said.

“Of course there is always work to be done.”

The NT Government has been criticised for massively underspending on remote housing.

Quoting the government’s own figures, the ABC reported that the government had spent only \$112 million of the \$330 million it should have spent in the first three years of the national partnership agreement on remote NT housing.

“Those figures are incorrect,” Mr Paech insisted.

“Over the last four years we spent \$650 million on remote



Mr Paech’s predecessor, former housing minister Bess Price, said back in 2016 that many remote houses were “not fit for humans”.

housing, and \$320 million of that money is coming from the Territory’s own pockets.”

He hinted that the 10-year agreement process would pick up steam soon.

“Progress is slow, but when it does start it’s certainly very fast.

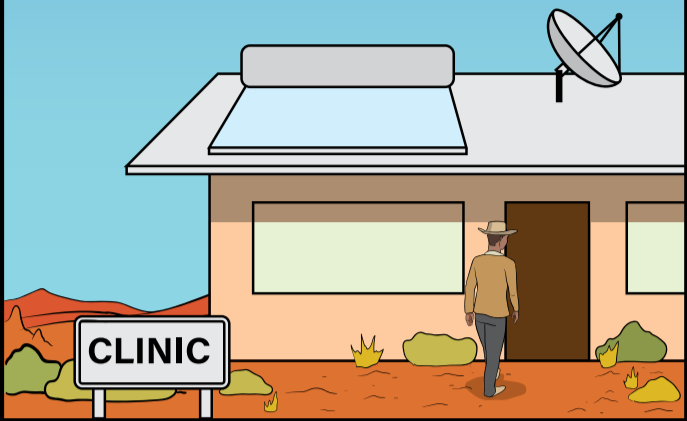
“We’re gonna see a great economic opportunity for Aboriginal people in remote communities to look at employment when

we are going to do these refurbishments, renovations and new builds and we will be looking at what housing models are best placed for people in remote communities,” said Mr Paech.

The NT land councils are hoping the new minister will give their community-controlled model a very close look indeed.

# JANGALA\* HAS TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

## WHAT NOW?



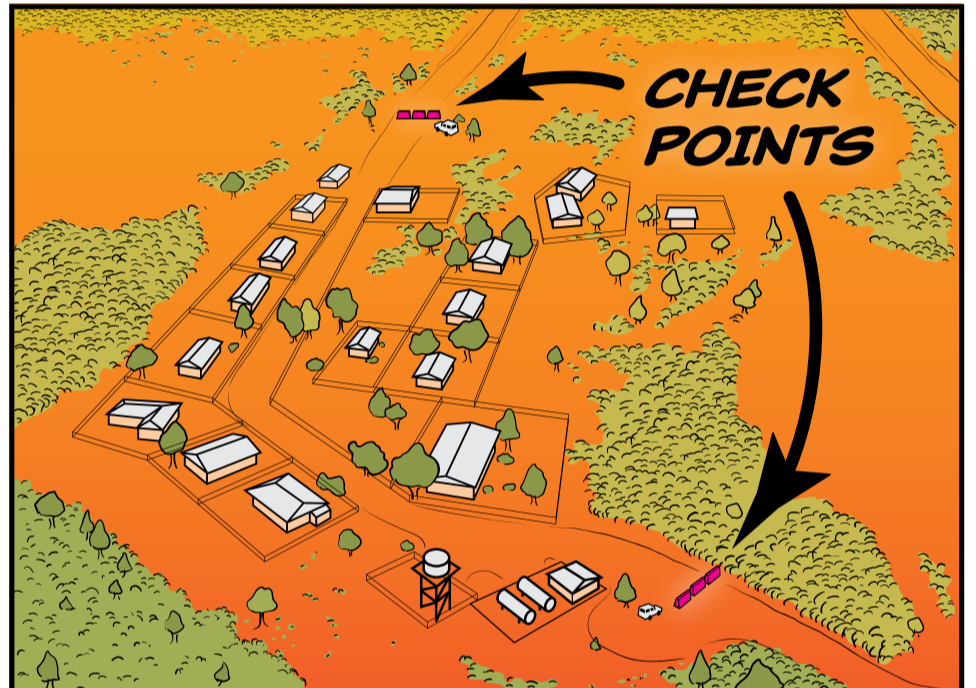
THE CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL CONGRESS HAS A PLAN CALLED "CONTAIN AND TEST." IT HAS BEEN ADOPTED BY THE NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT AND HAS THE BACKING OF THE LAND COUNCILS.



