

FREE

# LAND RIGHTS NEWS

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## CENTRAL AUSTRALIA



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# LOOK AFTER THESE WATERS AND THESE LANDS

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EDITORIAL

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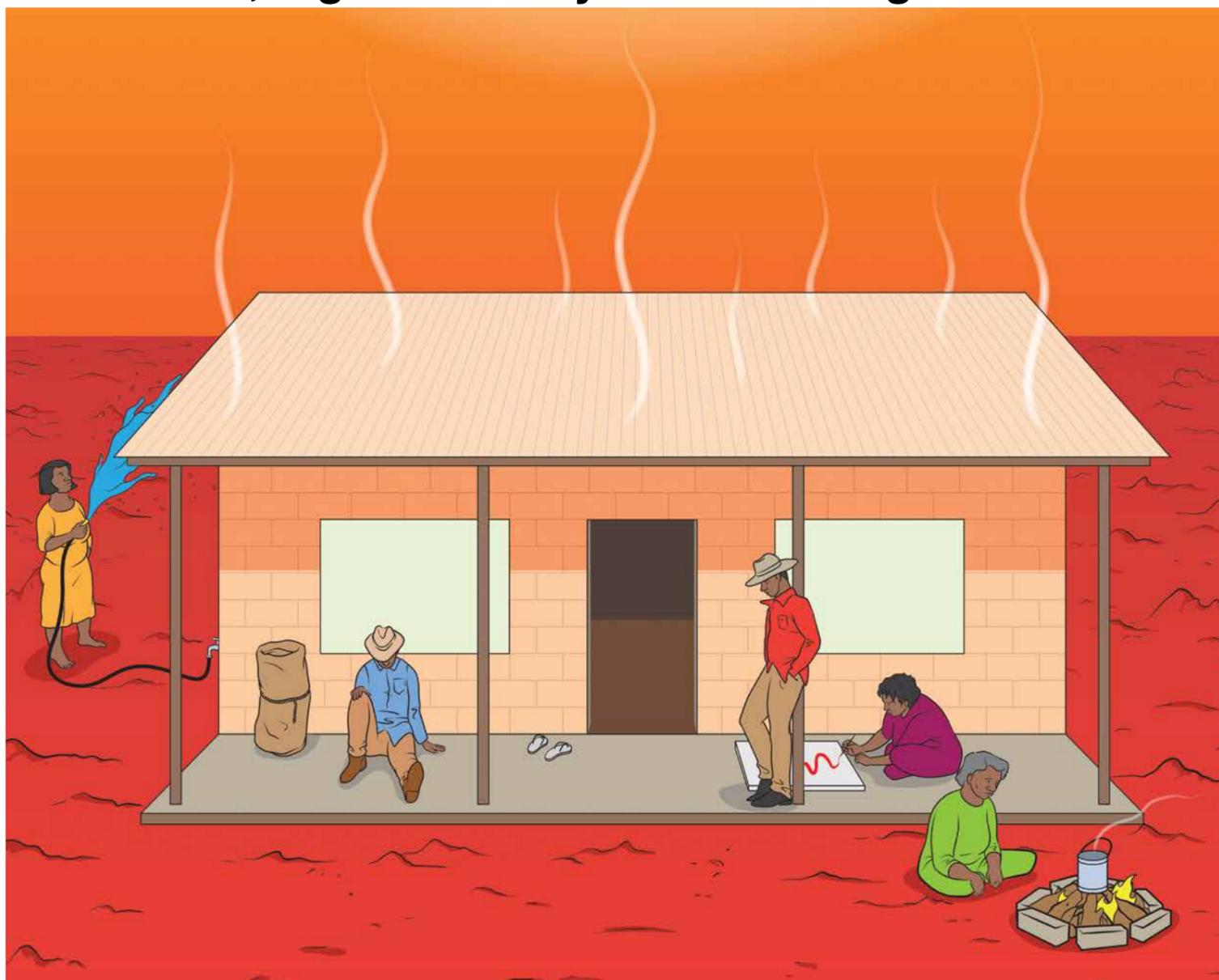


One month after being awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for his outstanding service to his people, elder Frankie Holmes travelled to the High Court in Canberra to support the native title holders for Singleton Station.  
Photo by Anna Miers

CLC MEETINGS

- 15–16 April 2026  
Executive  
Alice Springs
- 28–30 April 2026  
Council  
Gem Tree
- 13–14 May 2026  
Executive  
Alice Springs

# Hot homes, high bills: why we need tougher standards



"We want to see seven star ratings in all our communities": CLC general manager and Sweltering Cities ambassador Mischa Cartwright (below).

RAISING the Northern Territory government's minimum housing energy rating would make new homes in remote communities more comfortable and cheaper to run.

While the rest of Australia has moved to six and seven star ratings, the NT has maintained its 2009 standard of five stars, the lowest in the country.

"We want to see seven star ratings in all our communities," Central Land Council general manager and Sweltering Cities ambassador Mischa Cartwright said.

In remote Central Australia, where summer temperatures regularly exceed 40 degrees, most households depend almost entirely on air conditioning to stay cool.

This makes remote communities vulnerable. Research from Original Power shows these households are disconnected from electricity an average of 59 times a year – the highest prepaid electricity disconnection rates in the country.

Homes with higher energy ratings could reduce dependence on power. Better insulation, heat-resistant materials on western walls and more effective air flow inside can keep indoor spaces cooler without electricity.

Homes in arid climates should have eaves or small verandas so northern sun is captured in winter to warm living areas, but shaded in summer to keep the house cool. In recent years, two out of every three new homes in the desert do not face the sun the right way.

Thoughtful housing design can also better support cultural practices and everyday living. Wide verandas provide shaded outdoor sleeping areas for residents and visitors and spaces for outdoor cooking to reduce heat build-up

inside the home. They should be fitted with power points and taps.

Because many households have members of all ages, bathrooms should be fit for wheelchairs and have strong walls that can support handrails. Builders need to fit homes with durable hardware and fixtures and carry out proper quality checks.

With many parts of the NT predicted to get even hotter we need to change how we design houses.

The NT government needs to consult with communities and residents on the types of remote houses available. Right now, residents can select prefabricated or blockwork homes with up to five bedrooms. They need to have a say at the planning stage about the location and type of design of the house. As Australian Institute of Architects NT president Miriam Wallace, from Mparntwe (Alice Springs), explains, "that's where the cultural appropriateness is managed."

**"It's important they not only respond to our climate today but handle the increasing temperatures predicted over the next decades."**

Families have different needs, some want external bedroom doors to deal with avoidance relationships while for safety reasons others don't want outside access. Some prefer closed kitchens, while others want open plan living. Ms Wallace said there was no single right layout.



"The challenge is balancing repeatable designs with meaningful choice," she said. "If you can include people in that limitation, it can make people feel the home is more like their own."

Prefabricated homes can be completed in about six months, while blockwork houses typically take a year to build. If families don't get a say early on, they can miss the chance to choose what suits them best and may face unnecessary delays.

Improving house design is a high priority for the CLC, as new houses can last for more than 30 years.

"It's important they not only respond to our climate today but handle the increasing temperatures predicted over the next decades," said Ms Cartwright.

# Regular repairs save lives

THE LACK of regular, planned housing repairs in remote Aboriginal communities can have deadly results.

The preventable death of two-year-old Kumanjayi Fly, who fell into a septic tank at Watiyawanu (Mount Liebig) in 2023, shows the human cost of this neglect. The coronial report into the tragedy found it could have been avoided if regular checks and repairs had been carried out.

The Northern Territory government waits until something is reported broken and then fixes it, often after a long wait for the tenants. This puts lives at risk.

Three-year-old Mitchell Thomas, from Mparntwe (Alice Springs), died in 2023 in a fire in a public house that started because of an electrical failure. The coroner recommended better regular electrical safety checks in public houses.

“For many years we have asked the NT government to carry out regular planned maintenance in remote communities and town camp houses,” said CLC general manager Dr Josie Douglas. Through the Joint Steering Committee for Remote Housing NT, we are providing input into developing a better maintenance plan.

Regular (called cyclical) maintenance can mean checking electrical safety and plumbing, servicing air conditioners and

controlling pests every year. Planned maintenance can involve installing new kitchens, bathrooms, insulation upgrades and painting.

Cyclical maintenance is the most cost-effective and safest way to manage remote housing, according to not-for-profit organisation Healthabitat. Director David Donald said public and community houses should undergo an annual safety check “just like a car”. That way, problems can be fixed quickly, and before they create bigger health, safety and legal headaches.

Healthabitat have checked remote housing data and found that cyclical maintenance delivers the best value for money and the greatest safety.

For emergency repairs, travel expenses can be up to 96 per cent of the total bill. “The cost to send a tradie on a return trip from Alice Springs to Kaltukatjara is between \$6,500 and \$8,000 – and that’s before any work happens,” Mr Donald said.

Travel expenses are only 11 to 37 per cent of regular and planned maintenance costs, clearly the cheaper option.

Mr Donald said three out of four equipment and structural failures come from a lack of regular maintenance. Faulty construction causes 18 per cent of failures and just seven per cent come from



Regular repairs of airconditioners, like this one in Wilora, save money and keep people healthy.

tenant damage. “Not doing cyclical maintenance can lead to multiple failures and much higher costs, especially in remote areas where costs increase dramatically,” he said.

Bundling jobs together through

**“Not doing cyclical maintenance can lead to multiple failures and much higher costs, especially in remote areas where costs increase dramatically.”**

regular repair trips also reduces those expenses by a lot. Healthabitat estimates that avoiding 40 separate emergency callouts could save between \$135,000 and \$215,000.

The joint steering committee is the main forum for monitoring remote housing outcomes. “We feel more confident that the NT government is taking the right steps to put in place a maintenance program that fixes problems before they become life-threatening,” said Dr Douglas.

She urged the government to act on the coroner’s recommendations swiftly and in full.

“We look forward to working with the department and committee partners to progress a cyclical and planned maintenance program.”

# High Court forces rewrite of remote rent plan

THE NORTHERN TERRITORY government must consult with Aboriginal organisations as it designs a new remote rent plan.

Late last year, the High Court of Australia ruled the plan was not legal as the government did not consult tenants properly on rent increases. The policy increased rents for around seven in every ten of remote tenants across Central Australia. Some were paying up to \$300 more per fortnight.

The government should re-establish the plan’s oversight committee and consult with its members as it develops a new rent model by the end of the year, said CLC general manager Dr Josie Douglas. “Until there is a new model tenants should not be charged rent arrears.”

In early February the NT government changed the housing law to sidestep the court ruling.

“We are appalled the government used urgency powers to rush changes through parliament to get around the High Court ruling.”

In a joint statement, Aboriginal Housing NT, the four Aboriginal land councils and the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency called the amendments an “attack on Territorians’ basic rights”.

“Fundamentally, this means that the government does not believe that it is capable of making these decisions in a fair way, so it is introducing legislation to allow it to make decisions in ways that it knows will be unfair,” NAAJA chief executive Ben Grimes said.

The changes ensure the remote rent scheme overturned by the court can continue to operate even though the judges found it unlawful.

This means tenants in remote communities will continue to pay much higher rents while their incomes remain the same. This forces people further into poverty.

Under the model introduced in 2023, public housing tenants in town pay rent based on income while rent in communities is charged on the number of bedrooms.

These tenants pay \$70 per bedroom each week, no matter how much they earn, how many people live in the house, or the condition of the home. Tenants pay the same rent for a new home as for a rundown house.

The former Labor government set up the oversight committee to monitor how the scheme affects remote community residents. The committee has met only once since the change of government in August 2024. It is made up of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development, Aboriginal Housing NT, land councils, NT Shelter, Tangentyere Council and Darwin Community Legal Service.

Dr Douglas said tenants should have proper help to access financial support and pay no more than a quarter of their income on rent.

“The new scheme should be fair, evidence-based and importantly consider the high cost of living out bush. It must consider household income and protect families from deeper poverty,” she said.

**“We are appalled the government used urgency powers to rush changes through parliament to get around the High Court ruling.”**

Once the new model is established, regular oversight committee meetings should be held to monitor the impact of the framework and ensure the government is made aware of problems when they arise.

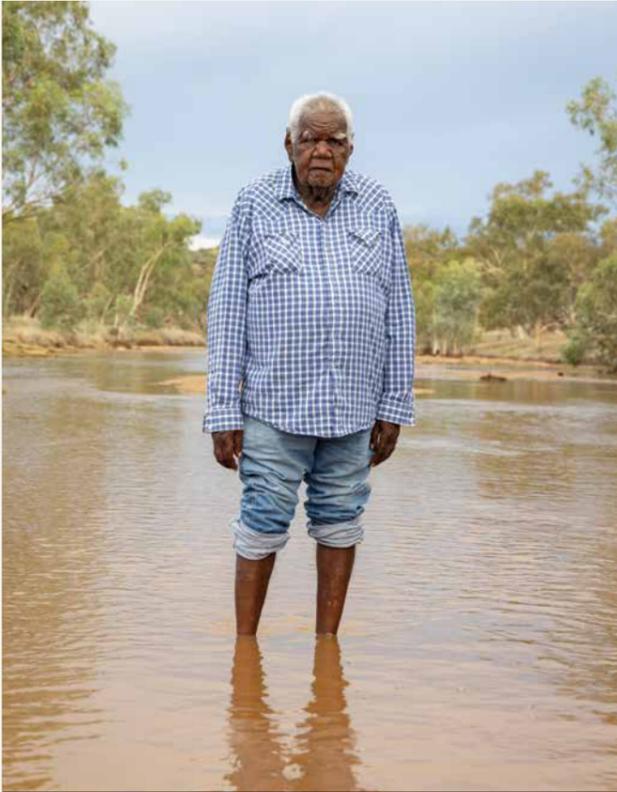


North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency chief executive Ben Grimes.



CLC general manager Dr Josie Douglas.

# Singleton: High Court hears first Aboriginal water rights case



Michael Jones



Roger Tommy



Valerie Curtis

THE NATIVE TITLE HOLDERS for Singleton Station flew to Canberra in February to hear the High Court's first Aboriginal water rights case.

After a six-year legal battle, the members of the Mpwerempwer Aboriginal Corporation and their neighbours hope the highest court of the land will scrap the water licence the Northern Territory government gave to the station south of Tennant Creek, and make the Minister follow the law properly this time.

