

FREE

# LAND RIGHTS NEWS

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## CENTRAL AUSTRALIA



# “WATER IS LIFE”

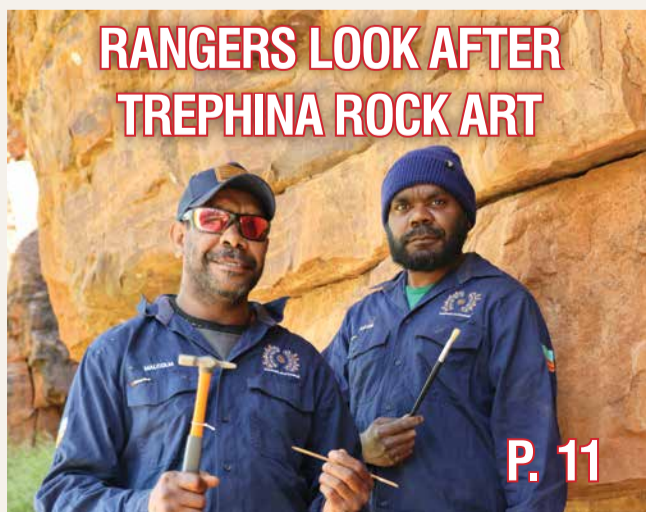
### HIGH COURT TO HEAR SINGLETON’S TRADITIONAL OWNERS

P. 2



### STRONG TOGETHER AGAINST RACISM

P. 2



### RANGERS LOOK AFTER TREPHERINA ROCK ART

P. 11



### PROTECTING BILBIES

P. 8, 10

## EDITORIAL

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## COVER



Gerry Rice, Valerie Curtis, Arana Rice, Judith Swan, Valerie Nelson, Dawn Swan, Frankie Curtis and Verna Curtis believe the Singleton water licence will destroy too many sacred sites and the desert region's native plants and animals that depend on its groundwater.

## CLC MEETINGS

27–29 October 2025  
Council  
Yulara

3–4 December 2025  
Executive  
Alice Springs

## High Court to hear Singleton traditional owners' message



Continuing to fight for their sacred sites and water rights are George Anderson, George Brody, Dennis Malony, Rodger Tommy, Heather Anderson, Michelle Brody and Heather Tommy.

“FINALLY, someone is listening,” was the immediate reaction of Dawn Swan to the High Court of Australia’s decision in September to hear the appeal against Singleton Station’s water licence.

“I am very happy. We have people living on the land and this is their dream to stay here for future generations,” Ms Swan, a native title holder for the station, said.

Fortune Agribusiness’ licence to extract 40 gigalitres of groundwater a year from the station, south of Tennant Creek, represents the largest amount of groundwater ever given away by the Northern Territory.

The Mpwerempwer Aboriginal Corporation, which represents native title holders, has argued the licence will

destroy too many sacred sites and the desert region’s native plants and animals that depend on its groundwater.

Native title holders described the High Court’s decision as incredibly important.

“The reason why we are fighting is because the amount of water Fortune [Agribusiness] wants to take from our land is too much,” native title holder Valerie Curtis said.

“We’re happy to share the water, but to us it just seems like they want more than enough and it’s not fair on our country. It’s not fair on our future generations,” she said.

“This has been a long journey, and we will continue to fight for our sacred sites and culture,” Ms Swan said.

**“We’re happy to share the water, but to us it just seems like they want more than enough and it’s not fair on us. It’s not fair on our country. It’s not fair on our future generations.”**

Continued on page 4.

## Strong together against racism and rights abuses

“THE VIEW that we have from all land councils is: pathetic. High numbers of incarcerations, [no] opportunities of economic development – it’s a big failure of the government.”

This verdict of Northern Land Council chair Matthew Ryan on the Country Liberal Party government’s first year in power set the tone for a rare joint press conference of the Territory’s four land councils in Darwin.

“We’ve had enough, we want to be heard,” he said, standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the chairs and deputy chairs of the Central, Tiwi and Anindilyakwa land councils in front of the NT parliament.

The executive members of the councils met for three days in July to discuss policy priorities.

They ended the meeting by accusing the CLP government of racism and human rights abuses.

The NT’s police racism crises and justice and public safety laws were high on the agenda of the first joint executives meeting since 2020.

Deputy CLC chair, Barbara Shaw, said the punitive new laws limiting bail and clamping down on youth offenders undermined the rights of Aboriginal people.

She condemned the NT’s skyrocketing Aboriginal prison rates—an increase of around 30 per cent since the election of the CLP government.

“We are stacking and racking and it’s so disgusting,” she told the media.

“This government is not listening to our elders, to take our children back onto country and be with families... unfortunately this government does not want to listen to Aboriginal people.”

Mr Ryan said the human rights of Aboriginal people had “been ignored”. He described the NT government’s

newly implemented laws and policies as “appalling”, saying “none of them are working”.

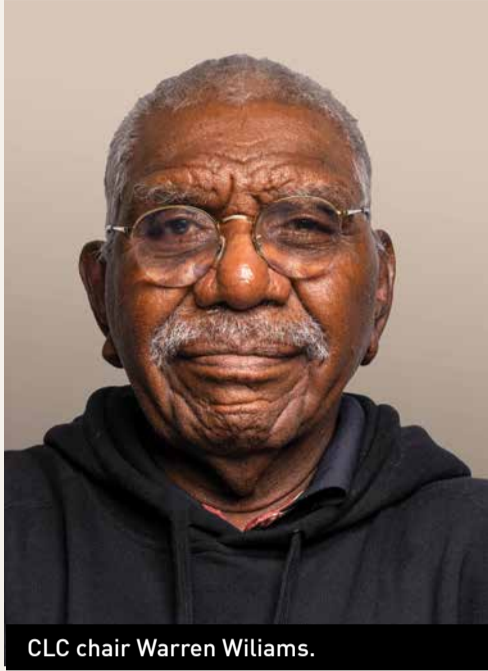
The land councils called for an independent police misconduct body and the implementation of all the recommendations of the coronial inquest into the killing of Kumanjayi Walker.

They said they want to co-design the terms of reference of an independent inquiry into structural racism in the NT police force, alongside other representative Aboriginal organisations.

“We want a working group of relevant agencies to develop and implement better procedures to address complaints by Aboriginal people about police racism and use of force, a group that consults with the land councils and affected families and communities,” Mr Ryan said.

Continued on page 3.

# The Country Liberal Party government is failing us



CLC chair Warren Williams.

culture, rights, heritage and sacred sites.

It rushed through changes to the NT Sacred Sites Act that ignore our right to have a say when a new developer takes over and wants to change a project or use land differently to what was agreed before. As we are seeing with the Darwin waterfront hotel development, this increases the risk of sacred site damage, disputes and court cases.

It ignored our calls to tackle the causes of crime with us, disrespecting our cultural authority. Our children are languishing in overcrowded police watch houses and adults are in jail even if they have not been found guilty.

**The CLP government has set back Aboriginal progress, creating a system that makes our work much harder.**

This year has been marked by a retreat from justice, fairness and basic humanity. The government is failing to hold police accountable for killing our loved ones or to address systemic racism. The NT coroner had not yet released her report into the police shooting of my grandson when I learned of another devastating loss—my nephew, a young man with disabilities, died in custody in Mparntwe.

Just days later, an old friend, educator and community leader from Wadeye passed away in Royal Darwin Hospital after his arrest. They are not statistics. They are people I loved. Our families are crushed by unbearable grief while those in power could not care less. I can't understand how the CLP government could scrap the review

into police racism promised in the Aboriginal Justice Agreement in 2021.

The government's refusal to consider an independent investigation into police conduct shows that it is unwilling to confront racism and violence in our institutions. More than 30 years after the Royal Commission into Black Deaths in Custody, political leaders—including those in the CLP—are still more interested in blaming each other than implementing its recommendations.

An anti-racism strategy has been drafted. Unless the strategy is

resourced and implemented with us, it will fail, but it is never too late to start working with us.

In a rare bit of positive news, assistant police commissioner Martin Dole promised during our council meeting at Kalkaringi in August to work with us. If he and his political leaders are serious about this, truth-telling must become a part of the strategy. Letting our families share their experiences with the police is necessary for ending racism in the force for good.

By Warren Williams

## Sacred Sites Act changes explained

THE NORTHERN TERRITORY Government has changed the laws that protect sites of deep cultural and spiritual importance to Aboriginal people.

Until recently, if someone wanted to do work near a sacred site, they needed a certificate from the Central Land Council or the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority. These certificates set out strict rules about how to avoid damage to the site. The certificates were tied to a specific applicant and a specific project, and if the project changed hands the new applicant had to consult traditional owners again. This was an important protection so that traditional owners could learn about any changes to the project and make sure that sacred sites would be properly protected.

The new law changed that. AAPA's certificates can now be transferred to another company or shared with additional parties, without going back to the traditional owners for their consent. That means a mining or cattle company could hand its certificate over to someone else to use for a similar project with greater

impact, even if traditional owners have never spoken to them.

The new law forces the AAPA to transfer old certificates to new developers if the "use of land" is the same. For example, a certificate allowing "mining" might have been issued decades ago to a small prospector digging shallow pits. If a large mining company now wants to build an open-cut mine and tailings dump, it could claim the use of land is still simply mining. The impacts on sacred sites would be vastly different, yet the AAPA must transfer the certificate with the same outdated conditions, no matter how inadequate. The AAPA is not allowed to consult with the traditional owners. It must transfer the certificate to the new developer without asking them.