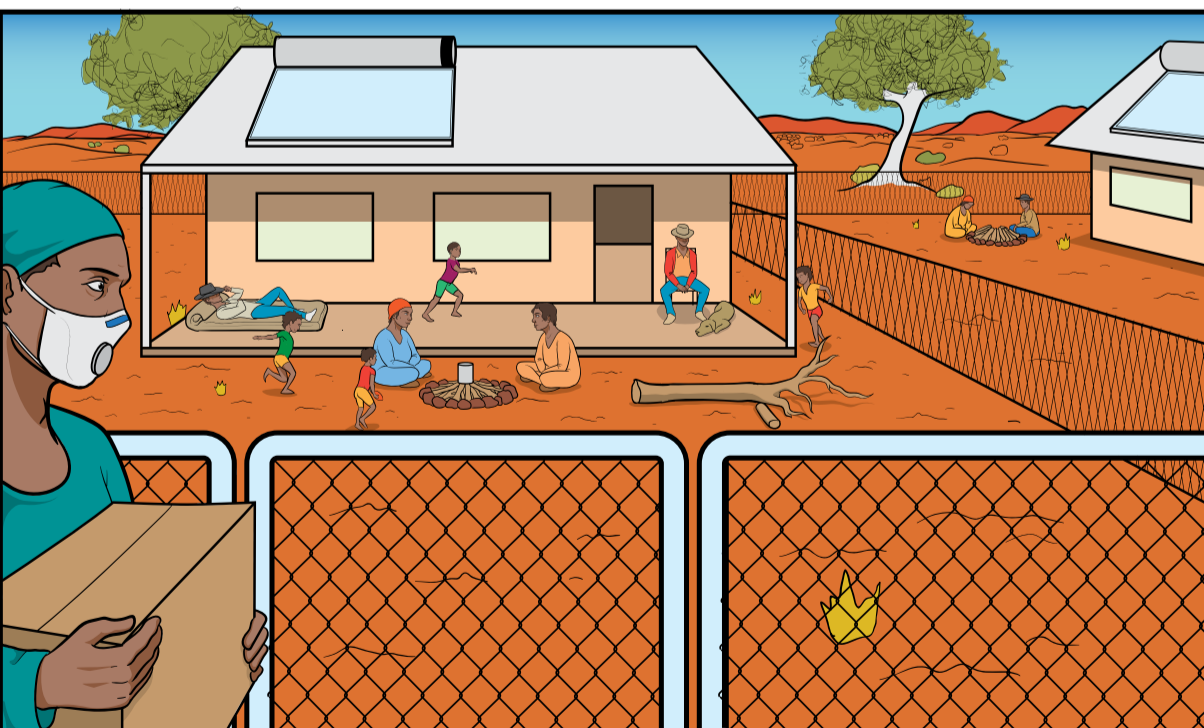
JANGALA HAS TESTED POSITIVE FOR THE CORONA VIRUS. HEALTH WORKERS ARE TESTING HIS FAMILY AND ALL CLOSE CONTACTS STRAIGHT AWAY.



JANGALA AND ANYONE WITH A POSITIVE TEST WILL TRAVEL TO HOSPITAL. HIS CLOSE CONTACTS WILL GO TO QUARANTINE IN ALICE SPRINGS OR HOWARD SPRINGS WHERE THEY WILL BE CARED FOR.



THE REST OF THE COMMUNITY GO INTO THEIR YARDS AND HOUSES AND STAY THERE. NO VISITING OTHER YARDS AND NO ENTERING OR LEAVING THE COMMUNITY!



WORKERS WILL DELIVER FOOD, FIREWOOD, MEDICINES AND OTHER ESSENTIALS TO FAMILIES WHILE THEY STAY IN THEIR YARDS FOR 14 DAYS.



THE WHOLE COMMUNITY WILL BE TESTED AT THE BEGINNING AND AT THE END OF THE 14 DAYS.

ANYONE TESTING POSITIVE FOR COVID-19 IS TAKEN TO HOSPITAL. THEIR CLOSE CONTACTS WILL GO TO QUARANTINE IN ALICE SPRINGS OR HOWARD SPRINGS.



\*JANGALA IS NOT A REAL PERSON - BUT HE COULD BE! THIS VIRUS DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE.

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
CALL YOUR CLINIC OR  
CONGRESS ON 0437714932



# Bindi artists win with painted stories of childhood adventure and country



Adrian Robertson - *Yalpirakinu*



Lance James - *Punu, Puli, Tjanpi, Wild Horses on Kaltukatjara Country*

PAINTED memories of his mother's country, Yalpirakinu, has won Northern Territory artist Adrian Jangala Robertson the prestigious Telstra General Painting Award at this year's National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards.

Mr Robertson has painted the country around Yuelamu, three hours north-west of Alice Springs, for many years, capturing its moods, colours and forms. It was this expression of country in his winning work *Yalpirakinu* that the judges praised.

"The real strength of this work is in its restraint. The gestural brushstrokes convey a quiet confidence and an intimate knowledge of and connection with country. The luminosity the artist has achieved through his palette choice beautifully evokes the sense of place, scale and colour of the artist's country – Yalpirakinu," the judges said in their statement.

Mr Robertson paints from memory and chooses to restrict his palette to about six colours. His very confident mark-making catches the drama and sweep of his country with broad and powerful brushwork.

His paintings consistently refer to the desert mountains, ridges and trees from his mother's country, though over the past couple of years his subject matter has broadened to include portraits of his family, his community and of himself. Similar to his



Charles Inkamala, Billy Kenda, Lance James and Adrian Robertson work in the Bindi studio in Alice Springs. Photo: BindiArts

landscapes, his portraits are brooding and pensive, textural in their execution.

Working from Bindi Mwerre Anthurre Artists studio in Alice Springs, Mr Robertson, who is non-verbal, expressed that he is extremely proud to be receiving recognition from such an important award and proud for his family and his community to know of his achievements.

Born at Papunya in 1962, he went to school in the community and has memories of former teacher Geoff Bardon working alongside the Western Desert painters.

Mr Robertson is from a family of artists and painters. His uncle was the late Darby Ross, one of the high-profile

founders of the painting movement at Yuendumu.

His mother, the late Eunice Napangardi, was also a well-known painter. It's her country that Mr Robertson draws inspiration from for his paintings.

His father Jampijinpa's country stretches from west of Walungurru (Kintore) through Karku at Nyirripi to Warlurkurlangu at Yuendumu.

Fellow Bindi artist Lance James was nominated in the same award category for *Punu, Puli, Tjanpi, Wild Horses on Kaltukatjara Country* - a vibrant and energetic painting of wild horses running through the rocky landscape.