The licence allows Fortune Agribusiness to take, free of charge, 40 gigalitres of groundwater a year for 30 years from the station to grow fruit and vegetables largely for overseas markets. That much water could supply Alice Springs for 119 years and meet the drinking water needs of every Australian for 40 years.

The native title holders say the NT's largest groundwater licence is too big and the risks to their country and culture are too great.

Mpwerempwer director Dawn Swan said she felt "energised" listening to the case in court. "It's really exciting, it's an eye-opener. We hung in here for six years. We did it for our elders and our future generation," she said. "I'm going away spiritually motivated. It's making us stronger."

A group of six native title holders and traditional owners of surrounding country attended the hearing, determined to have their concerns about the licence taken seriously.

One of them was senior knowledge holder and 2026 Order of Australia medal recipient Frankie Holmes. He warned that taking this much water will lower the water table across a huge area and threaten what matters most.

"If the water is gone, the plants are gone, the animals are gone, the sacred sites are gone. Water is our life blood. Water is life," he said.

Drawing down groundwater across thousands of hectares risks damaging for good an ancient aquifer, at least 40 groundwater-dependent sacred sites and community water supplies.

That's because sacred trees and plants die when their roots can no longer reach the sinking water table. Animals linked to songlines disappear and with them cultural practices maintained for tens of thousands of years. This will cause deep emotional, social and physical distress for those responsible for caring for country.

**"If the water is gone, the plants are gone, the animals are gone, the sacred sites are gone. Water is our life blood. Water is life."**

Fortune Agribusiness does not have to pay for the water, worth between \$70 million and \$300 million and expert economists say the project will create few jobs.

The seven High Court judges will now decide if the NT government's

licence process has been fair to the native title holders and if it properly considered their cultural values, such as sacred trees, water places and animals. They will decide if a 30-year water licence was justified, instead of the usual 10-year licence.

They listened to the legal arguments and are expected to hand down a judgement within six to 12 months.

The court case does not stop the environmental approval Fortune Agribusiness needs before it can start to use the licence to pump up water.

Mpwerempwer and other affected traditional owners are working with

the Central Land Council and the company on a social and cultural values impact assessment.

While Mr Holmes feels no need to return to Canberra in a hurry, seeing the High Court in action was worth the trip.

"Looking after country, especially sacred trees, is very, very important for us," he said. "Ancestors hand it over to us to look after these waters and these lands. This is important to keep it going and for us to keep passing it on."

Ms Swan said the fight is far from over.

"We have people living on the land and this is their dream to stay here for future generations. This has been a long journey, and we will continue to fight for our sacred sites and culture."



Frankie Holmes OAM warned taking too much water will lower the water table around Singleton Station.



Frankie Holmes OAM



Dawn Swan



Jorna Murphy



Determined to have their concerns taken seriously Singleton native title holders headed into the High Court.



Dawn Swan and Valerie Curtis hope the High Court will scrap the Singleton water licence.



Frankie Holmes OAM and Roger Tommy ready themselves to enter the High Court.

# Is the historic Warumungu land claim a good sign for Singleton?



Murphy Jappanangka, Dick Riley, Myrtle Kennedy and other Warumungu and Alyawarr traditional owners travelled far to hear the 1983 High Court case against the CLP government. Photo by Peter Wells



Jorna Murphy (centre, with sun glasses) thought about her family's trip to the High Court 43 years ago as she stood in the same spot in February.

FOR JORNA MURPHY, one of the traditional owners of Singleton Station who travelled to the High Court of Australia to fight for their precious groundwater, the trip had a special significance.

In February she found herself in the very same spot where her late father, Murphy Jappanangka, stood 43 years ago as Peter Wells took an iconic photo of her family for the *Canberra Times*.

The group he photographed also included Ms Murphy's mother Margaret Corbett, her uncle Dick Riley Jappanangka, her auntie Myrtle Kennedy Nappanangka and her siblings Jeffery, Sharon and Kevin. The delegation of 31 traditional owners had driven from Tennant Creek to Canberra in August 1983 to fight for the Warumungu land claim. They had come to stop the Territory's Country Liberal government of the day from leasing part of their land to a government corporation so it could no longer be claimed.

Unlike the Singleton hearing earlier this year the group gave no media interviews beforehand but were still well received on their arrival. The court attendants showed the children Court 1, where the hearing for their land was to be held – the same room where the Singleton case was heard. It was a proud moment when the full bench of the High Court announced the matter in the name of Dick Riley Jappanangka.

In 1984, the five judges ruled against the government and the land claim went ahead.

"It made me cry when I was standing there, thinking about my father," Ms Murphy said. "I'm proud of standing where my father was standing – my two fathers and my auntie. All the families. I have to stand strong, like my father."

As with the Singleton campaign, the fight was very much about future generations.

The Central Land Council had offered to fly four of the claimants to Canberra, but the group wanted a much broader representation and the inclusion of children in their care. At a meeting in July 1983 the claimants decided to take a bus instead.

They chose who should go by reflecting carefully on the links between the senior landowners and the areas of the claim the NT government tried to block. Among the 20 adults were very senior ceremonial men and women and younger people with the right links to country and a strong interest in the claim. They were accompanied by 11 children with future responsibility for the country.

Jorna Murphy's Singleton delegation was back in Central Australia within three days. Her dad's group took 16 days for the round trip. It was not without its challenges. Bruce Reyburn, a former CLC anthropologist who travelled with the group from Tennant

Creek, recalled the bus breaking down in Longreach, delaying its arrival for a reception planned by the Bourke community.

Throughout the journey the travellers relied heavily on the generosity of many such supporters, for example the artists of Circus Oz who put on a benefit performance in Canberra.

**"It made me cry when I was standing here, thinking about my father."**

Flooding in southwestern Queensland delayed the trip home and funds were running low. "We had limited money to cover the costs. We all took swags," recalled former CLC anthropologist Jane Lloyd who was on the bus home. She paid tribute to some of the many generous people who made the trip possible.

"It was bitterly cold. Barbara Flick and her family in Dubbo fed and bedded everyone. Neville Perkins from Aboriginal Hostels gave us accommodation, warmth and food. The men camped in the garage at the hostel which was the only available room, while the women, children

and myself camped in a two bedroom unit," Ms Lloyd said.

Former CLC chair Charlie Perkins, by then the chair of the Aboriginal Development Commission in Canberra, had been especially generous. "Without his help we would've struggled to complete the trip. Charlie welcomed the entire bus load into his offices where we shared lunch with him and his staff. He presented Dick Riley with a cheque for \$5,000 for the bus hire and \$1,000 in cash. It was much appreciated," she said. Bruce Reyburn said he responded without hesitation: "Of course I must help them. They are my people".

The Tranby College in Sydney provided accommodation and meals, the Bourke residents gave them access to the town hall and the Charleville community and show society put them up when the roads were closed due to flooding. On 21 August 1983, the group finally made it home.

Flooding also delayed the return journey of Jorna Murphy's group to Tennant Creek in February this year. As Lhere Artepe (Todd River) broke its banks Ms Murphy wondered whether the old photo of her family is a good sign.

Will the High Court again back the traditional owners? She won't know for many months, but she is sure of one thing. "We need to keep the water for the next generations. Water is life."



Jorna Murphy's father drove Ngurrutiji participants to Tennant Creek to catch the bus to Canberra. On board were Dick Riley (swinging the door open), Myrtle Kennedy (climbing out the back) and some of the kids chosen for the trip. Photo by David Alexander

# Holmes Bros OAM: senior knowledge holders recognised



Frankie Holmes OAM, Donald Thompson OAM and Casey Holmes OAM.

“I GUESS that means I’m a really good bloke.”

That’s how highly respected Alyawarr elder Frankie Holmes greeted the news that he and his brothers Casey Holmes and Donald Thompson have been awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for their outstanding service to their people.

The three traditional owners for Antarrangeny country are widely recognised as senior knowledge holders across the east of the Central Land Council region.

Their cultural authority, profound knowledge of ceremonies and songlines, deep connection to country, and their commitment to sharing their knowledge and protecting significant sites have made the brothers trusted sources of guidance far beyond their own country.

“It’s the way we’ve worked for so many different places and communities. Helping people right across, in this great area. We’ve done it the right way,” Frankie Holmes said.

“After all the good work that we’ve done, we feel it’s really great to be recognised and to get this award.”

The brothers have also been strong supporters of the campaign against the controversial Singleton water licence, a case recently heard by the High Court.

Frankie Holmes accompanied five native title holders of the pastoral lease to the court hearing in Canberra.

“It’s water that’s special and it’s just not replaceable. Water is main thing, very important. It must be looked after. Our body and our blood and everything depends on water. Without water, we finish,” he said.

The brothers have been elected repeatedly to represent their communities on the Central Land Council.

They have taught generations of school students and are involved with Codes 4 Life, an Aboriginal program that aims to reconnect

Hill Got a Story and they have featured in the ABC’s First Weapons program.

Throughout their lives, the brothers have played a vital role in ensuring the continuation of Alyawarr law, language and culture, for future generations.

“Looking after land and country, especially like sacred trees, is very, very important for us. Ancestors hand it over to us to look after these waters and these lands. This is very important to keep it going and for us to keep passing it on,” Frankie Holmes said.

“I’m still feeling good about all this, and we’re still going strong.”

**“Ancestors hand it over to us to look after these waters and these lands. This is very important to keep it going and for us to keep passing it on.”**

They have contributed their extensive cultural knowledge to the CLC’s work on the Sandover, Kurundi, Singleton, Davenport, Tennant Creek Station and Epenarra native title claims and the Angarapa, Alyawarr, Anurrete and Wakaya Alyawarre land claims.

men with their responsibilities and communities.

The brothers have also contributed to the Alyawarr-English Dictionary, the Alyawarr Picture Dictionary and other significant cultural resources.

Their stories are preserved in the CLC’s oral history collection Every

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# Rangers try new way of measuring success

THE CENTRAL Land Council's Warlpiri Rangers have teamed up with the Spinifex Rangers of the Great Victoria Desert in Western Australia to trial a new method to measure the success of their land management work. The desert habitat method is a way to track and measure how traditional burning practices keep native plants and animals in spinifex country healthy.

Ecologists and rangers worked together to create the method and have been testing it for several years. Recently they met up in the Southern Tanami Indigenous Protected Area to share burning and other land management knowledge. They checked if different groups can understand the method and if it will work across the desert. "We're trying to look after this country," IPA management committee member Maisie Wayne said. "We care for our land so it's a place where we can teach our children and leave them with our stories and knowledge to keep forever and pass on."

Traditional burning techniques have kept country healthy for tens of thousands of years. Committee member Nancy Collins said "when we go out burning, we take elders too, traditional owners, and they teach us which way to burn in the right way". This knowledge has been passed down for generations, and the desert habitat method is one way to show the rest of the world the impact and importance of this work.

It involves looking at satellite images, vegetation maps and rainfall data, as well as country visits to monitor the effects of burning spinifex, documenting the age of spinifex plants and mapping weeds. "[We were] talking about whereabouts to set up some plots so that we can go out again next



Michael and Tommy Watson camped at Chilla Well during the desert habitat method trial. Photo by Andre Sawenko

time to look at that area again, what happened to it. Different types of warlu [fire] with burnt grass and good grass. Has it been burned again or maybe been growing healthy," said committee member Benedict Mosquito.

Aboriginal land managers use the method to measure exactly how they are making country healthier. This is important because it will let them earn pieces of paper called biodiversity certificates that are worth money. They will then be able to sell these pieces of paper to

companies that want to make up for damaging country or support land managers for other reasons. This trade happens in a nature repair market where those who destroy nature can pay those who look after it.

Traditional owners of savannah country are earning money for burning country the right way because there is already a method for measuring the impact of cool season burning north of the CLC region. Most of the CLC region is desert, and desert does not store

enough carbon for groups to make money from burning. The desert habitat method is a different way for Aboriginal land managers to make money from looking after country.

"We're the teachers. We know all the animals, we know this country, we know all the plants," committee member Tommy Jangala Watson said. "It's our job to teach this knowledge to our young ones, so this gets passed on to all generations to come." Nature markets might help to make this happen.



Elders and rangers looked at recently burned country on the Southern Tanami Indigenous Protected Area. Photo by Andre Sawenko



Tommy Watson and George Atkins discussed the trial. Photo by Andre Sawenko



Madeleine Dixon talked about patchwork burning. Photo by Andre Sawenko



Trial participants visited a rock hole near Chilla Well. Photo by Andre Sawenko

# MEET OUR RANGERS

## What kind of jobs do you do as a ranger?

We learn our language, culture, about land and where we are from. We look after country and take out traditional owners to the countries they are from. We listen to them about what we can do to look after their country. I've been going to Ti Tree school and helping them with language and culture. How to survive out bush and how to get bush tucker. We also took the junior rangers to local rock holes and taught them stories, because every rock hole has a story.

## What do you like best about the work?

I love going out bush and camping for ranger projects and training. My highlights would be meeting, learning, finding out about family connections and also learning my culture. I enjoy travelling out to different country and meeting other rangers.

## Why do you think ranger work is important?

We need to protect our country and show our future generations how important the land is to us and teach them how to look after it. It's important to be a role model.

## Why do you think it's important to have women as rangers?

We have women sites and knowledge we need to look after. I've been talking a lot with other women and encouraging them. It's important to have young

women learn their background, especially from grandmothers, having knowledge passed onto them.

## What message would you share to women wanting to become rangers?

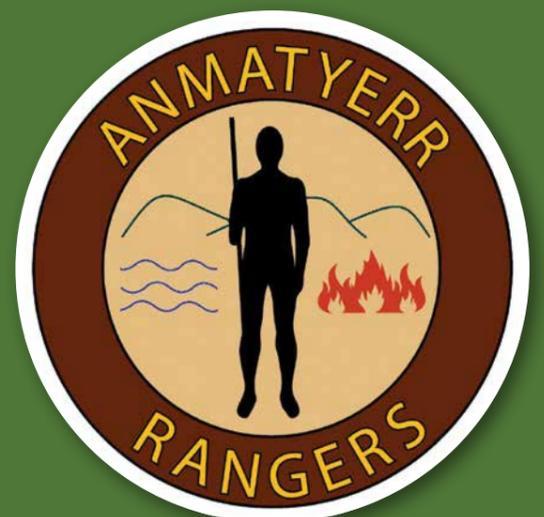
Come along, join us and learn. It's pretty good. I'm the only women ranger in Ti Tree now, so if we can get more young ladies involved, we can do more work in the future. Don't be shy to become a ranger, if men can do it, women can do it too!