The government said the changes will "streamline" the process, but NT land councils and traditional owners say it weakens protection and breaks promises of consultation. They fear it puts sacred sites at greater risk by cutting out the people who hold the knowledge, authority and responsibility to protect their sites.

## Audit government spending

Federal government funds make up more than 70 per cent of the NT's annual budget—spending that the land

councils want to be independently audited.

"All Aboriginal people want to see it happen," Mr Ryan said.

"Where's our money being spent?"

They're developing [new] prisons, that money should've been spent on communities developing programs in communities."

"The Australian Government needs to hold the NT government accountable and make sure its laws and policies match the intent of that funding, to help our communities."

Following the media conference Indigenous Australians Minister Malarndirri McCarthy told the ABC the Australian government expects "that money to be spent effectively and appropriately", "particularly in relation to Closing the Gap".

The deputy chair of the Tiwi Land Council, Austin Wonaeamirri, believes the opposite is happening.

"The gap's getting wider and wider," he said, blaming a lack of consultation with remote Aboriginal communities.

The leaders warned against making decisions about their people—more than a third of the NT's population—without them.

They said economic growth for all Territorians "can only happen in genuine partnership with our people".

Defending the NT government, Aboriginal Affairs Minister Steven Edgington pointed to the government's election promise to bring back local government community councils.

"We are working in partnership with Aboriginal people to empower communities that want a greater say," he said.

One month later, addressing the CLC meeting at Kalkaringi, Mr Edgington announced he would start discussions about local government reform in the Barkly and Central Australia.

Yet he had no details to share, leaving delegates to wonder how this will all happen, when and at what cost.

The executive members of all four land councils want to meet more frequently.

It's clear that when these leaders next get together they won't run out of policies to discuss.



Aboriginal rights are being undermined said deputy CLC chair Barbara Shaw.

# High Court to hear Singleton traditional owners' message



John Duggie and Donald Thomas met with the CLC about the next steps.



Heather Anderson, Heather Tommy and Michelle Brody also attended the meeting.

Continued from page 2.

The case is likely to be heard next year and, if successful, the water licence would be invalid and likely to be sent back to the NT minister to decide on again, but this time in accordance with the law.

The appeal does not stop the NT's environmental approval process and Mpwerempwer and other affected traditional owners are working with the Central Land Council and Fortune Agribusiness, the lease holders of Singleton Station, on the environmental impact assessment.

Before the assessment is finished the company is not allowed to use the licence to extract groundwater.

"We want to make sure the study

**"Water rights are inseparable from land rights and go to the heart of protecting culture."**

is done properly so that Fortune Agribusiness, the NT government and the Environment Protection Agency hear how deeply Aboriginal people fear the damage this much groundwater extraction could cause to their country and culture," the CLC's chief executive Les Turner said.

Mr Turner said Mpwerempwer's decision to pursue the case to the

High Court shows that "water rights are inseparable from land rights and go to the heart of protecting culture."

The High Court will decide if the NT Court of Appeal was wrong when it found that the NT minister lawfully granted the licence.

It will consider if the minister properly took Aboriginal cultural values into account or properly considered if there were exceptional

circumstances that justified a licence for 30 years. It will also consider if the native title holders were entitled to the same procedural fairness as Fortune Agribusiness.

For example, Fortune was given an opportunity to review the water licence condition before the licence was granted. Native title holders were not given a chance to review the condition about assessing cultural values.

Ms Curtis said she was very excited the court would hear their story.

"It makes me feel happy. We want to fight for our rights, our sacred sites and our country, to be heard and for it to be fair," she said.

## Lille Madden helps women to strengthen connection to culture

GROWING up in Sydney, Lille Madden loved spending time in nature with her family and watching National Geographic TV programs. It led the Arrernte, Bundjalung and Kalkadoon woman to study and work in conservation and land management and become a passionate advocate for the environment.

The quietly spoken daughter of art curator Hetti Perkins and granddaughter of the first Central Land Council chair, the late Charles Perkins, Ms Madden is also a storyteller. She presented and co-wrote Healing Country a three-part ABC social media series where she yarned with young Aboriginal people about what they were doing to protect their country.

Now the 30-year-old is helping women to stay on remote country and keep their connection to culture strong. She is the CLC's first Aboriginal women's land management facilitator.

Ms Madden, who worked as an NT Parks ranger at the Mparntwe (Alice Springs) Telegraph Station for more than two years before joining the CLC, will build women's skills by identifying training and ranger exchange opportunities. She will support women to present about their research projects at conferences and will network widely to attract women to the CLC's ranger program.

"Women hold a lot of responsibility to families, communities, country and culture and my role is to support them in land management and help employ and elevate women within the organisation," she said.

Ms Madden also acknowledged the work of her predecessors, Kim Webeck and Fiona Webb.

"It's really important to acknowledge that this role and its funding was hard-won by the women all throughout the Central Desert.

**"I constantly think about what our elders both past and present have done for Aboriginal people and what our responsibilities are as the next generation."**

"The work is an opportunity to connect with remote communities and support their continuous efforts to help keep their people healthy, culture strong, sacred sites protected and to conserve native flora and fauna for many more generations to come," she said.

Ms Madden has met about half the CLC ranger groups and says working with women has been a powerful experience. "I feel very lucky to be able to work with some amazing knowledge holders who all share a similar vision, cause and passion for their country."



Lille Madden at the Mparntwe Telegraph Station where the ashes of her grandfather, Charles Perkins, were scattered.

Moving to Mparntwe three years ago was a big life decision. "It was very important for me to go back to my grandfather's country to learn culture and remain connected to that place.

"Aboriginal culture sees everything as equal and the world would be a much better place if people had this understanding.

"I constantly think about what our elders both past and present have

done for Aboriginal people and what our responsibilities are as the next generation.

"What will it be like for my future children as well as for all Aboriginal children? What's their connection going to be? I want to keep that connection strong."

# Climate change is driving up the cost of remote community power bills

RISING TEMPERATURES and extreme weather are pushing up electricity costs, leaving more remote community households without power when they need it most.

Yuelamu's Granites Mine Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation (GMAAAC) committee is setting up a community-owned solar microgrid to improve electricity supply to households. The committee is working with Original Power, which supports Aboriginal communities to move to renewable energy.

Yuelamu GMAAAC director and member of the Australian Government's First Nations Clean Energy Advisory Committee, David McCormack, said residents cannot afford the high cost of rent and power.

"We use power cards, and when the money runs out we have no power. During extreme weather the power lines break and we are without power for 16 or 17 hours. This happens a lot.

"The food in the fridge goes bad and needs to be thrown away. People lose hundreds of dollars of food."

GMAAAC director Clifty Tommy, also from Yuelamu, said people can't store their medications safely. "Some of my relatives have new kidneys and they need medication to be refrigerated."

In summer Mr McCormack pays around \$150 a week to cool two rooms in his home. "Air conditioning chews up a lot of money. That's why we are looking at a community-owned microgrid to provide cheaper power to households."

Original Power is studying how the community, three hours northwest of Mparntwe (Alice Springs), uses its power and what it would take to connect the microgrid to the Yuendumu power station, half an hour's drive away.

The community is working with Original Power and other partners to understand the system load requirements and the grid's capacity and power outputs.

Original Power will help the community identify government and other funding sources for the project.

While there are power disconnections throughout the year, when temperatures rise above 40 degrees disconnections also rise dramatically, especially in the NT.

**"We are looking at a community-owned microgrid to provide cheaper power to households."**

Original Power used prepayment meter data to show that remote NT communities using prepayments averaged 55 disconnections per year while South Australia's Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara lands averaged 14 disconnections and remote Western Australian communities 33.

It said South Australia prepayment tariffs were fixed at 10 cents per kilowatt hour, compared with 31 cents in the NT.

Energy retailers in the NT are not required to report prepayment disconnections. As a result, energy insecurity in the territory is largely hidden.

The Central Land Council has called on the NT Utilities Commission to make power retailers report all disconnections in remote communities and apply the same electricity retail reporting requirements across the territory.

The NT-based Climate Justice Alliance predicts the NT is heating up dangerously. The Alliance's Dr Ned Bible said she used publicly available Climate Council data to forecast how hot it will be in 72 Northern Territory communities by 2050 and 2090.

"It showed if we stay on our current path, by 2050 Alice Springs and Katherine would experience more than twice as many days over 40 degrees than now, and Darwin would have 92 more days over 35 degrees Celsius than currently."



David McCormack said Yuelamu is taking action against expensive and unreliable power.

Dr Bible said remote communities in the north of the NT, such as Tennant Creek, were already suffering hotter days and nights as humid air from Darwin moved further south.

She said remote communities will be hit by the double whammy of extreme heat and unaffordable power. This combination will worsen chronic disease and increase the risk of heat stress, particularly for the elderly, the very young and those already sick.

The NT government is planning to replace 55 remote community diesel power stations with renewable energy. The CLC and the Northern and Tiwi land councils are working with the government to ensure the renewable energy transition benefits residents.

They want to bring the cost of power down so there are fewer disconnections. They also want residents to get training and jobs out of the construction and operation of the renewable energy.

CLC chief executive Les Turner said Aboriginal people need affordable power so they can survive and thrive on country as the climate heats up.

"Cheap and reliable power in communities like Yuelamu is essential to the health and wellbeing of families," he said. "Our people are among the hardest-hit by man-made climate change and have done the least to contribute to it. It's only fair that they are part of the clean energy transition."



