

Community Development NEWS

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CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL

Driving our own development

WINTER 2025

NEW PLAYGROUND IS THE TOPS FOR TARA KIDS

Tara kids are celebrating their brand-new playground. Having their own playground in the middle of the community has changed daily life in Tara.

Families sit in the shade, sip tea and watch their children play.

“They play all day, have lunch, then come back and play again,” said grandmother and group member Nancy Thompson. “Even after school they run straight here and play into the night. They love the playground.”

Residents suggested the playground project at a community meeting with the Central Land Council’s community development team in 2021.

Working with the CLC team, the group planned the project and allocated \$127,000 matched funds from the Aboriginals Benefit Account.

Two years later, Alice Springs-based Pedersens Builders installed a fire pole, a slide and swings.

Even before the builders had finished the playground kids would line up before school to watch them work.

“We would see the beds empty and find them outside watching the builders. They were so excited they could hardly wait,” Selma Thompson said. “They’d go to school and then come back and watch. My grandson Gilbert was crying ‘Mum, come on and



Jarserisha tries out the new swing

make dinner so after dinner we can move our bunks here so we can camp here tonight.”

Selma Thompson is a member of the Tara community group that planned the project.

She said the playground was good news for all residents of the small community near Barrow Creek.

“IT’S NOT JUST THE KIDS THAT ARE SO HAPPY, IT’S ALSO PEOPLE THAT LIVE HERE IN TARA. SO HAPPY THAT SOMETHING NEW IS HAPPENING IN TARA,” SAID SELMA THOMPSON.

Before the playground, children in Tara, three hours north of Alice Springs, had few options after school. Many made do with makeshift swings or making their own cubby houses.

When possible, families took them to playgrounds in other communities.

“They have their own playground [now] because everywhere else we go, other communities we see they got their playgrounds. Our kids always ask ‘Can I go over there to play?’” Selma Thompson said. “I feel happy for Tara kids.”

She said the playground has brought families together.

“We used to buy our own swings, and lots of kids used to go to my house and I would keep an eye on them. But now instead of just one person looking after the children, we’ve got the whole community keeping an eye on them.”

Parents and grandparents, including Nancy Thompson, have noticed that the kids are looking out for each other.

“THEY DON’T FIGHT OR TEASE. THEY’RE BUSY PLAYING AND TALKING, AND THEY LOVE IT,” SELMA THOMPSON SAID.

The Community Development News gives Aboriginal people a chance to find out about the many outcomes they are achieving as part of the CLC’s community development program.

This newsletter keeps CLC constituents up to date on some of the social, cultural and economic projects Aboriginal groups are planning and funding with

their own money across Central Australia. If you would like more information about this work please contact the CLC on 8951 6367 or visit www.clc.org.au

Cover Photo; Gilbert enjoys the new playground at Tara.



BACK ON COUNTRY: HOMELAND UPGRADES BRING FAMILIES HOME

Utju traditional owners are one step closer to living on their homelands full-time, thanks to newly-renovated, more comfortable homes.

Ntorrata working group member Mildred Inkamala hopes her upgraded home at Alkngarrintja, half an hour's drive from Ntaria (Hermannsburg), will help future generations stay connected to country.

"I WANT ALL MY CHILDREN AND GREAT-GREATS TO STAY IN MY HOMELAND," MILDRED INKAMALA SAID.

Her home now has two rooms and a covered outdoor area, and there is room for more family in an old tin house next door.



The new accommodation at Alkngarrintja

"I wanted my house to be fixed so I can stay on my country. Finally, I got that little house put in there," she said.

In 2023, the working group approved \$90,000 from their community lease income and \$248,000 in matched funds from the Aboriginals Benefit Account for renovations

at two homelands at the foot of the West MacDonnell Ranges.

A year later, builder Dynamic Solutions completed the work on Ms Inkamala's house and two houses at neighbouring Ipolera.

One Ipolera house got new windows, doors and screen doors and the builder fixed the sewerage system.

Utju traditional owners helped with the renovations.

Christian Malbunka worked 46 hours on construction, while Colin Malbunka contributed 17 hours of plastering and painting.

"I was staying at my outstation in Alkngarrintja and travelling to Ipolera every morning for work," Christian Malbunka said.

"I took out the old materials, fixed the doors, and painted inside and out," he said.

"I'd wake up early and start at 7 o'clock. It was good to work on the houses. I enjoyed learning how to fix things up. Now I want to fix my house too."

Ipolera resident Bevan Malbunka welcomed the upgrades.

"They've done a really good job, especially inside where the broken ceiling was. Water kept coming in, and that's why parts of the

ceiling fell off," the working group member said. "It's an old house."

It now has a new kitchen roof and a renovated kitchen and bathroom. The floors have been laminated and there's air conditioning, ceiling fans and new doors and windows.

The families still need to connect the water and fix the solar power before they can live there full-time.

"At the moment, nobody lives in the house because there's no water and power," Bevan Malbunka said.

"Somebody turned off the main tap at the bore, the one we used to fill the drinking water tank. But once that's sorted, I'll move back and commute the half hour to Ntaria for work."



Bevan Malbunka looks forward to spending more time at Ipolera

"The kids and grandkids all think it's great. They're all thinking of coming back," Bevan Malbunka said. "I want to come back for good. It's much quieter here. In Ntaria, you hear cars all the time, up and down the street."

He hopes to see more families return.

"There are a lot of houses here, so when they see me coming back, maybe more families will too."

"MY SISTERS AND I—WE ALL COME BACK HERE. THIS PLACE WAS BUILT FOR US AND OUR KIDS. WE BELONG HERE," BEVAN MALBUNKA SAID.



