

LAND RIGHTS NEWS

April 2011



INSIDE:

CLC rangers, Wadeye
SIHIP, news from around
NT communities



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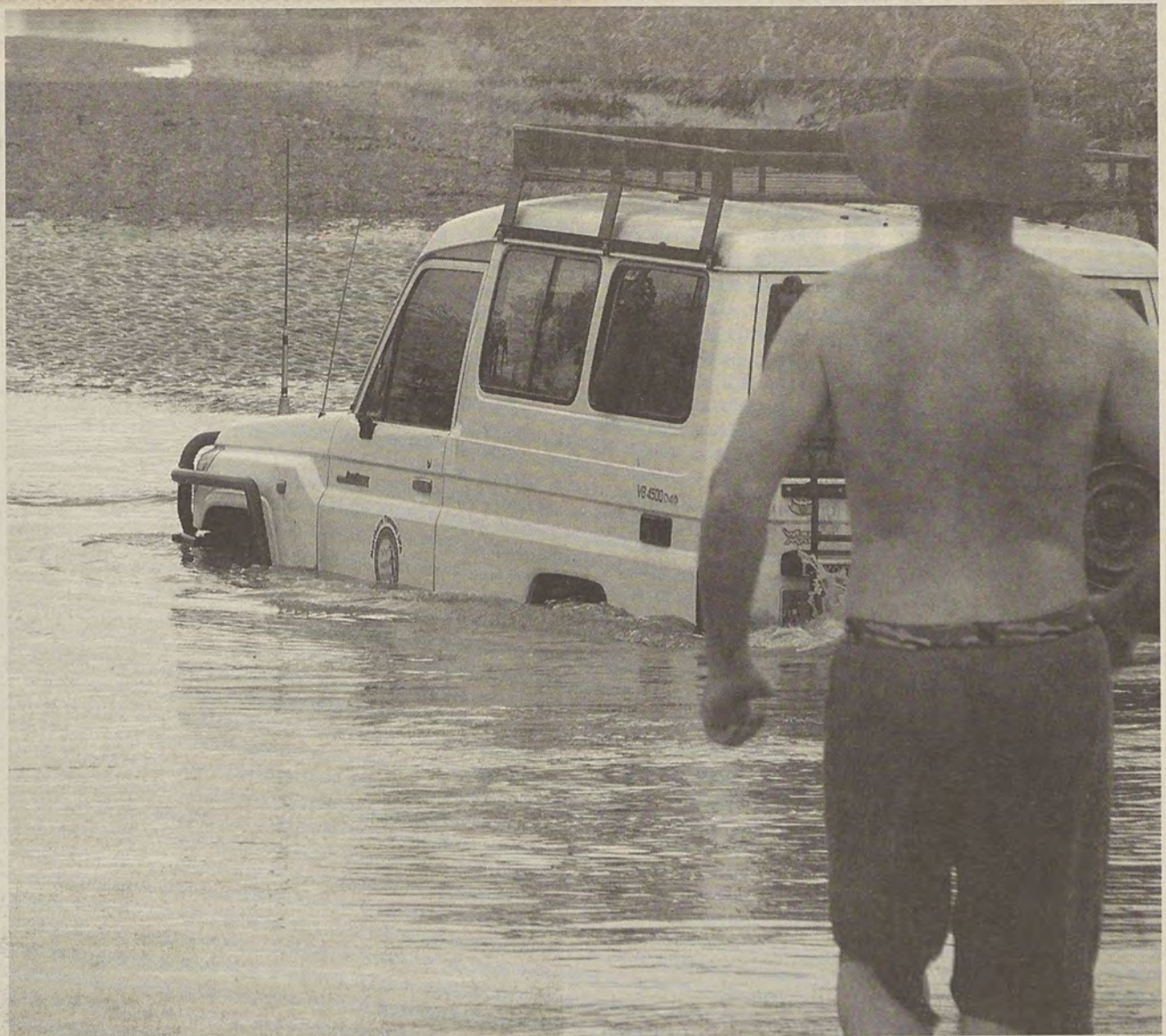
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Central Australia experienced record summer rainfall and flooding was widespread. Above: The Wulain Rangers from Lajamanu often found themselves driving through a metre of water recently.

Land Rights NEWS

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Editorial, Advertising:

PO Box 3321, Alice Springs NT 0871

Ph: (0889) 516215 Fax: (0889) 534344

GPO Box 1222, Darwin, NT, 0801

Ph: (0889) 205100 Fax: (0889) 452615

Subscriptions:

GPO Box 1222, Darwin, NT, 0801

Ph: (0889) 205100 Fax: (0889) 452615

Accounts:

PO Box 3321, Alice Springs NT 0871

Ph: (0889) 516215 Fax: (0889) 534344

email: media@nlc.org.au
media@clc.org.au

web site: www.nlc.org.au
or www.clc.org.au

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COVER PHOTO

Rain on the way again: Jimmy Friday and Ronald Brown pointing to a darkened sky over Alekerange

Mining companies fail self-regulation tests

By Nigel O'Connor

The capacity of environmental regulators in the Northern Territory to effectively prosecute standards and ensure mining industry compliance has again been brought to public attention.

In February, a report released by the NT Government's Environment Protection Authority (EPA) highlighted systemic flaws in the enforcement of environmental regulations – describing industry in the Territory as “self-regulating”.

The findings coincide with fears by traditional owners of the Kakadu region of an imminent environmental catastrophe resulting from unsafe mining practices.

The Top End has seen its wettest monsoon season on record. Heavy rainfall has brought flooding to many parts and with two months of the Wet remaining further downpours are inevitable.

For the Mirrar people, traditional owners of Kakadu National Park, the prospect of more heavy rain brings fear that a major environmental disaster is looming.

In February, representatives of the Mirrar travelled to the Gold Coast and met with a delegation from the European Parliament, expressing concerns over the uranium mine on their country.

Prior to their trip, Energy Resources Australia (ERA), the subsidiary Rio Tinto company operating the Ranger uranium mine within the Park, was

forced to cease milling as the radioactive tailings dam approached its limits of capacity.

Tailings dams are used in mining to collect industrial waste water. In uranium mining the accumulated waste is radioactive, making the tailings dam a potential environmental hazard.

Northern Land Council (NLC) Chief Executive, Kim Hill, said ERA had a duty of care to begin pumping water from its Ranger tailings dam into its operational pit – even if this meant a longer shutdown of mining activities.

“There’s more than 10 million litres of radioactive contaminated water sitting at the mine site and this is in a World Heritage listed area,” he said.

A CSIRO study estimates that 150,000 litres of water leaks into Kakadu from the Ranger mine – per day.

ERA supplies 10 percent of the world’s uranium and Justin O’Brien, Executive Officer of the Mirrar-run Gundjehmi Aboriginal Corporation, feels greed has clouded the judgement of operators at Ranger.

“This situation has arisen because of poor mining practices fuelled by economic imperatives, which have come at the cost of basic environmental protection and simple common sense,” he said.

Mr O’Brien said Gundjehmi had consistently raised concerns regarding environmental safety at Ranger.

“For at least a decade the Mirrar people, through Gundjehmi Corporation and the



Ranger uranium mine's tailings dam is close to capacity, locals fear an environmental disaster.

Photo: Dominic O'Brien

Northern Land Council, have consistently called for an overhaul of Ranger's environmental management,” he said. “These calls have fallen on deaf ears.”

Mr Hill links these concerns to the ability of environmental regulators to function in the NT.

“We should not have arrived at the point where the tailings dam is brimming to capacity,” he said. “ERA should have seen this coming long ago but as the water rose the company continued to mine.”

The Department of Resources, the Department of Environment and EPA are responsible for ensuring industry compliance in the Territory.

In early 2010, a series of whistleblower disclosures highlighted the lax enforcement of environmental standards in the NT. In each instance the company responsible had failed to report incidents which only came to

public attention when diligent workers contacted media organisations.

These incidents included the dumping of 88 tonnes of alumina oxide into Gove Harbour by Rio Tinto Alcan and the release of two tonnes of copper concentrate into Darwin Harbour during loading at East Arm Wharf.

In April, BHP Billiton oversaw a spill of between one and two tonnes of manganese ore into the port of Groote Eylandt.

Following these incidents the NT's Minister for Natural Resources and Environment, Karl Hampton, was forced to declare he was “putting heavy industry on notice” and claimed he would “come down hard on companies”. The result was a doubling of fines for non-reporting of incidents and a doubling of EPA monitoring staff from three to six.

The latest EPA report examined the

circumstances surrounding the leaking of 75,000 litres of unleaded fuel from an old storage tank at Rio Tinto Alcan's Gove bauxite mine site.

In releasing the findings Dr Andrew Tupper, Chair of the EPA board, described several key systemic problems with environmental enforcement in the Northern Territory.

These included:

- * A lack of existing requirements for infrastructure on mining sites to be monitored or inspected for environmental risks;

- * Mine Management Plans not being made public and inspections on mine sites are not required to be reported, resulting in little or no transparency of the way the Department of Resources are managing environmental risk;

- * Inspections occur reactively rather than preventatively and are sporadic and infrequent

Dr Tupper said the mining industry has become largely self-regulating and self-reporting, “exposing the NT to an increased risk of damage to the environment from neglect, poor process and poor decision making”.

Following the release of the EPA report Mr Hill said it was clear that industry self-regulation in the NT was failing.

“Mining companies have shown that they can't be trusted to monitor themselves and the government needs to step in and end this ridiculous situation immediately,” he said.

“What is needed is a collaborative approach engaging traditional owners, where relevant, and responsible government agencies with the capacity and powers to ensure the pollution of the environment is not seen as mere collateral damage in the pursuit of larger profit margins for company shareholders.”

Mutitjulu uses Uluru rent money to get a pool

After a long struggle, the residents of Mutitjulu will finally get their own swimming pool.

The Uluru Kata Tjuta Board of Management approved its installation at a meeting last week.

Central Land Council Director David Ross congratulated the traditional owners today.

"These people have wanted their own pool for a long time and it's been a contentious issue for decades.

Yulara, more than 25 kilometres away, has a number of pools but I don't think Mutitjulu people ever felt entirely comfortable going there and transport was also an issue for the kids," Mr Ross said.

"It is hoped that the pool will be built by next summer.

"We expect to see significant positive health and educational outcomes from this move by the community," he said.

Traditional owners have been putting money aside from the rent received from the Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park since 2007 and now have \$1.5 million to contribute to the management and running costs of the pool for the next five years.

The Aboriginal Benefits Account has approved \$2 million for pool construction and an upgrade to the power station that's needed to accommodate the additional power use associated with pool.

The Royal Life Saving Society Australia Northern Territory (RLSSA NT) has agreed to manage and operate the pool for five years and says

it is striving to make it a best practice model for remote pools.

The pool will be run using a community development approach which means local people are involved in decisions around pool operation.

There will be local training and employment opportunities.

The Board of Management's approval is subject to various legal agreements related to ownership, construction and operation of the pool being finalised between the CLC and the Director of

Parks (agreements).

Traditional owners have been using their rent money from the Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park for community development projects like these for the last five years.

Another project currently underway in Mutitjulu is an \$875,000 upgrade to the

community recreational centre and basketball court.

Above: Traditional owner Donald Fraser at an Uluru rent money community development meeting last year.



CLC and Bushfires NT present united fire warning



The Central Land Council and Bushfires NT have joined forces to warn Central Australians against becoming complacent with fire.

They say that a huge build up of vegetation from record rains in the past 12 months is going to lead to an extreme fire season this year.

Both the CLC and Bushfires NT say the regular rains have brought remarkable growth in native and introduced plants alike and just a couple of weeks of extreme heat will create conditions perfect for hot fires.

These fires threaten infrastructure such as houses, communities and tourism facilities, but they also

endanger pastoral country, sacred sites and plants and animals that are susceptible to hot summer fires.

The CLC's ranger groups that operate out of communities around Central Australia spend much of the cooler months actively using fire for hazard reduction and protection around important sites and infrastructure and habitat man-

agement for many species of plants and animals.

They are also taking a fire safety message to people living in remote communities and outstations.