Yuelamu residents and Original Power are working on the development of a microgrid to bring the cost of power down so there are fewer disconnections.

# Utopia Rangers mentor land management hopefuls

THE UTOPIA RANGERS have taken two interns under their wing, showing them firsthand how they look after country.

Bree Bannister and Amit Rotenberg are part of an Indigenous Desert Alliance program that places future land managers with ranger groups for hands-on experience.

For two weeks, Ms Bannister, from Broome, and Ms Rotenberg, from Melbourne, worked with the rangers around Arlparra, northeast of Mparntwe (Alice Springs). They learned not just fire skills but about the cultural heart of the job.

The rangers liked having the interns along.

“They like to go around with us, see the country, learn about bush medicine and fire,” ranger Paul Club said.

“We’ve been showing them waterholes, sacred sites, bush plums—all the things we look after.”

The rangers showed the interns different burning techniques.

“There was a beautiful moment where [traditional owner] Sam started lighting matches and then a couple of rangers followed him. Then Helen [Kunoth] brought me over and showed me her technique of getting a big stick, lighting that on fire, winking at me,” Ms Bannister said.

“It’s been incredible, the rangers have been so welcoming, so funny and so generous in sharing their knowledge. I’ve loved every second of it.”

**“It’s been incredible, the rangers have been so welcoming, so funny and so generous in sharing their knowledge. I’ve loved every second of it.”**

The four-week program began with a week-long intensive induction process at the IDA Desert Hub in Perth, where the eight interns met staff and were prepared for the field-based elements of the



Rita Pula drew on her fire burning skills to light up the land.

program, including the cultural and ecological aspects of Indigenous land management.

The IDA then placed interns with member ranger groups across the desert for two weeks of on-country experience, before a final week of reflection and debriefing in Perth.

The program is about matching the right people with the right land management jobs when there are no local Aboriginal applicants.

“The internship was created in response to IDA members and desert ranger teams who wanted better support for bringing new people into the sector right way,” the IDA’s sector development manager, Zack Wundke said.

“This way, they can get hands-on experience, decide if it’s right for them, and, if it is, start building the relationships and skills they’ll need to succeed.”

Ms Bannister, a trained nurse from Broome, wanted to test whether she was ready for a career change.

“When this internship popped up, I thought what a great opportunity to give it a go and see if I’m good for it. The biggest lesson has been to step back, watch, listen and observe. Being able to do that trumps all your qualifications.”

Ms Rotenberg, from Melbourne, has a master’s degree in environmental management and would like to work with Indigenous knowledge.

“I’ve learned that ranger work isn’t just about burning or weed control, it’s about being on country, telling stories and passing on knowledge. The women here have been so generous with me, showing me bush medicine plants and telling me whose country we’re on. I didn’t expect them to be so open, so quickly.”

On one school trip, the women taught children plant names in Alyawarre while the men lit fires in the background.

“It was beautiful,” Ms Rotenberg said. “The kids were excited, and the ladies just looked in their element.

Everyone was so into it and looked glowing and happy to be out of the classroom. It was really nice to watch.”

Utopia’s ranger facilitator, Paul Evans, compared the program with an apprenticeship. “It’s a deep, hands-on introduction. New coordinators and facilitators need time to build trust and respect with countrymen and women, that’s the foundation. Without it, people can come and go quickly, which can leave a long-term impact on the community.”

The program is part of building the steady leadership that helps rangers to take on more senior positions. “When facilitators stay for the long haul, they form strong relationships with rangers, share valuable skills, and help build the confidence needed for rangers to step up and take on those roles themselves,” says the Central Land Council’s Boyd Elston, who also chairs the Indigenous Desert Alliance.



Helen Kunoth showed off her fire lighting capability.



Amit Rotenberg was keen to work with local Aboriginal knowledge.



# Many agendas make for one deadly burning trip

WHEN TRADITIONAL OWNERS and rangers from across the Central Land Council region gathered in June to spend four days burning the Jinkaji woodland, near Elliot, each group got something different out of the experience.

You might say all their different agendas were the secret of the trip's success.

For the traditional owners the exercise, which 'cleaned up' 15,000 hectares, was an important part of their Karlantijpa North Kurrawarra Nyura Mala Aboriginal Corporation's carbon abatement project.

They used income from selling the carbon credits to fund the four-day visit by the Tennant Creek-based Muru Warinyi-Ankkul Rangers, the Utopia Rangers from Arlparra and the Murnkurrumurnkurru Rangers from Daguragu.

For the Utopia Rangers the trip was a chance to learn new skills in an unfamiliar landscape that was a long way from the desert country they call home.

Working in the grassy tropical savannah country was a new experience for Paul Club, from the Utopia region.

Bordered by cattle stations, the remote Aboriginal land trust land covers 3,000 square kilometres.

There is no road access and a history of hot, destructive, late dry season fires which have scarred the region's environment.

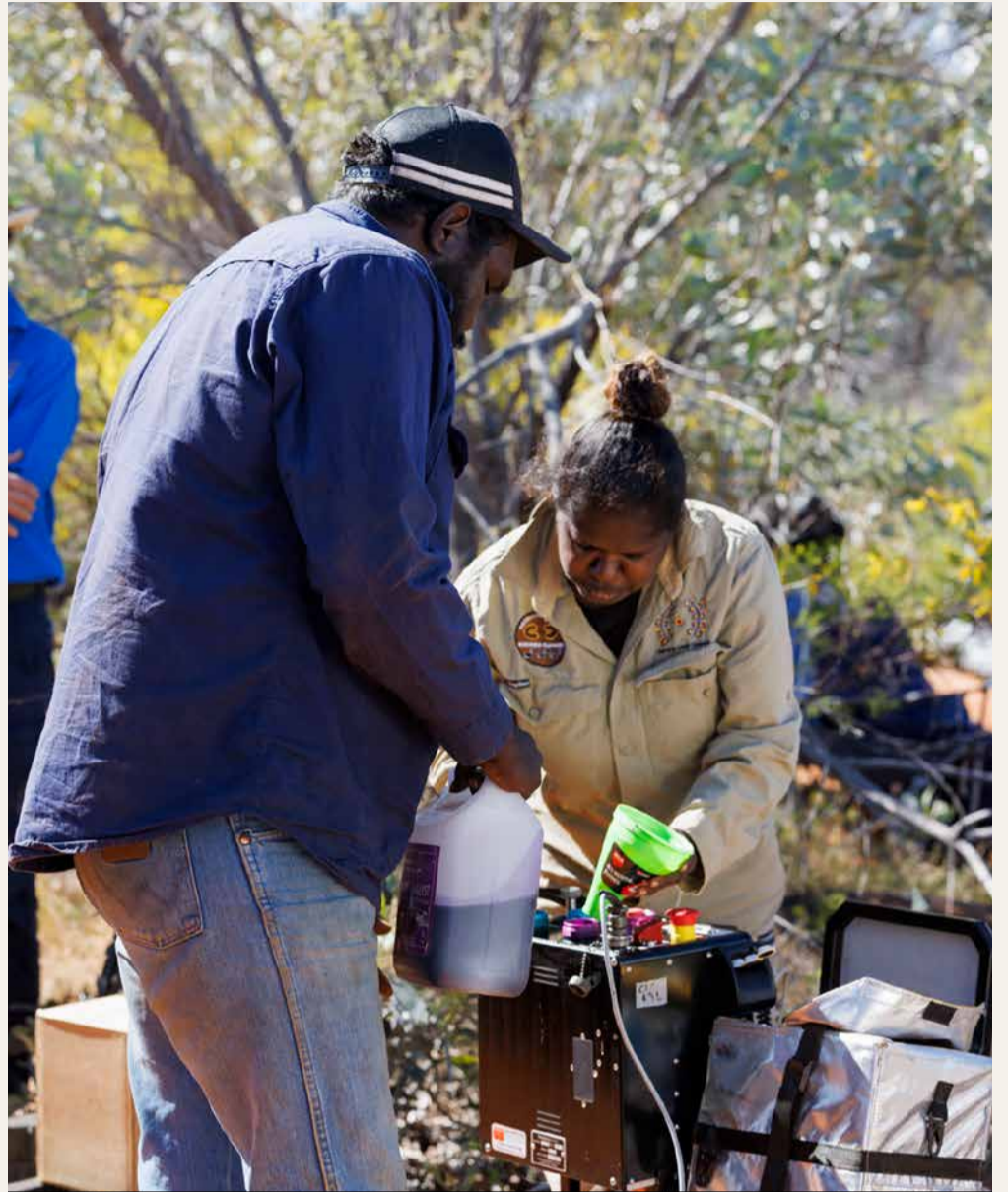
Mr Club wants to put what he learnt to good use on his country.

"We're training to do burns that help stop bushfires, so we can go back to our lands and do the same burning," he said.

Traditional owners and other CLC staff showed the rangers where and how to burn, using a mixture of ground and aerial burning.

"When burning country you have to have that knowledge coming both ways," said Jinkaji traditional owner Elaine Sandy.

These trips are never just about the burning though.



Rangers Michael Nappa and Helma Bernard pour chemicals into the rain dance incendiary machine used in aerial burns.

**"Whenever we burn, we still got to look for whether or not we still got enough bush tucker to go around. For our grandchildren to know, we got to look after our bush tucker when we do burning."**

Traditional owner Janey Dixon said teaching the next generation important skills is also a big part of it.

"Whenever we burn, we still got to look for whether or not we still got enough bush tucker to go around.