Christian Malbunka worked with Dynamic Solutions on the renovation at Ipolera

Project facts: Matched Funds

The Central Land Council and the National Indigenous Australians Agency started a trial in 2020 to fund groups that use new income from land use agreements for community driven projects by matching their investments dollar-for-dollar.

All communities with new lease income and traditional owner groups with new income from land use agreements between \$50,000 and \$150,000 are eligible.

A significant amount of the matched funds has gone to groups whose incomes from land use agreements would otherwise be

too small for the projects they want. The trial was extended for another three years in 2023.

Twenty-three traditional owner groups and 27 communities currently take part in the trial.

The groups have planned and funded 186 projects with almost \$7 million dollars of their matched funds. Some larger projects have attracted co-funding from other sources with support from CLC's community development team.

MATCHED
FUNDS

Engawala kids
band performing

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ENGAWALA STUDENTS FIND THEIR RHYTHM IN MUSIC WORKSHOPS

Music has always been a big part of life in Engawala.

Now young people have tuned into learning, creating and performing music, thanks to a workshop with some of Australia's best.

Coloured Stone band members Jason Lee Scott and Bunna Lawrie, singer-songwriter Kutcha Edwards and producer Dave Walker, from Capel Sound Studios, led a three-day

their own songs and recording their music with the industry professionals.

The visitors turned the classroom into a makeshift studio to teach how songs are put together from start to finish.

Traditional owner Joy Turner was happy to see the students so engaged.

the show with choir performances and band sets, proudly showing off their new skills.

Local favourites, the MB Reggae Band and the Newboys, got the crowd moving.

Kutcha Edwards led the audience in a powerful singalong with all of the students onstage.

Coloured Stone, backed by the MB Reggae Band, kept the crowd dancing to their biggest hits until the last note.



Kutcha Edwards leads music
workshops with Engawala community

music workshop at Alcoota School, where students explored instruments, songwriting, and recording.

The highlight was a concert under the stars at Engawala's central park, where young performers shared the stage with the seasoned artists.

The students prepared for the concert by experimenting with different instruments, writing

"THE KIDS ENJOYED THE LEARNING AND THE WORKSHOPS TO MAKE THE MUSIC. IT WAS FUN TO WATCH THE KIDS ENJOY THEMSELVES," JOY TURNER SAID.

Families and friends from Engawala, Atitjere and Arlparra gathered as the students opened

Leanne Dodd, whose niece and nephews performed on stage, loved how the show brought everybody to their feet.

"EVERYBODY WAS DANCING FOR COLOURED STONE, NOT ONLY THE KIDS BUT THE ADULTS TOO," SAID LEANNE DODD.

The community allocated \$22,000 of its matched funds income to the workshops and performance.

MATCHED
FUNDS

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FOR COMMUNITY JOBS

Local jobs help families and keep money in the community. Every year more than 450 Aboriginal people get work through community projects.

These jobs pay wages and make life better—through playgrounds, walking trails and sports facilities. They also improve bilingual education and support school trips.

Aboriginal groups plan, fund and monitor these projects, and whenever possible, they team up with Aboriginal-owned organisations and businesses.

Under agreements with the Central Land Council these ‘project partners’ plan and implement the projects with the groups and employ the local workers.

Meet some of the men and women working in their communities.



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 COMMUNITY AS WELL.”



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. PALYA.”



Leigh Forrester
Lifeguard (Casa Leisure, Mutitjulu)

“I ENJOY THE WORK AND IT’S A GREAT WAY TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE COMMUNITY.”



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!”

Patricia Patterson
Water park attendant (The YMCA of the Northern Territory, 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.”



YUELAMU ARTISTS PAINT A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Yuelamu residents are kick-starting their own art centre—Inkwareny Artists of Yuelamu—to share their culture and creativity and support their families.

Since the centre opened its doors in 2023, more than 50 artists have become members, painting, selling and showcasing their work.

Artists Lisa Cook and Rowena Larry split their time between painting and operating the art centre.

“IT’S GREAT TO HAVE OUR OWN ART GALLERY WHERE VISITORS CAN COME AND SEE [OUR WORK]. IT’S GOOD TO PAINT MY DREAMING AND GO OUT ON COUNTRY VISITS,” MS COOK SAID.

In its first year, Inkwareny Artists sold 450 paintings, providing \$45,000 in direct income to the artists.



Before this, some artists travelled three hours to sell their work at the Todd Mall in Alice Springs, while others drove 40 kilometres to Warlukurlangu Artists in Yuendumu.

“IT’S GOOD TO LOCATE AND PINPOINT THE ART CENTRE. TO SHOW WHERE YUELAMU IS AND WHO’S DOING THE PAINTINGS. THE ARTISTS ARE PROUD OF IT. IT’S CHANGE, GOOD CHANGE,” ARTIST JULIET MORRIS SAID.

The centre sells art at fair prices while helping to build a unique Yuelamu art identity.

The artists are also learning new skills, from canvas stretching and screen printing to pottery.

“It’s about having fun and doing painting and showing the kids,” Ms Larry said. “Maybe they’ll take it over when they grow up. The kids can learn from us, from their elders. It’s quite fun doing painting—patterns and dreaming for our country.”

For the past two years, residents worked with the Central Land Council’s community development team and the Wanta Aboriginal Corporation’s social enterprise manager to set up the art centre. One of the first steps was to employ an art centre manager and local arts workers.