That message encourages people to take action to protect their homes and country from uncontrollable fires by clearing grass and plants from around communities and outstations or sensitive areas like sacred sites and clearing a minimum of four metres around camp fires and putting them out with dirt or water before leaving the area.

Many of the recent fires were started by lightning strikes but some have been started accidentally through people being careless with fire in these conditions.

"Spinifex and buffel grass have grown significantly in the last 12 months and this combined with all the extra growth on trees and shrubs has made it vital that people be more careful with fire this summer," CLC director David Ross said.

Rod Cantley from Bushfires NT reminded people that fire on their land is their responsibility.

"Central Australia is such a vast landscape with remote areas of rugged terrain where fires can be very difficult, or even impossible, to manage," he said.

"People are encouraged to clear tracks and fence lines that will provide access for fire suppression or containment. Fires can get away so easily out here that it can be almost impossible to stop then in some places so we just ask people to help prevent fires in the first place," he said.

"It's an especially important message this year with the huge fuel load that's grown after the big rains we've had."

Above left: CLC chairman Lindsay Bookie, Bushfires NT's Rod Cantley and Tjuwanpa ranger Damien Williams inspect burnt out country near Standley Chasm.

Strong opposition to new land council

By Kim Hill
NLC CEO

PLANS to set up a new land council within the Northern Land Council region are being met with vigorous opposition by traditional owners across the Top End.

The plan for a new land council was hatched by the Katherine-based Jawoyn Association late last year, but a series of meetings held by the NLC in recent weeks have demonstrated a lack of support for such a move.

The Jawoyn Association claimed the Katherine Regional Land Council movement had the support of Aboriginal traditional owners from more than 20 Aboriginal clan groups, whose country stretches from the Gulf of Carpentaria to near the Northern Territory-Western Australian border, but on closer inspection this appears to be a gross exaggeration.

In addition to the establishment of a new breakaway Land Council, the Jawoyn Association proposal also seeks to create a Native Title representative body.

The NLC has held meetings at Katherine, Minyeri, Beswick, Barunga, Yarralin, Timber Creek, Borroloola, Ngukurr and Elliott and more meetings are scheduled for other communities in coming weeks.

The underlying message to come out of these meetings is that people are concerned at the prospect of a new Katherine Regional Land Council land council and have little confidence in the Jawoyn Association's ability to run such an organisation.

The first NLC community meeting was held at Katherine, in the heart of Jawoyn country, and more than 50 people attended and signed a petition that voices their lack of support



for a new land council.

Opening the meeting, NLC Chairman Wali Wunungmurra told traditional owners that the NLC took a dim view of the Jawoyn Association's Katherine Regional Land Council proposal.

"Together we stand, divided we fall," he said.

"Cultural integrity is at the forefront of how the NLC has always worked and any threats to that should be vigorously resisted."

The Katherine meeting also highlighted growing dissatisfaction with the Jawoyn Association among local traditional owners.

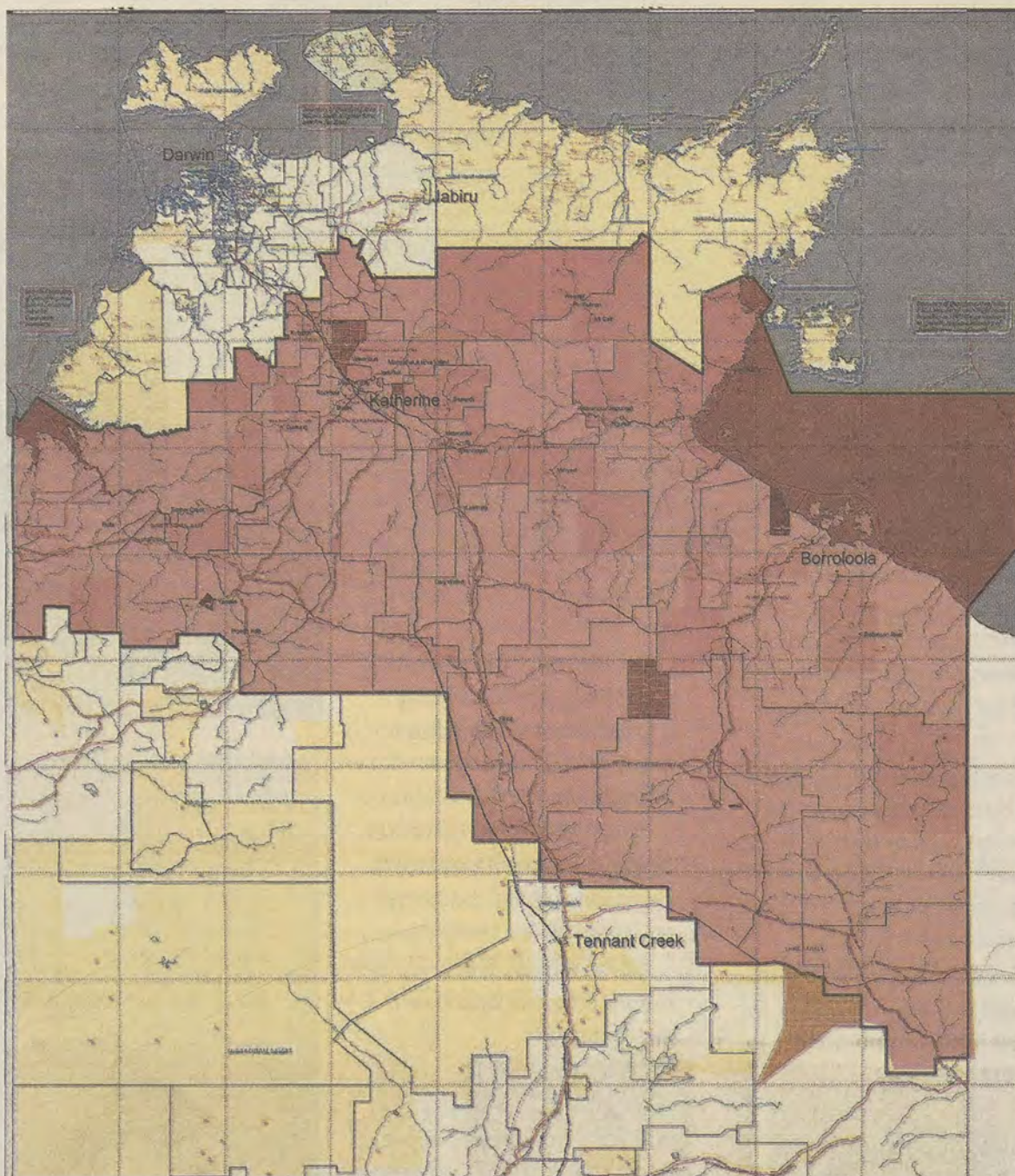
NLC member and former Jawoyn Association Chairwoman Lisa Mumbin told the meeting the Jawoyn Association was a fractured organisation which was no longer providing effective representation for her people.

"The Jawoyn Association is currently faced with its own breakaway from within," she said.

"People from the communities of Rockhole, Binjari, Kalano and Werenbun all support the NLC strongly and as the former long-term chair of the Jawoyn Association, I am very worried about the future of the organisation."

"If the Jawoyn Association can't run its own affairs properly, how could it run a large and complex operation like a land council, which has a very different set of responsibilities."

A common trend, evident at all of the NLC's community consultation



Above: The proposed Katherine Regional Land Council area and left: NLC CEO Kim Hill

meetings, was the lack of real information being distributed by the Jawoyn Association on how the proposed Katherine Regional Land Council would provide better outcomes than those currently being delivered by the NLC.

Any new land council would need to comply with the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act (1976), the Native Title Act and provisions of the Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997.

While supporters of the Jawoyn Association proposal appear to be upset at decisions made by the NLC, if any new land council were to make decisions on those matters again, they would, if given the right legal and anthropological advice most likely make the same decisions.

It must be understood that a new land council is not just something that can be "given a go" for a couple of years – a trial if you like.

In the event of failure, bringing the proposed Katherine Regional Land Council movement back under the auspices of the NLC would be very difficult and akin to unscrambling an egg.

Nearby at Beswick, Bulman traditional owner Peter Lindsay said the Jawoyn Association's proposal was being led by a group of people he called "trouble-makers".

The NLC received strong support at all of the community consultation meetings, but nowhere was this more evident than at Ngukurr, west of Katherine.

During that meeting,

Davis Daniels from the Yugal Mangi Aboriginal Corporation provided a copy of a letter of support for the NLC, signed by 144 representatives of the seven language groups from the Ngukurr region.

Mr Wunungmurra said such a document was clear evidence the Jawoyn Association's proposal was not supported in the Roper Gulf region.

"This is one of the most fantastic expressions of support for the NLC I have ever seen," he said.

Hundreds of kilometres away, at Timber Creek near the Northern Territory-Western Australia border, the mood was similar, with senior traditional owners from across the region voicing their unwavering support for the NLC.

Continued page 9

PHOSPHATE MINE BOOST TO BARKLY

Aboriginal people are set to benefit from a major new mining project in the Barkly region.

In February the Central Land Council signed a mining agreement for a phosphate mine near Wunara, 250 kilometres east of Tennant Creek with the Arruwurra Aboriginal Corporation and Minemakers Australia Pty Ltd.

The traditional owners had mostly travelled from their homes in Queensland to be at the event and were extremely emotional about the opportunities which had been provided for their children by the agreement.

Many of them also expressed their deep sadness about relatives who had passed away before they were able to reap any of the rewards of the hard work which went into it.

CLC Director David Ross said the opportunities for the traditional owners were very exciting.

"The agreement ensures opportunities for Aboriginal people in the region for enterprise development, employment and training. Many of the traditional owners already work or have businesses in the mining industry in WA and Queensland and they are very excited about the prospect of working on their own country," Mr Ross said.

The project is across Aboriginal land, NT Aboriginal freehold, pastoral lease and vacant Crown land and the agreement will protect sacred sites well into the future.

It will affect several hundred Aboriginal people from the Wakaya and Alywarre language groups.

The large deposit of phosphate is expected to have a life span of at least 30 years.

The CLC's community development unit has already been working with traditional owners to use compensation money from



exploration to upgrade the small community of Wunara.

Many traditional owners are interested in moving back there once employment at the mine gets underway.

The traditional owner's Arruwurra Aboriginal Corporation will be the body responsible for the project.

Mr Ross said the company's conduct had been exemplary.

"Minemakers has shown respect and immense good will for Aboriginal people and I thank them and wish them every success in this bold venture," he said.

The traditional owners expressed their appreciation to the staff of the CLC and Minemakers with gifts of paintings.

**Top left: Arruwurra Aboriginal Corporation Chair Paul Slater-
Top right: signing the agreement at the table
CLC Dputy Chair Gina Smith, CLC Chair Lindsay Bookie, Arruwurra Aboriginal Corporation chair Paul Slater, Minemakers Chair George Savill, Behind l-r : Lance Spain, Marilyn Luta, Allen Punch , Gordon Haines, Minemakers Managing Director Andrew Drummond, Katrina Spain
Middle : Lance Spain talking with Tony Willy.
Right: Allen Punch and CLC mining manger Julie Ann Stoll with Katrina Spain in the front.**



NATIVE TITLE FOR NEWHAVEN TRADITIONAL OWNERS

Native title has been confirmed for traditional owners of Newhaven Wildlife Sanctuary after a sitting of the Federal Court on the isolated property in the Tanami Desert north-west of Alice Springs on December 8, 2010.

It is the first native title consent determination between traditional owners and a non-government conservation organisation.

The traditional owner named on the claim Harry Nelson said it was a happy day.

"It's a proud day for us," he said. "To have our native title rights recognised makes us feel happy."

"We have been working well with the Australian Wildlife Conservancy and we hope this determination will open more opportunities for us to work together, especially with our rangers."

Newhaven covers an area of more than 2,600 square kilometres and is one of the largest non-government conservation areas in the world.

It is a hotspot for threat-

ened species such as Black-footed Rock-wallabies, Brush-tailed Mulgara and Great Desert Skinks. One of the few recent sightings of the endangered Night Parrot was also recorded on Newhaven.

Birds Australia initially acquired the pastoral lease for conservation with support from the Australian Government's National Reserve System program, before transferring the lease under a partnership with AWC in 2006.

