



At the Central Land Council's April meeting at the Spotted Tiger camp ground near Atitjere (Harts Range) the members discussed the voice to parliament and reaffirmed their support for a "yes" vote in the referendum later this year.

## GREAT WORK AT ATITJERE

Garth Forrester and Maria Ross spoke about the work of the Akityarre Rangers (formerly the Arltapilta Inelye Rangers) and Children's Ground. Mr Forrester talked about weed control on Huckitta Station and fencing important rock holes and grave sites in the area. Ms Ross explained how activities such as bush medicine camps on country keep local children connected to their culture.



Members discussed their local issues in regional groups before reporting back to the council.



Dianne Stokes (region 6) spoke up at council.

## "VOTE YES": STRONG SUPPORT FOR VOICE TO PARLIAMENT

During a panel discussion about the voice referendum members expressed their hope that most Australians will vote 'yes'. "Yes says we deserve to be heard when laws and policies are made about us because we know what needs to happen in our communities," Rachel Perkins from Australians for Aboriginal Constitutional Recognition and the daughter of the CLC's first chair Charlie Perkins said. "This is not about the politicians, it's about you. You are the voice." Members heard the voice will take work to set up, but

will be very strong because future governments won't be able to get rid of it like they did with ATSIC and other bodies.

Panel members Jimmy Frank and Barbara Shaw talked about what they hope the voice will change. "I want to have control over my life, I want my children to carry on what their grandfather has left them. Change the country's rule book," Ms Shaw said. Many delegates raised the Intervention as an example of the top-down decision making they expect the voice to prevent.

Several delegates described

the voice as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and spoke about the importance of enrolling young people in particular, so everyone can vote in the referendum later this year. "Let's get this done," Mr Frank said.

## REGIONAL GROUPS APPROACH IS A WINNER

Delegates spent the first day of the meeting in nine regional groups to discuss agenda items in their own languages and focus on their regional issues.



Rachel Perkins, Jimmy Frank, Barbara Shaw and Josie Douglas were part of the panel discussion about the voice referendum.



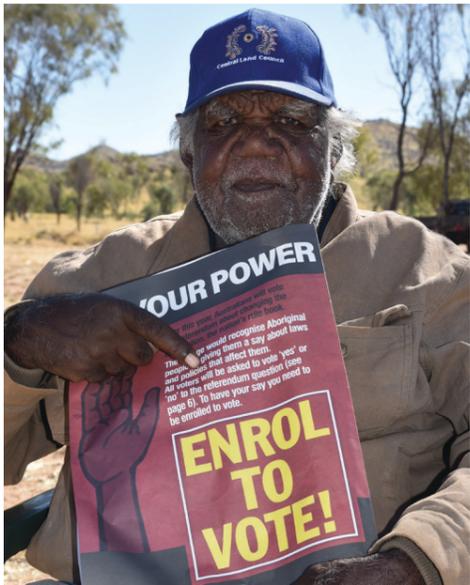
Council members are responsible for making decisions in the best interests of Aboriginal people in the CLC region and to keep the CLC strong. The council has made meeting rules to support strong governance.

Aboriginal people of the CLC region can look at the council rules and the council minutes at the CLC Alice Springs office – please contact the CLC's strategy and performance manager if you want to read the rules or minutes.

## VOICE INFORMATION GOES BUSH

Members strongly supported a community information and enrolment campaign about the voice to parliament. Regional groups discussed the best ways of

translating information into local languages and to deliver it out bush. The CLC's regional officers will help enrol people to vote in the referendum.



Michael Jones (region 6) encouraged everyone to enrol to vote in the referendum.



Patrick Oliver (region 1) with one of the new 'voice shirts'.



Craig Woods (proxy region 2) spoke about why the voice is a good idea.



Ronald Brown (region 6) asked for more information on NTAIC grants process.

## HOMELANDS MONEY ARRIVES, REMOTE RENTS RISE

The delegates heard that the NT government has gone against the advice of the land councils and changed how it charges rents in remote communities. Since March tenants have been paying rent per bedroom, rather than rent based on their income. For most households this means higher rents. Some people may get help from a 'safety net'. The CLC wants to hear from people who can't afford the higher payments so it can keep speaking up for a better rent system.