Project facts: Granites Mine Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation

The Granites Mine Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation benefits nine communities affected by Newmont’s Granites gold mine in the Tanami Desert - Yuendumu, Lajamanu, Willowra, Nyirrpri, Yuelamu, Tanami Downs, Balgo, Ringer Soak and Billiluna.

Every year, community committees plan, and allocate funds to, community benefit projects.

Communities elect committee members every three years and the committees choose the directors of the corporation.

The CLC’s community development unit helps the community committees to plan the projects



In December 2024, Inkwareny Artists became an incorporated organisation.

The Granites Mine Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation committee allocated \$264,000 to set up the centre and cover its operational costs between 2022 and 2024.

“It’s good to have our own art centre and to work from here. Before, we had to go to Yuendumu,” GMAAAC committee member Shonelle Stafford said.

Ms Cook has taken her art to the Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair.

“I learned different kinds of skills for art. Some people came up and asked us about our paintings,” she said.

Yuelamu artists also participated in last year’s Desert Mob event in Alice Springs and sold 80 per cent of their work at their first exhibition in Castlemaine, Victoria.

The GMAAAC committee allocated an additional \$71,000 to the project in 2024, which included \$10,000 to build a website, inkwarenyartists.com.

Launched last November, it helps the artists to sell and promote their work online.

The community is now working on plans for a dedicated art centre space in a disused building.

“WE WANT TO RENOVATE THE OLD MUSEUM FOR OUR GALLERY — TO SELL OUR PAINTINGS AND CREATE ART THERE,” SAID MS LARRY.

Design plans featuring a gallery and art-making spaces are almost complete and the local GMAAAC committee has applied for government funding to help with renovation costs.

Ms Morris is already planning about how to market Yuelamu’s art at the turn-off to the Tanami Highway.

“When we have the new art centre, we’ll put a sign on the road for visitors,” she said.



and select partner organisations to implement them.

Since 2008 GMAAAC has allocated more than \$100 million to 1,300 community benefit projects. The projects create jobs for Yapa, contracts for local businesses and support community priorities such as language, culture, education, training, essential services and infrastructure.

The GMAAAC, the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust, and the Newmont Tanami Operations support the CLC’s community development work in the Tanami.

Some projects in the region have also been supported with funds from the Tanami Mine Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation.

PAW MEDIA EXPANDS ITS LAJAMANU SERVICE

Yuendumu-based Pintubi Anmatjere Warlpiri Media has expanded its operations in Lajamanu and local production is soaring.



A new two-year media program funded by the Granites Mine Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation (GMAAAC) has begun to churn out music videos, documentaries and social media content.

PAW Media, the Tanami region's only Aboriginal-controlled media and music service, and Lajamanu's GMAAAC committee decided in 2022 to boost PAW's presence in the community and set aside more than \$800,000 for a two-year program.

Three years of planning and development later, PAW Media has recruited a multimedia producer and trainer to Lajamanu.

Video and film creative producer and director Sophie Saville started in the role in April.

The organisation has also renovated its recording studio at the arts centre and established an office space at the community's learning centre, where its community archive is.

Maxwell Tasman, a local media producer since 2005, is excited about PAW Media's commitment to Lajamanu.



"IT'S REALLY GOOD PAW HAVING A PROGRAM MANAGER HERE TO FOCUS ON LAJAMANU. IT WAS ONLY ME WORKING FOR A WHILE, CARRYING THE LOAD," MAXWELL TASMAN SAID.

Mr Tasman hopes that the GMAAAC investment will keep PAW Media "more connected to the community".

"I was hopeful that someone could work in Lajamanu permanently, and PAW listened," he said.

PAW Media's Yuendumu staff have helped the Lajamanu team to cover Lajamanu's sports weekend in June.

The event featured a concert with four bands and attracted around 150 people. Since then four residents have spent more than 106 hours working on media projects.

They produced a documentary about last year's Milpiri Festival, two short films for a community mural project and posted on social media about a visit from the Carlton Blues football team.

They also worked on a music video featuring local musician Esau Marshall.

PAW Media and the GMAAAC committee plan to focus more on music production once PAW Media builds its capacity in Lajamanu.

"FOR ME IT'S REALLY EXCITING AS A MUSICIAN. I PLAY BASS, AND I CAN'T WAIT FOR IT TO GET STARTED AND FOR PAW TO START RECORDING MUSIC," COMMITTEE MEMBER MICHAEL PAYTON SAID.



"NEARLY THREE YEARS AGO, CONVERSATIONS STARTED WITH GMAAAC. PAW CAME TO US WITH A PROPOSAL, AND SOME OF US WERE KEEN TO HAVE PAW IN LAJAMANU. WE HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR THEM TO GET SET UP. IT DOESN'T HAPPEN STRAIGHT AWAY; WE NEED TO BUILD THINGS UP. WE ARE NEARLY THERE," SAID MR PAYTON.



GMAAAC RECOGNISED AMONG NATION'S BEST AT GOVERNANCE AWARDS

The Granites Mine Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation was one of the top three finalists at the 2024 Indigenous Governance Awards.

The awards honour organisations that make a lasting difference to the lives of Aboriginal people through strong leadership and governance.

Competing against 150 organisations across Australia, GMAAAC stood out among large corporations.

Directors Cyril Tasman, Derek Williams, Joyce Herbert and Michaeline Gallagher attended the awards ceremony in Brisbane.

"It's good to be recognised as a finalist from so many strong Indigenous organisations," Mr Williams said.

Mr Tasman said he felt "very honoured and proud to be a finalist".

"IT WAS INSPIRING TO SEE INDIGENOUS ELDERS LEADING AND TO LEARN ABOUT THE GREAT THINGS OTHER ORGANISATIONS ARE DOING FOR THEIR PEOPLE," MR TASMAN SAID.