## What future projects would you like to see?

I want to do more bush trips with women and teaching young people about singing, dancing and painting up. I want to do a trip with old people, record their stories so it can help me, my kids and their kids. I would like to work towards putting up signs at protected sites and record them.



## Enita Morton



# CLC cadetship accompanies Arrernte man on his creative journey

A FOUR-YEAR cadetship with the Central Land Council's communications team has worked out well for Bachelor of Animation graduate Declan Miller.

The Arrernte man found employment with the CLC's land management team as soon as he graduated from Brisbane's Griffith University late last year. Mr Miller is now using his illustration and animation skills to bring to life CLC policies for rangers and other staff while he pursues an honours degree.

Studying at Centralian Senior College in Mparntwe (Alice Springs), during his schooling years his passion for visual arts grew and he decided to study animation. Thanks to the CLC's cadetship program he was able to pursue his interests and learn valuable skills during semester holiday placements twice a year.

With his extensive creative knowledge Mr Miller is a part of Stick Mob Studio in Mparntwe, which works with Aboriginal artists, telling stories about growing up on country through comics and illustrations.

"The skills I've learned from CLC and from university helped mould me into a storyteller," he said.

The CLC's cadetship program offers financial support to Aboriginal university students and hands-on learning during paid holiday placements. Cadets work for up to 14 weeks a year, while the program pays for their flights and accommodation.

During his placements, Mr Miller

gathered stories out bush, interviewing people and taking pictures. One of his favourite bush trips was a burning trip last year to Jinkaji, savannah country near Elliot. He talked with elders about their carbon business while watching how rangers and traditional owners burn their country during the cool season to prevent destructive summer bushfires, earning carbon credits in the process.

"I was out for a whole week, I got all my interviews from the rangers and elders on the first day, so I spent the rest of the trip cooking, helping out and getting to know them," Mr Miller said.

"We all loved to work with Declan because he didn't just rely on his visual creativity but turned his hands at anything his colleagues asked of him, often before they had time to ask," said communications team manager Elke Wiesmann.

"He was also a wonderful mentor for our newest cadet, Shirlinda Elston."

Mr Miller encourages other Aboriginal students to join the CLC's cadetship program.

"The benefits are just phenomenal. It's just the best decision you'll make," he said.

He looks forward to the next stage of his learning journey, now that he has successfully completed his cadetship.

"I'm super proud of myself for getting through it and the sky's the limit. Doing honours is the next step, to see what else I can study and what else I can do."



Since graduating from Griffiths University former CLC cadet Declan Miller has been using his illustration and animation skills to support the CLC's land management team.



## GET PAID TO STUDY

Apply for a cadetship

The Central Land Council is offering cadetships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who are studying at a university or are planning to do so.

**HOW DOES IT WORK?** You will study full-time during the academic year and attend 12 weeks of placement at the CLC each year.

**WHO CAN APPLY?** You can apply if you are enrolled or have been accepted to study full-time at a university in Australia.

### Your benefits

- a fortnightly salary for the whole year
- support with textbooks, laptop, equipment and travel costs
- mentoring and support from industry professionals.

**Contact the Human Resources Team**  
on 08 8951 0660 or [hr.training@clc.org.au](mailto:hr.training@clc.org.au)



# Sharing desert cat hunting knowhow with Tasmania

KUYU PUNGU (master tracker) Christine Napanangka Ellis Michaels has shared her cat management knowledge with Tasmania's Pakana Rangers.

The rangers had invited Ms Ellis Michaels, from the Warlpiri Rangers in Nyirripi, to Lungtalanana (Clarke Island), a small island between Tasmania and the mainland of Australia to learn how to rid it of feral cats.

The Tasmanians were keen to draw on her decades of experience tracking, trapping and hunting feral cats in the desert. So over the course of a week last year, she shared her expertise. She used material from the Central Land Council's Yitaki Mani (reading the country) project – a training program she created with other kuyu pingu to keep traditional tracking knowledge alive.

The Pakana Rangers were impressed to see Ms Ellis Michaels using her desert tracking skills in a tricky new environment. The island is covered in thick vegetation and rocks, and the strong wind and frequent rain wipe out tracks quickly.

"It must have been difficult coming into a different country type and still applying her skills," ranger supervisor Kulai Sculthorpe said, "She did an amazing job, showing us tracking skills under difficult circumstances. She was really

attentive to what she was doing. She was so observant."

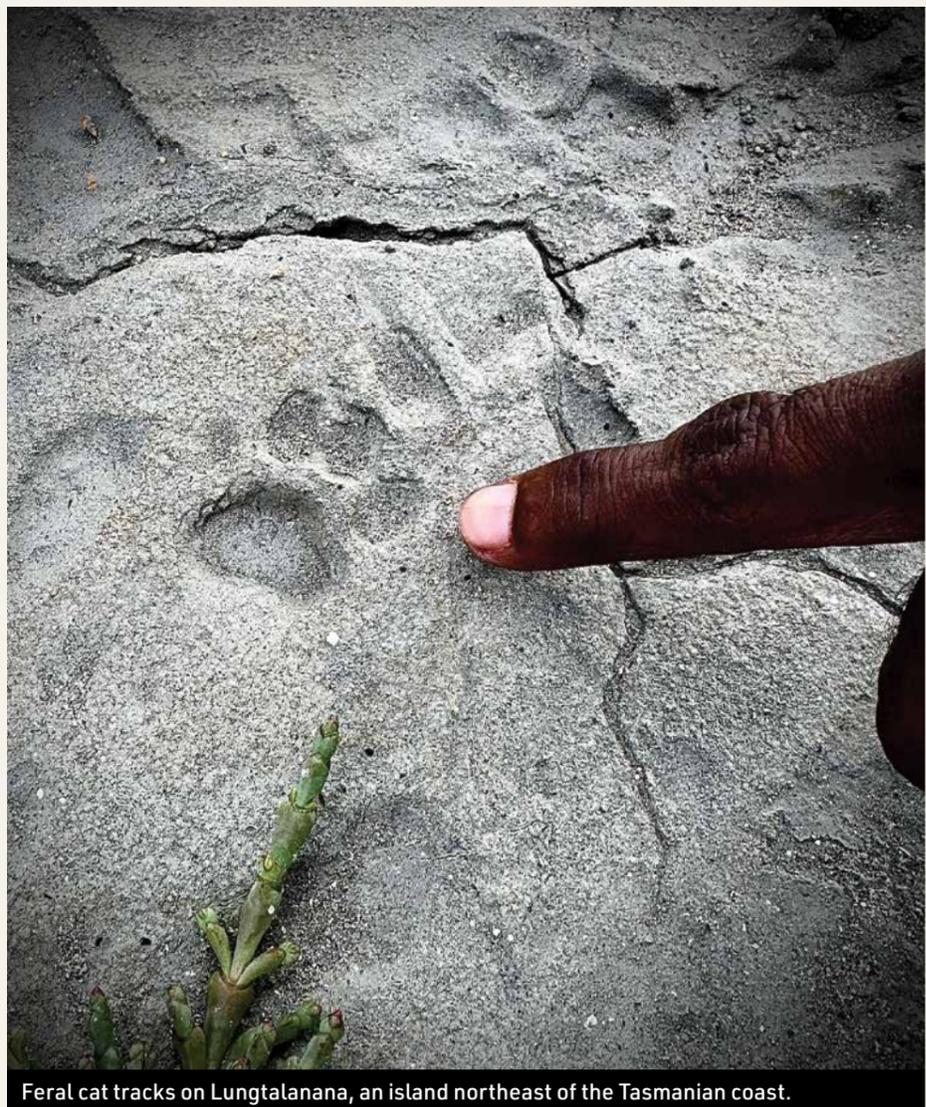
The kuyu pingu and Indigenous Desert Alliance ecologist Rachel Paltridge, who had come along, both felt that eradicating cats from Lungtalanana was possible. They told the rangers to "go hard for a shorter time," rather than on-again, off-again attempts over many years, which can make cats shy of traps and baits.

Ms Paltridge said they analysed feral cat scat (poo) and saw that they were eating native lizards, birds and mice.

Ms Ellis Michaels enjoyed sharing knowledge with the Pakana Rangers and learning about island country. She saw her very first pademelons, little native animals that look a bit like mala (hare wallabies). She heard about the mutton birds on neighbouring islands and how the rangers want to bring back wombats.

"I felt happy and proud to share my knowledge with those young rangers. I hope they start catching cats soon and hope they find some more special animals on their island," she said.

"I'd like to thank them for looking after us and showing us around. We would also love to invite some of them back to desert country to teach them more about tracking."



Feral cat tracks on Lungtalanana, an island northeast of the Tasmanian coast.



Christine Napanangka Ellis Michaels shared her knowledge with the Pakana Rangers.



The rangers set traps to catch feral cats on Lungtalanana (Clarke Island).



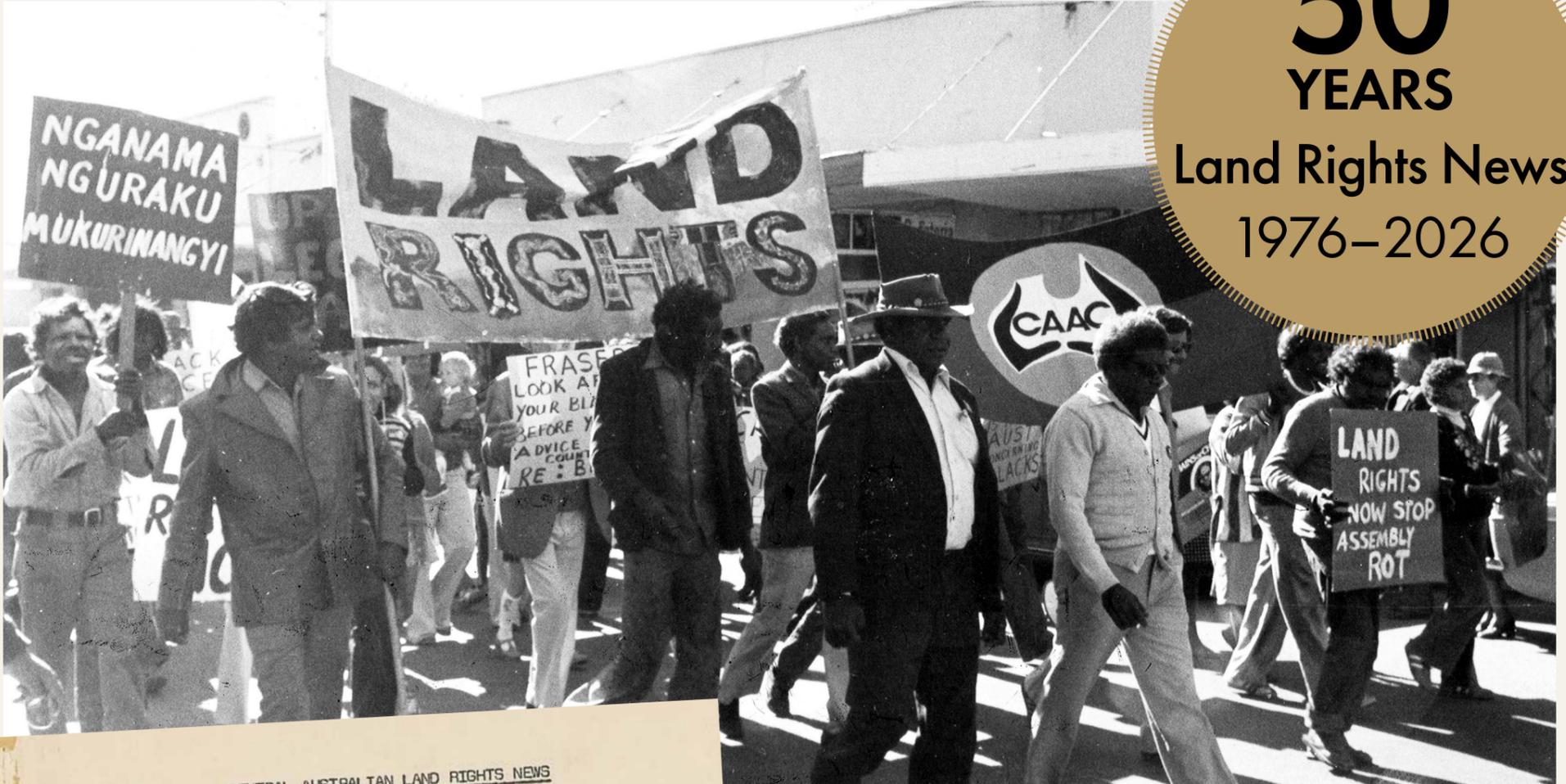
**Any questions about CLC business?**  
Call your region's office

	1. ALICE SPRINGS Shawn Foster 8951 6264
	2. SOUTH WEST Shane Stirling 8951 0577
	6. TENNANT CREEK Jackson Cole 8951 0543
	3. NORTH WEST Glen Woods 8951 6255
	7. EASTERN SANDOVER Cyril Kunoth 8951 0606
	4. TANAMI Amos Egan 8951 0581
	8. EASTERN PLENTY Richard Dodd 8951 0622
	9. CENTRAL Nathan Pepperill 8951 6339
	5. WEST Vacant 8951 6255

# “It may get better, but don't hold your breath”

# 50 YEARS

## Land Rights News 1976–2026



### CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN LAND RIGHTS NEWS

Have a look at our first edition. Terrible is'nt it? It may get better but don't hold your breath waiting.

This is the year of land rights in the Northern Territory. Victories won now will establish the pattern for the next fifty years of development in Aboriginal Affairs. If you want the inside information on what Aborigines are doing to win Land Rights then the newsletter won't tell you. But it may give the odd hint.

In order to finance the newsletter (which costs us virtually nothing to produce) we propose to charge exorbitant rates according to your wealth. The funds so obtained will also be used to provide a base for the independent dissemination of news throughout Australia.

Editions every fortnight (at least we promise to try).

#### Suggested Annual Subscriptions.

Fat Cats, wealthy miners, publicspirited and funded bodies.	\$25.00
Not so important but still quite rich people.	\$10.00
Lousy rich people and poor but conscientious supporters.	\$ 5.00
Supporter, friends and anyone else.	\$ 4.00

Send your subscriptions to

The Secretary,  
Central Land Council,  
P.O. Box 1960,  
ALICE SPRINGS. N.T. 5750

LAND RIGHTS NEWS.