The NT government has received

\$100 million for homelands from the federal government. Across the CLC region the first quarter will go towards power and water upgrades, also to homelands around Arlparra, Papunya and Ikuntji. The NT government, the peak body Aboriginal Housing NT and the land councils are now making five regional plans for this investment. How much each region gets depends on how many registered homelands it has. The biggest share, almost one third, will go to Central Australia.

## COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN REGIONAL CONTROLLER

Early this year Dorrelle Anderson was appointed to help respond to crime and violence in Alice Springs and surrounding communities. Her first job as Central Australian Regional Controller was to listen to Aboriginal peoples' voices and deliver a report. She recommended governments don't lift alcohol restrictions before communities have made strong alcohol management plans and that governments fund family violence

services properly. Speaking in Luritja and English, she told the council that since then she has consulted with more remote communities. She said residents keep raising failed policies that were made about them, but without them. Ms Anderson is now writing up how governments should work with Aboriginal people to put in place solutions that work on the ground.

## GOOD NEWS ABOUT WATER RIGHTS

The policy team shared some encouraging wins in the ongoing fight for Aboriginal water rights.

The NT Environmental Protection Agency listened to the CLC and others and decided that the Singleton Station must undergo the highest level of environmental impact assessment. The decision means the project will be on hold while the agency finds out what the project's massive water licence would really do to the country.

Laramba's water treatment plant is up and running, filtering high levels of uranium out of the community's drinking water. The government is also improving the water supplies of Yuendumu, Yuelamu, Atitjere, Engawala, Imanpa and Epenarra.

CLC delegates Pam Corbett and Jackie Mahoney, from Alpururulam, won the 2022 NT Human Rights Award for Social Change for their efforts to secure drinkable water and are hoping for more good news for their community.

The council also agreed on eight principles that will guide the CLC's water strategy and advocacy work.

## INCOME MANAGEMENT AND WORK-FOR-THE-DOLE STAY FOR NOW

The federal government has not kept its promise to make income management voluntary. It has only given people on Centrelink benefits new 'smart' cards. The council again called on the government to end compulsory income management.

The government is going slow on its election promise to replace the so-called Community Development Program (CDP) with real jobs and proper wages and conditions in partnership with Aboriginal organisations. The CLC is starting its own remote employment trial in Ltyentye Apurte (Santa Teresa) so it can offer some evidence to the national reform discussion.

## NT SACRED SITES ACT REVIEW

Three years ago the four land councils asked the Northern Territory government to strengthen its sacred site protection laws. Land council representatives are taking part in a working group set up by the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority to review the

NT Sacred Sites Act. At the council meeting members talked about the legal changes they want. Staff will now write a submission to the government about these changes and report back to the council later this year. All CLC submissions are at [www.clc.org.au](http://www.clc.org.au).

## NT ABORIGINAL INVESTMENT CORPORATION ACTING CEO

The acting chief executive of the new Aboriginal-controlled corporation that will make decisions about the Aboriginals Benefit Account from now on, Leeanne Caton, gave her first progress report to the council. She talked about the four land councils' decades-long campaign to bring Aboriginal income under Aboriginal control, the new corporation's board chaired by former CLC deputy chair Barbara

Shaw, its grants committee and long-term investment plans. Delegates had lots of ideas and questions. They wanted to know what projects the grants will fund and what support people and organisations can expect when applying for the grants. More information and grant guidelines are at [www.ntaic.org.au](http://www.ntaic.org.au).

## NEXT COUNCIL AND EXECUTIVE MEETINGS

The delegates brought their next council meeting forward to 6–8 June at Barunga, a week before the community's annual festival. They want to hold a joint meeting with the other NT land councils at the place where their leaders

delivered the famous 1988 Barunga Statement. The joint meeting replaces the CLC's August meeting. The CLC executive committee will meet in Alice Springs on 16–17 May and 20–21 June.