Mr James paints the country

around Kaltukatjara (Docker River), eight hours south-west of Alice Springs. Since he was a young boy, he depicted the horses, bulls and stockmen that populated his country and his childhood.

His affinity with the horse is particularly evident. He imbues the animals with great movement, strength and grace. His familiarity with his subject matter allows him to capture the essence of a lifestyle long gone. He uses humour and sensitivity to explore a narrative of childhood adventure and love of country.

Mr James lives at Docker River with his family and regularly visits Alice Springs for respite and the opportunity

to paint at the Bindi studio in the town's industrial area.

In a milestone for both painters, the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory has acquired both works in recognition of their quality and importance.

Bindi says it's the first studio in Australia to bridge the gap between supported studios and Aboriginal art centres. The organisation supports Aboriginal artists with a disability to develop and receive recognition for their artistic practice. It provides supported studio spaces, a national exhibition schedule, design contracts, multimedia collaborations, art fairs and art award opportunities.



# Cultural icon and witness to history sees out 100th year

FRANKY “WHITLAM” Japanangka was surrounded by family, friends and collaborators he’d amassed over his long life, as he celebrated his 100th birthday at the Hetti Perkins aged care home in Alice Springs in January.

Mr Japanangka received presents and cards from many people, including the Queen, the Governor General and the Prime Minister.

Close friend Peter Yates recalls him being in good spirits.

“He had so many presents, and I gave him a photo album I put together from his life and work. It was a great occasion to be at his 100th birthday,” Mr Yates said.

He said Mr Japanangka was “a great person, always looking to keep culture strong”.

But sadly, just days later, the old stockman, artist and leader passed away peacefully on the 31st of January, 2020.

He was born in 1920, in Yuendumu, north-west of Alice Springs. His father was Yarri Jarri Japangardi, from Yurkurru (Brooks Soak), and his mother was Mary Nampijinpa, from Coniston Station.

His mother was killed during the Coniston massacres when he was just eight-years-old. According to his granddaughter, Dulcie-Anne, he remembered, after witnessing his mother being shot, his stepmother saving his life by taking him to the top of a nearby hill.

Mr Japanangka “saw the near extinction of his community when he was a child,” his old friend Warren Snowden, the Federal Member for Lingiari, told the Australian House of Representatives.

“He grew up experiencing and knowing the detailed raw emotional story and fate of his family killed in the Coniston massacre.

“He also lived to see the reconciliation of families from both sides of the Coniston massacre – an event of national significance to all Australians,” Mr Snowden told parliament.

Mr Japanangka’s first language was Anmatyerre, his second was Warlpiri and his home community was Yuelamu (Mount Allan).

He worked for many years as a stockman, driving cattle from Coniston to Coober Pedy, then to Yuelamu, to Mt Denison and back to Coniston, according to his granddaughter Dulcie-Anne Frank.

His life as a fit young stockman was captured in the 1972 documentary *Coniston Muster*, which follows the annual cattle muster led by



Franky Japanangka performed in the early 2000s.

**“He also lived to see the reconciliation of families from both sides of the Coniston massacre – an event of national significance to all Australians.”**

head stockman Coniston Johnny.

Central Land Council executive member Harry Nelson said Mr Japanangka also worked on Napperby Station.

For a while he and his late nephew Alan Norman traded dingo skins for rations.

Mr Japanangka had

five children with his wife Maggie Napurrurla Briscoe: Douglas (deceased), Daisy, John (deceased) and Carol (deceased).

The descendants of Ms Briscoe’s late daughter Peggy Forrester are also considered part of the family.

The former stockman proudly carried the nickname

“Whitlam” in honour of the prime minister who did so much for the rights of Aboriginal people, and went on to claim his own place in the history of land rights.

Mr Nelson said he got the nickname at a time when *Yapa* leaders were named after influential *kardiya* politicians in recognition of the leadership role they held among their own people and the respect they attracted.

When Mr Japanangka became known as “Whitlam” the Labor party leader Gough Whitlam “had done many good things for *Yapa* people”.

As a senior traditional owner of Mount Allan Station, Franky Japanangka led a nine-year effort to claim back his land.

In November 1979, the CLC lodged a land claim over the station on behalf of the traditional owners.

In 1988, Mr Japanangka received the title deed from then Aboriginal Affairs Minister Clyde Holding, but his joy did not last long.

Within days, the NT Government took out an injunction that stopped the deed from being registered.

Despite losing in the Federal Court and a dismissal from the High Court, the government continued to contest the grant. It claimed that the public had a right to access the old stock routes on the station.

It finally backed down after a meeting between the traditional owners and neighbouring pastoralists made it clear that the pastoralists saw no problems with their future access to the station tracks.

In the end, the government paid \$36,000 in legal costs to the CLC. The total cost to the NT taxpayer however, was estimated to have been three times higher.

Nobody has been able to put a price on the pain and suffering these unnecessary delays caused traditional owners, who had already waited so long to see their enduring connection to land and culture acknowledged in Australian law.

Once that battle was won, Mr Japanangka spent the rest of his life expressing it through his art, including traditional dancing, singing, craftsmanship and painting. He was a founding member of The Janganpa Dancers, a troupe of painters, singers, dancers and actors who performed in Anmatyere and Warlpiri.

*Janganpa* is the Warlpiri word for possum, an important totemic animal, which has become extinct in Central Australia.

The troupe appeared in many films together, including *Kings in Grass Castles*, *Rabbit Proof Fence* and *The Tracker*.

It performed in Japan, New Zealand, Dubai, Germany, Norway and Korea.

Dulcie-Anne Frank said her grandfather often talked about these travels.

“He didn’t like spicy food very much,” she laughed.