Australian Wildlife Conservancy's Chief Executive Atticus Fleming said AWC, which holds the lease over Newhaven, and the Warpiri-Luritja traditional owners have already built up a working relationship over almost five years cooperating on fire management and biological survey projects on the property.

"The formal recognition of native title is an important step in further strengthening our partnership at Newhaven," Mr Fleming said.

The combination of science and traditional knowledge is a powerful tool in delivering effective land management for remote



Above: The traditional owners of Newhaven at the native title determination

protected areas such as Newhaven.

"The partnership is important in securing the extraordinary conservation values of Newhaven and in helping achieve socio-economic aspirations for traditional owners," he said.

The CLC's Director David Ross said the consent determination was an example of how leaseholders and traditional owners could work together for the benefit of all involved.

"This consent determination is important because it recognises that Aboriginal laws and customs still hold

a place of importance in today's society," he said.

Mr Ross said he also hoped the determination would lead to ongoing involvement by traditional owners on Newhaven.

It's taken 10 years in the Federal Court and negotiations involving traditional owners and different owners of the lease to get to this stage. The traditional owners should be congratulated for their perseverance over this time," he said.

"We now look forward to a consolidation of the cooperation that's already been shown between the

ranger groups and AWC," he said.

In Justice John Reeves' determination, he said the decision recognised something that has always been there.

"It's not the court's order today that grants the claim group native title," he said.

"Their native title has always been there under their traditional laws and customs.

"Instead, the orders of this court, that I've made today, formally recognise that pre-existing native title under the laws of Australia."

Visionstream cable laying cuts through the centre



remotely to benefit from the cable.

Nonetheless, they approached the task enthusiastically and recognised the national importance of the project.

Traditional owners in Central Australia have been working with Visionstream to ensure that sacred sites are protected as the contractors lay the thousands of kilometres of fibre optic cable through Central Australia.

Unfortunately these traditional owners are likely to be among the seven percent of the Australian population who live too

Far left: left to right Greg Deftereos (Visionstream), Joe Bird, George Ryder, Donald Thompson, Mark Brown, Jimmy Friday, Ronald Brown and CLC anthropologist Joe Firnu standing in front of a bulldozer

Above: Laying the cable trench through the Centre.

CLC urges community development as a way to move forward

Anti-social and criminal behaviour in Alice Springs has been getting a lot of publicity in recent times. It always does, but it's been getting more than usual lately.

The most common response is the call for law and order. Crack down, zero tolerance, fill the jails. But the jails are full and those eventually let out are replaced by more young people who go in as children and come out as institutionalised adults. While the law and order response is understandable, as a strategy it's impoverished and unsustainable.

There is no magic bullet or overnight fix. The situation is complex, but I believe there is a way forward and it's about really investing in Aboriginal people, local Aboriginal organisations and working from the bottom up. Little will improve until all governments understand that top down

approaches make the situation worse as people become disaffected, powerless and alienated.

My bosses – the 90 traditional owners that govern the CLC – are clear about their priorities. Keep law, language and culture strong, ensure remote communities and outstations are healthy and sustainable and pursue new opportunities for remote livelihoods.

The CLC operates within a community development framework to support people's aspirations, build their capacity to deal with a complex, modern world and develop opportunities which are realistic and sustainable for them.

The introduction of the shires, the abolition of community councils and CDEP and the intervention are just some of the enormous changes made in the last half of the decade. None have benefitted Aboriginal people.

A case in point is

the abolition and subsequent reform of the CDEP program. An estimated 80 per cent of the Indigenous population aged over 15 live in remote areas. In 2007 it was estimated that there were nearly 8000 participants on CDEP in the NT making up nearly 40 per cent of the labour force.

CDEP wasn't perfect and it attracted more than its fair share of detractors but the Australian Government misunderstood the place CDEP occupied in the social and economic fabric of remote communities.

CDEP employment in community-based organisations was basically dumped to create a limited number of low paid 'real jobs' in public sector agencies. There was no longer any community development or 'ownership' component of the work and no incentive to 'top up' a wage by working more hours. They were replaced with passive welfare.

Yet there are some outstanding successes

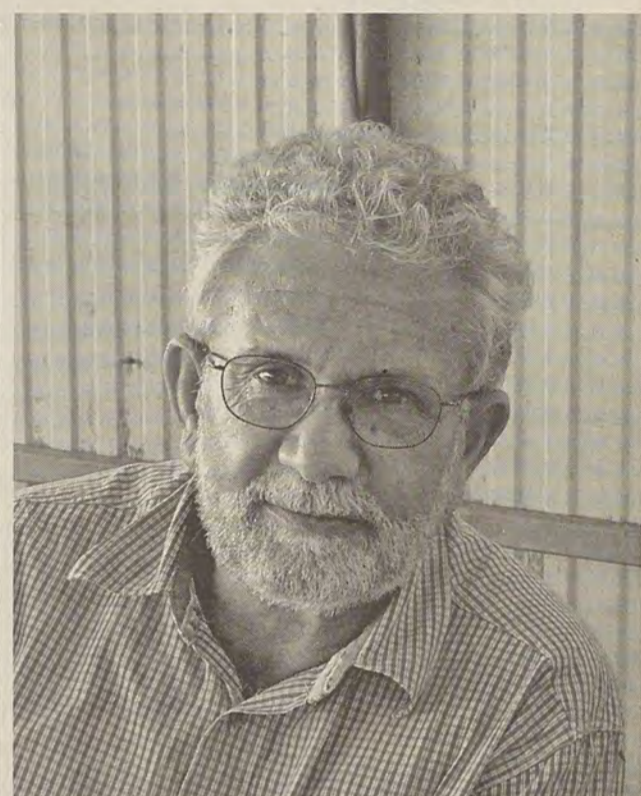
and a path for a way forward. For instance the CLC's ranger program now funded by the Australian Government started as a small group of ten or so CDEP workers. It now employs more than 100 young Aboriginal people from the bush.

They are mostly from backgrounds where unemployment and poor education were the norm. This program has transformed their lives and had a positive impact on entire communities.

Similarly the CLC's employment program to place Aboriginal workers in the Granites Gold Mine in the Tanami started out with a couple of young men and now Aboriginal workers are queuing to work there.

From small beginnings micro managed programs can spread and affect more and more people until there is a 'tipping point' and social change translates more widely.

The CLC, along with other peak Ab-



original organisations in the NT, want a new Community Employment and Enterprise Development scheme for remote Indigenous Australia occupying the niche between welfare and full employment and build.

It would provide a range of productive activities in remote areas like after school care, care for kids at risk and care for the aged, support jobs in the primary health care sector, small to medium scale horticulture projects

to produce fresh foods and so on.

Community development is expensive but its an investment that will provide rich returns.

The value of funding enterprises that are socially productive, but not necessarily commercially viable, needs to be recognised because as we well know, social costs quickly turn into economic nightmares.

Above: CLC director David Ross

Consultation on the Australian Constitution

The Australian Government has appointed a panel to develop options for recognition of Indigenous people in the Australian Constitution.

The panel includes Indigenous and community leaders, legal experts and parliamentary members. It will be co-chaired by Professor Patrick Dodson and Mark Leibler.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner and the co-chairs of the national

Congress of Australia's First Peoples will also be on the panel.

The panel will lead a national public consultation and engagement program during 2011 with the aim of building a consensus on the recognition of Indigenous people in the constitution and reporting to the government by the end of the year.

In a joint statement announcing the appointment of the panel, the Prime Minister Julia Gillard, the Minister for Indigenous Af-

fairs Jenny Macklin and the Attorney General Robert McClelland said the government is committed to holding a referendum on the issue during the term of the current government or at the next Federal election.

"Constitutional recognition of Indigenous people will be a significant step towards building an Australia based on strong relationships and mutual respect between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians," the statement said.

"To succeed, the refer-

endum must attract the support of a majority vote nationally, and a majority of votes in a majority of states."

MEMBERSHIP OF THE EXPERT PANEL ON INDIGENOUS CONSTITUTIONAL RECOGNITION

Co-Chairs: Professor Patrick Dodson and Mr Mark Leibler AC.

Panel Members: Mr Graham Bradley AM; Mr Timmy 'Djawa' Burarrwanga; Mr Henry Burmester AO, QC; Mr Fred Chaney AO; As-

sociate Professor Megan Davis; Mr Glenn Ferguson; Ms Lauren Ganley; Professor Marcia Langton; Mr Bill Lawson AM; Ms Alison Page; Mr Noel Pearson.

Parliamentary Members: Mr Rob Oakeshott MP; Ms Janelle Saffin MP; Senator Rachel Siewert; Mr Ken Wyatt MP.

Ex-Officio Members: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner (Mr Mick Gooda); The National Congress Co-Chairs (Mr Sam Jeffries and Ms Josephine Bourne).

Sacred sites: NLC attacks discriminatory Intervention

Northern Land Council Chief Executive Kim Hill attacked the Intervention as “discriminatory” following the failure of the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority to overturn an inadequate fine handed down to a construction company for the desecration of a sacred site at Numbulwar in 2007.

S & R Building was fined \$500 in November 2010 after its workers had constructed a pit toilet on sacred ground used by many surrounding tribes to hold ceremonies.

In January, the Northern Territory Supreme Court dismissed AAPA’s appeal at the leniency of the sentence. Justice Steven Southwood ruled that as work was be-

ing conducted as part of the Intervention, Section 91 of the Northern Territory National Emergency Response Act prevented him from taking into account the trauma and shame caused to traditional owners.

S91 of the Act prevents custom and culture being taken into account during sentencing.

In sentencing, Justice Southwood said the effect of S91 was to “distort” the sentencing process.

Mr Hill called for an immediate review of the legislation.

“The law is obviously discriminatory,” he said.

“The Intervention was supposed to improve the lives of Aboriginal peoples living in the Northern Territory, but here we have yet more evidence of how it’s failing



them badly.

He added: “If any other minority group was subject to such injustice there would understandably be a public outcry. If the law is not changed this sets a

dangerous precedent for Aboriginal peoples in the Northern Territory. In essence, anyone coming onto Aboriginal land in the NT, for work related to the Intervention, need not con-

sider the cultural ramifications of their actions.”

Above: Bobby Nungumajbarr at the desecrated sacred site

Strong opposition to new land council continued from page 5

Former NLC Executive member Roy Harrington said the Jawoyn Association failed to provide local traditional owners with any verbal or written information about the proposal.

Respected local elder Larry Johns told the meeting the NLC had his full support and noted staff were equipped with the experience and capacity to undertake the varied and complex tasks required of an effective land council.

Mr Johns said the NLC was “walking in the footsteps of the Wave Hill walk-off mob”.

He said the NLC had always provided strong support and assistance for

his people around Timber Creek, Yarralin and the Victoria River District, highlighting its work in successful negotiations for the handback of Jutburra

National Park (formerly Gregory National Park) and the return to joint management arrangements for the park.

The issue of cultural integrity was front and centre at all community consultation meetings.

At Elliott, the NLC’s Cultural Advisor and senior lawman Gordon Nawandalpi told the meeting that any talk of a new land council was serious business.

“I am sitting here with cultural people – we are all cultural people,” he said.

“This group here in Katherine (Jawoyn Association) that are all little boys...little boys,” he said.

“A lot of old people from around here were here when the NLC started up and we have got to stay together.

“We are ceremony people here – we

are all one people and have got to stay strong together.”

The problems currently faced by the NLC and government agencies in attracting staff to work in the Katherine region was discussed at all meetings.

Katherine currently has a severe housing shortage and accommodating staff in the town is difficult and extremely costly.

It was pointed out that the proposed new land council would most likely need to set up its head offices in Darwin and many traditional owners agreed.

Ultimately the Federal Indigenous Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin will decide if a vote is required to determine whether there’s real support for a new land council.

This is of great concern because any election would not be

confined to seeking the vote of traditional owners, but all Aboriginal people living within the proposed region would have a say – including those who come from other areas and even those from interstate.

The NLC will continue to engage Aboriginal peoples living across its seven regions on the issue of the proposed Katherine Regional Land Council.

Meetings already held have unearthed deep-seated resentment to the Jawoyn Association proposal and provided a valuable platform for traditional owners to learn more about the NLC’s functions.