Ms Herbert enjoyed meeting people and sharing ideas.

"I LIKED NETWORKING WITH OTHERS. NEXT TIME WE TRAVEL, WE CAN LOOK FOR THEM. THE GALA DINNER WAS GREAT. IT WAS MY FIRST TIME AT SOMETHING LIKE THAT," SAID MS HERBERT.

Last September, GMAAAC directors and committee members welcomed the Indigenous Governance Awards judges to Yuelamu and Yuendumu. In Yuendumu the judges and the committee visited the GMAAAC-funded pool and murals.

In Yuelamu the committee took the judges on a tour of the areas identified for development in the community's masterplan, and to visit the recently constructed playgrounds.

The directors and residents explained how these projects have strengthened community



GMAAAC directors Derek Williams, Cyril Tasman, Joyce Herbert, Michaeline Gallagher and CLC staff Karina Menkhorst and Rebecca Humphries at the awards

connections in Yuendumu and created better spaces for families in Yuelamu.

The judges also learned about the GMAAAC good governance program, which helps directors manage the corporation and its investments.

The corporation receives compensation income from the Granites mine, about 540 kilometres northwest of Alice Springs.

It invests half of its income for use after the mine closes. The rest is used to run the corporation and fund community benefit projects in nine Tanami communities.

Reconciliation Australia, the Australian Indigenous Governance Institute and the BHP Foundation present the awards every two years.



Yuendumu GMAAAC committee member Belinda Wayne showed IGA judges Kenny Bedford, Belinda Duarte and Val Price-Beck community projects



GMAAAC committee members gave the judges a tour of projects they have funded in Yuelamu



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During the ceremony the elders performed the yala (bush potato) purlapa

YAPA ARTEFACTS RETURN FROM EUROPE

When senior Yapa law men Banjo Tex and Jimmy Spencer welcomed an Austrian researcher and his son to Yuendumu in 1972, they never expected the artefacts they gave them to come home again.

Nor did they get to see any of the footage Professor Irenäus Eibl-Eibesfeldt, his then 18-year-old son Bernolf and assistant Dieter Heunemann filmed of them.

Fifty-two years later the professor's son handed back sacred men's objects and everyday objects such as karli (boomerangs), wurlampi (knives), pikirri (spear thrower) and kurdiji (shields) to a group of Yapa elders at an emotional ceremony in Frankfurt, Germany.

Long-time Central Land Council ranger Kumanjaye Tex, who passed away in early April this year, had walked from the Warlpiri Ranger office in Yuendumu to the Pintubi Anmatjere Warlpiri Media (PAW) studio to watch a live stream of the handover ceremony at Frankfurt's Senckenberg Museum.

"I WAS REALLY HAPPY. BOTH HAPPY AND SAD BECAUSE MY DAD NEVER TOLD ME ANYTHING. I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE THOSE THINGS BACK IN THE COMMUNITY. I WANT IT BACK," KUMANJAYE TEX SAID AT THE TIME.

The South Australian Museum's repatriation officer Jamie Hampton spent two years tracking the missing objects and footage to the other side of the world.

On Christmas Eve, two years ago, he called Bernolf Eibl-Eibesfeldt, who had inherited his late father's private collection.

"BERNOLF HAD BEEN CARING FOR THE OBJECTS SINCE ABOUT 2015. IT WAS PLAYING ON HIS MIND THAT THE OBJECTS NEEDED TO GO BACK TO THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS. SO WHEN I MADE CONTACT HE WAS SO HAPPY, SO EXCITED. HE FELT A SENSE OF RELIEF," MR HAMPTON SAID.



Yuendumu men visited Frankfurt's Senckenberg Museum for the return of their ancestors' artefacts

Around \$220,000 of this helped to pay for the Frankfurt trip.

"It was just great to get the support from GMAAAC and from the elders to make it possible," Jamie Hampton said.

"It was a good investment for GMAAAC and for a good cause. Some of these objects are more than 100 years old," GMAAAC director Derek Williams told the ABC.

He said the objects are not only important for the future generations of Yapa, but wants visitors to see them as well.

"BECAUSE OF TRUTH-TELLING, TELL THE TOURISTS WHAT HAPPENED IN OUR COMMUNITIES," SAID DEREK WILLIAMS

Once the many hours of historical footage have been digitised the project plans to make them available through its online archive and Pintupi Anmatyerr Warlpiri Media.

Yuendumu residents will be able to watch the footage of their ancestors once it has been digitised, they will have to wait a bit longer to see their objects.

They will be stored at the South Australian Museum, under the care of the Warlpiri Project, until they can be returned to the planned Yuendumu cultural centre.

The phone call resulted in the ceremonial handover late last year.

The return of the objects and the film footage made Mr Hampton's father Karl, one of the leaders of Yuendumu's Warlpiri Project, feel "complete".

"They are not just objects. To us they are part of our ancestors", Karl Hampton said.

Since 2021 Yuendumu's committee of the Granites Mine Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation (GMAAAC) invested almost a million dollars in the project.



YAPA TEACH CULTURE AND LANGUAGE ON COUNTRY

Yapa students are strengthening their language, culture and identity on country visits.

Nyirрпи teacher Verona Jurrah says taking students out of the classroom keeps traditions strong.

“WE TEACH KIDS HOW TO TRACK ANIMALS, COOK, AND UNDERSTAND WHERE THEY LIVE AND WHAT THEY EAT,” VERONA JURRAH SAID.