“He couldn’t eat much when he travelled in Asia, he always liked to have his cup of instant noodles.”

Mr Japanangka leaves behind his daughter Daisy Frank, grandchildren Johanna Frank, Patrick Frank, Matthew Brown, Frank Brown, Daniel Frank, Christopher Frank, Richard Frank, Joslyn Frank, Sandra Frank and Dulcie-Anne Frank and 25 great-grandchildren.

# In her own words: Kunmanara Armstrong, force of nature

KUNMANARA ARMSTRONG was born in 1942 on Ngaantjatjarra country in Western Australia, between Irrunytju (Wingellina) and Papulankutja (Blackstone). Her mother Rebecca Wanngupai carried her 500 kilometres east to Atila (Mount Conner), near Angas Downs Station, when she was a baby.

Ms Armstrong, who passed away in April 2020, was a feisty woman often described as a force of nature. She relished talking about her adventurous and enterprising life. She said her extended family survived by “hunting rabbits and spearing kangaroos” during her earliest years. “Our fathers and mothers fed us on what they had dug out of the ground with *wana* (digging stick) and *wira* (digging scoop),” she said.

They lived off the land until they were captured by police while burning some country near Mantarur, south-west of Uluru. “The mounted policeman hunted and tracked them down, apparently because a small child had set fire to the bush.

“All those cheeky fellas galloped over to them, and clapped everyone into handcuffs.” The whole family,

except for a boy who had hidden in a tree, was taken to Aputula (Finke).

“My mother was still carrying me around while riding on the back of the camel. But my older sister and my older brother and all the others were handcuffed and dragged along by the neck, not the hands. In those days they were only taken to jail by the neck cuffs, lined up.

“Many others had gone to jail because they had speared and killed and eaten bullocks,” Ms Armstrong said. “It had been a case of, ‘Hey! This black animal is good! Good meat! Plenty of fat! Quick everybody! Let’s follow these animals and spear some more!’ and so the people started following the bullocks around for meat to add to their diet of kangaroo meat. They were spearing and eating bullocks around Watarrka, Lilla, Bagot Springs and Wanmala – right along there. Poor things. So because of that they were arrested and taken to jail.”

Kunmanara took her first steps in Aputula, where her mother and the other young women “looked after nanny goats” while her father and other men were jailed in Alice Springs. The men returned just as one of the women

mistakenly entered a men’s site. “It was a sacred site, *miilmilpa*, or, as they said down that way, *makamaka*. The goats had gone in there and she’d followed them in,” Ms Armstrong said. Rather than wait to find out whether the outraged local men would “kill the girls or exact some other punishment”, her family escaped by night.

Her father and mother kept travelling and returning to Angas Downs for rations and “because they didn’t like the idea of living in such a narrow gap in the ranges at Areyonga and because they knew they’d get too homesick for their own lands”.

“Each time they went, they saw policemen. They said, ‘Oh no. More policemen! We can’t

parents during the school holidays. In the 1960s, after she left her first job at the Utju clinic, she lived with her family at Bloodwood Bore (New Angas Downs Homestead) and worked for the Liddle family as a stockwoman.

“Mr Liddle would say, ‘There are not enough boys! Get up on that horse, or maybe you don’t know how to?’”, Ms Armstrong recalled. “But of course I knew how to ride a horse! Oh yes, I used to ride horses all the time! I would wear the men’s boots and the hats, trousers too! I’d help out all the time, like with branding. I’d help to hold the ropes while the young men did the branding. I’d help to drag the bullocks down by motorbike and I’d help to put the brands on and then the ear marks.”

She also cooked and baked for the tourists who stopped at Angas Downs on their way to Uluru.

“They’d come in from the bus for their dinner with the driver and we’d sit and eat dinner together,” she said.

“We’d be told, ‘Hey! They want to hear some music!’ So we’d tell our mothers, ‘Make some of those music sticks and clap them together!’”

“That’s how come the

**“I put Imanpa community first. People would put in a little bit of money in the bank when they get their pay, sitdown money, pension, or work money. I always said, ‘Hey! Come on! Chuck in money here! Put it here!’”**

“They travelled a long way, all the way, straight to Kalka, Papulankutja and further. Hidden out of sight, travelling all night.” Eventually Ms Armstrong’s family reunited at Utju (Areyonga), where she went to school. “It was a government school. This was before the settlements. It was just a mission back then.”

stay here! We have our own beautiful lands, but we can’t even live there on our own country. We just don’t know what we are going to do’. I would hear these words and I would wonder about them. I’d say, ‘I don’t understand. You should be able to walk around free!’”

Kunmanara joined her



old people started to make wooden artefacts there at Angas Downs. The men would make boomerangs. They also made lots of small wooden dishes and music sticks – and that’s where it all started from. So we’d sell the things. ‘One pound!’ They’d say ‘One bob!’ but those of us who had been to school and who knew a few things about numbers would be going, ‘Bump up the price a bit!’ Because we knew the oldies would be going and standing in front of the tourists, and saying, ‘One bob! Two bob! Two bob!’ Those mad people! Poor things!”

“They would still get a lot of silver, and with that money they’d go to the store and buy a lot of tin of meat, tea, sugar and so on. They only had to do this once to learn to rush off and cut more wood! Wood! They’d cut anything! *Wanari* [mulga], *mangata* [quandong]. They’d make *nulla nulla* [fighting stick] or anything. Nobody else anywhere in Australia was doing this, it was a first. Nobody had had any experience like this before. They’d go off on overnight trips to collect wood. They’d chop wood and cut and carve and carve and carve.