The community meetings also proved a useful platform for traditional owners to voice their concerns on NLC business – valuable feedback which is always welcomed.

New visitor camp for Alice Springs

Short-term accommodation for people visiting from remote communities has been opened in Alice Springs.

The \$11 million Apmere Mwerre Visitor Park is located near the showgrounds and includes a mix of self-contained units, cabins and camping facilities.

Federal Indigenous Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin said the park can accommodate up to 150 people.

“The park meets a very real need to provide families and vulnerable people with safe and secure accommodation where drugs and alcohol are not tolerated,” she said.

“Importantly it will also help alleviate overcrowding in the Alice Springs town camps.

“Apmere Mwerre means ‘good place’ in the local Arrernte language and was the name suggested by the traditional owners in Alice Springs.”

Aboriginal Hostels will manage the park, which will be serviced by public transport to enable visitors to attend medical or other appointments.

Ms Macklin said the park is part of the \$150 million Alice Springs Transformation Plan.

2011 CLC Ranger camp

CLC staff had to come up with some fast solutions as record breaking summer rains threatened the 2011 Ranger Camp.

Widespread flooding made bush roads impassable and some of the rangers forded streams a metre deep to reach town.

On the morning of the camp the venue was hastily changed to the Alice Springs Showgrounds instead of the Ross River homestead which became cut off altogether.

Despite the bad weather the

The Central Land Council says its ranger camp reflects what can be achieved in the bush when supportive, ongoing measures are put in place to back Aboriginal people working in a remote workplace.

More than 100 Indigenous rangers from remote regions around Central Australia attended the camp in March

The camp provides a professional development environment for rangers to share and learn new skills with a dozen nationally accredited training programs on offer.

In its fourth year, the camp has grown significantly since the first gathering. This year, along with 15 different groups from within the NT, groups have also travelled from Western Australia to attend.

Funded by the Department of Environment Working on Country initiative and the Indigenous Land Corporation, the CLC ranger program has run for about five years.

It sees the rangers getting real skills and real training for real jobs on their own country.

Thanks to that funding, the CLC is able to provide opportunities for remote Aboriginal people to build their employment capacity and enable traditional owners to take their responsibilities of managing country for future generations seriously.

As a result, people who have been given a start under the ranger program are now able to move on from these jobs, if they wish, into employment with mines, shires and on pastoral leases.

CLC director David Ross said the ranger program is exactly the type of grass roots level scheme that has proven to bring real social and economic benefits to remote communities.

"We know the top-down approach doesn't work," Mr Ross said, "but while top-down approaches have been failing, the community level ranger program has quietly been kicking goals.

"Through the ranger program CLC staff have helped men and women improve their literacy and numeracy, acquire national



qualifications for earthmoving equipment, in environmental management and the erection of infrastructure.

"The involvement of

senior men and women in the program has garnered the support of communities and lifted the self esteem of rangers thanks to the increased cultural knowledge they've picked up during the process.

"With patience, perseverance and respect, the program is bringing real economic, employment and social benefits to remote areas," Mr Ross said.

At the camp the rangers were trained up in chainsaw use, using an aerial incendiary device for remote burning, the handling of chemicals to eradicate weeds, four wheel driving, SMARTtrain chemical use accredita-

Top: Chainsaw training, Above: CAAMA Radio broadcast live from the camp

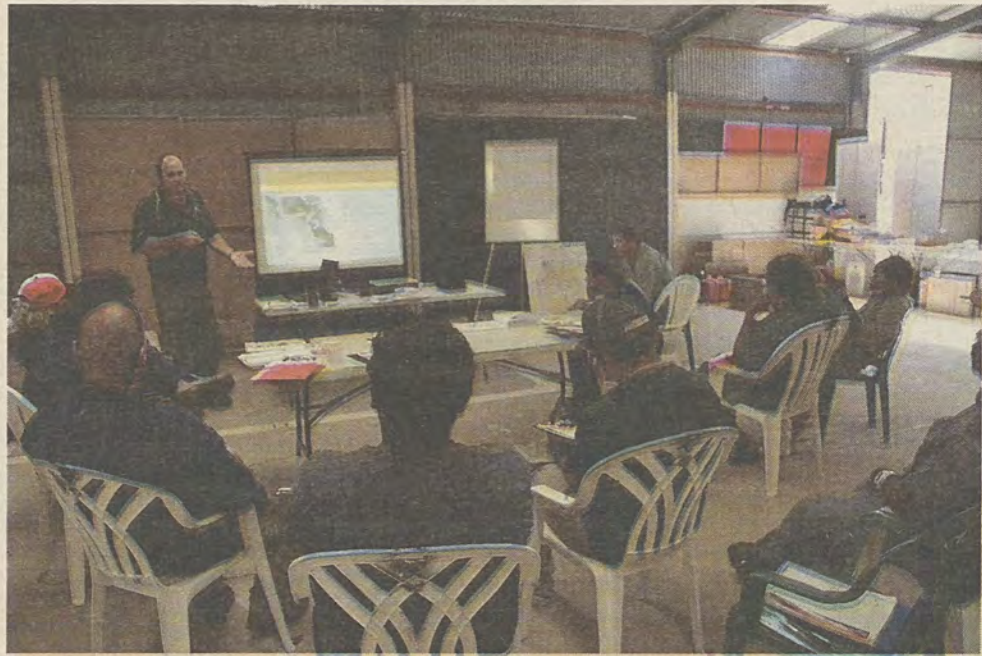
Far left: Tennant Creek ranger Alwyn Williams talks to CAAMA

KLeft: Docker River ranger Dennis Hunt



tion, bobcat handling, water monitoring, quad bike riding, CyberTracker, construction industry White Card and basic wildfire awareness.

CLC ranger camp beats the wet



Top left: rangers at a Bushfires NT workshop at the Alice Springs showgrounds.
Above middle: Gladys Brown, a Muru-waring-Ankkul Ranger from Tennant Creek being interviewed for the ABC Radio Country Hour
Above: Rangers at the claypanns in Alice Springs learning how to use the Cybertracker (inset)

Onwards and upwards: Tennant Creek ranger moves up through the ranks



Above: NT Parks and Wildlife ranger Jeremy Dawson

After 18 months spent as a one of the CLC's Muru-waring-Ankkul Rangers in Tennant Creek, Jeremy Dawson decided to try his luck in the big time as an NT Parks ranger.

So far he hasn't looked back.

"There was one position with parks in Tennant Creek and six of us going for it," Mr Dawson said.

"I got interviewed by the Chief Ranger and I got the position as a trainee for 18 months. Then they offered me the permanent job.

"I was in Tennant Creek for five years as a ranger then I started to ask about other parks so they offered me the Alice Springs Telegraph Station."

"The CLC ranger group was a good place to start.

"As soon as you become a T1 in the NT Parks it's a lot of work and you have to do a lot of study.

"I had to do Certificate 2 in Land Management through Batchelor and it took me two years to finish it.

As soon as I graduated I started Certificate 3 and finished that. This year I'm looking forward to finishing Certificate 4.

"I've got lot of support at the Telegraph Station and a lot of work. There's always new things to learn there," he said.



Above: Workshops at the Showgrounds
Left: Docker River ranger Selwyn Burke at the chainsaw workshop

Kenbi: the Larrakia's long wait

By Nigel O'Connor

December saw the passing of an ignominious anniversary, as the traditional owners of the Cox Peninsular marked 10 years of government inaction since a Federal Court ruling granted them land rights.

The protracted process has become Australia's longest running land claim and represents a further stain on the country's treatment of its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations.

The Larrakia people of the Darwin area began the process of achieving formal recognition of their land rights in 1975, prior to self governance in the Northern Territory.

The Kenbi Land Claim, covering several islands and the Cox Peninsular which sits adjacent to Darwin Harbour, was lodged in 1979 under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976.

Since then, successive NT governments are estimated to have spent \$20 million challenging the claim and

stymieing the Larrakia's attempts at self-determination.

In December 2000, Justice Gray of the Federal Court of Australia ruled that six people were "traditional Aboriginal owners" of the land claimed and recommended it be granted as Aboriginal land.

Despite the limited identification of "traditional owners", Justice Gray emphasised the granting of the land would be of benefit to the hundreds of Larrakia living in and around Darwin.

The 2001 election of the NT's first Labor government brought a commitment to settle Kenbi. In 2009 the NT Government and Northern Land Council reached an in-principle agreement for 13,000 hectares to be converted to freehold – allowing for the development of homes and industry.

The remaining 52,000 hectares granted by Justice Gray would be designated as Aboriginal land. At the time, federal Labor MP Warren Snowdon described the agreement as an "important step forward" for reconciliation in the Territory.



Despite this, the federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Jenny Macklin, is yet to hand title of the land to its traditional owners.

"Talk about 'closing the gap' appears hollow when our peoples are prevented from taking responsibility for their lands and seas due to the hindrance of governments" NLC CEO Kim Hill

NLC Chief Executive, Kim Hill, said the Federal Government was holding back development for the Larrakia and the wider NT economy.

"Talk about 'closing the

gap' appears hollow when our peoples are prevented from taking responsibility for their lands and seas due to the hindrance of governments," he said.

"Too many of the original claimants have passed away since the process began and it is imperative for future generations of the Larrakia that this land is promptly granted."

In a letter to the NT News, published on 7 January 2011, Larrakia Development Corporation Chairman, Nigel Browne, called on the Federal Government to start the new year with a fresh approach to Kenbi.

"All it takes is some leadership from senior ministers and the Prime Minister to finally resolve the bureaucratic inertia," he wrote.

While the Larrakia have demonstrated their capacity for patience, it is time for the Federal Government to act in the interests of justice.

NEW KATHERINE REGIONAL CULTURAL PRECINCT

Construction of a new Katherine Regional Cultural Precinct (KRCP) is set to begin this week.

Local company AJL Holdings was recently awarded the \$7.4 million tender to build the first stage of the three stage project with the cost shared between the Federal and Northern Territory governments and Katherine Town Council.

The first stage of the new cultural precinct will include a multi-purpose hall, café and social function area, display and office spaces as well as external landscaping, public art and parking.

Northern Territory Minister for Arts and Museums, Gerry McCarthy, said the flexible hall will accommodate both local community and touring performances and exhibitions.

Mr McCarthy said the main foyer will act as a powerful entry statement which links the display space, and galleries to the multi-purpose function area.

"Subsequent completion of the outside areas of the new precinct will cater for up to 2000 people and landscaping will include bush tucker plants and flora and fauna native to the Katherine region."

Opal rollout in Kakadu good for fishing boats

Opal is unleaded petrol which has extremely low levels of aromatics, removing the 'high' petrol sniffers get when they sniff normal unleaded fuel.

Opal has been available in Kakadu since January.

The introduction of Opal fuel in Central Australian communities resulted in a reduction of up to 94% in petrol sniffing.

"The comprehensive rollout of Opal fuel in the

Kakadu region is a very significant step towards addressing petrol sniffing in the region and its serious social and economic consequences to the community," Minister for Indigenous Health and Member for Lingiari, Warren Snowdon said.

