



Embargoed until Tuesday 28 July 6am AEST

Aputula Rangers to celebrate grand opening of their purpose-built ranger base

The Central Land Council's rangers in Aputula (Finke) will no longer have to rely on a lone shipping container to support their growing workloads, as they celebrate the opening of a long-awaited ranger base on Tuesday 28 July.

The Aputula Rangers, community residents and other CLC rangers will open the new base at 11:00am, with plans for ceremonial dancing and a performance from the Titjikala band.

The purpose-built new ranger hub in the remote town of Aputula, around 4.5 hours' drive from Mparntwe (Alice Springs), offers modern amenities and ample space for the team to meet, train, work and share knowledge.

It features a large solar-powered shed for equipment and camping gear, an air-conditioned office with internet connection, indoor and outdoor meeting spaces, training areas and accommodation.

The new base has been a long time coming. Established in 2020 with seed funding from the Aboriginals Benefit Account, the ranger group now comprises four female and three male rangers – with one more woman joining soon.

They work mostly within the Aputula and Pmer Ulperre Ingwemirme Arletherre Aboriginal land trusts, the Akerre (Mac Clarke) Reserve and across other neighbouring cattle stations.

They will also work on the new Pmere Atherre Antenterreme Indigenous Protected Area in the Simpson Desert, which was dedicated earlier this month.

Ranger and traditional owner Jolene Doolan said she fences sacred sites and threatened native plants to keep them safe from cattle and tourists. Her colleague Geoffrey Stuart also measures rare trees and sets up cameras that record native animals and threats such as feral cats and camels.

"I feel proud," Mr Stuart said of the new facilities.

Jill Doolan, a member of the traditional owner committee that advises the rangers, said the new base will make looking after the country more comfortable.

"It's a more open and safe space," she said. "The resources are helpful and having the ranger base is really good for future generations."

She is grateful for the strong will, determination and commitment of her elders.

"Their voice made a big difference for us," she said.

The CLC will unveil a plaque honouring the late Mr Hoosan during the opening celebrations. A highly respected leader who lived in Aputula, Mr Hoosan served as CLC chair in 2022.

"Mr Hoosan's time as chair was tragically cut short, but his profound impact is still felt today," CLC chief executive Les Turner said.

CLC delegate for the region, David Doolan, said Mr Hoosan was a champion of the rangers.

"Mr Hoosan did a lot of things for this place," Mr Doolan said. "He did good things for the CLC office and for the rangers, too."

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