“Meanwhile Mr and Mrs Liddle would be buying rasps and tomahawks and files and bring them back to the store and of course they would be instantly snapped up. It was lovely really, what was going on and we were all learning,” Kunmanara said.

When all her friends around the same age had left the station, the famously determined Ms Armstrong talked her cousin into running away with her so they could search for a husband. “I got to find a man! I can’t just sit down here!” she told her. “Anyway, we got a lift with Jim Cotterill’s father, and we run away to Alice Springs to find a man! Funny one! So that’s how I got my husband.”

She married Esky Armstrong, a stockman from Erldunda, and gave birth to her sons Leo, Glen and Steven at Angas Downs and Mount Ebenezer. She also ‘grew up’ her sister Rosie Tjapakula’s three daughters.

The outstation movement in the 1970s saw many Anangu leave Angas Downs for their homelands to the west and south. The Armstrong family moved to the new community of Amata, in South Australia, but Kunmanara felt homesick for Angas Downs. In the late 1970s, she and her brother-in-law and stockman Tjuki Tjukanku Pumpjack and others tried to set up a community near the eastern boundary of the station, but it did not prove viable. By then the tourist trade bypassed Angas Downs and shifted to Mount Ebenezer, and with them many Anangu.



Kunmanara with *mangata* (wild quandong).

Ms Armstrong moved to the newly-established Imanpa community, near Mount Ebenezer, where more than a hundred people lived in tin shacks, sharing two taps and two small ablution blocks with an unreliable water source. Imanpa then had a reputation for extreme alcohol abuse and violence, with people travelling to and from the ‘dry’ Pitjantjatjara lands using the community as a stop-over where they could drink without constraint.

During this period, she worked tirelessly to reduce alcohol abuse and improve community life, becoming a driving force behind many Aboriginal-controlled organisations and enterprises. “I started the store, the clinic, office and school. I was sitting down and working there and running around with ATSIC and all that.”

A passionate believer in education, she got the education department to move the school from the Mount Ebenezer roadhouse, the local grog outlet, to the community and spent the 1980s working there as a teacher’s aid. She encouraged her students to attend regularly and took them on many excursions and camps where she taught them how to gather and hunt. She became the first Anangu teacher of her colleague Maggie Kavanagh, who would go on to lead the NPY Women’s Council. “We got Maggie when she was a wild brumby from the city and we broke her in”, Kunmanara used to boast. Both women would become instrumental in the council’s fight against alcohol abuse and violence.

When the community

bought the roadhouse to control the grog and develop an economic base, in 1987, she was one of its first directors and helped to develop and enforce policies and practices for restricting the sale of alcohol. Kunmanara encouraged young Anangu, especially those at risk of experimenting with petrol sniffing, to work at the roadhouse or in the community.

Kunmanara’s toughness and resilience were legendary and she refused to give drinkers ‘one more chance’. She helped

power, streetlights, and water reticulation. When housing funds did become available, she helped to ensure that the locals did all the labouring. She also persuaded the community to establish a CDEP (work-for-the-dole) program.

“I put Imanpa community first. People would put in a little bit of money in the bank when they get their pay, sitdown money, pension, or work money,” Kunmanara said. “I always said, ‘Hey! Come on! Chuck in money here! Put it here! We can

**“I got to find a man!  
I can’t just sit down here!  
We run away to Alice Springs  
to find a man! Funny one!  
So that’s how  
I got my husband.”**

the police to find people with outstanding warrants and convinced officers to increase their patrols of Imanpa. To make this possible, given the distances they needed to travel, she persuaded the roadhouse directors to offer the police free lodging.

When drinkers arrived from Alice Springs and harassed people, girls sought her protection. She would drive the children and old people out bush so they could be safe while people sobered up.

Her solution to Northern Territory and federal governments arguing about who was responsible for funding the community was to impose a levy on all residents, and to self-fund

make a savings!’ I knew we could make a profit to go back to Angas Downs one day. So every payday they put five dollar, 10 dollar, 20 dollar, like that. I always take it to the bank, and that bank chuck in til we had \$300,000 dollars.”

She was instrumental in the community’s 1994 purchase of Angas Downs and the declaration of the Angas Downs Indigenous Protected Area in 2009. She fought hard to set up the Nyangatjatjara Aboriginal Corporation in 1992 and served as a director until 2008. She helped to establish the Nyangatjatjara College near Yulara, and strongly influenced its philosophy. The secondary college ran an

award-winning school-based apprenticeship program with the Ayers Rock Resort. That the Imanpa girls were among its most successful students was in no small part thanks to Ms Armstrong making sure they turned up for school and work experience.

Kunmanara was a courageous and outspoken advocate for her people. A true firebrand, she marched with the NPY Women’s Council on the Curtin Springs Roadhouse on the Lasseters Highway in the late 1980s to demand restrictions of the sale of alcohol to Anangu from surrounding communities. The women succeeded in 1997, when the Human Rights And Equal Opportunity Commission negotiated an agreement between the council and the licensee for a trial of a range of restrictions. This was followed by another agreement banning the sale of alcohol to Anangu.

Anangu elected her to represent them at every ATSIC Regional Council election. She represented Imanpa on the Central Land Council between 2015 and 2018 and is remembered for speaking up strongly for Angas Downs.

She was also a director of the Imanpa Development Association until 2019, when she moved to Mutitjulu for palliative care.

Eight years before her death, Kunmanara said: “I’ll be leaving this here and what will they think afterwards? And I’ll be watching them like a spirit. That’s what I think and I’m talking to them about this in advance. They’re all preparing, that’s what I’m looking at, and you will all run business on your own for the future generations, through your children, through your grandchildren. That’s what I can see into the future.”