For our grandchildren to know, we got to look after our bush tucker when we do burning," she said.

"If you look after country, country looks after you."

With the next generation at the forefront of their minds, the traditional owners also want to use their carbon project income to set up a campsite that will make the area more accessible to their families.

They used the opportunity to plan the camp site with the CLC's community development team.

The trip ticked lots of boxes for lots of people, yet more proof that sometimes many agendas make for the most harmonious of experiences.

## MEET OUR RANGERS



**Paul Club**

**What work do you do?**

Using chainsaw, fencing and welding. Taking care of the country. Fencing up areas like the waterholes to save them from cattle and horses. Going out bush and having a look where we are going to do burnings. Looking after sacred sites and looking after country.

**Can you talk about the recent fire management training trip to Jinkaji, near Elliot?**

This was my first time there. I like the country there. Training and creating fires with the owners of the land. Following them, learn from them and make a fire with them so we can go back to burn our lands.

**What are some of the good things about burning country?**

Keep big fires away and learn how to follow which way the fire is going by which way the wind is going. It keeps the animals safe.

**What's better – ground burning or aerial burning?**

Ground burning is better. It's good to walk around. Can make the fire better.



# Yapa knowledge protects bilbies

COMBINING Aboriginal ways of knowing with scientific monitoring of bilbies makes for better research.

Lajamanu traditional owners and rangers are helping a researcher find bilby tracks, identify their desert environments and threats and develop conservation strategies.

Dr Hayley Geyle relies on the lead ranger of the Central Land Council's North Tanami Rangers, Helen Wilson, and her community to find the shy nocturnal creatures. Together, they learn more about the size of their families and develop strategies to protect bilbies from cats and foxes.

"My work would not have been possible without traditional owners and rangers. They've taught me so much about how to track animals across this landscape. They have deep knowledge of bilbies—where they live, how they behave and what's putting them at risk," she said.

Studying bilbies over the past four years with Yapa has helped the researcher from Territory Natural

Resource Management and Charles Darwin University gain clearer and deeper knowledge.

"It's given me a whole new understanding of how these animals might be interacting across the landscape," Dr Geyle said.

"It's been really great to learn from elders and rangers and to bring that knowledge into our science. It's definitely led to much better outcomes." For example when looking for bilby poo, also known as kuna or scats.

"A study we published together showed that we were able to find a lot more bilby scats when we based our surveys on local tracking knowledge, compared to standard scientific methods."

Ms Wilson said the traditional owners are keen to be part of the research.

"The community come out with us when we do the surveys. They really like to learn. It creates excitement."

She said Yapa liked working with Dr Geyle because she listens to them. "We make a good team."

The two-way knowledge sharing gained national attention with Ms Wilson and Dr Geyle winning the 2024 Bush Heritage Australia 'Right Way' Science award at the Ecological Society Australia conference.

"I feel happy and pleased because I am doing my work for my people, the community and country," said Ms Wilson.

Before colonisation, bilbies lived across most of Australia. Today, they're found in less than a quarter of their former range, mainly because of feral predators and changes to how country is burned and looked after.



Stephen Morice and Travis Penn installed a fox bait trap east of Lajamanu.

In July, North Tanami rangers Ms Wilson, Travis Penn and Kealyn Kelly and traditional owner Silas James took Dr Geyle to known bilby sites on the Northern Tanami Indigenous Protected Area to test a method for controlling foxes that doesn't harm dingoes.

The team checked on spring-loaded baiting devices and the motion-sensor cameras they had deployed earlier to

monitor how foxes, cats and other animals interacted with the devices. They also surveyed track plots and flew drones to look for signs of bilbies and other animals. The cameras confirmed what traditional owners already knew: foxes are very busy in the area.

The team tested the baiting devices with dried meat but without the poison capsule they can release when triggered by foxes.

**"The community come out with us when we do the surveys. They really like to learn. It creates excitement."**



Helen Wilson uses her deep understanding of desert animals to find bilbies.



It consulted elders throughout the process to ensure dingoes, which are sacred to the area, would not be harmed. The trap's design included a special collar that stop dingoes from triggering the devices.

"Next, we'll go through the footage with the rangers and traditional owners and have a yarn about whether this method is a good fit for the Northern Tanami," said Dr Geyle.

The rangers showed how good they are at finding signs of bilbies from a moving car. Driving at 40 kilometres per hour they asked to pull over every time they spotted new burrows metres from the track. Ms Wilson collected bilby poo while Dr Geyle recorded the locations on her phone app.

The team expanded the search by scanning hard-to-reach areas with drones. Then the workers searched the ground where the drone footage showed signs of bilbies.

"There's a few things I've learned, like recording the data on the iPad and the phone," Mr Kelly said. "The cameras also, I'm trying to figure out how they work and everything, and trying to put them in spots where they

can't get destroyed by fire or some other animal."

He said Yapa ways are front and centre of the work.

"Some parts where we do the surveys, some women or some men aren't allowed to go on that site... so we just work as a team you know, try to divide the group and try to record as much data as we can."

Dr Geyle said the work the team

produced together was strong, both from a scientific point of view and from a cultural point of view. "It's really helped us collect better data, by working with people who know the land the best and can guide us to areas where bilbies or foxes are likely to be," she said.

"More than that, it reflects a whole different world view, one that is deeply connected to country and built on generations of lived experience. This perspective brings knowledge, values and ways of seeing that are just as important as the science. Without it, we'd be missing a big part of the picture."

**"Some parts where we do the surveys, some women or some men aren't allowed to go on that site... so we just work as a team you know, try to divide the group and try to record as much data as we can."**



Hayley Gayle showed Travis Penn how to set the fox baiting trap.



Silas James checked the motion sensor camera.



A fox sniffed food in the trap.



The nocturnal bilby searched for food.

# Bilby Lukkanu is the star of wild genetics



Lukkanu provides valuable genetic diversity to make bilbies healthier.

WHEN Tennant Creek locals rescued a bilby from its dead mother's pouch in late 2021 it was the beginning of an amazing genetic journey.

After being told about a baby bilby whose mother had been killed on a road near Bootu Creek Mine Muru-Warinyi Ankkul ranger, Gladys Brown, travelled with family to rescue the hairless tiny creature.

Ms Brown, her niece Dianne Stokes and Ms Stokes' daughter Amber drove two hours to retrieve the bilby from Ms Stokes' son, Sebastian Waistcoat, who worked at the mine.

"It was a real family event. We all hadn't seen a bilby before, we wanted to go and see what it looked like. First time looking at a small bilby. It's a bit different to baby kangaroos.

It had sharp nails," she said.

"It was moving around probably missing its mother. I was cuddling it and making sure it was alright."

Ms Brown named the joey Lukkanu, meaning star in Warlmanpa.

"I felt sorry for him losing his mother so I took him to the vet," Ms Brown said.

After caring for him they gave Lukkanu to Tennant Creek wildlife carer Carol Hepburn who sought advice from the Alice Springs Desert Park and Sea World. She mothered, fed and provided him with round-the-clock care for a couple of months.

"I care for pretty much anything that's not venomous, like wallabies, kangaroos and other smaller animals," Ms Hepburn said.

Once Lukkanu grew fur and became strong he was relocated to the Alice Springs Desert Park where his breeding journey began. Thanks to Ms Hepburn's care during Lukkanu's most vulnerable stages, he went on to greater bilby things.

As a wild-born animal he provided valuable genetic diversity for the Desert Park's bilby breeding program and fathered two female and four male joeys.

Lukkanu's male joeys Kulbar, Mr NT and Tyson were transferred to other captive breeding programs across the country. Kulbar was moved to Kanyana Wildlife in Western Australia, Mr NT to Charleville Wildlife Sanctuary in Queensland and Tyson stayed temporarily at Monarto Safari Park in South Australia and bred joeys Clive and Trish before moving to Currumbin in Queensland.

Early this year Ms Brown wanted to visit Lukkanu and found he had moved to Monarto Safari Park which hosts the Zoo and Aquarium Association's national Bilby Species Management Program.

Lukkanu had been renamed TC but after Ms Brown let the park's Claire



Ford, know his Warlmanpa name they changed it back to Lukkanu.

In July Lukkanu met Gigi and they bred a new joey.

Now at the age of four (31 in bilby years) and weighing two kilos Lukkanu provides rare and valuable genetics to the intensive breeding program.

Genetic diversity is important for growing bilby numbers, preventing inbreeding and for overall healthier bilbies.

Introducing wild bilbies to breeding programs also helps bilbies to thrive out bush for generations to come. When bilbies are released back into the bush this genetic boost makes sure they have the best possible chance of survival.

"We can't thank you enough... Lukkanu is making such a wonderful contribution to the bilby breeding program," Ms Ford said.



Ranger Gladys Brown, "I felt sorry for him losing his mother so I took him to the vet."

## Ranger research helps develop a recovery plan for the endangered princess parrot

KALTUKATJARA rangers have measured marble gum tree hollows to find safe breeding sites for the endangered princess parrot.

Their research is helping scientists to plan how to save the estimated 5,000 colourful parrots left in the bush.

Scientists from the Australian National University joined 11 rangers and other CLC staff in July to check the hollows of 162 marble gums north of Kaltukatjara (Docker River) and found around 230 suitable hollows for nests.

They measured how wide the stems were and recorded the number and size of hollows.

Some were just a few centimetres deep, others were four and a half metres deep.

"Some hollows are new and some old," ranger Bernard Bell said.