APRIL 1976. NO 1.

#### WHY A NEWSLETTER ?.

This is our first attempt to have news on land rights matters put together and sent to all communities. Many people have asked us to produce a newsletter but it has been very hard to get time to do so. We hope that we are able to put out a newsletter every two weeks or so but to make it effective it would be good to have someone working on it regularly.

Unfortunately, because our budget is so restricted we cannot pay people to do this work but if someone would like to volunteer his or her services then we would be very pleased to accept.

For the newsletter to be a success we need to have your comments. Some matters can not be discussed in an open newsletter since they should first be discussed in the full council meetings.

#### RESULTS OF DELEGATION TO CANBERRA.

The big march and meeting in Alice Springs on 13th March 1976 was a great success. At that meeting a delegation was chosen to go to Canberra to see the Prime Minister, Mr. Fraser and other Ministers. In the delegation which finally went to Canberra were:

Wenten Rubuntja.  
Johnny Lynch.  
Wilton Foster.  
Simon Enalanga.  
Neville Perkins.  
Geoff Eames.

The delegation was to seek guarantees on two issues:

- 1). That the Land Rights Bill would be dealt with by Federal Parliament and not by the Darwin Assembly mob.
- 2). That cut backs on spending would be stopped and people who were sacked reinstated.

The delegation was very successful simply because it had behind it the weight of support from so many people from many different tribes. Before the demonstration the Assembly blokes kept saying that the people on settlements, stations and missions did not support the Land Council and were happy to have the Assembly handle the Land Rights Law.

When so many people came into town from as far away as Wattie Creek and Ernabella the Assembly blokes still did not want to believe it. A story was spread in town that people only came in because the Land Council was paying \$10 each to them. Eric Manuell said that the tribal leaders who attended the demonstration were "insignificant" people and that the people who came in didn't know why they were here. Bernie Kilgariff and Manuell both said that the delegation did not represent Aborigines but comprised of "radical" people who had no support.

Fortunately Mr. Fraser and Mr. Viner did not take this view and gave the delegation a very good hearing. Mr. Fraser guaranteed that Federal Parliament would pass the Land Rights Law. After the meeting with Mr. Fraser the delegation had long and friendly talks with Mr. Viner about the details that the C.L.C. would like in the Land Rights Bill. The delegation also had talks with heads of D.A.A. including Mr. Dexter, with Senator Neville Bonner, Senator Keefe and many other politicians.

Mr. Viner was very sympathetic about the problems caused by cut backs. He has promised that if each community which has had people sacked or work stopped because of cut backs, could write down what has happened and send it to C.L.C. he will personally look into the cases to see whether the money can be cut back.

2/

FROM THE “terrible” first typewritten edition the writers hoped “may get better” to Central Australia’s last printed paper (at least for a few years) – *Land Rights News* has never pulled punches.

Australia’s longest running newspaper, celebrating its 50th year, has proved since day one that fighting for your rights is a lot easier when you can also laugh at yourself. What other paper would feature a dead feral cat on the cover, draped fur-coat-like over the shoulders of famous Kiwirrkurra kitty killer Yukultji (Nolia) Napangati?

The changing face of *Land Rights News* mirrors the changes the Central Land Council itself has gone through. Not a woman in sight during the early years, except behind the scenes, to lots of women featuring everywhere.

The first edition from April 1976 is nine months older than the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*. A CLC section called the directorate put the newsletter together, and former director Patrick Dodson took great pride in his team hand-delivering it far and wide.

From 1991, the CLC published a joint edition with the Northern Land Council, with a print-run of more than 20,000 copies, but by 2011 both land councils realised their readers were better served by each putting out its own paper.

All editions going back to 1999 are at [www.clc.org.au](http://www.clc.org.au) – soon to be joined by the older editions, but don't hold your breath.

**CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN LAND RIGHTS NEWS**



*For an Inside View on LAND RIGHTS*

A Monthly Publication, Published by the Central Lands Council No. 6 February 1977



One of the Alice Springs Fringe camps during the recent wet period.

Authorised by Wenton Rubuntja President Central Land Council P.O. Box 1960, Alice Springs

**CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN Land Rights News**



AN OCCASIONAL PUBLICATION OF THE CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL . . . No. 15  
AUTUMN 1982  
ISSN 0313 - 6353. Registered for posting as a publication.

**SADADEEN**



Willie Rice, Amos Golder, Michael Rice and Augustine Rice describe the passage of the caterpillar dreaming at the Sadadeen Valley - a registered sacred site that the N.T. Government wants to use as an industrial site.

**Sacred Site or Industrial Site?  
FOR AN INSIDE VIEW ON  
LAND RIGHTS**

**LAND RIGHTS NEWS**  
CENTRAL AUSTRALIA

AUGUST No.20 Registered by Australia Post - Publication No. S8H0523 ISSN 0811-725X

**Aboriginal controls over mining under threat**

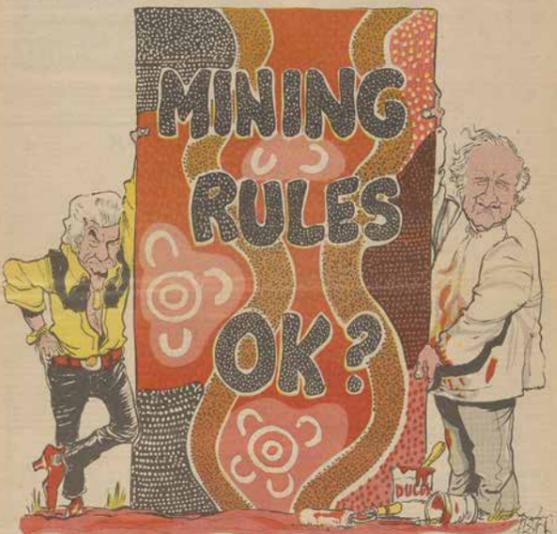
**LAND COUNCILS TAKE THE FIGHT TO CANBERRA**



Indigenous leaders from the Northern and Central Land Councils of Parliament House, Canberra in June 1984 to ask the Federal Government for a commitment to land rights and controls over mining activity.

**LAND RIGHTS NEWS** September 1985

ONE MOB ONE VOICE ONE LAND



**MINING RULES OK?**

*Howie and Holding: Painting by numbers*

INSIDE: Federation protests Cabinet endorsement . . .  
Our struggle goes to the United Nations . . .  
A declaration of indigenous rights . . .  
Land Rights - the story so far . . .  
The Government that wants to turn back the clock . . .  
No justice for the people who built the pastoral industry . . .

**LAND RIGHTS NEWS**

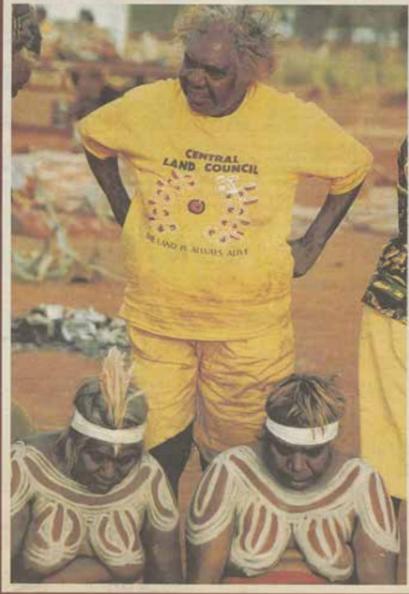


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**LAND RIGHTS NEWS**  
ONE MOB ONE VOICE ONE LAND  
Produced by the Central and Northern Land Councils Vol 9, No 42, June 1997

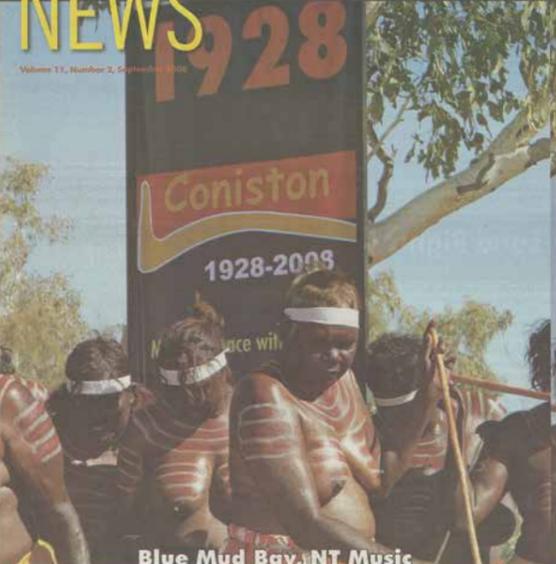
croker • uranium • timber creek



native title special edition

**LANDRIGHTS NEWS** 1928

Volume 11, Number 2, September 2003



**Blue Mud Bay, NT Music awards, Garma, Coniston 80 years on, Warlpiri education, The Big Walk**

**LANDRIGHTS NEWS** FREE  
CENTRAL AUSTRALIA  
April 2015 volume 15, number 1



**FERAL CAT ATTACK** PG. 22

**IAS CHAOS: MINISTERS FOR ABORIGINAL DESPAIR?** PG. 2  
**EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES** PG. 2  
**GREEK CRICKET AT IMPARJA CUP** PG. 33

Australia's Longest Running Aboriginal Newspaper proudly published by Central Land Council

**LANDRIGHTS NEWS** FREE  
CENTRAL AUSTRALIA  
March 2023 volume 13, number 1



**YES**

**OPEN YOUR HEART TO OUR VOICE** P. 4

**BOBCATS ARE WOMEN'S BUSINESS** P. 16  
**VOTE YES: NEW CLC CHAIR** P. 2  
**ARTIFACTS COME HOME** P. 10

Australia's Longest Running Aboriginal Newspaper proudly published by Central Land Council

# Celebrating 20 years of community driven development

IN 2001, Central Land Council director David Ross met with female Warlpiri teachers in Lajamanu. The group had a big vision for the future of Nyirrpri, Yuendumu, Lajamanu and Willowra. They told Mr Ross that for their children to walk strong in two worlds they needed a bilingual and bicultural education, designed by Yapa for Yapa.

“We asked Rossy if he could help us use money for education in our communities to run programs. Early childhood, country visits, elder payments, vehicles, learning centres and secondary [school] programs,” one of the women, the late Kumanjayi Napanangka Martin, said. “He told us to ‘be strong ladies, stand up and ask for it’”.

She said they were tired of waiting for governments “because we have been relying on government money for a long time”.

Mr Ross negotiated with Newmont for additional gold mining royalties to fund lifelong two way learning in the four communities. The CLC used the funds to set up the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust in 2005, and with it a groundbreaking way of working that invests Aboriginal funds in projects driven by Aboriginal people for Aboriginal people.

Two decades later the WETT has developed a Warlpiri school curriculum with bilingual education materials, champions learning and teaching on country with elders and in play groups, funds school excursions, supports boarding students and built learning centres for the whole community.

“Education is the key and to keep our culture, language and our Jukurrpa

strong,” said Verona Jurrah, a member of the trust’s advisory committee.

While the committee was working out how to best meet Yapa education needs, the Anangu traditional owners of the Uluru – Kata Tjuta National Park asked the CLC to help them come up with better ways of using the rent income from the park. The Uluru rent money project was born in 2006.

From these beginnings the CLC established a dedicated community development unit that today employs more than 30 staff supporting more than 100 working groups across its region. They have delivered 3,000 projects and invested \$300 million into their communities. This year the CLC celebrates the community development program’s 20th anniversary.

“We are proud of having developed a recognised way of working with Central Australian Aboriginal communities that puts Aboriginal people in the driving seat and shifts power about what happens in their communities,” CLC chief executive Les Turner said.

In the CLC’s ‘bottom-up’ approach to development the vision and plans come from the community and are not handed down by governments. “The community development program is helping make people stronger,” said the late Uluru rent money group member Julie Clyne. “It makes us happy to be doing more projects. We are in control of the process.” Papunya working group member Lynda Lechleitner says the program “tries to give people a voice and helps them understand how they can spend their money to make their community better”.

Communities – not governments – make project decisions because they are using their own money from land use agreements such as rent for Territory parks and mining compensation payments. People consider information, choose projects and plan and make decisions together. It’s about having the skills to take control and shape every project, with support from the CLC and outside experts. “Our voice is getting stronger. We have more knowledge to have the conversations with kardiya. It’s not all one way now,” said Kurra Aboriginal Corporation director Roger Japaljarri Jurrah.

Today, the work goes beyond buildings and programs. Communities now develop masterplans that set out how they want to live on their land. They talk up strongly to governments and show people around the world what self-determination looks like. “You sit down with your mouth closed at the table, you won’t get nowhere. You gotta speak up for your community,” said Imanpa working group member Kathleen Luckey.

Good governance, doing things the right way in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal worlds, makes for strong projects and creates change. A dedicated governance support program, developed in 2018, helps the boards of the Granites Mine Affected Area and Kurra Aboriginal corporations in the Tanami manage mining money and plan for the long term.

This training has helped Mr Jurrah learn how to manage money. “Money for Yapa is like the wind, it comes and goes. Now we know how to save it and grow it. We don’t have to spend it.”

Some communities and groups get much less income from land use agreements than GMAAAC and Kurra. That makes it hard to dream big. To help those communities, the CLC worked with the federal government on a program where the government matches every dollar a community invests, up to a limit of \$150,000. This ‘matched funds’ initiative allows communities with less money to do more – from eight projects in 2020 to more than 260 today.

**“Our voice is getting stronger. We have more knowledge to have the conversations with kardiya. It’s not all one way now.”**

Many Aboriginal people gained jobs through community led projects. Yapa researchers collect stories from their neighbours and families about WETT programs and share this feedback with the trust’s advisory committee, communities and conferences.

When Aboriginal people lead, communities thrive. The CLC’s community development approach proves that deep listening, two way learning and local decision making create lasting change. This is self-determination in action.



Warlpiri Education and Training Trust advisory committee members Maisie Kitson, Fiona Gibson, Valerie Patterson and Kumanjayi Napanangka Martin. Photo by Chloe Erlich



# Communities invest in community jobs

LOCAL jobs help families and keep money in the community. Every year hundreds of Aboriginal people get work on country through the Central Land Council's community development program.

In the last financial year alone 680 found jobs thanks to the program.

These jobs pay wages and make life better in remote communities. They support bilingual education, school trips and many other projects.