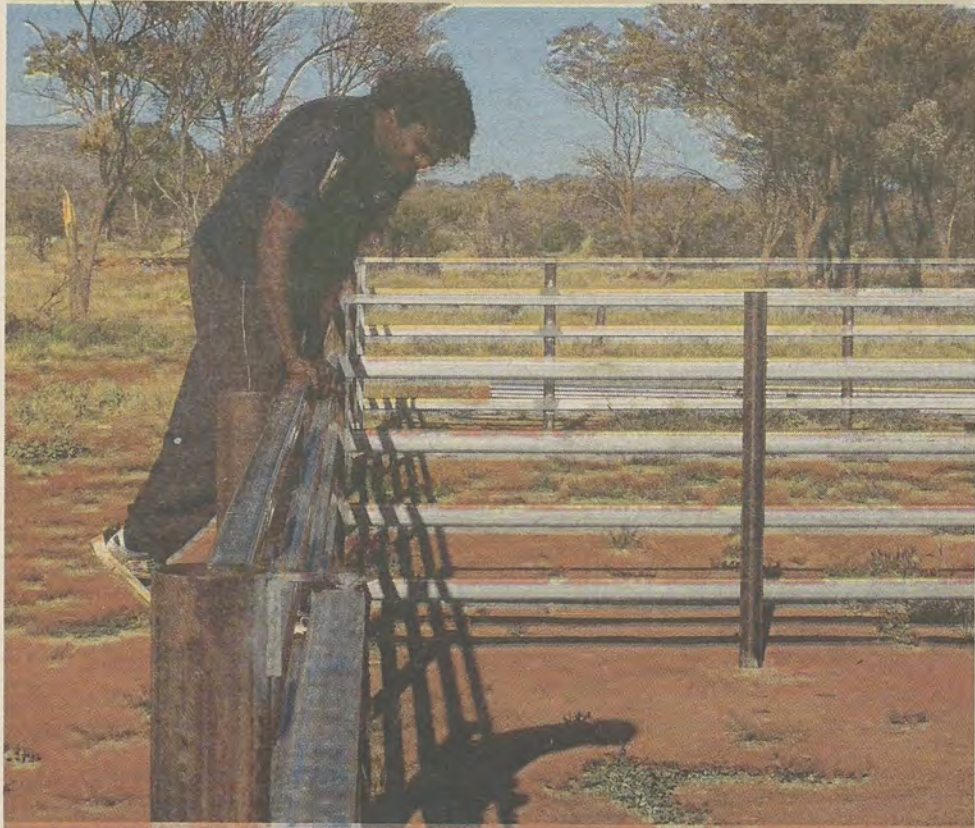
The Kakadu rollout is part of an \$83.8 million Australian Government commitment to tackle petrol sniffing, which includes the expansion of Opal fuel to at least 39 new retail sites across the Northern

Territory, Western Australia and Queensland.

Independent field trials conducted last year in Maningrida tested the new version of Opal with an Evinrude E-TEC 115 hp – a high-performance, two-stroke engine.

Well-known Territory angler, Alex Julius, who was involved in the trials, said the tests "demonstrated clearly that the new and improved Opal was safe to use without the need for additional additive."

Docker Rangers: doing the hard yards



Docker River now has a new holding yard for horses and camels thanks to the Docker River Rangers who whipped the yards up late last year.

The rangers dug more than 50 post holes and cut a large number of steel posts and rails to replace the old horse yard that was smashed apart by camels during last years camel crisis.

Camels rampaged throughout the community smashing air conditioners and water hydrants until the CLC carried out a cull which reduced the numbers considerably.

Building yards can be tricky business because all those rails have to exactly line up at the end of it.

It was critical the posts were set straight in concrete and some difficult-welding was required.

In addition it was



the middle of summer.

"It was hot, hard work but we learnt a lot and now have a great new yard to muster feral camels and work with our horses," Docker Ranger Selwyn Burke said.

"Camels can't wreck this yard, it is built too strong."

The rangers were helped by the CLC's Shannon 'Eagle Eye' Lander.

The yard is 30mtrs x 20mtrs and is divided into two separate yards with an internal gate and water trough.

Though the yard has been built for feral animal management purposes it will also act as a holding area

for the Community owned horses.

The Docker mob love their horses and the young fellas start riding at an early age.

The Docker River residents are reported to be extremely pleased with the work of their young men.

Top: Docker Ranger Selwyn Burke climbs the fence at the new yards
Above: Hard at work on the yards late last year.

Tassie track building for Tjuwanpa rangers

A prominent walking track in Tasmania that two Tjuwanpa rangers helped build has opened near Hobart.

Steven Booth and Emron Campbell worked on the track last year during a placement with track builder John Hughes.

The pair was training ahead of anticipated track building work on Central Australia's Larapinta Trail.

Their visit followed another the year before by several Tjuwanpa rangers to be trained in the art of building walking tracks through envi-



ronmentally sensitive areas.

Mr Booth and Mr Campbell's work on the Cascade Walking Track in the south of Hobart included the construction of the Degraives Bridge, a stone-arched foot-bridge.

The Tjuwanpa rangers are based

near Hermannsburg west of Alice Springs and have already put their training to work by helping Parks and Wildlife to realign parts of the Larapinta Trail in the West MacDonnell Ranges.

Above: The Tjuwanpa Rangers helped to build this bridge in Tasmania

CLC and Central Desert Shire sign agreement



Above: CLC Chair Lindsay Bookie and Central Desert Shire President Norbert Patrick sign a Memorandum of Understanding at the CLC recently. The MOU makes it clear what jobs are the CLC's and which jobs are the Shire's and how the two organisations will communicate with each other to get the best possible outcomes for Aboriginal people in the region.
The CLC signed a similar agreement with the MacDonnell Shire late last year.

Grand Designs: SIHIP construction in

By Nigel O'Connor

A cloud of red dust hangs over Wadeye in the latter stages of a hot and sticky build up. Ferried to and fro along the main road by a regular procession of trucks, vehicles and machinery, the swirling ochre haze is indicative of the activity occurring within the town.

Wadeye is undergoing a multi-million dollar makeover. The redevelopment represents a substantial investment by the Australian government in the Northern Territory's largest Aboriginal community. Often representative of many issues being faced in remote Aboriginal communities, Wadeye can be seen as a significant test for the government's major Indigenous affairs policies – the Intervention and the Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program (SIHIP).

Attempt at change

Overcrowding in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander houses is often cited as a major impediment to improving outcomes in health, education, domestic violence, and living conditions within remote communities.

Through SIHIP, administered by both the Commonwealth and NT governments, \$672 million was initially allocated to build 750 new houses and rebuild or refurbish 2,730 more. Budget blow-outs have increased the expected cost of the undertaking to \$1.7 billion. Highlighting the costs and difficulties arising from service provision in remote Australia,

the oft-maligned programme has been criticised for a range of problems surrounding its implementation. Among them, the percentage of allocated money absorbed by administration costs, failures to adhere to budgets, delays in construction, and modifications to original commitments on housing designs, are consistently raised.

In Wadeye the

portions of the town's population to areas outside its centre, it is hoped to prevent some of the violence that terrorises residents. Milhn, adjacent to the community's airstrip, will be increased to 50 houses from five. Manthape, about one kilometre to the west of Wadeye, will grow from 12 houses to 50.

Amidst the dusty heat, the community's population of over

of paved roads, lined with pavements and rock gardens.

Troubled legacies

Isolated and only accessible by plane or barge during the monsoonal months, Wadeye was established as a Catholic mission in the 1930s. It is still often referred to by residents by its original name, Port Keats.

The settlement brought together seven clan groups,

into full scale riots. In a bizarre twist, groups adopt heavy metal rock bands to provide identity through clothing and music. Their names are scrawled on the walls of buildings and signs across Wadeye – Evil Warriors and the Evil-Licas (named after rock band Metallica) are two. Swastikas are the favoured calling card of the German Boys.

The desired effect

concentrate on homework and parents to raise families."

Mr Heron believes the promised quota of houses will be adequate to meet the needs of residents but qualifies his optimism with reference to Wadeye's growing population.

"Wadeye has population growth about 100 people annually," he said. "This will require at least 12 houses to be built each year to accommodate new arrivals. Also, the majority of residents are under the age of 25. Many of these young people are still living with their parents and will require houses of their own."

Mark Ninnal works with the local rangers and offers another perspective. He welcomes the much needed investment in Wadeye's housing but is sceptical about whether it will serve to improve relations between the town's clan groups.

"The new housing is good but it won't help," he said. "The fighting won't stop."

Camp dogs skulk about looking for a shady tree to sit under and scratch themselves. Heavy metal music floats across the air from distant stereos. A walk around Wadeye shows the extent of the work being undertaken. Mushrooming in gay contrast to the dilapidation of much of the existing housing stock, the new buildings stand inviting with distinctive pastel colours.

In front of his house after a morning shower stood Roger Mullambuk. He towelled his hair in the early



Roger Mullambuk is awaiting the delivery of his new home under the SIHIP program.

investment is seen as more than just a clutch of new houses, but an opportunity for small-scale social engineering and a chance to ease some of the tensions between clan groups living within the community. Using SIHIP funds, 105 new houses will be built and up to 50 refurbished or rebuilt. The government is aiming to have work completed by June 2011.

Construction is heavily concentrated on the satellite suburbs of Milhn and Manthape. By moving

3,000 has swollen with the arrival of over one hundred construction workers. New Futures Alliance has been contracted to deliver the government's construction commitments. As if not visible enough, workers move about town clad in the yellow and blue of today's mandatory safety clothing. Their presence is that of a temporary army housed in a temporary barracks. Their fully catered living quarters consist of a series of portable buildings positioned within a compound

each with their own language and a long history of inter-tribal conflict predating European settlement. Today, the turbulent legacy of forced cohabitation is most superficially visible in the graffiti daubed throughout the community on buildings and signs. Youth disengagement – wherever it occurs – is a social problem requiring long-term, holistic approaches.

Clan-affiliated gangs of youths fight regular night battles that on occasion turn

of increasing the concentration of people at Milhn and Manthape is to separate conflicting parties. Dave Heron, shire services manager for Wadeye at Victoria Daly Shire Council, is hopeful the SIHIP investment will improve living conditions for residents and see a decrease in violence.

"Any movement of population away from the centre of town will help the social situation resulting from overcrowding," he said. "Improved housing will allow kids to

the NT's largest remote community

pointed to an iron bar lying on the ground.

"They were fighting again last night," he said. "This time the Grey Evils and the Germans. One fella got hurt pretty bad in the leg outside my house."

His home is free of the graffiti that is present on many of the other houses in Wadeye. A portrait of the Blessed Virgin adorns the front door but offers little protection.

"Sometimes the gangs come to bust up my power box," he said. "I put padlocks on it but they smash them and we have no electric."

Mr Mullambuk is awaiting the delivery of his new house within the new developments at Manthape. He hopes this will allow him to avoid some of the trouble associated with living in town.

New opportunities

The expansion of Wadeye has presented unanticipated economic opportunities for local entrepreneurs.

In Manthape a new store has opened to service local residents. Previously Wadeye had just one store with a monopoly on residents' food and grocery purchases. As in most remote NT communities a lack of competition sees greatly inflated prices on everyday goods. Whilst only selling a basic range of products, many Wadeye residents are now choosing to travel to the store at Manthape rather than shop in town.

On a much larger scale, Thamarrur Development Corpo-

ration (TDC) has benefited from the money flowing from government coffers.

Following the dissolution of local councils across remote parts of the Northern Territory,

in the wake of 2007's federal Intervention, and the creation of larger regional bodies, TDC positioned itself to receive funding for service provision. Today, amongst other

things, the non-profit organisation controls Wadeye's post office, garbage collection, a mechanical workshop, a nursery, and the local Thamarrur Rangers. Of the 120 people

employed by TDC, half are locals.

Additionally, TDC is being sub-contracted by New Futures Alliance for the delivery of a portion of the SIHIP housing through its civil construction arm. TDC workers are completing four houses each month. CEO John Berto boasts that contracts through SIHIP have boosted TDC's turnover from \$11 million per annum to \$24 million.

Mr Berto described a lack of government assistance is hindering the work of TDC.

"It's been a real struggle to secure the support of government," he lamented.

In 2009, TDC received \$1.4 million for the purchase of a mobile concrete batching plant. Located close to the main street of Wadeye, this plant produces pre-fabricated concrete panels of the type used in the construction of houses under SIHIP. Theoretically, if funding were available to continue the construction of houses in the Wadeye area following SIHIP's conclusion, TDC would be well placed to provide much of the labour and materials required.

Self sufficiency on this level is much needed in remote Aboriginal communities.

Further Progress

It is estimated government spending in Wadeye reached \$980 **Top:**

One of the existing houses in Wadeye.

Middle:

The workers' camp in the town.

Bottom:

A house completed under the SIHIP

million during 2010. This money has been directed to a variety of initiatives besides housing.

Building has begun on a boarding school to service children from surrounding communities and homelands. Children and family centres, a new police station, school and homeland centre upgrades, a new bus service, and work on the town's airstrip are also planned.

A \$7.6 million clinic recently opened to provide urgently needed specialist x-ray equipment, a pharmacy, and an emergency room. The commonwealth funded facility is the largest in a remote community.