“We also share our jukurrpa—our dreaming stories—so they know who the caretakers and traditional owners are.”

Each year, the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust funds week-long trips and culture days out bush at Lajamanu, Yuendumu, Willowra and Nyirрпи to support two-way learning.

The trust pays more than 100 elders per year across the four schools to pass their knowledge to the next generation.

It is spending \$561,000 on its country visit and elder payment program between 2023 and 2025.

Last year, 22 elders guided Nyirрпи students on two bush day trips, two multi-night country visits and two culture days at school.

They visited ‘old Nyirрпи’, the site where the community was before it flooded and was moved to its current location.

“We went to sleep in old Nyirрпи and I been make spear—important for jukurrpa,” said 10-year-old Elirio Michaels.

Men taught boys about ceremonies, body painting and carving shields and boomerangs.

“They found the wood and started the tool making in the bush, then came back to school to finish the tools off,” Ms Jurrah said.

“When they finished making the tools, they painted them up with a red ochre.”

Ten year old Geoffrey Spencer understands the value of these skills.

“WHEN WE GET OLDER, WE’RE GOING TO MAKE IT AND KEEP GOING WITH OUR CULTURE. I LIKE TOOLMAKING AND CHOPPING STICKS,” SAID GEOFFREY SPENCER.

At Willowra, 38 residents, including elders, taught students during four bush trips and the community organised a culture day.

More than 50 students took part in ceremonies based on the theme purlapa, yawulyu, kurdiji (three different types of ceremony).

Each skin group painted up and performed.



Nyirрпи students learnt how to make traditional tools

The women painted the girls, while Kumanjayi Long led the men in painting the boys and teaching older boys how to prepare younger ones. Men from the Long and Ross families then performed ceremony with the boys.

“I felt happy dancing and getting painted up,” said Colby Dickson from Willowra.

“IT’S IMPORTANT FOR CHILDREN TO LEARN HOW TO SPEAK TO THE LAND, KEEP OUR DREAMING STRONG, AND UNDERSTAND HOW DANCE CONNECTS TO SONGLINES. OUR SONGLINES CONNECT TO THE LAND AND TO US—IT’S INSIDE US,” MS JURRAH SAID.



The boys were painted up for the Willowra culture day

YAPA RESEARCHERS WANT BETTER SUPPORT FOR BOARDING SCHOOL STUDENTS

Yapa researchers from Yuendumu and Nyirrpri shared their findings and gathered ideas on education and job opportunities for school leavers at a college in Cairns.

Glenda and Belinda Wayne and Warlpiri Education and Training Trust advisory committee member Fiona Gibson attended the Djarragun College's Nerkep Boori summit late last year, where they spoke with students, families and educators about pathways for Yapa students after year 12.

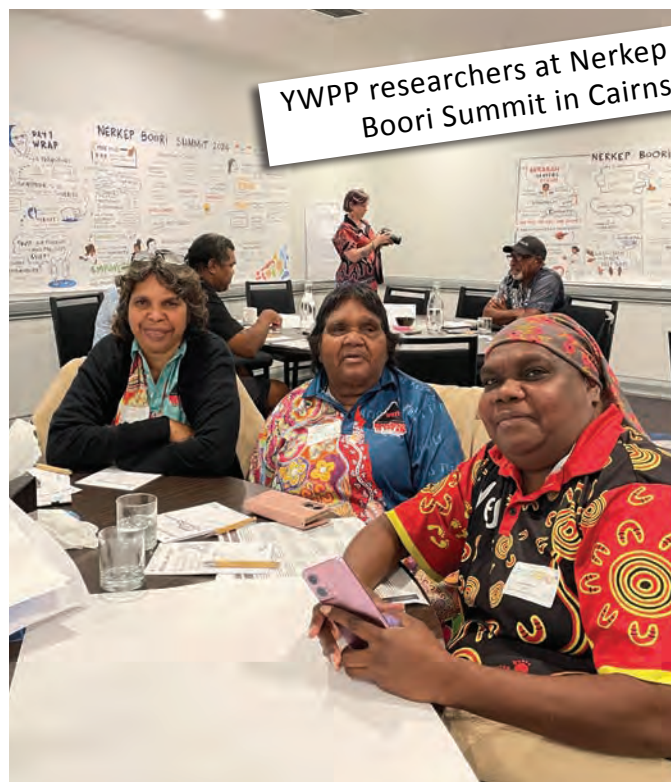
"WE KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE FOR OUR YOUNG ONES. WHEN WE STUDIED TO BE TEACHERS IT WAS REALLY HARD FOR US TOO, GOING AWAY FROM HOME AND LEAVING FAMILY," MS GIBSON SAID.

Many Yapa families send their young people to the Djarragun College, a boarding school for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

"It's a long journey and challenge for students going to boarding school and being away from home. We want them to be strong and confident in themselves and be proud of who we are. It makes family happy to see them succeed," Belinda Wayne said.



Belinda and Glenda Wayne with their nephew Ricky Wayne and classmate Quinston Watson



YWPP researchers at Nerkep Boori Summit in Cairns



YWPP community researchers presented the results of the survey at the summit

"IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT FOR YAPA KIDS TO SUCCEED IN THEIR EDUCATION AND TO HAVE GOOD OPTIONS AFTER THEY LEAVE SCHOOL. FOR TWO DAYS WE SHARED OUR STORY AND COLLECTED IDEAS ABOUT EDUCATION AND JOBS PATHWAYS FOR OUR KIDS AFTER THEY FINISH YEAR 12," MS GIBSON SAID.