Aboriginal groups plan, fund and monitor projects, such as playgrounds, walking trails and sports facilities. Whenever possible, they team up with Aboriginal-owned organisations and businesses.

Under agreements with the CLC these partners implement the projects with the groups and employ the local workers.



**Alarna Gordon – water park worker, YMCA, Lajamanu**

"I like working with the kids and bringing my own kids here as well. I love the water park, so I decided to work here. I make sure the kids are playing safe and give them food when we do barbeques on Fridays."

**Julie Anna Rice – patrol worker, Southern Tanami Kurdiji Indigenous Corporation, Yuendumu**

"I like communicating, engaging with the community and all the Yuendumu locals. I enjoy looking after the mob and the kids in the community."



**Diane Dixon – art worker, Engawala Art Centre**

"I've been working at Engawala art centre for two years; I did paintings first then I went to work here. I help the artists by cutting and measuring the canvas, cataloguing, pricing, doing payments for the artists and helping organise the art markets."



**Donisha Granites – patrol worker, Southern Tanami Kurdiji Indigenous Corporation, Yuendumu**

"I've worked with the night patrol for two years and one year in the office. I enjoy it, working with the mob on community and keeping it safe. I check the work shifts, check on the papers, the reports and the cars."

**Craig Forrester – lifeguard, Casa Leisure, Mutitjulu**

"I've been working at the Mutitjulu pool for four years now. It's pretty good, I like it. I patrol the pool and make sure to look after the people swimming, especially the kids when they swim after school. I have a great boss, the job is not too stressful and there's good people and systems here. It's great there are jobs like this in Mutitjulu."



**Kirsty Tillmouth – art worker, Engawala Art Centre**

"I've worked here at Engawala Art Centre for two years; the job is pretty good. My favourite part about working here is supporting the artists and learning stories behind all the paintings with the old ladies. I do things like sell artworks at the markets, fill up paints and cut canvas."

# Glamping on country: the Yalka Eco Stays journey

AFTER YEARS of patience and persistence, Western Aranda traditional owner Conrad Ratara is finally welcoming visitors to the eco glamping camp he has long imagined for Palm Valley.

"I feel good. Really good," Mr Ratara said.

Yalka Eco Stays, operated by the Yalka Ratara Aboriginal Corporation, is now hosting guests through a six-month trial with Intrepid Travel, marking a major milestone in a journey that began decades ago.

"We had our dream. We've been dreaming for a long time," Mr Ratara said.

The idea first took shape after the 1988 flood, when the old ranger station at Palm Valley became vacant after a new one was built on higher ground. Mr Ratara saw the potential to create something that would properly welcome visitors onto Western Aranda country.

"We got our good country. People come here and nobody's welcoming them, nobody's talking to them. That's why I wanted to do something like this."

Before the first tent could be installed, Mr Ratara and his family had to establish a corporation and work through the process of securing a lease through the Central Land Council.

"The land council really supported me to get my lease so I could run my own show," he said.

With the lease in place, the corporation successfully applied to the Aboriginals Benefit Account for a grant to purchase eight luxury tents.

"I'm proud I got my tents," Mr Ratara said.

Last May, Mr Ratara used parks rent income to purchase furniture for the tents. Parks rent income has further supported repairs to the old ranger station and funded tools for artefact making, business insurance and ongoing operational costs.

"We didn't get a loan. We used parks rent money and ABA supported the rest," he said.

Each evening, Mr Ratara meets visitors, walks with them on country

and shares what he can of the story handed down from his father and grandfather.

"They enjoy the walk, the talk. They enjoy seeing our people own our own tent and our own business," he said.

The connection with Intrepid Travel, a small group tour operator, began last year and has now moved into a six-month trial. The trial brings tour groups to the Palm Valley camp two days a week.

"Every time I get guests, I get good feedback. Peaceful land, good feeling," he said.

If the trial develops into a longterm partnership, Mr Ratara hopes the business will create new jobs for Western Aranda people on country, such as guiding, hospitality and buffel grass management work.

"I want to see our young people working here instead of doing other things," he said.

**"The land council really supported me to get my lease so I could run my own show."**



"I feel good. Really good": Conrad Ratara with his wife Noelene.

The corporation is also exploring training opportunities for local staff through the partnership.

Starting the business was not easy. Funding was a major hurdle and the wait for approvals stretched over many years.

"It's not overnight. It takes a long time to wait. Be patient," Mr Ratara said.

Yalka, the business name, comes from the bush onion, chosen because it is simple and easy to pronounce.

Looking ahead, Mr Ratara is hopeful but cautious about getting too big too soon.

"Like they say, little things, big things grow. We'll see how it goes," he said.

**"I'm really looking forward to seeing people doing something like this."**

He hopes other Aboriginal corporations will be inspired to pursue their own enterprises.

"I'm happy for them to come and ask me a question: how did you get this far?" he said.

"I'm really looking forward to seeing people doing something like this."



The Aboriginals Benefit Account paid for eight luxury tents for Yalka Eco Stays at Palm Valley.

## Vincent Lingiari Art Award celebrates big land rights anniversary

ARTISTS from across the Central Land Council region are working on their entries for the fourth Vincent Lingiari Art Award.

This year, artists are invited to reflect on the theme Our Country, Our Culture: 50 Years of Land Rights.

The award marks the 50th anniversary of the passing of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act (NT) in 1976. The groundbreaking federal law set up the Territory's land councils and allowed them to claim more than half of the NT back for the traditional owners of the country.

Presented by the CLC and Desert, the 2026 Vincent Lingiari Art Award exhibition will open in August. For the first time, the \$10,000 Award will be part of the annual Desert Mob event. The winner will be announced on 10 September during the joint celebration of the Vincent Lingiari Art Award and Desert Mob at the

Araluen Arts Centre in Mparntwe (Alice Springs).

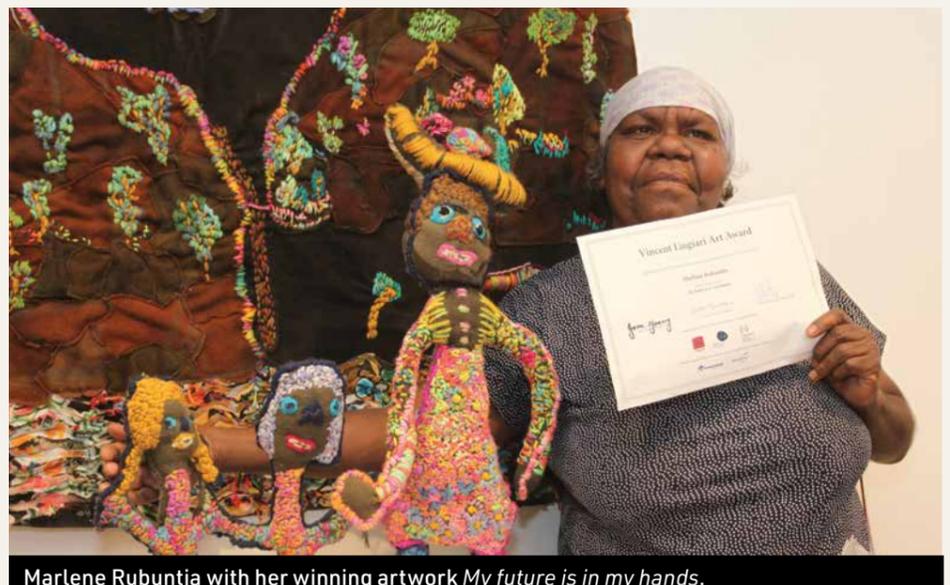
"Desart is proud to again partner with the Central Land Council to present the Vincent Lingiari Art Award," Desart chief executive Philip Watkins said.

"Our artists today are the inheritors of the legacy of people like Vincent Lingiari, who fought hard to have our land and other rights recognised. The expression of our culture through art is a catalyst in allowing our voices to be heard; always has been and always will be."

The CLC and Desert have been partnering since 2016, when they presented the very first Vincent Lingiari Art Award at the Tangentyere Artists Gallery. That year, Marlene Rubuntja won the award for her soft sculpture, *My future is in my hands*. Other past winners were Eunice Jack, from Ikuntji, in 2019, and Grace Robinya, from Laramba, in 2021.

In late August, CLC delegates will preview this year's finalists and choose the winner of the \$2,000 Delegates' Choice Award during their council meeting in Kalkaringi.

Entries close on 10 April. For more information about how to enter, artists can contact [vlaa@desart.com.au](mailto:vlaa@desart.com.au).



Marlene Rubuntja with her winning artwork *My future is in my hands*.

## COMMUNITY IMPACT AND INNOVATION GRANTS

Aboriginal Investment NT's **Community Impact and Innovation Grants** give access to apply for between \$300,000 and \$1 million to support medium-scale Aboriginal community-led projects in the Northern Territory.

The Community Impact and Innovation Grants are designed to **support projects** that **achieve cultural, social and/or economic impact or innovation.**

To learn more about the Grants or to apply, visit **[www.aboriginalinvestment.org.au/community-impact-and-innovation-grants](http://www.aboriginalinvestment.org.au/community-impact-and-innovation-grants)**



ABORIGINAL  
INVESTMENT

# Willowra paints cultural maps to keep country and stories alive

IN WILLOWRA, the community has come together to work on a big mapping project. Not an ordinary map with site names and roads but a canvas painting about country and culture. The maps show the location of bush tucker, medicine and songlines.

The project began in 2012 when Willowra elders shared their worries that young people were losing their connection to country. Inspired by a map on the Stuart Highway roadhouse and Paruku, a Desert Lake exhibition at Araluen, the late former Central Land Council executive member Teddy Long came up with the idea of using painted canvas maps to maintain knowledge.

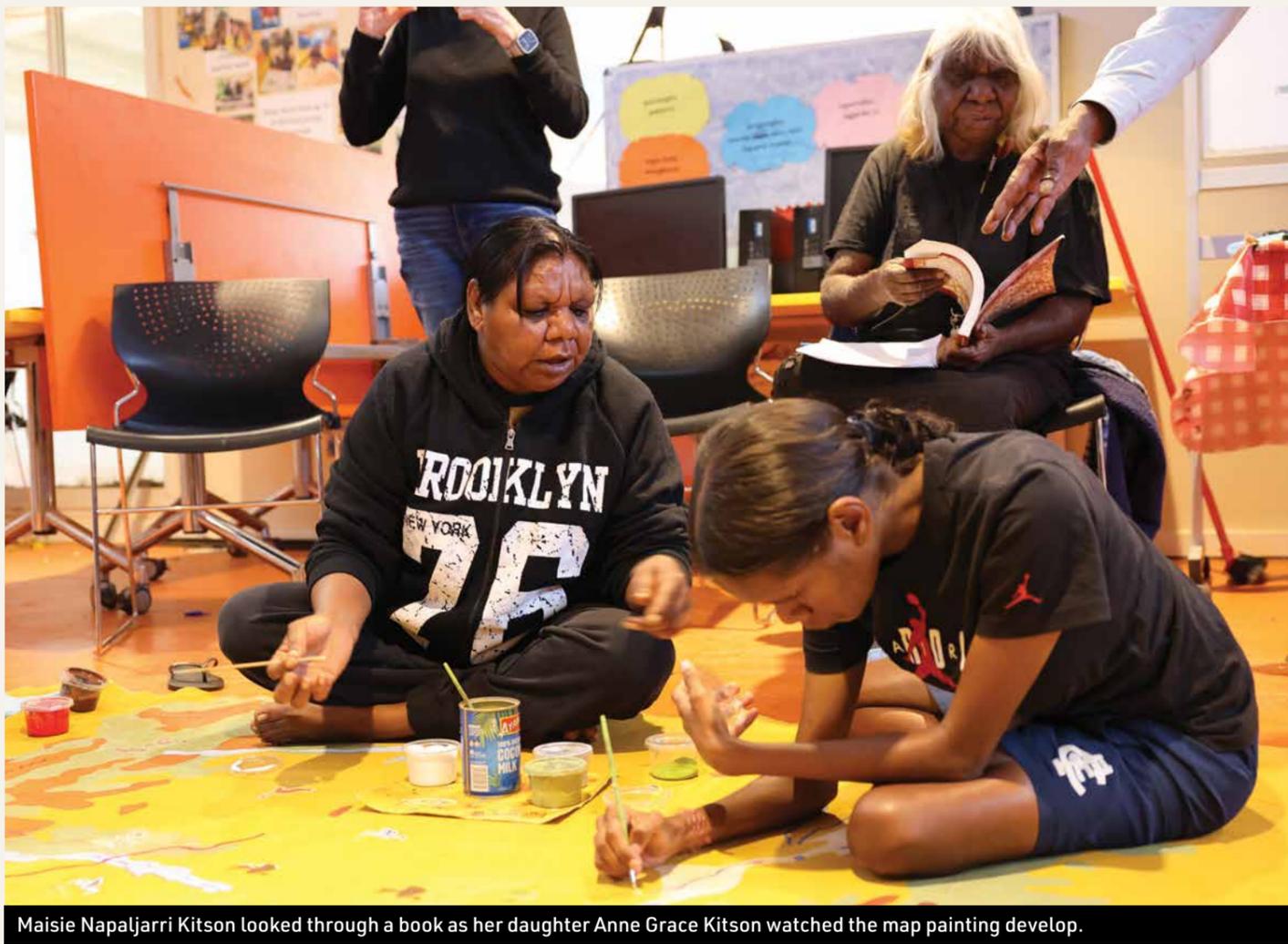
Willowra elders decided to record sacred sites and use the maps to teach young people and plan land management activities. The first map documented hundreds of sacred sites along the Yarlalinji (Lander) River. It led the community to use its GMAAAC income to fund more site visits and for each country group to create paintings of their country with support of the artist Kim Mahood.

It brought the community closer to the land, their culture and each other. Referring to a map that incorporates all the countries, Maisie Napaljarri Kitson said, "We all work together. Young and middle-aged, in separate countries, and on one canvas".

Dwayne Ross said the project is very important to the community. "It's about the future, keeping the stories and land alive and creating a map so every child born knows where they belong. And it's very hard to keep that going."

"That knowledge is like a fire stick: when you're walking with a fire stick, fire goes down, and you don't know where to go. Keep that fire going, burning, and show the younger ones, keep that story going and also keep the people together."

Petronella Vaarzon-Morel, an anthropologist who has worked with the community since the 1970s, and is working with anthropologist Luke Kelly on the project, said a key part of the mapping process was visiting and



Maisie Napaljarri Kitson looked through a book as her daughter Anne Grace Kitson watched the map painting develop.

documenting sacred sites, many of which hadn't been visited for decades.