October saw the signing of stage one of the Thamarrur Indigenous Protected Area. Agreements between clan groups in this area are notoriously difficult to achieve and the creation of an IPA on the Daly River/Port Keats Land Trust – after two years of negotiations – represents a significant achievement. In addition to facilitating the use of local knowledge in land management, the IPA presents some commercial opportunities such as the harvesting of crocodile eggs for lucrative overseas markets.

Speaking at the signing ceremony at Perrderr outstation, local teacher Alanga Nganbe was overjoyed.

"We've been waiting for this for a very long time and it really means a lot to us," she said.

Her optimism seems well placed.



Big wet has big impact on road network



Record wet season rainfall across the Top End has had a devastating effect across the regional and remote road network, leaving many

Aboriginal communities isolated for long periods.

While monsoonal rains have caused damage to rural roads across the Top End, the Victoria River, Darwin and Daly districts have been worst hit.

Northern Land Council's roads construction and repair consultant Dennis Powley said the damage was the worst he'd seen in 30 years.

Mr Powley said with much of the floodwaters across the western Top End yet to subside, it was difficult to estimate just how widespread the damage to

roads and accompanying infrastructure was.

"In areas we can't access by road we're carrying out helicopter surveys and at this stage that's telling us that we have a lot of flood damage," he said.

Mr Powley said the Port Keats Road, the only way in and out of the NT's largest Aboriginal community Wadeye, appeared to be one of the roads hardest hit by wet season run-off.

"On the Port Keats road we know there's a lot of damage, and even once the river drops it will probably be at least two months

until we can have heavy trucks on it.

"Reconstruction and repairs will go well into the dry season and weight limits will be gradually lifted as we get work done.

"But I must stress, the damage is widespread and also stretches to the eastern Top End.

"The Carpentaria Highway, which runs through to Borroloola is still weight limited as crews carry out repairs to the road."

Mr Powley said repairs will be undertaken by local contractors, and where applicable, shire council workers.

Record rainfall has left many roads across the Top End under water. These pictures show sections of the Daly River - Port Keats Road



NEW ALCOHOL LAWS IN PARLIAMENT

The Northern Territory Government introduced new alcohol reform laws into the NT parliament while it was sitting in Alice Springs in March.

Attorney-General and Minister for Alcohol Policy, Delia Lawrie, said a new five-point plan would tackle alcohol abuse and reduce anti social behaviour in the Territory.

"Alcohol continues to be involved in 60 per cent of all assaults and 67 per cent of domestic violence assaults which is simply too high, while last year police reported taking people into protective custody 54,000 times.

"Studies also show that alcohol abuse costs our community a staggering \$642 million or \$4197 for every adult Territorian compared to \$944 per adult nationally.

The new proposed reforms include

- banning problem drinkers from purchasing takeaway alcohol
- Introducing mandatory rehabilitation treatment for problem drinkers
- Rolling out a new Territory-wide Banned Drinker Register in all take away liquor outlets
- Replacing the existing Alcohol Court with a Substance Misuse Assessment and Referral for Treatment (SMART) Court
- Expanding and enhancing rehabilitation and treatment options for problem drinkers

The Government plans to introduce new laws that allow NT Police to issue alcohol banning notices preventing problem drinkers from consuming and purchasing take away alcohol.

Under the proposed new laws, Police may issue a banning notice of up to 12 months to a person who is:

- Placed in protective custody three times in three months
- Charged with an alcohol-related offence
- Involved in family and domestic violence assaults and offences involving alcohol

After being issued with a third banning notice, a person will be referred to the Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) Tribunal. The Tribunal can issue drinking bans and make mandatory treatment orders for problem drinkers.

Ms Lawrie said 70 per cent of all alcohol sold in the Territory were take away purchases and the Territory-wide alert system will prevent banned problem drinkers from buying take away alcohol.

As part of the reforms, the Alcohol Court will be replaced by a new Substance Misuse Assessment and Referral for Treatment (SMART) Court to deal with people charged with a criminal offence where alcohol or drug abuse is involved.

But Shadow Minister for Central Australia, Matt Conlan, said the Country

Liberals have lodged a submission with the Licensing Commission outlining the party's objections to limiting the sale of full strength alcohol in Alice Springs before 2pm unless a meal is purchased.

"This is nothing more than another measure that unfairly targets the people of Alice Springs and is more paternalism from a Government out of touch with the broader community," Mr Conlan said.

"As we say in our submission, it is untargeted, inefficient and an unfair impost on residents and visitors to the town.

"There is no justification for implementing meal service as a basis for buying full strength alcohol because 75% of alcohol in Alice Springs is consumed off premises.

"It is the Country Liberals' assertion that the wider community is being penalised because of the actions of a small group of problem drinkers."

Mr Conlan said the Country Liberals have called for a review of the existing electronic identification checks before there is any consideration to expanding the system.

"Since the introduction of ID checks for the purchase of take-away alcohol, there has been no reduction in the level of alcohol fuelled violence and anti-social behaviour in Alice Springs," he said.

HARD TIMES

Life after the Intervention By Paul Toohey

Barry Driver is not a spokesman for his community, let alone his people, but he had, through an intermediary, agreed to speak to me. When I get to Tennant Creek, after a 13-hour Greyhound bus trip from Darwin, he comes out of the house where he's temporarily staying, at the Blueberry Hill camp, looking shaky from a big night. He's scratching his head and clearly reluctant. It looks to me as though he's been warned off. It's a common enough feature of remote Aboriginal community life: if you poke your head up, expect to watch it roll off. Best to stay low; be a nobody.

My interest in Driver came from a story that appeared some weeks before in the Tennant & District Times, the local paper, on 19 November. Driver's only son, aged 29, had been killed while walking on the Stuart Highway outside Wycliffe Well, a fuel and grog stop for the nearby community of Ali Curung, where both Driver and his son lived, and which lies 170 kilometres south of Tennant Creek.

Two white women – tourists, heading north – were in the car that struck and killed Kumanjayi Driver. It wasn't the driver's fault. Barry Driver – a traditional Aboriginal man, whose father earned his surname driving trucks north to the town of Elliott during World War II to help with the defence of Darwin – had approached the local newspaper, both to pay tribute to the son he loved and to request that payback actions for the death, which were occurring in Ali Curung and Tennant Creek, cease.

The payback was messy in the case of Kumanjayi. According to tradition, someone must be held responsible for a death. There is no such thing as a natural cause, no such thing as an accidental death. There were some reprisals among those who'd

been with Kumanjayi on the day he died, but there was no one who could realistically be held to blame. The woman driving the car was cleared of responsibility by police and, besides, as a white person, she was not subject to payback. There was a blame vacuum. Angry relatives were looking to take the matter further, which meant dealing out more punishment. Barry Driver, the person most affected by the death, saw clearly what some of his countrymen could not: the death did not warrant traditional payback.

At the time, leading up to Christmas, feelings were running high around many of the Northern Territory's Aboriginal communities. There were heavy tribal payback issues in Yuendumu, causing an exodus; weapons were being seized in several large Arnhem Land communities; Groote Eylandt, an island in the Gulf of Carpentaria, was typically uneasy. It was seasonal, to a point, as the communities shut down for the rainy season and people got a little too close, their tempers getting uneven.

December is also the time in Central Australia when the boys – some as young as 12 – are literally grabbed up off the streets and taken bush to be put through circumcision ceremonies. The boys enter the ceremonies frightened; they exit full of relief – although during Tennant Creek's last ceremony season, several young boys required treatment after they were mutilated by what some believed were inebriated masters of ceremony. Told they are now instant men, they're full of attitude. There begins the hinterland equivalent of schoolies' week. Everyone is edgy and, to make matters worse, it is hell hot.

Driver had moved up to Tennant Creek to grieve. His decision to approach the local newspaper was of itself un-

sual. Bush Aborigines don't use the media if they can avoid it. Photos and stories about the local football team are welcome, and news about policy that may affect their lives is followed closely. But Aboriginal business is no one else's. When people do speak, they like to do it as a quorum of senior people. This offers weight of numbers if there is an adverse reaction.

The editor of the newspaper, Jasmin Afianos, was surprised to find Driver seeking her out. She asked him whether he held any resentment for the white women in that car. "On the contrary," Driver told her. "My heart goes out to those poor ladies and I cry for them, too. It was just a fateful night." Driver talked about his son, making him much more than another road statistic. "Every morning, he would wake me up and say 'Come on old man, let's get to work.' I feel so alone now, like I've lost a part of myself."

On payback, Driver called for calm. "There are some people who are using this tragedy as a leverage to gain traditional ascendancy and I don't want any part of that." It was a compelling statement because power plays in community life happen in a quite secretive world of kinship and family, not public campaigning or elections. Aboriginal people do not necessarily enjoy the same assumed free-speech protections as white Australians, yet here was a man talking of misuse of power among his own people.

Besides that, he sounded interesting. Driver's language was more Noel Pearson than a traditional bush bloke from Ali Curung. It seemed he must have been the product of some mission-era elocutionist mentor, but it did not turn out that way. He had learned his language in the times of early Territory self-government and national

self-determination – from 1974 on – when things had for a moment looked so full of possibility. There were more than 1000 people in Ali Curung back then. Now the population has dwindled to a couple of hundred. School attendance is at best sporadic. A government business manager, or GBM, appointed under the federal intervention to live in the community to oversee the arrival of the new beginning, resides behind a barbed-wire compound. Locals say she doesn't engage with the community. Ali Curung has been earmarked as a 'Territory Growth Town', supposedly part of a township normalisation process, but there's no evidence of it.

Charlie Poulson's left leg and the toes on his right foot have been lost to diabetes. He pulls up his shirt to show the scars from a recent heart operation. He's an elderly man, in Aboriginal terms, and says he's probably 66. He gets around on a shiny red electric four-wheeler. His wife, Martha, brings out a photo of him being presented with an Aussie Rules medal when he was a young man; he played in Territory rep sides with legendary Aboriginal footballer David Kantilla. Poulson talks through gravel and is hard to understand, but his point is clear: those were the days.

Now he watches the intervention from his electric chair on his verandah in Ali Curung. He says the intervention has done nothing for his community, except to take control of the local shop. "We don't own it anymore," he says. Profits used to go towards paying for funerals and bush trips with the kids. Not any more. Now, the local council office – once the political centrepiece of the community – has a skeleton staff whose main work revolves around lawn mowing. The grass is high.

Remote community councils were gutted after the Territory moved towards super shires, centralising power in the bigger towns. Poulson feels his people no longer have any say in their community. "Used to be young people working in this community, but not now. We used to build our own houses. Not now. White people got the jobs. We got no motor cars, nothing. We used to have people go to college, train and come back and teach our people. Not any more."

As a young man, Poulson travelled far and wide across Australia, long trips on slow dirt roads, as far as Shepparton, Victoria, doing seasonal labour. These days, the closest the kids of Ali Curung get to the big smoke is Alice Springs, 380 kilometres south-west. The local training centre, where young people went to learn to make artefacts, has been closed. Kids can't speak proper English, says Poulson, but they need it if they're going to make it. "We don't talk or make friends with white people these days." As for the intervention's resident GBM, he says: "I don't know what she does. We don't see her."

Gwen Brown and Savannah Long are two senior Ali Curung women. Brown is an Aboriginal community police officer, who was recently reinstated after losing her job. Her nephew, Patrick, had removed the battery from her private vehicle and put it in his own car so he could go to Tennant Creek on a grog run. Upon his return, Brown took to Patrick with a stick and broke his arm. Patrick went to the clinic, which reported the injury to police. Gwen Brown ended up in court with a six-month good behaviour bond. And then the police sacked her. Her job was providing the conduit between the police and the community – then that link

was severed. And she was humiliated.

Brown lives in a community where adults are routinely accused of failing to discipline children and teenagers. When Brown did act, in the Aboriginal way, she lost her job. She appealed her case and eventually got her job back, but the experience damaged her perception of the white justice system she has helped serve.

Brown and Long both believe the intervention has failed Ali Curung, with the exception that Long believes income management – whereby 50% of welfare payments are quarantined for essential items, such as food and clothing – has worked. Long says the kids of Ali Curung are always on the hunt for food. She makes sure she's always got damper and tinned meat for the children who routinely turn up at her door. But she can't feed the whole town.