WETT currently supports 44 Warlpiri students through its boarding school support program, which provides funding to keep them engaged in school.

Glenda and Belinda Wayne work as senior community researchers with the trust's Yitakimaninjaku, warririnjaku, payirninjaku manu pina-jarrinjaku (YWPP) team.

"WE SPOKE TO 51 DIFFERENT PEOPLE, INCLUDING 22 CHILDREN IN THE WETT'S BOARDING SCHOOL PROGRAM. NINETY-ONE PER CENT OF KIDS WANT TO FINISH YEAR 12. OUR KIDS WANT PROPER JOBS IN THEIR HOME COMMUNITIES. THEY NEED SUPPORT FROM FAMILY, COMMUNITY AND GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE STRONG JOBS PATHWAYS," SAID GLENDA WAYNE.

Ms Gibson, who has years of experience in education, understands the challenges young people face.

Belinda and Glenda Wayne felt proud watching their nephew, Ricky Wayne graduate from year 12. He served as Djarragun College's 2024 college captain, alongside Quinston Watson.

Last year, the YWPP community research team gathered stories from young people and adults about their boarding school experiences and life after graduation.

Their findings led to three key recommendations for the WETT, community partners and government: more support for boarding students to stay connected to family, language and culture; stronger job pathways, apprenticeships and support for TAFE and university, and leadership development opportunities to help young people grow into future leaders.

"WHAT WETT IS DOING TO SUPPORT OUR KIDS IS REALLY GOOD, BUT WE NEED MORE HELP FROM GOVERNMENT TO SUPPORT BILINGUAL EDUCATION. WE'LL TAKE THE STORIES FROM THIS CONFERENCE BACK TO OUR COMMUNITIES," MS GIBSON SAID.

The YWPP team, a growing group of Yapa researchers from four Warlpiri communities, works with the WETT advisory committee to ensure young people's voices shape education and employment decisions.

The Central Land Council and La Trobe University support their work.

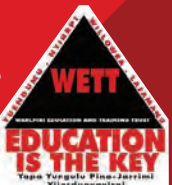
Project facts: Warlpiri Education and Training Trust

The Warlpiri Education and Training Trust has supported education and training in Nyirrpri, Lajamanu, Willowra and Yuendumu since 2005.

The trust receives more than \$6 million every year from Newmont's Granites gold mine for its children and families, language and culture in schools, youth development, learning community centres and secondary school support programs.

The Kurra Aboriginal Corporation meets twice a year to decide how to spend this income and its WETT advisory committee meets three times a year to plan and monitor the five major WETT programs.

The trust delivers the programs in partnership with community schools, the Batchelor Institute for Indigenous Tertiary Education and World Vision Australia. It has invested more than \$63 million so far.



FIRST YEAR 12 GRADUATE IN A DECADE

At just 18 years of age, Joyleen Butler has already achieved a big milestone: being the first person from Kaltukatjara in a decade to graduate year 12.

12 Ms Butler decided to leave her remote community to board at the Clontarf College in Perth, because she wanted a greater education challenge.

"I WANTED TO LEARN MORE BECAUSE THE SCHOOL IN MY COMMUNITY WASN'T CHALLENGING. I WAS AT THE BOARDING SCHOOL FOR TWO YEARS," JOYLEEN SAID.

The journey to Clontarf wasn't an easy one, but Ms Butler had been inspired by her family.

"My sister and my niece used to go to that school, and I got really excited to go there."

Traveling from Kaltukatjara to Perth saw her take the Bush Bus to Alice to catch a flight to the Western Australian capital.

"It was tiring to travel, but I'd take a lot of naps." At Clontarf, homesickness hit.

"IT WAS HARD AT FIRST BECAUSE I DIDN'T HAVE ANY FRIENDS OR FAMILY THERE. BUT I STUCK IT OUT FOR A COUPLE OF MONTHS AND THEN MADE THREE OR FOUR CLOSE FRIENDS. WHEN I WAS HOMESICK, I CRIED AND RANG MY FAMILY, ASKING TO COME HOME. THEY ALWAYS REMINDED ME THAT EDUCATION COMES FIRST," SAID JOYLEEN.



Her new friends kept her going.

"My favourite moments were dancing and breaking it down in the common rooms with my friends, singing and sharing stories."

Graduating with her year 12 certificate was a proud moment for Ms Butler and her family.

"MY SISTER AND THE FAMILY WHO RAISED ME WERE SO PROUD. THEY SUPPORTED ME FOR THE TWO YEARS I WAS AT BOARDING SCHOOL AND TOLD ME I MADE THE COMMUNITY PROUD," SAID JOYLEEN.

Small remote community schools struggle for funding and to find and keep teachers, and Kaltukatjara is no exception.

The boarding school program of the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council offers a better way for many students.

The traditional owners of the Uluru-Kata-Tjuta National Park invested almost \$401,000 in the program in 2023. It supports students from Kaltukatjara, Mutitjulu, Imanpa, Amata, Pukatja (Ernabella), and Yunyarinji (Kenmore Park). Since 2017 the traditional owners have funded the program with more than \$1.6 million of their gate money.

Ms Butler plans to give back to the program that has supported her.

"I WANT TO WORK WITH NPY WOMEN'S COUNCIL AND YOUTH SERVICES AND MAYBE BECOME A DIRECTOR SOMEDAY, BUT FOR NOW I WANT TO WORK IN THE RECREATION HALL AND ON THE BOARDING SCHOOL PROJECT," JOYLEEN SAID.

She knows what she will tell young people who ask her about boarding school. "Try your best, whether it's hard or easy. Just do it. You'll have a good future. And make sure your family supports you too."