She said the response has been overwhelmingly positive. "People have just been so involved. And it's developed and grown through the generations. Many people who started off working on the project have passed away, but younger people are taking it on and are working on it.

"Everything from all the trips to the country, visiting the different places, learning about them. There's never been a problem of getting people involved. It's their project, their idea, their money. They're directing it. They make the decisions about where we go next," she said.

Mr Ross said the stories are told while painting. "I say, you belong

here. All this is your land, and you're the guardian of the other part of the land. The fathers and mothers, the grandmother, grandfather – they are all here, connected."

The community uses the maps for learning on country. "The elders would take it to the ceremony ground, roll it out on the side of a Toyota there and use it to teach people about their countries and where they take the song line to and where they stop, and teaching them not to jump over into other people's countries," Ms Vaarzon-Morel said.

It is hoped the maps will be displayed in an exhibition, before returning to Willowra, where they will continue to teach future generations.

**"It's about the future, keeping the stories and land alive and creating a map so every child born knows where they belong. And it's very hard to keep that going."**



Warlpiri families mapped their sacred sites and culture on canvas at the Willowra Learning Centre.

## WETT shares 20 year education journey in Aotearoa

Nine members of the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust attended the World Indigenous People's Conference on Education in Auckland, Aotearoa.

They shared the trust's 20 year journey strengthening Warlpiri language and culture in education and youth development with more than 4,000 conference participants. They also visited the Kia Aroha School that is nurturing the next generation of 'warrior scholars'. The group learned about the school's approaches to bilingual and bicultural education, critical thinking and taking part in community life.



## Women rangers focus on wellbeing during Women's Health Week

Central Land Council women rangers and other land management staff gathered at the Desert Park in Mparntwe (Alice Springs) for National Women's Health Week, to look after their own wellbeing.

SpeakWrite founder and town councillor Cherisse Buzzacott, led conversations on physical and mental health, stress management and Yoga Shala ran a yoga session.

"We carry a lot. Who looks after the women?" former Anangu Luritjiku ranger group facilitator Lynda Lechleitner said.

Participants described the gathering as empowering and holistic. "We know when we've got strong women our communities will do a lot better," Ms Buzzacott said.



## Traditional fire knowledge shapes 2026 burn program

More than 40 Central Land Council rangers and traditional owners from Tennant Creek, Yuendumu, Willowra and Nyirripi met at the Newhaven Wildlife Sanctuary to plan the 2026 burning program.

Traditional owner Fred Williams got his knowledge of fire from his father and grandfather. "I learnt by watching how fires move and change and feeling which way the wind is going. I have deep respect for fire," he said.

Traditional owner Nelnita Morrison, who became involved in fire management three years ago, said the work has strengthened her family connections. "The first time in the chopper was with my brother and my cousin and he told me where I connect to the land and where I come from," she said.



## Cheaper groceries helps cost of living

A new federal government program which lowers the cost of 30 essential foods and household goods is making a difference in remote communities.

The low-cost essentials subsidy scheme aims to lower the high cost of living by cutting prices of the 30 items by between a third and half.

Ntaria resident Raphael Impu said he's seen a big change since the program came in. The Ntaria Outback Store managers have been great, he said. "They've been working with community a lot to keep the prices down."

Signing up for the reduced prices program is one part of that. More people are shopping in the community, and while people still travel to Alice Springs for big shops, Mr Impu said the cheaper items mean people can travel less and go longer between trips.

"People manage a bit better now," said store director Nicholas Williams. "We see the numbers as well here. It's gone up in sales because it's cheaper here."

Fifty-seven stores in the Northern Territory signed up to the reduced price scheme. Having seen the effects in his community, Mr Williams hopes it will be expanded to more shops.





CLC chair Warren Williams spoke at the 40th anniversary celebration of the handback of the Uluru – Kata Tjuta National Park.



Central Australian men called for an end to domestic and family violence at a march organised by the Ingkintja Male Health Service in December 2025.



CLC staff Tom Dews and Dante Mavec at the smoking ceremony before the hearing of Singleton's native title holders.



Shirleen Campbell, Barbara and Connie Shaw from the Tangentyere Women's Family Safety Group spoke at the men's march.



CLC executive members Leroy Lester, Neville Petrick, Jackie Mahoney and Geoffrey Matthews marched against domestic violence.



Canberra traditional owners welcomed traditional owners of country affected by the controversial Singleton Station water licence with a smoking ceremony outside the High Court.



Roger Tommy and Michael Jones at the High Court in February.



Sandra Morrison joined traditional owners of Singleton Station for a BBQ in Tennant Creek to cheer on the group that travelled to the High Court hearing.



Les Turner and Mischa Cartwright congratulated Helen Wilson, Dana Bohning, Francine McCarthy and Sherilyn Barnes for their long service to the Central Land Council.



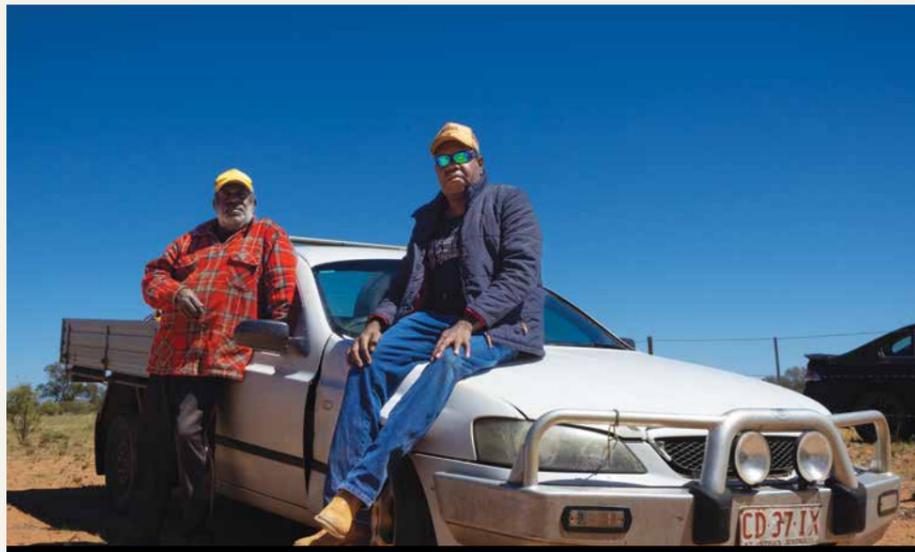
Lots of CLC staff gathered for the organisation's big day out in December 2025 at Mparntwe (Alice Springs).



Amy Nelson celebrated the Arlparra church opening.



Dancers performed at the 40th anniversary celebration of the handback of the Uluru – Kata Tjuta National Park.



New CLC members Desmond and Gideon Presley.



Jackie Mahoney from Alpururulam spoke up at the council meeting at Yulara in October.



Utopia ranger Peter Skinner worked on a controlled burn near Arlparra.



Amy Stafford and Carol Corby attended a clean water meeting at Laramba.



Men performed at 40th handback celebration of the Uluru – Kata Tjuta National Park.



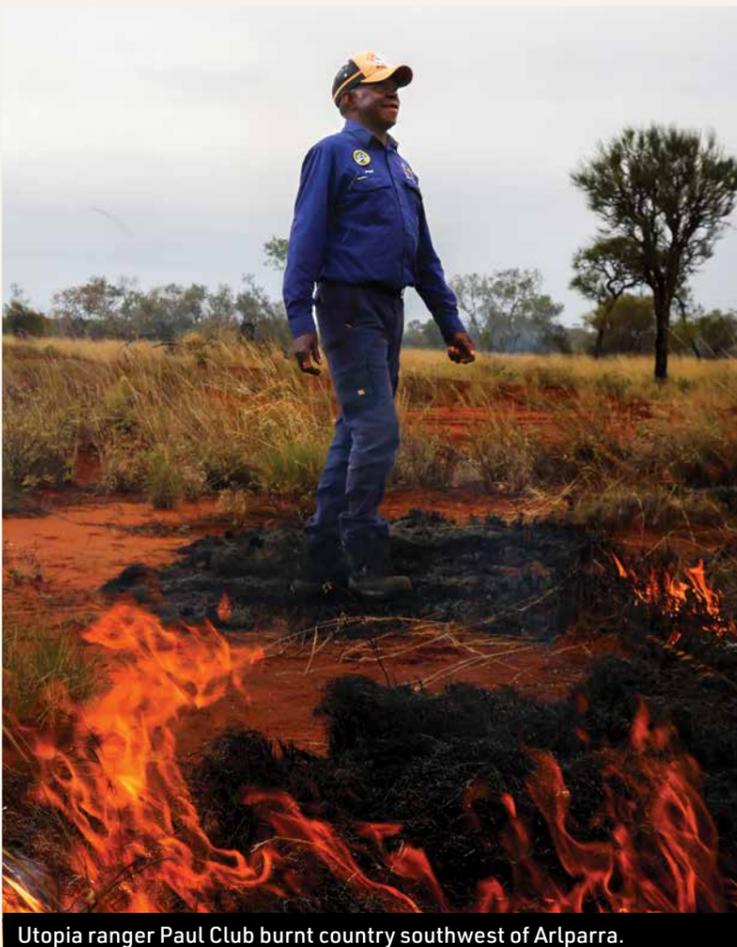
Sam Kunoth was there for the Arlparra church opening.



Margret Louis and Marlet Ross danced at the 40th anniversary celebration of the handback of the Uluru – Kata Tjuta National Park.



Traditional owners and Central Land Council staff at a fire management meeting at the Newhaven Wildlife Sanctuary.



Utopia ranger Paul Club burnt country southwest of Arlparra.



Martina Robertson, Kealyn Kelly, Myra Herbert and Silas James checked fire management maps at Newhaven.

# A quiet achiever who just got on with it

Herbie (Herbert) Bloomfield Penangke was born around 1949 and grew up on Mount Riddock Station, northeast of Mparntwe (Alice Springs). His father, Charlie Bloomfield Peltharre, was a stockman while his mother, Lena Ross Kemarre, looked after the children and the nanny goats.

He went to the little school at the station homestead and became a stockman himself, working for the Webb brothers on the Mount Riddock and Huckitta stations. Years later, he would help the Central Land Council win native title over both properties and buy one of them for the traditional owners.

Mr Bloomfield was one of the longest serving CLC delegates, initially representing Mount Riddock. At council meetings he often sat with his brother Kevin, who represented Engawala.

Together, the brothers continued their father's quest for a community living area, or 'excision' on Huckitta in the late 80s and early 90s. They wanted their families to live together on the Plenty River, but did not get permission to set up a homeland at their preferred location along the Jervois Stock Route. Eventually they negotiated an excision at Inelye (Mount Eaglebeak), at the edge of the station, near Atitjere.

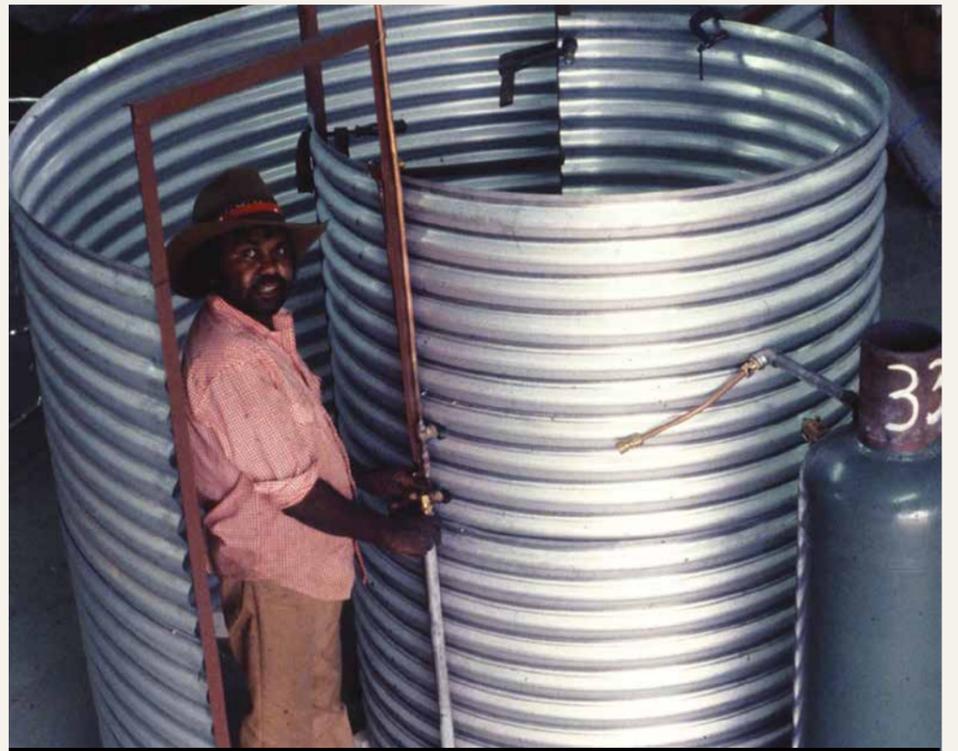
For a time, Mr Bloomfield and his wife, Christine Turner, lived there with their children Sally, the late Ian, Nigel, the late Patrick, Julius and Narelle, who looked after him in his final years. They visited sites around the area, the kids swimming in the local springs and rock holes. Mr Bloomfield represented the homeland on the CLC almost continuously until 2024.

When the kids got older the family moved to Mparntwe. Mr Bloomfield got a job at the Priest Street workshop of the Centre for Appropriate Technology in 1983. He became one of the mainstays of the workshop, making the early CAT-designed hand pumps, washing machines, chip heaters and shower blocks.

"He was a loyal and trusted member of CAT and could make every product we made," recalled former CAT chief executive Bruce Walker. "He was a special, humble, quiet worker – a great supporter of the other employees. He used to bring his boys in to show them what he was making and taught them a bit of welding."

When Pope John Paul visited Alice Springs in 1986, he took time off to prepare Blatherskite Park for the event, volunteering his labour. He and Tony Clements were the first Aboriginal people to complete 10 years of service at CAT and he got to enjoy long service leave before returning to work at Huckitta Station again. This time he came back not only as a stockman, but also as one of the station's new owners.