"Kids get married at 13, 14 and they're having children already," says Long. "They should be at school. No one works and no one controls them. And the houses get full because they [the federal government] didn't want to give Ali Curung money to build new houses."

"I feel we're on the edge," says Brown, referring to the survival of the community itself. Still, ask them if they'd live anywhere else and they shake their heads. This is home, in sickness or health, for better or worse.

The aftermath of a New Year's Eve car crash in Elliott, 250 kilometres north of Tennant Creek, is still being felt months after the event. The Aboriginal people of Elliott, Tennant Creek and Ali Curung are closely interrelated; there are tribal distinctions but they are from the same group of families. Also closely related are the white police, ambulance, clinic, fire brigade and emergency service people who attended this small apocalypse. Megan Rowe, Tennant Creek's police superintendent, says many who helped out at the site needed counselling.

A local boy, aged 13, got the keys to his mum's powerful Fairlane. He collected a

group of friends – eight of them, all Aboriginal boys – for a drive to Longreach Waterhole, north of town. When they turned off the highway, one of the kids, who didn't trust the way the 13-year-old was driving, got out. The rest kept going. The car rolled several times, at speed, about 10 kilometres down the track. None of the kids were wearing seatbelts and all were thrown from the car. A five-year-old boy died immediately and a 14 year old was close to death when help arrived. Those two had been sharing the front passenger seat.

Sergeant Michael Kent of the Elliott police station tells me what he saw that day: "When I approached the scene, the first thing I could see was all these white people walking around, which seemed odd because I'd been told the crash involved Aboriginal children. They were ringers who'd been swimming down at the lake and had come to help. I couldn't see the children at first. I then walked [over] and could see these young Aboriginal children scattered over a large area. The ringers were covering them with towels. The scene was quiet. I could hear whimpering but no one was screaming.

Three planes were deployed to airlift the injured boys, variously to Adelaide, Darwin and Alice Springs. For once, the pub emptied out. No one even bought takeaway alcohol. "People were really quiet, sitting in groups in the camps. Grog sales stopped – that was voluntary." Elliott, a town of 600 or so, had only begun piecing itself back together after a white paedophile had ransacked a number of its young Aboriginal girls. The same question asked in that case was now being asked again, in both Elliott and Tennant Creek: Where were the parents?

The question is only partly rhetorical. Tennant Creek is the largest town in Australia with a majority Aboriginal population, and Elliott, while smaller, also has an Aboriginal majority. In both towns there is a strong visible presence of listless welfare people whose main motivation is sourcing alcohol and the

temporary amnesia it administers. Some have the wherewithal to anticipate the dangerous places alcohol will take them. It was due to this foresight that a 30-year-old woman named Noelene sought out Leigh Swift, the station officer at the Tennant Creek Fire Station.

Swift and his wife (a government employee who cannot be named) live across the road from Noelene, who has a baby girl named Michaela. When Michaela was six months old, Noelene started asking them to babysit Michaela when she went out drinking. These sessions are not a few drinks at the local: they are a premeditated wipe-out, drinking cartons of VB in the backstreets or at friends' houses in the alcohol-free town camps. Sometimes, when the stars align and there is welfare money about, they'll buy 'Four Corners' – Bundaberg Rum, which comes in a square bottle and guarantees oblivion.

Swift and his wife believe Noelene was exercising a strange sort of parental responsibility in seeking their help with Michaela while she got legless. Noelene's two older children, aged about seven and 12, had already been taken from her and were living with relatives. Swift and his wife began looking after Michaela one night per week. Noelene's husband was a drinker, and Swift and his wife realised Michaela had become a kind of breathing ransom note, to be used as bargaining power in vicious arguments. The baby was, perhaps, the only thing of value either possessed. One night, when Michaela was about 12 months old, her father was running up and down the

street holding her, saying that Noelene had stabbed him. He flung the baby at Swift's wife and collapsed in the driveway. The story that later emerged was that Michaela's father had asked Noelene to hold the baby while he went to the toilet. Noelene didn't like it. She stabbed him.

Swift and his wife began looking after Michaela more often. The baby's father went to Alice Springs Correctional Centre on domestic violence matters and Noelene ended up losing Michaela after Family and Community Services (FACS) intervened. Swift and his wife were interested in becoming Michaela's foster carers, but FACS has a policy of placing Aboriginal babies with relatives wherever possible. From the remove of a big city this policy makes sense but the reality is that children are often shunted back into conditions identical to those from which they were extricated. Michaela was placed in the custody of her aunt, already struggling to cope caring for her blind mother.

Late last year, the aunt rang Swift and his wife from Alice Springs, saying she needed them to come and take Michaela. When they arrived, they found the house where Michaela was staying cordoned off by crime-scene tape. There had been a killing in the house the night before. Since then, Swift and his wife have not heard from Michaela's aunt. They have

full-time care of Michaela, whose general health and alertness have visibly improved. Noelene still visits, regularly, although Swift says Michaela recoils from her mother when she has been drinking.

Driver is waiting at his brother's house at Blueberry Hill camp at 10 am, as arranged. Tribally, he's a fully initiated eastern Warlpiri man. His traditional connections run west to Yuendumu. His parents came to Ali Curung – or 'Warrabri' as it was then known – as part of the settlement program that placed people of different tribal groupings in one holding pen. Such settlements served the useful purpose of keeping Aboriginal people out of towns such as Tennant Creek and Alice Springs. The Baptist Church was their guardian. People still remember the Warrabri kids turning up for sports carnivals in Tennant Creek, marching down the main road in blinding-white shorts and royal blue T-shirts. Driver remembers this; he also remembers Ali Curung as a pretty town, with market gardens and a bakery.

But Driver, 52, does not look to this time with nostalgia. He instead remembers that the mission's grip was broken as the outstation movement began. People started returning to their traditional lands, living in smaller groups. For the first



time they had choice. For the majority who stayed behind in Ali Curung, in the era of self-determination, there was a powerful will among the people to get themselves and their children educated.

Back then, there were 13 white teachers at Ali Curung's local school, assisted by 10 full-time Aboriginal teaching aides. One of them was Barry Driver, who worked in the role for 14 years. He had been to Yirara College in Alice Springs for his schooling, and to Batchelor College, just south of Darwin, for his tertiary education. He has been a constant reader and follower of national issues. Why? Because he feels it is his right as an Australian citizen to keep informed. When the intervention was announced in June 2007, Driver had his eyes wide open.

"When it started, an analogy came to my mind. John Howard and his cronies went on a punitive expedition, literally, riding down roughshod on a group of people who didn't know what the problem was. We got a GBM and it took me back to the welfare days where the welfare government was based in Darwin and the GBM was the local superintendent. Again, an analogy."

But you said things were pretty good when you were a kid? "Yes, it was the start of self-government in the Territory and there were huge expectations. I was happy with how things were back then. Now, the GBM lives in an enclosed compound on the outskirts of the community. We've had three or four of these GBMs. They're not effective at all. They have community meetings with the leaders. They are present at the meetings but they never convey to the community who they represent, what they're on about, what the federal government is doing to the Aboriginal people. They never spoke to the people at large. They were on the sidelines and we had to figure everything out for ourselves, as far as the intervention was concerned.

"I was the local housing officer at Ali Curung. With the advent of the SIHIP [Strategic Indigenous Housing

Infrastructure Program], they made a huge mistake. There was no consultation. They just came in, spoke to the shire board, and said: 'This is what we're going to do.' They refurbished all the houses, but Ali Curung did not get new houses. One of the main points of the intervention was child abuse. Now, all they did to the houses was to refurbish living areas, cooking areas and bathroom areas. But you still have ten people living in two-bedroom houses. How would this prevent child abuse, if child abuse was going to happen?"

I put it to Driver that people will say – that is, people do say – "taxpayers build you new houses and you guys trash them." "From the outside they might perceive it that way," he responds. "But I say again, if there are ten people living in a two-bedroom house, sure, it will be trashed."

Younger people around Ali Curung and Tennant Creek lack Driver's education and don't seem to see themselves as having a place in the nation; only in Ali Curung, or Tennant Creek. "Parents don't tell them to go to school," says Driver. "In the early '80s, it was a huge thing. People wanted to get educated, people wanted to work at the schools. Now, we don't have that sort of engagement, or the willingness to do these things. There came an attitude that said, 'I can't do that. I'll get someone else to do it for me.'"

I put this to Driver: I live in a nice suburb in Darwin. If a member of my society kills someone, or badly injures them, the mark of the plague is on their door. You'll remember what that person did. When I meet an Aboriginal man in this part of the world, there's a fair chance he has been to prison and it's almost a certainty that he will have participated in or experienced serious violence. But here, violence is accepted: people live with it and have a high tolerance for it.

"I grew up in a society where violence was rife," he says. "Men bash their wives – to me, it was a normal thing; that was my perception of what was going on. I think things are turning around a bit, but we've got the hous-

ing problem and the alcohol problem making these things happen."

To add to matters, Driver says his people have lost the ability to sort out their own affairs. "Payback relies on the old adage of an eye for an eye," he says. "It is a form of punishment that allows the victim's family to make right what is wrong. And it's done in a controlled manner – I'm talking about true payback. You've got the victim's family and the perpetrator's family trying to mediate a solution. Now, that is not violence – it is inflicted injury. We come to a dilemma where the judicial system in the Territory doesn't allow the perpetrator to go back to the community to get just punishment. And when that happens we've got problems.

"The victim's family and the perpetrator's family are still trying to find a solution, but emotions are running high and you get that regrettable payback violence. It spills into the streets. The traditional system unwittingly incites the violence that spills into the townships."

I return to my point: people such as Driver live harder, tougher lives than people such as myself, and have developed dangerously high tolerance levels. "Look, I'm not talking any rhetorical bullshit here but it goes back to 1788. From then to 1901, when Australia got its Constitution, nothing happened between white Australia and us. We've been alienated since the establishment of Botany Bay. We were alienated and neglected by our fellow Australians. We weren't even acknowledged to exist in the Constitution. You come to 1967, when white Australia put its hand up and gave us the tick – our citizenship.

"After that, having been castrated from white society, we got the right to drink and everything got even worse. Here were a people given the right to live freely like other Australians, and the real troubles started – all the problems that white Australians whinge about Aboriginal people, the things we are doing to ourselves. We were never cared about enough to be educated about the effects of alcohol. Everything that's happening now, under



the intervention, has a very long history. But I don't think we are quite as dysfunctional as you think. Families are breaking down Australia-wide. It's not only an Aboriginal situation."

Driver rejects my assessment that Ali Curung is a mess. He says there have been heavy rains and people are only starting to come back to work after the Christmas break. The real issue, he says, is that the creation of the super shires means that the local council is no longer run by locals. "It affects us greatly. The older people have no say." The issue is not litter and high grass, he says, but loss of control.

Driver says I should expect to see big changes soon. "There is no difference at all between Labor and Liberal," he says. "Governments are governments. We are starting to find some [local] leaders and getting more people involved." He's referring in part to an Aboriginal party – the First Nations Political Party – that is forming out of Wave Hill, where the stockman and Aboriginal activist Vincent Lingiari led the walk-off in 1966.

"People have blindly voted Labor for a long time. That is changing. In Tennant Creek and Ali Curung, a lot of Aboriginal people voted for the Greens, the independents and some even voted Liberal at the most recent federal election. Judging by the result [where federal Labor MP Warren Snowdon hung on to his seat of Lingiari after getting a kicking from his mostly Aboriginal electorate], Aboriginal people are getting frustrated with Labor. Even though the Howard government brought in the intervention, Labor didn't change

anything or roll it back."

To Gillard, Driver says: "Have a true and frank consultation with Aboriginal people. On the one hand you've got a government that is naive and bigoted, on the other you've got really frustrated people, screaming their heads off. I say that government really needs to consult. They've got to speak to us. Their programs are a mess. If they can't build new houses, then build extensions and turn two bedrooms into three. Overcrowding is the main issue the government hasn't dealt with properly."

I press stop on the tape. Driver says: "I've researched your work. You're a cynic, aren't you?" I tell him he's right about that.

"No offence, but am I right that you use Aboriginal people to release your frustrations?"