Project Facts: Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park Rent Money

Every year since 2005 the traditional owners of the national park have spent a big part of their share of the rent and gate money they get from the Commonwealth on projects in their communities in the Northern Territory and South Australia.

They meet three times a year to decide how to spend that income, and plan and monitor projects. Among the local and regional projects are

upgrades and repairs of sports grounds and outstations, and support for renal dialysis, local and boarding school education.

They have set up funeral funds and strengthen local culture through inter-generational knowledge transfer activities.

The Mutitjulu community receives its own share of income from the park. It has funded the construction and operation of its swimming pool and upgrades of its

recreation hall and other sporting facilities.

The community has also funded men's ceremonies and cultural trips, an upgrade of the community's inma (ceremony) ground and a boarding school support program across the region.

So far, the traditional owners have allocated almost \$22.3 million to 152 projects.

ULURU RENT
MONEY

GREENER, COOLER, BETTER: MUTITJULU WALKWAY UPGRADE

Mutitjulu residents now have a cooler path between the health clinic and their pool, thanks to a new shaded walkway with seating.

The area now has three shaded seating spots, and a landscaped area with irrigated trees, providing much-needed relief from the summer heat making it a nice spot to gather.

“This project is the initiative of the Mutitjulu working group that wanted to develop the area for activity to happen in the future,” group member Dorethea Randall said.

“THE AIM OF THIS PROJECT WAS TO DO UP THAT AREA SO THAT IT COULD LOOK GOOD AND BECOME THE OFFICIAL PLACE TO CELEBRATE EVENTS,” SAID DORETHEA RANDALL.

With the new landscaping, car traffic has reduced, making it safer for children heading to the pool.

“KIDS RIDE THEIR BIKES ALONG THE PATH AND FAMILIES SIT AT THE SHELTERS NEAR IT WHEN THE RECREATION HALL IS OPEN. ONCE WE BUILD ANOTHER PATHWAY FROM AGED CARE, IT WILL BE A GOOD WAY FOR OLDER PEOPLE TO STAY ACTIVE,” MS RANDALL SAID.

Yuka Trigger finds it easy to use the walkway on her scooter



The shaded walkway as a community meeting space

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Since 2019, the community’s pool committee wanted to make the bare, dusty area around the popular swimming spot more welcoming.

The working group has set aside \$750,000 to design and build the walkway, using a combination of the community’s Uluru rent money and matched funds income.

The group worked with landscape architect Jen Clarsen on the plans. The Mutitjulu Community Aboriginal Corporation received an additional \$15,000 to hire locals to help build the walkway and maintain it.

Six locals have worked on the project, which finished last September.

Philip Driffen, Craig Robinson, Kevin Forbes, Alphonse Brumby, Rodney Collins and Martin Nipper helped with the landscaping.

They cleaned the area, removed graffiti, buffel grass and weeds, and kept the new trees watered.

“I LIKE KEEPING IT CLEAN AND MAKE IT LOOK EVEN BETTER. LOOK AFTER THE GARDEN AND THE TREES,” MR NIPPER SAID.



ULURU RENT MONEY

UTJU RESIDENTS SING THE PRAISES OF CHURCH MAKEOVER

Rene Cooper, Louise Coulthard, Irene Carroll, Lorraine Donald and Anawari Winmati at the Utju Church

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Utju is celebrating the recent repairs of its historic church, bringing new life to a place that has been at the heart of the community for generations.

Thanks to the recent upgrades, the church is now more comfortable, with a smooth new floor and shaded areas at the front, creating a more welcoming space for worshippers.

Many locals who regularly care for the building and lead services were concerned about its poor condition.

Now, brand new tiles have replaced the cracked concrete floor and new shelves in the store-room provide much-needed space.

A concrete ramp at the entrance makes the building more accessible, and two new shade structures at the front offer a comfortable gathering area.

Lorraine Donald, Watarrka traditional owner and working group member, is pleased with the result.

"Nice job, the church looks good now," she said. "The church was really, really old and too hot for people to go to church."

She has noticed more people attending services since the upgrades.

"Before [the church was fixed up] some stayed at home, some went. Now more people go. We're really happy that the church is fixed up."

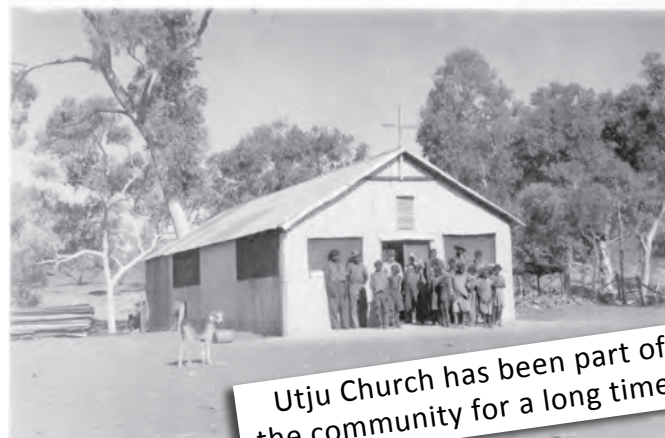
Joy Kunia, the church caretaker, is glad the church has more space.

"IT USED TO BE A LITTLE OLD CHURCH BUILT MAYBE IN MISSIONARY TIMES. WHENEVER THERE WAS A BIG RAIN THE ROOF WOULD LEAK. EVERYTHING'S FIXED NOW AND IT LOOKS GOOD. WE HAD A RAIN LAST MONTH AND SAW THERE WAS NO MORE LEAKING," JOY KUNIA SAID.