She made it clear that the oral history recordings used in this obituary were “for my mob and all the other whitefellas to read, in case they come and try to take over and all of that, so they can remember that this is Anangu land and Anangu Tjukurpa. As I told the policeman the other day, ‘Don’t you come here without you let me know you are coming. This is my home and my kids’. I worked for this all my life”.

Kunmanara leaves behind a large, extended family and is survived by her sons Leo and Steven and her grandchildren Marcia, Amanda, Narelle, Lorna, Saraphina, Michelle and many more.

*With thanks to former Imanpa community advisor Geoff Langford, Ara Irititja’s Linda Rive, former NPY Women’s Council co-ordinator Maggie Kavanagh, and the CLC’s Steve Martin and Tracey Guest, who all worked closely with Kunmanara.*

# Make a deal with Harold Thomas, APO NT tells government

THE PEAK Aboriginal organisations of the Northern Territory have put forward a new solution to the national dispute about the copyright of the Aboriginal flag.

The APO NT wants a negotiated settlement between the Aboriginal flag's Aboriginal designer and copyright holder, Harold Thomas, and the Australian Government, and a new independent body to manage the copyright of the flag.

government to set up the new body because Australia's copyright law does not protect Aboriginal cultural knowledge and heritage.

Other solutions that have been discussed include the Australian Government acquiring the copyright, however Ms Douglas said this would send the wrong message.

"Removing copyright from an Aboriginal artist would be problematic, particularly in

**"A national entity would enable protection across the entire scope of our intellectual and cultural property rights, managed in a self-determining way."**

The Central Land Council's Dr Josie Douglas has told a Senate inquiry that Mr Thomas should play a key role in overseeing a new Aboriginal flag commission or council.

"A national entity would enable protection across the entire scope of our intellectual and cultural property rights, managed in a self-determining way," Ms Douglas told the inquiry in September. She was speaking on behalf of the APO NT.

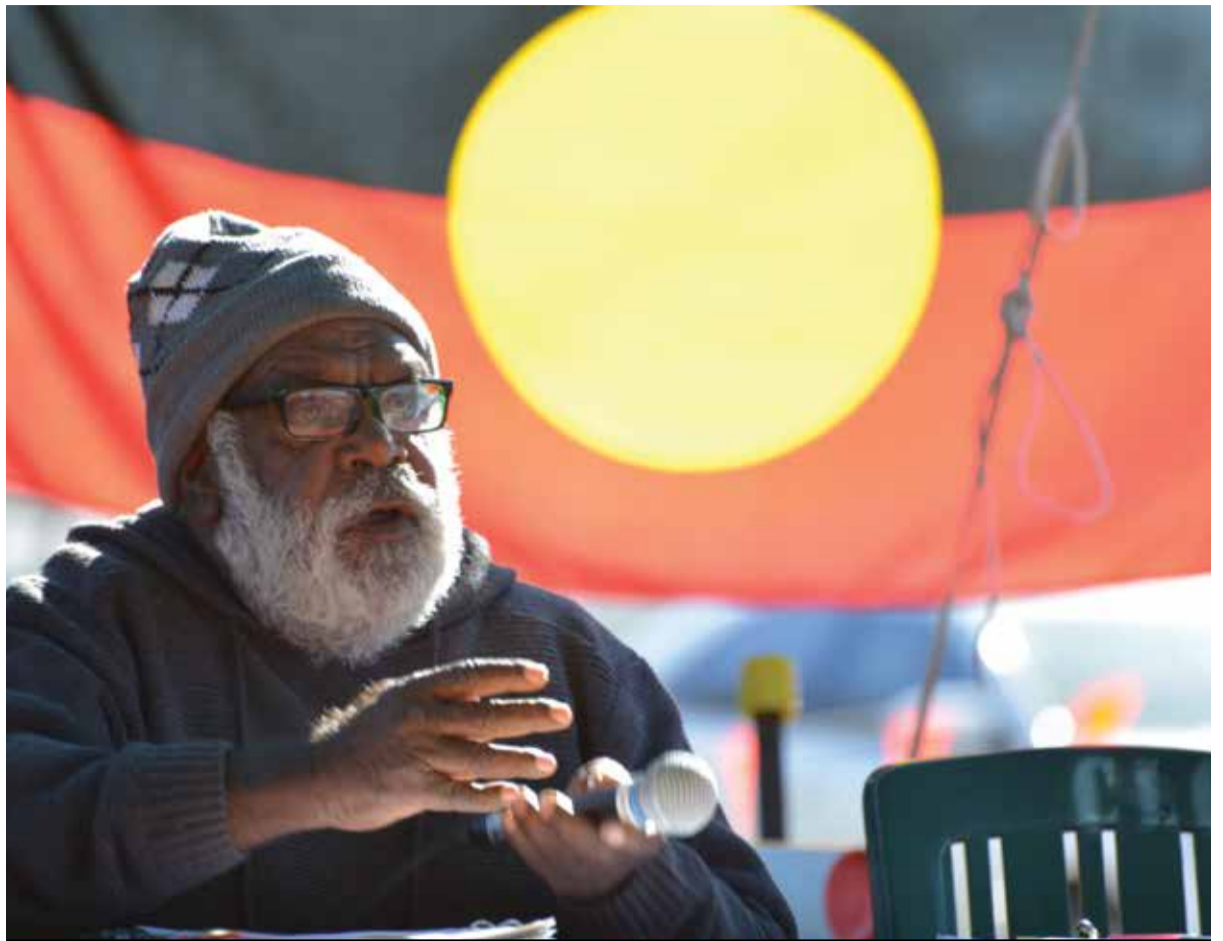
The alliance, which includes the CLC, wants the

terms of the history of having rights forcibly taken from us, be it land, children, culture, language or wages", she said.