"The deep old hollows keep them safe, their eggs and their babies. Their parents are ninti (smart). They care for the nest and the eggs. They are aware of dangers like the mulyamaru (black-headed monitor)."

The parrot also has the unique habit of walking backwards into a hollow,

but few people are lucky enough to see this.

"I have never seen them. This kind of bird used to live here, but they only travel through, now they hide away, hide from feral cats," ranger Peter Norman said.

### "The deep old hollows keep them safe."

Cats and large, uncontrolled bush fires pose the greatest introduced threats to the princess parrot.

Scientists Ellen Ryan-Colton and Luke Ireland compared the lifecycle of the parrots with those of Anangu.

Flocks of older parrots teach the young about the land and sources of food. The parrot's diet of seeds and flowers changed throughout the seasons and it gets water from juicy parakeelya leaves.

The team saw no parrots during the trip, but hid a sound recorder in an old marble gum to keep it safe from camels.

"We put it down to listen to all the bird noises, trying to hear [the princess

parrot]," ranger Tony Connelly said.

The team will use the recordings to estimate how many parrots live in the area.

The rangers hope the recovery plan will help to bring back a healthy and stable princess parrot population.



Tony Connelly and Luke Ireland installed a sound recorder in the trunk of an old marble gum.



# The art of revealing Aboriginal stories



Using a delicate touch Anton McMillan removes a top layer of dirt.



Malcolm Hayes and Anton McMillan with their tools of the trade.

SINCE Ltyentye Apurte ranger Anton McMillan learnt how to remove swallow nests from rock art from the Kaltukatjara Rangers four years ago he has seized every opportunity to use his skills.

“The paintings tell our story. I want to share our knowledge,” he said.

He and his fellow rangers practiced the delicate craft of cleaning hornet wasp nests covering rock art on the Trepkina Gorge cliff face.

Located near the creek bed, about a hundred metres from the carpark of the popular tourist spot, the once obscured painting is now clear for visitors to enjoy.

Mr McMillan uses the same technique for all nests made of mud, no matter whether they were built by birds or insects.

First he sprays turpentine on the nests to soften up the dirt on and around the paintings.

He carefully uses a hammer to remove larger chunks of the nest and

chips at bits of dirt with chopsticks before removing leftover dirt with fine pointed picks.

He then reapplies the spray and waits for it to dry. “When the chemicals dry off is when you get to see where you want to start brushing away,” he said.

Protecting the art is painstaking work. “You don’t want to damage the painting.” Mr McMillan said it’s best to “slowly take your time”.

Visiting the site for the first time Ltyentye Apurte traditional owner, Jeremy Williams, was glad the rangers were restoring it.

“It is very important. It’s been there for years and years.”

The buzz the restoration is generating around his community motivates Mr McMillan to keep going.

He hopes the rangers will continue to care for the paintings. “They’ve been here for a long time, so hopefully they stay that way, and we keep looking after it.”

**“They’ve been here for a long time, so hopefully they stay that way, and we keep looking after it.”**



Kelvin Kopp and Joe Palmer sprayed turpentine to clear mud off the rock art.



David Pearce, Tony Connelly, Peter Norman, scientist Luke Ireland, Norman Kulitja and scientist Ellen Ryan-Colton discussed how to bring back a healthy princess parrot population.

# We speak up about:

## Liveable homes in communities and homelands

- Housing upgrades and new housing
- Planned, regular maintenance
- Reduced overcrowding
- Houses designed for climate
- More choices in design
- Strong housing reference groups
- Aboriginal-controlled housing system
- New funding for homelands housing



## Governance and control

- Voice, treaty, truth-telling
- Aboriginal community governance

### Through the Aboriginal Peak Organisations NT

- Closing the Gap – NT Remote Aboriginal Investment and First Nations Economic Partnership
- Education
- Justice and community safety
- Police and anti-racism
- Health clinics, NDIS, renal services



## Water rights

- Water justice
- Strong and fair water planning, access and governance
- Good drinking water



## Strong land and culture laws

- Aboriginal Land Rights Act
- Native Title Act
- Sacred Sites Act
- Other NT and federal laws that protect Aboriginal rights and interests



## Affordable living

- Affordable power, food and fuel
- Remote Area Allowance boost
- Jobs and employment reform
- Improved access to Centrelink services in communities
- Income management



## Thriving and strong communities

- Climate change and renewable energy
- Essential services
- Roads
- Telecommunications
- Emergency planning and natural disaster management



The members of the Central Land Council met at Kalkaringi in August to decide about their advocacy priorities for the next three years.

# Seven goals guide land council's work

THE CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL'S roadmap for the rest of the decade covers a large area and all roads lead to the goals the council has set for the staff.

The roadmap, also known as the CLC's corporate plan, has seven goals.

We have used carved wooden shields representing each goal because Aboriginal people often talk about the council acting as a shield protecting their rights, country, culture and communities.

The corporate plan explains what the CLC will do between now and the end of the decade to reach its seven goals.

*My Father's Country*, the artwork for the cover of the corporate plan is by Rita Beasley, from Ampilatwatja. (pictured right)

"This place is our hunting place," she said about her painting. "I always go

with my daughters and their children. I teach them about the swampy country. We hunt for goanna, bush potato, bush tomato. After the big rain the bush medicine is picked and the roots are dug up to be used."

The corporate plan explains what the CLC will do between now and the end of the decade to reach its seven goals.

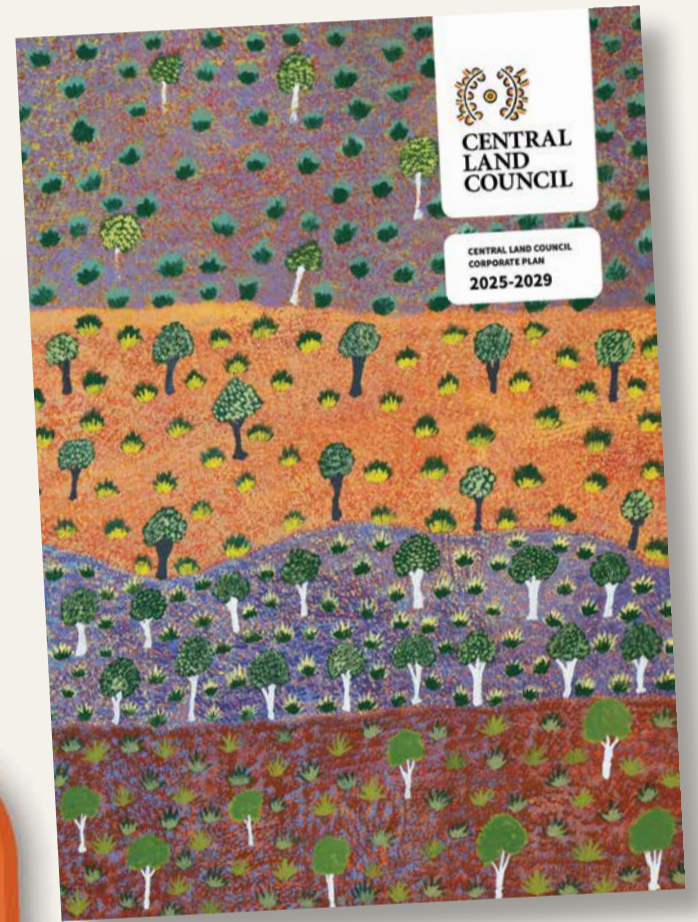
While the corporate plan is looking forward the annual report is looking back. The annual report shows what the CLC has done to reach its goals in the last 12 months and how it has spent its income.

The 2024-25 annual report has been sent to the Minister for Indigenous Australians and will be tabled in the Australian Parliament. Copies of the report and the plan are on the CLC website and in all CLC offices.

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



**We have used carved wooden shields representing each goal because Aboriginal people often talk about the council acting as a shield protecting their rights, country, culture and communities.**



# Land council team honoured at NAIDOC Week awards



NAIDOC award recipients Lynda Lechleitner, Roxanne Highfold, Billie Scott, Garth Forrester, Richard Foster, Barbara Shaw, Josie Douglas, Richard Hayes, Patrick Green and Boyd Elston with Toni Facer from the Mparntwe NAIDOC committee.

THE CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL'S Dr Josie Douglas and its rangers all won awards at the Mparntwe NAIDOC Week ball.

Dr Douglas, the CLC's general manager professional services, won the advocacy award for her commitment to Aboriginal rights. The caring for culture and country award went to the CLC ranger program, which employs more than 100 Aboriginal men and women across Central Australia.

"NAIDOC Week is a time to celebrate the strength and achievements of our people," Dr Douglas said. "Standing with our rangers, I saw how caring for country is inseparable from standing up for our culture, rights and communities."

Dr Douglas leads the CLC's policy, legal, anthropology, mining and communications teams and advocates for the council's priorities. Council members recently set the following priorities: liveable housing, improving how decisions about water are made and a strong focus on safe drinking water, protecting land and native title rights, lowering the cost of remote living, strengthening Aboriginal control of communities and building resilient communities and homelands (see pages 12-13).

Before joining the land council in 2015, Dr Douglas was a senior researcher at the CSIRO and Charles Darwin University. Her PhD on the intergenerational transmission of Indigenous ecological knowledge won the prestigious WEH Stanner Award in 2017.

