



Anangu traditional owners sign updated Uluru lease

The traditional owners of the Uluru - Kata Tjuta National Park and the federal government have agreed to vary the park's 99-year lease.

The lease now offers more jobs on country for Anangu [ARR-na-ngu], better commercial financial terms for the traditional owners of the park and more income to help with the extreme cost of living out bush and invest in their community-driven development projects.

For two decades the Central Land Council has supported the traditional owners of the park and their communities in the cross-border region of Northern Territory, South Australia and Western Australia to use income from the park for Anangu education initiatives, recreational facilities, homeland infrastructure and other projects.

The traditional owners have invested almost \$21 million in 102 projects in their communities, many of them multi-year initiatives, since 2006.

Among these projects are the pool in Mutitjulu, patrolled by Anangu lifeguards, and support for Anangu secondary boarding school students from the cross-border region and men's cultural events out bush.

CLC delegate and Uluru community development working group member Kathleen Luckey welcomed the additional funds.

"We've been spending our money wisely for many years and want to keep using it to make our communities stronger. For example, we'd like to put a roof over the basketball court in Imanpa so we can play, meet and celebrate there even when it's hot," she said.

"Palya, the projects are helping us," said Uluru working group and park board of management member, Alison Carroll.

"We want more of them to happen now. We have been speaking up strongly for our young people and we need them to become leaders like us and get jobs."

The updated lease obliges the park to reach a 50 per cent Anangu full time equivalent employment target by 2030 and to do more to help Anangu businesses win contracts.

This is only the second time since the 1985 hand-back of the park to its traditional owners that their lease with the federal government has been updated.

The traditional owners and the CLC have been negotiating with Parks Australia about this latest lease variation since 2013.

"The new agreement delivers stronger protection for sacred sites and songlines, tougher consequences for damage and more robust joint management principles informed by tjukurpa [JU-kurr-pa]," CLC chief executive Les Turner said.

"That may mean accepting guidance from Anangu about where and when to undertake traditional burning or when to close the park for cultural reasons."

Mr Turner said Parks Australia also agreed to recognise the traditional owners' cultural and intellectual property, such as songs, dances, stories and cultural knowledge, and to seek their explicit permission to use it.

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