WA Labor Senator Patrick Dodson said tensions over the flag are not just about the rights of the individual.

"It also has deep cultural cross currents not recognised by western legal copyright law," he said.

The APO NT submission puts forward a "model of collective ownership" through a national Aboriginal governance body.



Former CLC deputy chair Sammy Butcher at the joint NT land councils meeting at Barunga in 2018.

"We're not reinventing the wheel here," Ms Douglas said.

"This is an approach that provides scope for communal ownership, much like land ownership is based on communal title.

"This is something the members of the CLC and APO NT are very familiar with," she said.

Ms Douglas referred to the Torres Strait Islander flag,

which is owned by the Torres Strait Island Regional Council.

NSW Liberal Senator Andrew Bragg asked her what the Aboriginal flag means to Aboriginal people in Central Australia.

"It's such a potent symbol of land rights, it's a significant symbol of unity. In Alice Springs the flag was prominent in the peaceful protests following the killing

of Kumanjaji Walker by a police officer last year in Yuendumu," she replied.

"It's displayed every year at the Gurindji people's Freedom Festival to celebrate the Walk Off, so it's a potent symbol of land rights and survival.

"Aboriginal people should be able to freely use the flag as a symbol of identity and a symbol of strength."



# Always Was, Always Will Be.

**8-15 NOV 2020**

NAIDOC Week celebrations are held across Australia each year to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, by Australians from all walks of life.

To get involved with the Alice Springs NAIDOC committee, or to find out more, get in touch via email or the Facebook group below.

<https://www.facebook.com/alicenaidocweek>

[naidocmparntwe@gmail.com](mailto:naidocmparntwe@gmail.com)



# Loss of Amazon storytellers to devastate generations

WITH Brazil recording some of the highest COVID-19 infection rates in the world, the country's indigenous peoples were always bound to suffer a devastating impact, and the loss of their storytellers is something that will be felt for generations to come.

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro's handling of the pandemic has seen his country record the second highest death toll - around 140,000 - in the world.

The reach of the virus was emphasised when news broke

By early September, about 30,000 indigenous people had contracted the disease, with more than 700 losing their lives.

Among the dead is another of Brazil's most influential chiefs, Aritana Yawalapiti, of the people of Upper Xingu in central Brazil.

The 71-year-old died the same day Brazil's Supreme Court ruled President Bolsonaro must do more to assist the country's tribes.

The Munduruku, who are usually busy fighting to block the building of dams on the



Chief Raoni Metuktire tested positive to COVID-19 in August.

**“We didn't go to the city, we didn't go to other villages. We remained in quarantine. We got through, we are still getting through.”**

of Brazil's iconic chief, Raoni Metuktire, testing positive to COVID-19 in August.

Described as one of the most famous defenders of the Amazon rainforest, Chief Metuktire has fiercely criticised Mr Bolsonaro for promoting a surge in rainforest destruction.

Tapajos River, a tributary of the Amazon, have lost seven elders aged between 60 and 86 years to coronavirus since early May, according to *Reuters*, while the Xikrin tribe lost 64-year-old chief Bep Karoti to COVID-19.

They are just some of the custodians of culture and

oral traditions lost to the pandemic.

The Bolsonaro government's handling of the crisis, and the president's encouragement of development on indigenous land against landholders' wishes, has led to protests.

AFP reports the Kayapo Mekranoti donned traditional feather headdresses and body paint and took up bows and arrows to block a key highway through the Amazon.

There have been success

stories, but they came in areas where groups were able to take matters into their own hands and isolate themselves from the outside world.

*Associated Press* reported in mid-September that the Temb  in the Amazon had managed to keep their villages COVID-free since March because they swung their gates shut.

“We didn't go to the city, we didn't go to other villages,” S rgio Muxi Temb , leader

of Tekohow village, said. “We remained in quarantine. We got through, we are still getting through.”

Meanwhile, even if Brazil's indigenous groups see out the COVID pandemic, they face the ongoing threats of illegal mining, deforestation and forest fires on their land and have little hope of their national government coming to their assistance.

## Coronavirus threatens tribes' survival

THE ANDAMAN and Nicobar tribes on a group of islands in the Bay of Bengal are some of the most isolated peoples in the world, but they haven't been able to escape COVID-19.

The Great Andamanese tribe live on India's Andaman and Nicobar archipelago. They are one of a number of local tribes. Others include the Onges, Jarwas, Shompen and Sentinelese.

*Deutsche Welle* reports that because numbers of each of the tribes are dwindling to very small numbers - only

population has been affected by COVID-19,” Sophie Grig, senior researcher at Survival International, a London-based tribal rights group, told the broadcaster.

“Of course, the uncontacted Sentinelese are always vulnerable to all outside diseases, given that they are the most isolated people on the planet and are unlikely to have immunity to any outside diseases,” Ms Grig said.

India has the third highest number of deaths from COVID-19 in the world, with

**“The uncontacted Sentinelese are always vulnerable to all outside diseases, given that they are the most isolated people on the planet and are unlikely to have immunity to any outside diseases.”**

about 238 Shompen, 520 Jarawa, 120 Onge and 150 Sentinelese - any discovery of COVID-19 among them threatens their very existence.

The smallest group are the Great Andamanese.

“There are only just over 50 Great Andamanese, so with 11 testing positive, already about 20 per cent of the

more than 91,000.

“It is essential to restrict the contact between the non-tribals and tribals till the pandemic is over,” Srinath Reddy, president of the Public Health Foundation of India, said.