**"These awards show our young people that they can build a strong future, stay connected to culture and take pride in their achievements."**

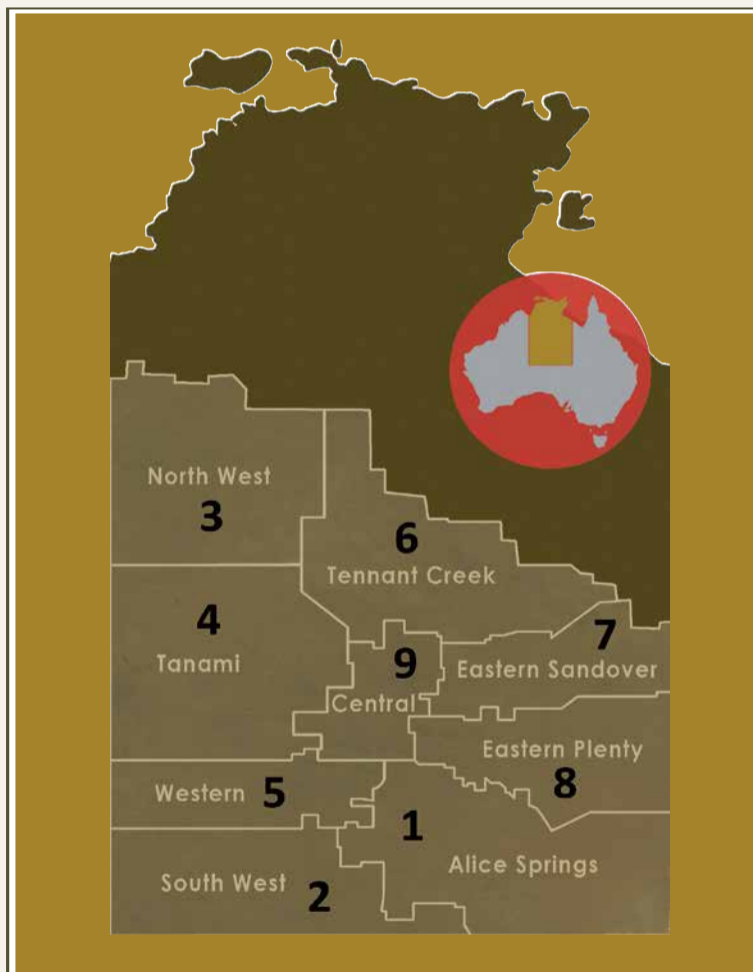
Ranger and programs manager Boyd Elston accepted the award on behalf of the CLC's 14 ranger groups.

"This award is for all of our rangers working in some of the most remote places—protecting animals, managing fire and keeping culture strong," Mr Elston said. "It recognises the excellent work they do with their families and communities every day."

From protecting threatened species and sacred sites to preventing large bushfires through cool season burning, the rangers pass on traditional knowledge to young people and use it to enrich modern conservation science.

"We are proud of Josie and our rangers for showing what's possible when you work with heart and mind," CLC chair Warren Williams said.

"These awards show our young people that they can build a strong future, stay connected to culture and take pride in their achievements."



**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

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# Yapa research excellence shines at conference

YAPA are taking the lead in understanding challenges and developing solutions with their communities.

This is the message researchers Mildred Spencer, Belinda Wayne and Natalie Morton gave the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Summit 2025 in Darwin.

Working as part of the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust's Yitaki-maninjaku, warririnjaku, payirninaku manu pina-jarrinjaku (monitoring, evaluation and learning) program, the researchers track outcomes of the trust's programs and use their insights to strengthen WETT programs and advocacy.

Ms Wayne said Yapa and kardiya (whitefellas) working together as a team means different ways of life meet, overlap and spark new approaches to research, storytelling and knowledge sharing.

"It's like the place where the fresh water of the river and the salt water of the sea meet," she said. "To work respectfully together, listen and learn from each other the team developed warrkini kuruwarri (work protocols)."

Yapa lead the research process and use Warlpiri or communicate in simple English.

Ms Wayne described how the team decides who to approach to learn what is happening in the community. "Men talk to men, women to women and researchers do not talk to their poison cousins," she said. The team asks the right people for confidential interviews—sharing the stories, but never the names.

It then organises the stories into four circles on the 'WETT map' that shows the community's feelings, wants and needs at a glance.

The map helps the researchers track Yapa decision-making, respectful relationships between Yapa and kardiya and quality education and training programs in each of the trust's programs. They are essential elements to achieve the trust's vision, according to Ms Morton.

"The WETT map is good because it speaks to Yapa, especially young people," she said.



Lajamanu researchers Valerie Patterson, Geoffrey Barnes and Matrina Robertson.

After each research trip the community is invited to a feedback barbecue where researchers share what they have learned and discuss how this information can help make Yapa stronger.

"We use the WETT map and brainstorm with the ideas and stories collected by community researchers," said the trust's advisory committee member Sharon Nampijinpa Anderson. This helps the committee make informed program decisions. "Our community knows best what we need and we should be making decisions for ourselves," she said.

"Kardiya way is to only see the numbers and the outcomes, focusing on just one circle.

"Yapa way is to focus on the whole map and the full story. For making Yapa strong to happen, we need to see all of them," Ms Anderson said.

"We need our kids to learn and have a better education to succeed. Our Warlpiri language and culture, with our Warlpiri theme cycle curriculum is most important. Two-way learning."

**"Yapa way is to focus on the whole map and the full story. Kardiya way is to only see the numbers and the outcomes."**

The team then shares its insights with youth workers, schools and government departments.

Ms Spencer said the team is proud of its work and its growth over the last few years. "We are showing the world that Yapa can do our own research and be researchers.

"Everyone is really happy to see young researchers, and we are encouraging more young men and women to become researchers," she said.

The Central Land Council's community development team supported 15 Yapa to make five presentations at the June conference. The other presentations included the GMAAAC's good governance program, the Southern Ngaliya Dancers, Lajamanu's chronic health and aged care project and the Making Yuendumu Beautiful murals project.



Research team members Jeffery Symons, Glenda Wayne, Mildred Spencer and Natalie Morton.



Researchers Natalie Morton and Keturah Peyton at a training workshop in Yuendumu.

# 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 and school trips.

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 'project partners' implement the projects with the groups and employ the local workers.

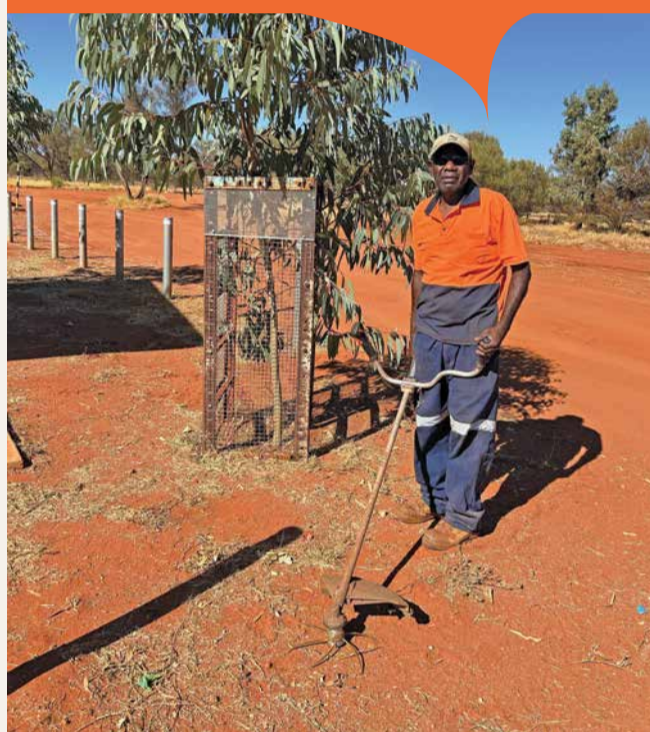


**Patricia Patterson, water park attendant (YMCA, Lajamanu).**

"I work Wednesday to Sunday. When I work with the kids it makes me really happy. It's fun working with the kids, especially my grandkids. They are here every day."

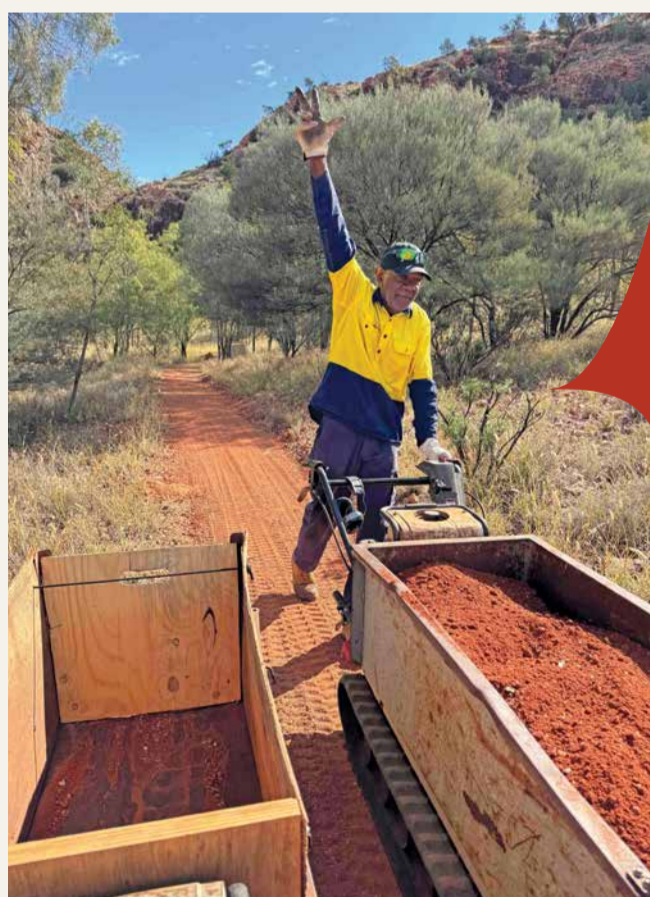
**Martin Nipper, community maintenance officer (Mutitjulu Community Aboriginal Corporation, Mutitjulu).**

"I like keeping it clean and make it look even better. Look after the garden and the trees."