Eastern Arrernte people had tried to buy a pastoral lease since the 1970s. Owning Huckitta, the remnants of a large Kidman property of the same name, had been a dream of Mr Bloomfield and other elders such as Louis Schaber. When the station came on the market in 1992, the men were part of the group of traditional owners that hand-delivered a letter to the CLC asking for help to buy the property. By the time the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission agreed to fund the valuation price, the asking price had gone up steeply. The next opportunity came in 2001. This time



Mr Bloomfield was a loyal and trusted member of CAT.

the group asked the Indigenous Land Corporation to purchase the station at auction but missed the ILC board's deadline for considering their application. In 2010, the CLC finally secured Aboriginals Benefit Account funding, bought the station for the traditional owners and began to work on getting recognition of their native title rights.

Fighting wildfires on the station during the following year, Mr Bloomfield almost missed the first CLC field trip to research the Huckitta native title claim. After very little sleep, he would drive the large old station truck with the bad brakes past the CLC camp in the bed of the Plenty River, on his way to yet another wildfire started by a lightning strike. There was no way he could let the station go up in smoke! A few of the CLC workers joined his battle against the fires. By the end of the week they had saved most of the stock, fences and buildings but Mr Bloomfield was so exhausted he could hardly stand.

He wore many hats: founding director of the Huckitta Aboriginal Corporation, owner of the station, and Huckitta Enterprises Pty Ltd, which operates the cattle business, and a valued and dedicated station worker. His sons Nigel and Julius and other members of the family often joined him on the job. He eventually stepped down as director due to this employment at the station, but he never lost sight of the aim of the purchase.

**“Old uncle (Herbie) has taught me about what is important. I’m free to go and learn now.”**

“That’s why we fought for that place – to get the young ones back onto the land, working as stockmen,” he said. He believed young people should not be on the dole but earning or learning. “We run a cattle station and business, so we always work. They can work on

station and keep out from town, away from grog and trouble,” he told the *Land Rights News* in 2015.

Mr Bloomfield compared the commitment required of directors of the cattle business to the obligations and responsibilities to which traditional owners are all held accountable. “Just like ceremony: they got to be there to keep things carrying on. Just like old people.” He saw station work also as an opportunity to learn about responsibilities for country. “Got to grab young people from the country to do the work so they can learn about the country from us,” he told the CLC’s 10-year-review of the station purchase.

Countrymen explained this work-based knowledge transfer to the reviewer. “They’re checking up all the time when they’re going around doing the job like fencing or cattle work. That’s why Herbie is there. He explains country as they go... most of the youngfellas know now... and youngfellas tell youngfellas,” Tony Schaber said. “I didn’t know much about what’s important on Huckitta before,” said Peppi Drover. “Now old uncle (Herbie) has taught me about what is important. I’m free to go and learn now.”

When the CLC set up the Arltarpilta Inelye ranger group at Atitjere, Mr Bloomfield was one of the earliest rangers. Between 2010 and 2013, he helped look after sacred sites on his father’s country and cleaned up many of the same springs and rock holes his kids used to swim in. He kept working closely with the group, today known as the Akityarre Rangers, as it began to look after plants, animals and sites on the station.

Mr Bloomfield was also one of the named applicants when the CLC lodged the Harts Range land claim and gave evidence in the Alcoota land claim in 1996.

Mr Bloomfield, who barracked for Hawthorn, was a quiet achiever. He got on with whatever job was at hand and knew his country extremely well.

He worked patiently with the many CLC workers that came through the region, who appreciated his knowledge, his hard work, and his humour. He is greatly missed.



Herbie Bloomfield represented Inelye (Mount Eaglebeak) on the CLC for many years.



# Farewell to a protector of country and trailblazer for women

JULIE SEETA CLYNE was born on the 20th of March 1958 at the historic Telegraph Station, also known as the Bungalow, in Mparntwe (Alice Springs).

Her parents Ben and Daisy Clyne grew her up around Todd Creek. It was a long walk from the creek bed to her auntie's place in new East Side, and then all the way to the Mission Block. She used to walk there all the time to visit family. She remembered watching the white people building houses which are still standing today.

Ms Clyne went to Amoonguna Primary School, then to Traeger Park High School, and later to Alice Springs High School and Yirara College. While she was still at school, she started doing courses at the Institute for Aboriginal Development and the Batchelor Institute. She studied teaching because she loved working with kids.

Ms Clyne worked at Yirara College and the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress. Her son was born in 1975, and her daughter came along in 1980. She also helped to grow up the children of her niece Helen. In the 1980s she lived at Ulpanyali, her family's homeland in the Watarrka (Kings Canyon) National Park, where she worked as a casual park ranger. The family moved back and forth between Ulpanyali and the Little Sisters town camp. Ms Clyne worked at the Central Australian Aboriginal Alcohol Programmes Unit and then got herself a job in the library at Yirara College. She was also employed at the Central Land Council, helping with land claims, and at the Tangentyere Council. First she worked there as a receptionist and later as a community control officer in Mparntwe town camps.

She was a leader in women's cultural projects who helped raise many nieces and granddaughters and encouraged them to get involved with these organisations. She wanted to keep them busy and connected, to help them learn about country and culture, work, share stories and to become strong women. Ms Clyne blazed a trail for women at the land council. The residents of the homelands in the national park elected her to represent them on the council between 2012 and 2015. She inspired former CLC delegate Janine Clyne and current delegate Gwen Gillen to follow in her footsteps and was a generous teacher to land council staff.

She was instrumental in protecting the park from mining. In 2012 the traditional owners of Watarrka had



Julie Clyne inspired many women and was a generous teacher to land council staff.

leased their land to the Northern Territory government, to be jointly managed as a national park with the NT Parks and Wildlife Service. They chose Ms Clyne and others to represent them on the joint management committee, where she will always be remembered for her contributions to two-way learning and knowledge sharing.

The traditional owners didn't always see eye to eye on everything but had spoken with one voice against any mining in the park. They were particularly worried about Palatine Energy, a company that wanted to drill for oil and gas there. When they asked the Country Liberal Party government to protect the park from mining it ignored their pleas.

**“Australia owes you a big debt of gratitude for allowing future generations to continue to enjoy your beautiful country.”**

In 2015 they decided to take their battle to the nation's parliament and the federal environment minister. In Canberra their delegates, Ms Clyne and two other elders who have also passed away, asked minister Greg Hunt for an emergency listing

for the park. After the half-hour meeting Ms Clyne told the media in the Parliament House courtyard: “I travel from Kings Canyon, Watarrka. I come here today with a message to say no to mining and to fracking.” Shortly after the press conference the NT government announced it would not grant Palatine an oil exploration permit. CLC director David Ross called Ms Clyne to congratulate the delegation: “Australia owes you a big debt of gratitude for allowing future generations to continue to enjoy your beautiful country,” he said.

A keen artist, she later helped other traditional owners and Tangentyere to design an award-winning shelter for the visitors of the park. The striking, spiky tjilkamata (echidna) design won two awards at the Northern Territory Architecture Awards. Using their rent income from the park Ms Clyne and other traditional owners also designed and paid for the construction of a campground where they could meet and spend time in the park.

She undertook many sacred site clearances and country visits to make sure country was looked after. As a cultural leader for the Kungka Kutjara (Two Women) tjukurrpa she helped to protect, register and teach about its sites for decades. She was also involved in the Umbeara and Yulara native title claims.

Later in life, mainly due to health and education reasons, Ms Clyne and her family moved back to Little Sisters, but she returned to Ulpanyali often. CLC staff would also pick

her up for joint management and community development meetings. A strong decision maker, she was an enthusiastic supporter of the CLC's community development program. She helped Ulpanyali residents plan some of the program's earliest projects – for example an art shed and an array of solar panels.

The projects were funded by rent income from the Uluru – Kata Tjuta National Park. As a traditional owner of the park and a member of its joint management committee, Ms Clyne spoke up for projects that support education initiatives across the southwest region. Thanks to her leadership, Anangu students got to go on bush excursions where local elders taught them about traditional tool-making and bush medicine and everyone produced bilingual booklets about the trips afterwards. Watarrka students illustrated *Yaaltji ngiyarilu tjilka mantjiru* (*How the thorny devil got his spikes*), a story told by Brian Clyne and translated by Julie Clyne. “I think the community development program makes us stronger,” she said. “It makes us happy. We are in control of the process”.

Ms Clyne is deeply missed by her surviving siblings, Linda, Steven, Lewis and Benjamin Clyne, the many children she helped to grow up, her nieces and nephews Helen, Stephanie, Raylene, Arnold, Brendan, Jay Jnr, Winston, Nicholas, Adele, Reidel, Mikayla, her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.



Julie Clyne and David Morris addressed media in Canberra. (ABC News: Marco Catalano)



Ms Clyne was a champion of bilingual and bicultural education and translated this book about thorny devils.



# Voice, treaty and truth guided warrior's life of service

Geoffrey Shaw OAM is being remembered as a man of integrity and courage who devoted his whole life to his people and his country. A founding member of the Central Land Council, he made an enormous contribution to land rights. Long before the Uluru Statement from the Heart he followed its calls for voice, treaty and truth-telling.

Born on the banks of Lhere Artepe (Todd River) on Christmas Eve, the riverbed would become home for Mr Shaw. During his childhood, the Bungalow, at the historic Mparntwe Telegraph Station north of town, was a ration camp. He went to school – first the primary school at Hartley Street and later Anzac High School – “if I had decent clothes and a belly full of food”. He left high school for good after eighth grade and worked as a ringer before joining the army.

Former CLC director Patrick Dodson reminded mourners in a eulogy delivered by his son Adrian that his old boss came from a time when “there was no respect or recognition. He fought for this country in Vietnam, even though it was not his war.” When he returned home “barely a glance of solidarity passed between those of this country for whose benefit he had gone off to war. Both his parents had died and he had the responsibility of his own brothers and sisters to carry. People were still living as outcasts and fringe dwellers in their own land. Nothing had changed for his families.”

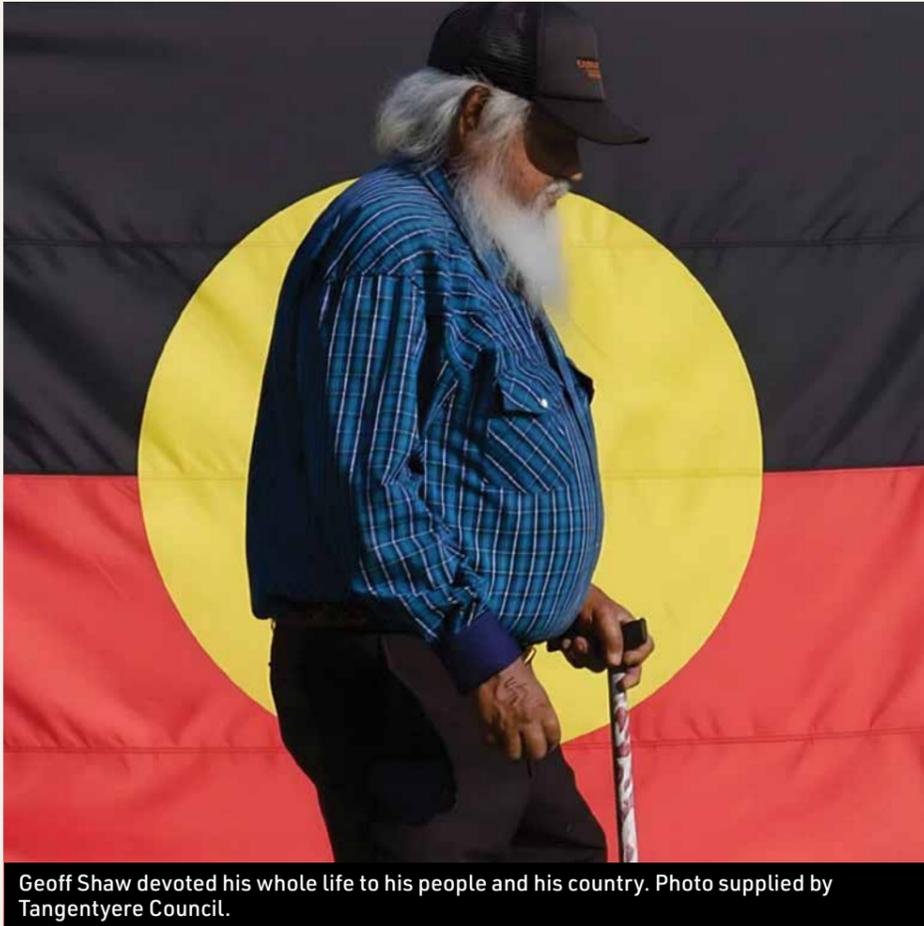
Mr Shaw could see plenty of reasons to keep fighting, but this time for his own people. “I was coming back to the same places, where there was one tap for 60 people, living in humpies and makeshift shelters,” he once recalled. Mr Dodson said he carried on the struggle of past leaders for land and better housing and services for his people “with honour and courage”.

In the early 1970s, Mr Shaw helped a group of respected Arrernte elders to set up organisations such as the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, Central Australian Legal Aid and Tangentyere Council. Under his leadership, Tangentyere “became a dynamic entity and effectively coordinated the interests of the resident town camp associations, doing all the work that the town council and Territory government failed to deliver for Aboriginal citizens”, Mr Dodson said.

## Land rights

Mr Shaw also took part in the traditional owner meetings that followed the Woodward inquiry and led to the creation of the two large Northern Territory land councils through the Aboriginal Land Rights Act of 1976 – the landmark law that is 50 years old this year. He made sure the living conditions of the fringe dwellers became a focus of the inquiry, remembered Mr Dodson. “One of the first considerations of the land commissioner was to consider grants of land based on need. This led to town camp associations seeking a tenure system that would allow public investment. This category of claim was subsequently removed when the Land Rights Act was passed.”

Mr Shaw went on to serve as deputy CLC chair under the likes of Wenten



Geoff Shaw devoted his whole life to his people and his country. Photo supplied by Tangentyere Council.

Rubuntja and David Long, and a CLC delegate and executive member for three decades. Mr Dodson remembers him as “a true comrade and a warrior for justice and respect”. His advocacy for services, economic development and self-determination for Aboriginal people in Central Australia continued even as his national reputation grew. While he helped to establish the Institute of Aboriginal Development and Centrecorp he carried their voice to the nation as the region’s first commissioner of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission. “His leadership, along with others working with their bosses at that time, contributed to making Alice Springs a significant political hub nationally in Aboriginal affairs. The alliance of local organisations was formidable, especially when he was on board,” Mr Dodson recalled.