“The tribes must also be the first to receive the vaccine when it is available,” he added.



Andaman islanders are fighting for their survival during the pandemic.



CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL

**LOOKING FOR WORK?**



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

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

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

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



Teddy Gibson, Louise Stanley, Verona Jurrah, Fiona Gibson and Ricardo Gallagher plan education and training activities in Nyirripi.



Robbie Peters, Timmy Vincent and Banjo Ryan Jangala cut the cake.



Becky Peters is one of the native title holders for Limbunya Station.



Martha Protty from Kaltukatjara with one of the bags of warm clothes the CLC distributed during the COVID-19 'lockdown'.



Kaltukatjara students thanked the CLC rangers for the swags they delivered to the school.



Matthew Algy and Sammy Wilson with the Wave Hill cake guardians.



Matteo and Matthew Bonson at the Limbunya determination.



Sammy Wilson and Barbara Shaw chaired the Ampilatwatja meeting.



Bob Purvis at the CLC's first council meeting of 2020 at Ampilatwatja.



Patrick Oliver, Patrick Sterling and Carl Inkamala at the Ampilatwatja CLC meeting.



Smoko rules: Stephen Ellis and Joyce Taylor at Ampilatwatja.



Delegates Derek Walker and Peter Corbett at Ampilatwatja.



Gabriel Tanami with Justice Richard White at Limbunya native title determination.



Jimmy Wave Hill, Paddy Doolak and Gus George at the Wave Hill native title determination.



Wave Hill native title holder Pauline Ryan in front of her mural.

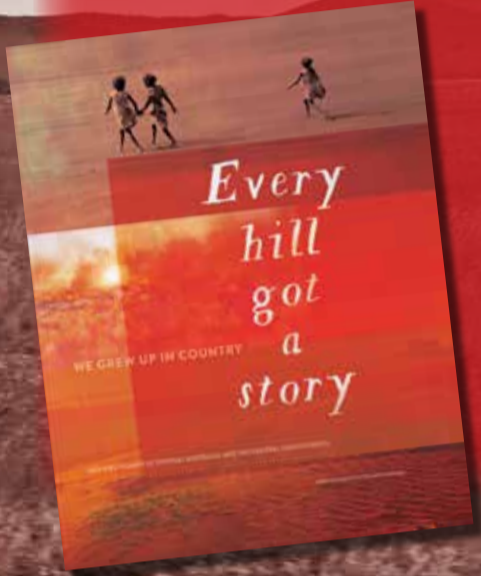
# “You can’t just cut up like a butcher shop.”



[Around 2009] some workers around here were trying to slaughter all the kangaroo every afternoon. Whitefella. And we rang up land council [and said] “Can you come up here? Deal with these mob. They’re killing our animal. We still going to live on tin-o-meat – or kangaroo? That’s our tucker.” Killing, bringing them all back to camp. [The whitefellas] not asking or telling us, “I’m going to go out this afternoon and kill a kangaroo for you.” No. They just shoot them [and say] “Here”; dump them. And when we’d seen what had happened, I rang them [the CLC] up about what we’d seen. You cannot shoot a male kangaroo. It’s against the rule – law for Yapa. You never touch a breeder.

Nothing. When we seen that two kangaroo, we were really sad and crying. “You can’t do that” [we said]. “We are going to get land council to come to stop this.” The lady lawyer came along. That really helped to stop any kardiya going to Yapa land trying to... One time, me, I was a ‘hunter’, like copying another person and talking [boasting] – “I can get more than you, over twenty.” Then I went out from Yinjiringirli, where my family was staying. About upwards of eight kangaroo [I got], and there were maybe two or three families [there], and I just heard my mother crying. “What? Are you crying?” “You doing the wrong thing.” “What am I doing?” “You cannot slaughter animal.

You never do that. You shoot one, not others. That is the wrong thing you did.” Now, today, I haven’t got rifle. I don’t go out [shooting]. I just have fun looking at them, everything. Families go along and [if] we see a perentie walking in front of the bus and they tell me, “Go closer, go closer!” – all I think [is], “It’s a big animal.” I don’t like to touch it. Sometimes you kill for a reason; sometimes you let him go. You don’t slaughter animals [for nothing]. Jukurrpa – law. You can’t do that [slaughter animals wastefully]. See, we still got law – how to cut up kangaroo, or cook it. Rule. You can’t just cut up like a butcher shop and put ‘em in a frying pan.



**Cobra Japangardi Poulson**

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)



Photo: National Archives of Australia NAA: A1200/18, 7913408.

**LISTEN TO THE STORYTELLERS OF  
EVERY HILL GOT A STORY  
AT**

[WWW.CLC.ORG.AU/ARTICLES/INFO/593](http://WWW.CLC.ORG.AU/ARTICLES/INFO/593)

**Central Land Council**

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<http://clc.keepingculture.com>



## STOP TRACHOMA & OTHER INFECTIONS



**6** STEPS for good hygiene



**1: BLOW YOUR NOSE UNTIL ITS EMPTY**



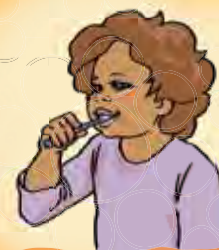
**2: WASH HANDS WITH SOAP & WATER**



**3: WASH FACES WITH WATER WHENEVER DIRTY**



**4: DON'T SHARE TOWELS, WASH TOWELS OFTEN**



**5: BRUSH TEETH TWICE A DAY WITH TOOTHPASTE**



**6: WASH WITH SOAP IN THE SHOWER EVERYDAY**