**Mervyn Rose, engagement officer (WANTA, Lajamanu).**

"I've been working with WANTA for three years now – loving it. The best part of working with WANTA is engaging with the kids and being part of the community as well."



**Anthony McMillan Jupurrurla, trail maintenance worker (Tricky Tracks, Yeperenye Nature Park).**

"When I work here I see different views than when I'm just passing on the road. When you are working here you are in it, looking around, getting to know it. Country gets to know you too. It keeps us healthy – more exercise. I love it!"



**Leigh Forrester, lifeguard (Casa Leisure, Mutitjulu).**

"I enjoy the work and it's a great way to contribute to the community."





# Community Quick Response Grants

## APPLICATIONS OPEN!

Aboriginal Investment NT provides grant funding to Aboriginal organisations, businesses and communities across the NT.

Applications for the **Community Quick Response Grants are open** and **assessed on a rolling basis**. There is up to \$10,000 available to support stand-alone, one-off community or cultural events or the purchase of goods and services.

These grants are quick turnaround and get smaller community projects off the ground quickly. Project examples include:



Cultural or community celebration days



Community barbeques



Purchase of local sports team uniforms or equipment



Community training or skills workshops



Art, cooking, music or dance classes



Small community infrastructure

For more information or to apply, visit  
<https://www.aboriginalinvestment.org.au>



# Plummer family honours its elders

HONOURING the lives of loved ones with grave headstones has made the Plummer family happy they are recognising their heritage.

The graves of its seven family members in the Tennant Creek cemetery had become hard to find. Only one had a plaque.

In April Central Monuments Headstones installed headstones, vases and granite surrounds on all seven gravesites. The family drafted the words on the memorials.

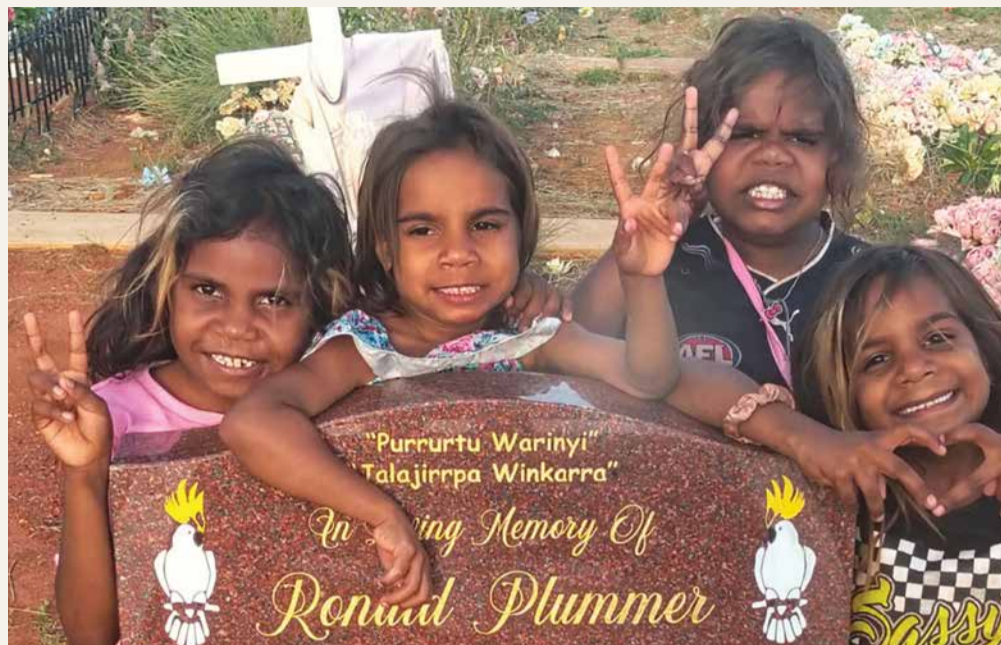
Mr R Plummer, a prominent Tennant Creek resident, began planning the headstone project with his family and the Central Land Council's community development team in 2022. After his death in 2023 the family wanted to continue his work to commemorate their ancestors and help keep their identity, culture and history alive.

**"Everyone helped out with the little things to finish and make it look good."**

"It's about honouring family that are gone," said Marlene Plummer. "Every time we come out [to the cemetery] we never see anything. Now we know where they are buried and we don't have to go searching."

The whole family was involved in the project and decorated the graves with flowers and added gravel, said Aden Plummer. "They felt proud doing their bit. Everyone helped out with the little things to finish and make it look good," he said.

He credited the late Mr Plummer with getting the ball rolling. "If it wasn't for him we probably wouldn't have looked into it. He was the one that started doing the slabs as part of the mob project.



After the death of the late Mr R Plummer in 2023 the family wanted to continue his work to commemorate their ancestors and help keep their identity, culture and history alive.

"He was always thinking about our family wanting to make headstones. The whole family feel happy with this, seeing their headstone on their parents' [grave].

"It's for the generations to come. They'll come out here and look where my great grandfather is. He's here with his brother. That's what we were thinking," he said.

The Purrurtu traditional owner (Plummer family) group funded the project with compensation income and

matched funds from the Aboriginals Benefit Account.

Since 2020 the matched funds trial of the CLC and the National Indigenous Australians Agency has supported groups whose income from land use agreements would otherwise be too small for the projects they want to do.

Twenty-three traditional owner groups and 27 communities are taking part. The trial has been extended until 2026.



# CLC's good governance guide goes bush

FEW newly-elected Central Land Council delegates get through their first council meeting without a peek in the how-to-manual for being a council member.

Each table has copies of the illustrated booklet *Governance at the Central Land Council* and many members like to look them up when they have questions.

They usually have lots of them: "Why do we check if we have a quorum and what is a quorum anyway?"

"How do I know if I've got a conflict of interest and what do I do about it?" "What is a proxy and why might I need one?"

The CLC's good governance guide has all the answers because it is based on years of feedback from CLC members.

It has been around for almost two decades, but the third edition is the best one yet.

So good, in fact, that Helen Wilson from the Lajamanu-based Northern Tanami Rangers has asked to take copies back to her community.

"I would like to have a book like that for all the rangers," she said. "So we can learn about governance too and about how the CLC works. There's no big words in the book, so it's all plain English. They broke it down so it's good to read. I might read it to my kids and teach them."

"I think this book is really good – what governance means to us. It will bring a lot of learning and teaching to the younger ones, like my age, and everyone else."

The lead ranger has been thinking on and off about representing her community on the council someday, once she moves on from ranger work.

When she visited the Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Park on other business in April she attended parts of the CLC's

**"They broke it down so it's good to read. I might read it to my kids and teach them."**

induction and governance training day and started to leaf through the guide.

"The writing is all right, not too long and not too short. The pictures in the book are of local people, so that's good."

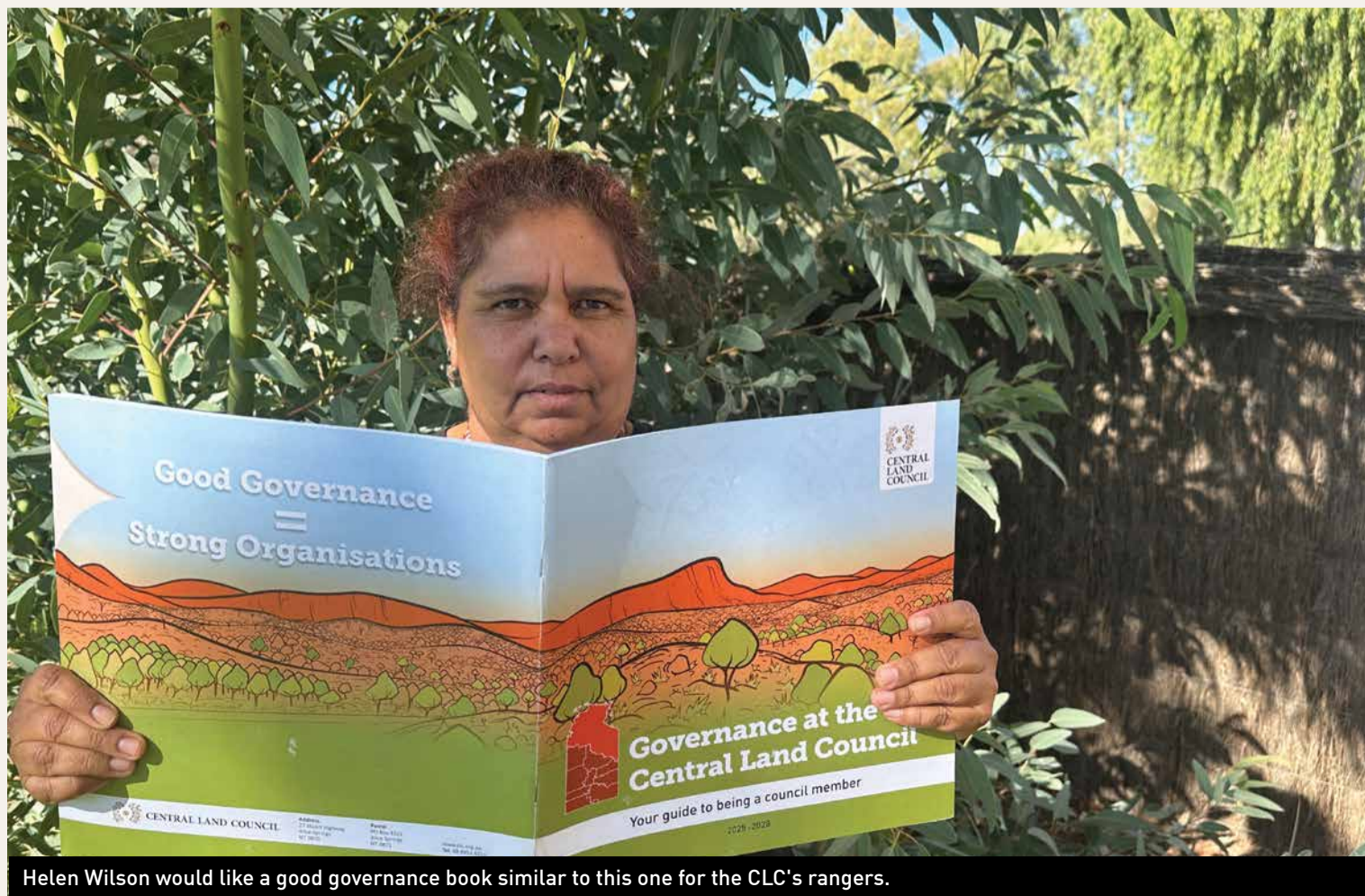
Another fan of the guide is governance trainer Maggie Kavanagh who ran the council induction during the first meeting of the CLC's 2025-28 council term.