The Medal of the Order of Australia for his advocacy for Aboriginal people, which he received in 1993, was “an honour he never sought but deeply deserved”, Indigenous Australians Minister Malarndirri McCarthy told mourners at his funeral in January. She reminded them how Mr Shaw carried the Aboriginal flag up Anzac Hill for its first raising there during the 2018 NAIDOC Day celebrations. “It was an incredibly moving moment

– a proud Kaytetye and Arrernte man, a veteran, a community leader, uniting service, sacrifice, pride and truth in raising the Aboriginal flag to fly high over this country,” she said. “During Covid, he stepped up to become one of the first Aboriginal leaders to be vaccinated, doing it publicly and encouraging others to do the same.”

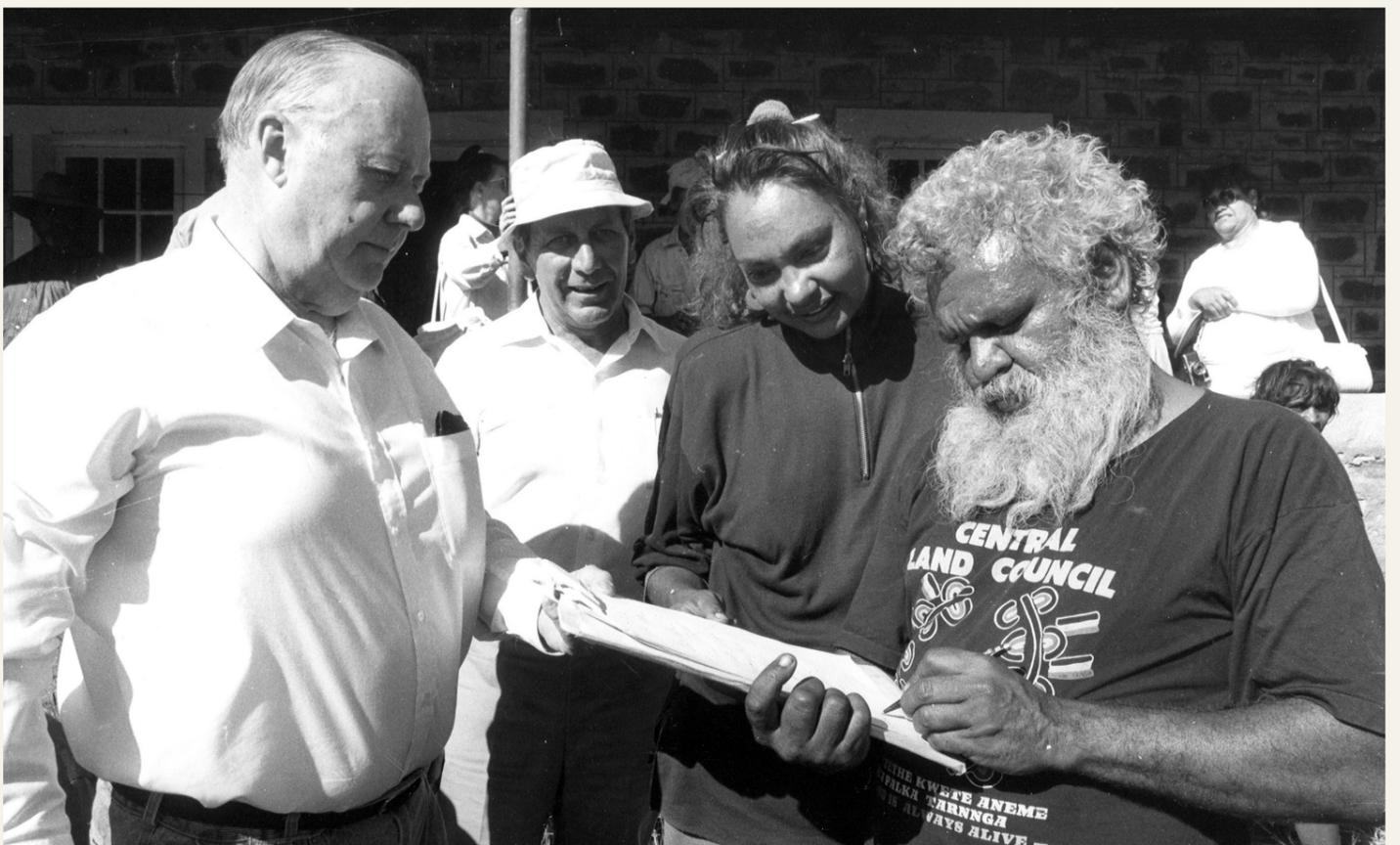
## Truth

A descendant of massacre survivors, Mr Shaw’s life was marked by the Australian frontier wars. In 1874, troopers killed around 90 Kaytetye people at the Barrow Creek Telegraph Station. The massacre followed the spearing of two linesmen and conflict with the invaders over water. Half a century later, Kaytetye families were also among the men, women and children murdered during the 1928 Coniston Massacre, a series of indiscriminate killing raids across a much wider region.

During the 2008 commemoration at one of the massacre sites, at Athimpelekwwe (Baxter’s Well) on Stirling Station, Mr Shaw interpreted in chilling detail the testimony of one of the survivors, the late Mr Thompson. “This place, as Tommy Thompson has said, is everyone’s big place – Kaytetye, Warlpiri, Warumungu, Anmatyerr,” he said. “But it is not just our story – this story needs to be told to all Australians... and it’s our job to get it told. We’re not bitter, we just want everybody to know and to acknowledge this black spot in Australian history.”

At the hard-fought handback of the Barrow Creek Telegraph Station to its

**“But it is not just our story – this story needs to be told to all Australians... and it’s our job to get it told. We’re not bitter, we just want everybody to know and to acknowledge this black spot in Australian history.”**



Telecom chair Robert Cameron handed a letter of 'permissive occupancy' for parts of the Barrow Creek Telegraph Station to Mr Shaw and Barbara Shaw sen. at the handback in 1988.



CLC deputy chair Geoff Shaw and chair David Long at a council meeting at Atitjere in 1988.

traditional owners in February 1990, Mr Shaw encouraged his people to draw strength from their history. "We've been through two massacres and we're still here," he said. "We've been scattered to the four winds but remember: you are not just somebody living in town somewhere. You are Kayteye people!" His vision was to share his people's story with the nation, long before truth-telling became a slogan. Part of this was an Aboriginal museum in the historic telegraph station buildings. Mr Shaw also became a distinctive voice among the 127 eminent men and women who contributed their stories to the CLC's 2014 oral history collection *Every Hill Got a Story* (see p. 28).

### Treaty

"He became a very significant and constructive player on the national and Territory stages without ever losing his roots in Central Australia," Mr Dodson said. "He had the smarts of a general but preferred being in the trenches, where he worked strategically to achieve outcomes."

Mr Shaw used his influence in the Labor party to help persuade Prime Minister Bob Hawke to come to the 1988 Barunga Festival and promise a treaty between the nation and its first peoples. In the CLC tent at Barunga and around the campfire he worked with Dodson, Nugget Coombs and others on the text of the Barunga Statement.

As the elders presented the statement to Mr Hawke they made sure Mr Shaw and Mr Dodson were part of their purlapa ceremony. Only much later were both men able to make light of the solemn occasion: "His paint and head dress made him look like a budgerigar while I was on the long hair belt line with very serious men leading the dance," Mr Dodson said.

**"He became a very significant and constructive player on the national and Territory stages without ever losing his roots in Central Australia."**

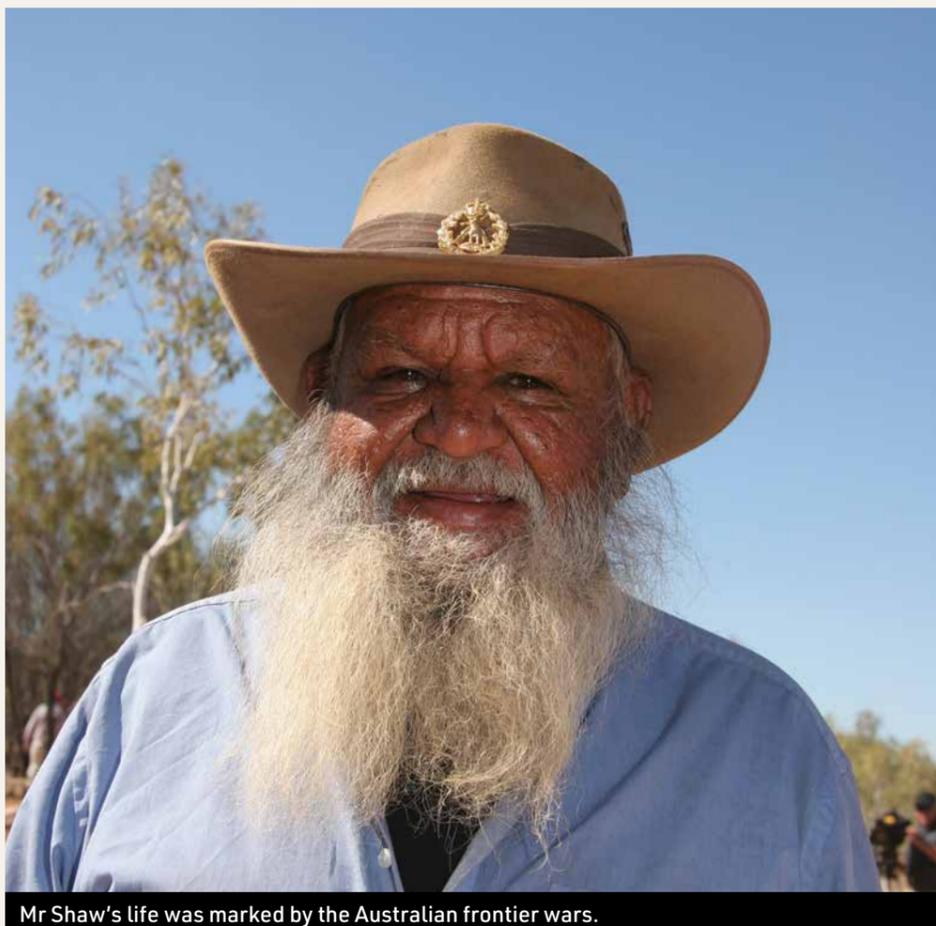
### Voice

The abolition of ATSIC, with the stroke of Prime Minister John Howard's pen, was one of the reasons

why Mr Shaw advocated so vigorously for a constitutionally entrenched Aboriginal voice to parliament. He knew that anything not written down in the nation's birth certificate would be vulnerable to the whims of hostile governments and the broken promises of politicians.

The voice campaign reunited him with one of his former comrades, Vietnam veteran Malcolm Spencer. The Queenslanders had read a newspaper interview with the mate he knew as "Tubby" Shaw, who was quoted as saying: "I'd like all the Vietnam veterans to follow my lead and vote for Yes." Already firmly in the 'Yes' camp, Spencer jumped into his car and drove non-stop to Mount Nancy town camp where he embraced his old mate. In Shaw's back yard the two old diggers gave an interview to the ABC. It would be their last campaign.

Mr Shaw believed deeply in service. To country, to community and his fellow Australians. His military service shaped his discipline, leadership and deep sense of responsibility. All this he brought to the Central Land Council. The aspirations of the Uluru Statement from the Heart were woven through his life's work. His service will never be forgotten.



Mr Shaw's life was marked by the Australian frontier wars.



Vietnam veterans Malcolm Spencer and Geoff Shaw united for the 2023 voice referendum campaign.

EVERY HILL GOT A STORY  
is now back in print

# I loved algebra for some reason



I didn't always go to school, [only] if I had decent clothes and a belly full of food. On my first day at school, we were all sitting in the classroom there, and this teacher says to me, 'If you don't come to school every day, you'll be going somewhere long, long away, to an island a long way away.' I couldn't figure it out. Only as I got older did I realise what she was telling me – if I don't come to school every day, I'll end up on Croker Island. ...

And then after finishing primary school I went to Anzac High. I only went to eighth grade. I couldn't fit in. And that's when I started missing school, wagging ... I was going to Anzac Hill High School from a humpy, mind you. And sometimes I'd feel embarrassed, no breakfast. There were

times I didn't go because I didn't have any footwear, didn't have decent clothes. I'd feel a bit shamed going to school. ...

I loved algebra for some reason, and one time I came top of the class in algebra, of all things! But the thing I didn't like at that time was they were teaching Latin and French. Here I was going to school, but I also wanted to maintain and learn my own language, not French or Latin or whatever ...

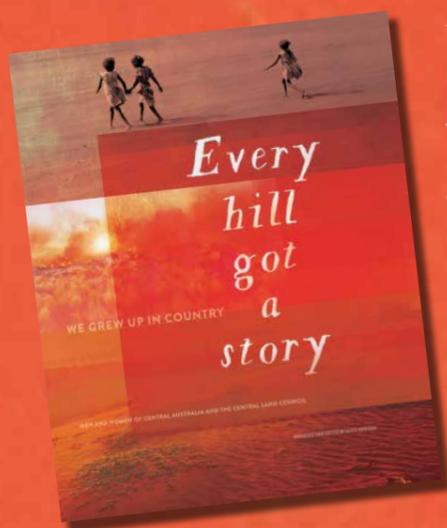
I'd go to school, but there was no way I could bring books home and study. We had no water, no power.

I didn't have a nice little room where I could study, or my own bedroom – none of that.

**GEOFF SHAW**

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)



Remote  
Australia  
Employment  
Service



## Helping people in remote communities get ready for work

**The Remote Australia Employment Service (RAES) started on 1 November 2025. It has replaced the Community Development Program (CDP).**

The RAES helps job seekers in remote communities to build skills and confidence. It gives people training, mentoring and support so they can take up job opportunities. This includes jobs created through the Remote Jobs and Economic Development (RJED) program.

Your provider will work with you to help get ready for work. If you are unable to work, or you are still looking for a job, they will provide support.

You can also take part in local community projects to learn new skills that may lead to employment.

As part of RAES, job seekers will need to:

- agree to a job plan
- attend compulsory appointments
- apply for jobs
- attend job interviews
- accept suitable paid work when offered
- not leave a suitable paid job.

Participating in activities to meet mutual obligations will remain voluntary.

**To find out more** or find your provider, **scan the QR code** or visit [niaa.gov.au/remote-services](http://niaa.gov.au/remote-services)