The Watarrka traditional owners pushed for these repairs, knowing how important the church is to Utju's history and culture.

Anawari Winmati, a Watarrka traditional owner and one of Utju's oldest residents, recalls how the church served a different purpose in the past.

"That church was the school before," said Ms Winmati. "Long time ago, the school moved and it became the church, maybe around the 1940's."



Utju Church has been part of the community for a long time

For many in Utju, the church is more than just a building – it's a place of connection, learning, and faith.

"We always go to church every Sunday, our whole lives. It gives us a good feeling. We teach our kids. The ladies here they run the church even when there is no Ingkata (priest)."

Sarah Gallagher, a lifelong resident and working group member, remembers going to the church as a little girl.

"My mum was a pastor and she looked after the church here a long time ago. The church building then had no air conditioning, so it wasn't really comfortable."

She said the working group prioritised this project because the church had fallen into disrepair.

"It wasn't good for the community. But now the people are really happy and smile when they go to church every Sunday."

The working group allocated \$124,000 of NT Parks funds in 2021, and Tangentyere Constructions completed the renovations last September.

Now the church stands strong and ready to serve future generations. The silver metal of the restored building gleams in the sun at the community 240 kilometres west of Alice Springs.

Ms Gallagher said the changes have made a big difference.

"WHEN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CAME ALONG, IT CHANGED OUR CHURCH. THE PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY THINK IT'S REALLY AMAZING. NOW THE CHURCH IS A REALLY HAPPY PLACE, AND WE'VE GOT AIR CONDITIONING. THE KIDS AND THE BABIES USED TO CRY WHEN THEY WERE HOT [IN THE CHURCH], BUT NOW THEY'RE HAPPY RUNNING AROUND. MORE PEOPLE GOING TO CHURCH EVERY SUNDAY," MS GALLAGHER SAID

Community member Hilda Burt is enjoying the new improvements.

"It's better now we've got tiles. Before it was a bit rough the cement. Now its tiles and it looks all right. Before we always had to clean the floor," she said.

They fixed two rooms and put in drawers so that we can keep the hymn books and bibles in order. I'm happy that these ladies did a good job, and that the land council helped us to renovate the church."

During the winter months, the church fills with gospel singing. Ms Burt and Ms Donald are part of the choir and hope to see further improvements in the future.

"Sometimes we have gospel night and people sit on the ground outside. More seats would be good," Ms Burt said.

"Hopefully, for the next round of community development, the working group can plan for that."

Project facts: Northern Territory Parks Rent Money

In 2010 the traditional owners of 16 national parks and reserves across the CLC region leased their land to the NT government.

They use all the rent they get for these jointly managed parks for community benefit projects and the CLC is

helping them to prioritise and plan community benefit projects, mostly on their outstations.

The working groups they set up have so far allocated more than \$17 million to 365 projects. Groups have been able to access co-funding from other sources for some projects with support from CLC's community development team.

NT PARKS

About the settlement of up to \$202 million for the Northern Territory Stolen Wages Class Action

YOU MUST REGISTER NOW TO BE CONSIDERED FOR ELIGIBILITY

The Commonwealth Government has agreed to a settlement of the Northern Territory Stolen Wages Class Action in which it will pay up to \$202 million including costs (depending on how many people register). The Court will need to approve the settlement before any money is paid out.

Ms Minnie McDonald brought the class action in the Federal Court against the Commonwealth Government on behalf of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who worked in the Northern Territory between 1933 and 1971 and were paid little or no wages.

A detailed notice giving information about the proposed settlement has been published. You can get a copy by contacting Shine Lawyers on the contact details below.



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Why do you need to register for the settlement?

If you are part of the class action and want to get a payment from the settlement, you need to register by **31 August 2025**. If you haven't registered with Shine Lawyers already, or registered for your deceased spouse or deceased parents, or you aren't sure if you have registered, you should complete, sign and send a registration form in by **31 August 2025**.

You are part of the class action and able to register if:

- (a) you are an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person;
 - (b) you were born before 12 November 1961; and
 - (c) you worked in the Northern Territory between 1 June 1933 and 12 November 1971 for little or no wages;
- OR
- (d) you are the spouse (married or de facto) or child of a person who fits the description in A, B and C above and has since passed away.

If you don't want to claim compensation, you don't need to do anything. But you will still be part of the case, and you will lose your legal rights and claims if the settlement is approved.

If you want to find out more about the case, the settlement or ask for a registration form, you can:

- Call Shine Lawyers on **1800 860 378**
- Email Shine Lawyers at **ntstolenwages@shine.com.au**
- Go to **shine.com.au/stolenwagesnt**
- Come to an information meeting at a town near you. You can call Shine Lawyers or visit the website to see the schedule of meetings.



1800 860 378 shine.com.au/stolenwagesnt

 **SHINE LAWYERS**

MEET THE DECISION MAKERS

All of the great community development projects that happen across the CLC region are due to the hard work of traditional owners and community members who plan and develop projects that benefit their communities. These are just some of the groups that are making planning decisions, big and small.



Urlampe traditional owner community development meeting



Laramba community development working group



Walpeyangkere community development meeting



Tjoritja West NT Parks rent money community development working group and CLC staff



Kurra Aboriginal Corporation directors



Kintore community development working group and CLC staff



Tanami Downs GMAAAC committee and CLC staff



Atula traditional owner community development meeting



Inarlanga Latna NT Parks rent money community development working group and CLC staff



Imangara community development meeting



Engawala community development meeting



CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL

If you want to know more about the CLC's community development work please call 8951 6367