Ms Kavanagh has followed the development of the guide for many

years and believes the latest edition shows that the council is taking governance support seriously.

"It is comprehensive, user friendly, has great graphics and is a terrific hands-on resource for council members to learn about their job," she said.

A digital copy of *Governance at the Central Land Council* is at <https://www.clc.org.au/governance-at-the-central-land-council/>.



Helen Wilson would like a good governance book similar to this one for the CLC's rangers.



## Protecting Ilpili

Camilla Young was one of the rangers who worked with scientists and Kintore's Yirara College students, digging out Willie Rockhole and planning cool-season burns with their fathers and grandfathers. The Walungurru Rangers have fenced the Ilpili spring, stopping feral camels from damaging the culturally and ecologically important site. Rehabilitation is now underway.



## Campground plan for Jinkaji

Jinkaji traditional owners are investing some of their carbon credit income back into their country near Elliott. The group wants to build a campground to give their young people a place to learn on country. They also plan to use the camp as a base for burning their country to earn carbon credits.



## Rangers share their fire knowledge

Ranger groups from the Barkly, Tanami and Utopia regions exchanged burning skills and knowledge on savannah country.

The Utopia rangers from Arlparra joined Tennant Creek's Muru Warinyi-Ankkul rangers and the Murnkurrumurnkurru rangers from Daguragu for a cool-season burn at Jinkaji, near Elliot.

Katrina Williams was one of the team that carried out both ground and aerial burning to manage sub-tropical woodland the 'right way'.

The Utopia rangers say they are excited to use what they learned back on their own country.



## Yewerre traditional owners plan for country

Traditional owners returned to the remote Yewerre Aboriginal Land Trust for the first time in 11 years. They planned how to protect sacred sites, for example through a fence to keep cattle out and Aboriginal freehold signs to warn off unauthorised visitors.



# Anangu build a path to sharing knowledge

SINCE February 15 Anangu from Muṯitjulu and Amata have helped to build three accommodation sites along the new 54-kilometre Uluru-to-Kata-Tjuta walking trail.

The workers have prepared and marked out the camp sites, built footings for structures and helped move materials to the sites. Working as builders' labourers they have helped tradespeople to fit out the buildings.

One of them is Rodney Collins. He's enjoyed sharing his knowledge with piranpa (Pitjantjatjara for non-Aboriginal) workers. "Some guys have been helping me, they want to learn our language and I am learning their language," he said.

"I tell them stories about how we go hunting on this land. I show them plants and tell them how we use them, and about our culture."

The experience has made Mr Collins, a former ranger, think about becoming a guide when the walk opens next year.

The walk has three accommodation sites. The first two sites include a communal building with a kitchen and dining area, separate toilets and showers, and canvas tents.

The third site, near Uluru, has individual units and kitchen, dining and lounge areas. The ready-made units, wiltjas (wind breaks), toilets and showers were built in Adelaide and transported to Muṯitjulu by truck then flown by helicopter to the sites.

Australian Walking Company staff

connected the units to the walkways and to solar power and plumbing.

Anangu are clearing vegetation, including buffel grass, from the track.

The company has been taking bookings for the five-day walk from next April.

The Central Land Council and the traditional owners of the park are part of a steering committee for the project and expect the completed walk to create at least 20 jobs for Anangu in the first 10 years.

They will work as guides, campsite

**"Some guys have been helping me, they want to learn our language and I am learning their language."**

hosts, bus drivers and in logistics.

Under the company's agreement with the CLC a community social and business development fund is being set up.

It will help Anangu to start businesses and work in jobs that support the walk in areas such as developing guided tours, transporting supplies and guests, creating artwork

for the accommodation sites, supplying firewood, maintaining the track and removing rubbish. There will also be opportunities to offer the

visitors cultural experiences such as painting, storytelling and punu (wood) carving workshops.



Rodney Collins has been thinking of becoming a guide on the trail he helped to clear.



## Community Youth Sports Grant

**NOW OPEN!**

PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY THE CENTRECORP FOUNDATION

- Supporting **Aboriginal youth participation** in sport across **Central Australia**
- Grants available for **community and remote regions** within the Central Land Council footprint
- Priority given to **team and club-based applications** focused on **youth engagement and development**
- Ideal for **clubs, schools, or organisations** aiming to boost local youth involvement through sport

**APPLICATION DEADLINE**



**APPLY NOW**

AND HELP BUILD **STRONG, ACTIVE FUTURES** THROUGH SPORT!



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[www.centrecorpfoundation.com.au](http://www.centrecorpfoundation.com.au)

for application details and guidelines



Atitjere Ladies Pinktails car by Maria Ross, Martina Madrill, Marie Ross, Billie-Jo Liddle, Zhoe Webb, Shaylee Rankine, Andrina Webb, Maqueya Dixon, Nesharna Hunter and Deniqua Morrison.



Freedom Day Festival dancers.



CLC members led the Freedom Day March.



CLC council members and staff hosted Labor politicians at Kalkaringi.



Children at the Freedom Day March.



Madeleine Dixon, Taheal Woods, Dennis Nelson and Maisie Wayne took part in the desert habitat method trials led by the Indigenous Desert Alliance. Photo by Andre Sawenko



Mulga Bore car prepared for the Red Centre Nats by Ziah Webb, Kirklen Bird, Zac Webb, Kevin Bird, Cassidy Bird, Tony Schaber and David Rankine.



Josie Douglas, Nick Rickard and Alanna Robertson at the Gurindji Freedom Day.



Tash Walker learned how to free bogged cars at the CLC four wheel drive course.



Harold shows off the Land Rights News.



After two decades his CLC colleagues Katie Allen, Kate O'Brien and Sherilyn Barnes farewelled David Young.

EVERY HILL GOT A STORY  
is now back in print

## We are still working – they are still climbing



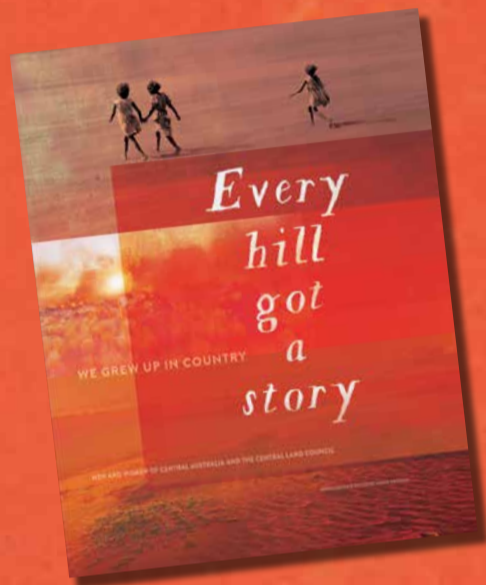
Ranger work is about culture, teaching the children dancing. Right now I'm telling all the tourist minga [ants] to keep away from that rock [Uluru] in the wet time and the windy time, when there is a strong wind. During the hot time we say to you to keep your family safe. Every year there is an accident on this rock here. We always tell the minga, 'Please don't run, wet time. Save your body.' We look after the tourists. Anangu worry about that one. Anangu are always talking meeting time. 'Close this. Listen to us. Close that climb.' We are still working – they are still climbing.

We always care for them – 'Not allowed to go that way, take a picture. That is a woman's sacred site' ... 'Woman can go this way, have a look.' Good way we do it. 'But you can't go yourself. You got to see the Anangu working ranger.' They always tell us, 'Good, lovely, thank you!' Sometimes those whitefella minga go mad, though. It is a good job, ranger work. I like it. I am still working there, ngaltutjara [poor thing].

**DAISY WALKABOUT**

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)



# LET'S CELEBRATE GETTING OUR LAND BACK

## ULURU-KATA TJUTA NATIONAL PARK

1985