"Personal or professional?" I enquire.

"Both," he says. I tell him there's no offence taken. He's right, sort of. I find it frustrating that he – his people – roll with things I find horrific. I believe Aboriginal people have got to develop less tolerance for violence and bad living conditions.

"Maybe I'm immune," he says. That's a big part of the problem, I'd reckon.

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Paul Toohey is now a US correspondent based in New York for News Ltd papers in Australia. He can be contacted on: ptoohey63@gmail.com tooheyp@newsltd.com.au

MR MAGIC'S LASTING LEGACY

THE Northern Territory's most famous AFL trailblazer Mr Rioli has been remembered as a footballer, leader and gentleman of the highest order.

The former St Marys, South Fremantle and Richmond superstar died, aged 53 in late December last year, and was farewelled by football royalty and a long list of dignitaries at a State funeral service in Darwin earlier this year.

Blessed with natural footballing talents honed while growing up on the Tiwi Islands north of Darwin, Mr Rioli will be best remembered for being the first player from a losing team to be awarded the Norm Smith medal for the player judged best on ground in the grand final.

He achieved that feat when his beloved Tigers went down to Carlton in the 1982 VFL season decider.

All up, Mr Rioli played 118 games for his beloved Richmond Tigers, kicking 80 goals as an attacking centreman.

Richmond Chief Executive Brendon Gale said Mr Rioli's death had deeply-effected all at the club, from players and administrators down to the rank and file yellow and black faithful.

"Maurice was an enormously important figure in the game as a player, and more broadly in the leading role he played for Indigenous Australians," Mr Gale said.

"He will be remembered as one of the greatest players in the Tigers' proud history.

"He inspired millions – the friendships that he made were enduring."

Richmond's vice-patron Cardinal George Pell said Mr Rioli was perhaps the best football exponent to ever come out of northern Australia.

"No player in the history of the game was a better mover as he was poetry in motion in action and regularly delighted tens of thousands," he said.

"He was a hero to the kids. In those days many of the boys on the Tiwis took the name Maurice as their

saints name at Confirmation.

"I pray that his soul may rest in peace and that his memory will continue to inspire many young men to goodness and greatness."

Mr Rioli was recruited to Richmond from Western Australian Football Club South Fremantle where, just like at Richmond, he is remembered as a footballer and person of the highest ilk.

Former Bulldogs president Tony Dean was lavish in his praise for the man who became to be known as "Mr Magic".

"Maurice was the consummate performer on the big stage," he said.

"Not only did he win a Norm Smith medal in a grand final in the AFL, he also won a number of Simpson medals playing for South Fremantle in grand finals and also in state games.

"The bigger the occasion, the better Maurice played."

Mr Rioli was not just a champion on the field, he also left a lasting impression on the Territory's political landscape, having served as a Labor party member in the Northern Territory parliament from 1992 until he retired in 2001.

Former

of parliament.

"It was all the same game to Maurice and the same principles applied," Mr Stirling said.

"He always

kept his eye on the ball and played the main game.

He refused to be distracted by the clip behind the ear on the football field or the incessant sledging from the opposite side of the house.

"It was clear that this hard-nosed professionalism was honed in a footballing environment, where there were no racial discrimination laws, codes of conduct or anti-sledging rules. To Maurice it was all water off a ducks back.

"Maurice served the people of his electorate diligently and he left politics on his terms to go home and continue to serve his own people on the Tiwi Islands, improving employment and training and government services.

"He will long be remembered as a great role model and a sensible advocate for his people."

Mr Rioli's has left a legacy which will continue to delight football fans for many years to come.

His nephew Dean Rioli dazzled Essendon fans during his AFL career, another nephew Cyril Rioli is now a genuine star of the national competition – while several other emerging junior stars with the famous name are already attracting interest with AFL clubs who have a long-term recruiting agenda.



Northern Territory Treasurer and Deputy Chief Minister Syd Stirling served with Mr Rioli as a member of the Labor opposition and describes his former colleague as a man who took what he learned on the football field and applied it within the halls



Marika retrospective at National Museum

An exhibition highlighting the work of three generations of the Marika family from East Arnhem Land has opened at the National Museum of Australia in Canberra.

Yalangbara: Art of the Djang'kawu opened in December 2010 and runs until August 2011. It is the first major exhibition surveying the works of the Marika family and includes the first paintings produced at Yirrkala in the 1930s.

Yalangbara, also known as Port Bradshaw, forms an important part in local Dreaming stories of the Rirratjingu clan.

Andrew Sayers, director of the National Museum, said the Djang'kawu has been the subject of some of Australia's most important art. "The exhibition offers an opportunity to understand more fully the deep and complex relationships between place and people," he said.



A photo on display at the National Museum's exhibition Dhuwarrwarr Marika digging a fresh water well.

Photo: Tony Tuckson Art. Gallery of New South Wales

New cultural museum planned for Warawi

Plans for a cultural centre and museum on South Golbourn Island, off the Cobourg Peninsular, are providing an exciting prospect for residents.

Senior traditional owner and NLC executive member for West Arnhem, Galaminda, has been the driving force behind the concept.

He hopes it will be an engaging means for local children to learn more about their roots and display the island's unique history and culture. "This will be an invaluable resource for the community," he said.

Two Darwin architectural firms have been engaged to produce plans realising the ideas put forward. Both designs offer an exciting glimpse of what would potentially be a model for other communities to follow.

Galaminda said he is looking forward to highlighting the unique history of the island. South Golbourn was engaged in the trepang trade with Indonesian sailors centuries before the arrival of European settlers. After settlement the island was home to a Methodist mission.

"The site will incorporate the



old missionary sisters' nursing home and have historical displays and rooms showing non-sacred and sacred artefacts," he said. "It will also include a theatrette, work from lo-

cal artists and a place for visitors to sit and relax."

The idea for the centre came after Galaminda visited the South Australian Museum, as part of an

NLC delegation in 2009. South Australian Museum operators are hoping to return much of their extensive collection, taken from Aboriginal groups in the Northern Territory during the 19th and 20th Centuries.

In addition to the trepang industry present on the island, the centre will provide an excellent reason for tourists to visit the island – helping to develop the local economy. The island is already home to an arts centre

"We are hoping the establishment of the cultural centre and museum will help us in securing regular flights to the island from Darwin," Galaminda said. "Also we hope this will appeal to the cruise ship operators and their passengers. People could come and visit for the day and have a lovely time."

Photo:
South Golbourn traditional owner Galaminda explains the plans to locals.

McLeod signing a major boost for NT Thunder

NT Thunder has secured the services of ex-AFL superstar Andrew McLeod for the 2011 season.

Andrew is contracted to play seven games with Thunder, including the opening Fostel Cup game, in which he kicked two goals to help his side to a 12 point win over reigning AFL Queensland premier Morningside last month March.

Originally a Darwin Buffaloes Junior, McLeod started his senior career with SANFL club Port Adelaide, where he played in the club's 1994 premiership.

He was then traded to Adelaide and made his AFL debut in 1995.

McLeod has won back to back Norm Smith medals in the 1997 and 1998 Grand Finals and also won the Crows' club champion award in 1997, 2001 and

2007.

He is a five time All Australian in 1998, 2000, 2001, 2006 and 2007 when he was made captain and was a close runner up in the 2001 Brownlow to Jason Akermanis.

McLeod is also a member of the Indigenous Team of the Century, having played 340 games and kicking 275 goals over a 15 year career.

McLeod said he was thrilled to again wear the NT jumper and hoped his signing would help grow the game further in the Northern Territory.

"I am excited to have the opportunity to pull on the Thunder jumper and give something back to NT footy," he said

NT Thunder CEO Stuart Totham said McLeod's signing would provide a major boost for the fledgling club, both on and off

the field.

"We are really looking forward to seeing Andrew in a Thunder guernsey," he said.

Thunder head coach Murray Davis

said McLeod's signing had caused great excitement around the club, with players, coaches, staff and supporters all over the moon to have the former Adelaide flyer in Thunder colours.

"As coach of the club, having Andrew McLeod on board for the 2011 season is very exciting," he said.

"Not only as a quality player that prides himself on his performance but as a leader for our whole playing group.

While McLeod's decision to sign with NT Thunder is



huge news in the Territory, his work as an anti-racism campaigner has recently generated headlines overseas.

McLeod led an AFL delegation that attended the United Nations Palais des Nations forum in Geneva – where he discussed racism in sport earlier this year.

His speech described the transferral of racism from mainstream society into the football arena.

"It wasn't until 1993 when Nicky Winmar was ra-

cially abused by opposition supporters, and in return, he lifted his jumper pointing to the colour of his skin that the AFL sat up and took notice," he said.

"No longer do we get called racist names on the field by opposing players like our preceding brothers did, from the spectators over the fence it has become a thing of the past."

Above: Ex AFL superstar Andrew McLeod discussing racism in sport at the UN in Geneva

BIG RIVER HAWKS GET NLC BOOST

ONGOING sponsorship from the Northern Land Council is set to provide a major boost for emerging AFL stars from Katherine and surrounding districts.

The NLC has struck an in-principle agreement with the Big River Hawks under-18 team to become one of the club's major sponsors in season 2011/12.

The sponsorship deal comes after the NLC provided \$3000 to the Big River Hawks for the club's inaugural presentation night held in Katherine last month.

The evening also saw the presentation of the inaugural NLC Chairman's Emerging Leader Award, which

recognises a player who exhibits leadership potential, both on and off the football field.

NLC Chairman Mr Wali Wunungmurra said the organisation was proud to be associated with the only AFL-NT junior team based outside of the greater Darwin area.

"The Big River Hawks' season has been a resounding success and I'm excited to see these young men showing their stuff in the Territory's premier junior competition," he said.

"To make the finals in their first year was a fantastic effort and the emerging footballers from across the Katherine region who pulled on the brown and

gold jumper did themselves and their families proud."

Mr Wunungmurra said the Hawks' achievement was all the more commendable given the logistics of being a regional club in the Northern Territory. Long road trips are an inevitable hurdle faced by players and staff.

"Many of the players live in communities outside Katherine and just getting the players into town for training and then onto Darwin for matches has been a huge task."

Mr Wunungmurra said he hoped the achievements of the Big River Hawks would encourage other towns and communities to consider placing junior

teams in the NT's premier under age competition.

"I would love to see more teams from outside the greater Darwin area showing off their skills in the NTFL."

There is talk that the under-18 side's successes this season will lead to a place in the NTFL's Division One competition next season, pitting them against the



reserves sides of established Darwin clubs.

Above: NLC CEO Kim Hill with NLC award winner Kyle

Learn.Earn.Legend! tour feature the best

Some of the best Indigenous players from the past decade were in the Northern Territory recently hosting the Learn.Earn.Legend! tour.

Andrew McLeod, Chris Johnson, Michael O'Loughlin, Daryl White, Peter Burgoyne and Ronnie Burns visited communities in and around Alice Springs and Darwin following the cancellation of the Indigenous All Stars match due to the effects of Cyclone Yasi.

Organised by Territorian Andrew McLeod, the players wanted to make sure fans in the region still got their taste of the AFL.

"We were all disappointed that the All Stars match couldn't go ahead, it's such an important event on the sports calendar in the NT and for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders across Australia," he said.

"We looked at ways that we could give something back to the fans, and the tour seemed a great way that we could not only meet and talk football with the people of Darwin and Alice Springs but also the many communities between."

"As well as running football clinics for children across the state the tour has given us time to go a bit deeper and talk about the importance of education and training to gain

employment later in life – using the Federal Government's program 'Learn.Earn.Legend!' as the framework."

Some of the highlights of the tour included McLeod being asked to sit in on a meeting of community leaders in Wadeye as they build a business plan for a Wadeye team to enter the NTFL next season.

Ronnie Burns and Daryl White took on a very different role as they umpired matches between school kids after talking about the Learn Earn Legend! message and the group dining on the local delicacy of kangaroo tails at Ross River.

McLeod was glad that the tour was so well received.

"The great positive to come out of the cancellation of the All Stars match is that we got to put this tour together and were able to get out to so many different places in the Territory that otherwise we might not have."

"The reception in each of the communities has been very humbling but we really hope that by speaking about the importance of education leading to employment through the Learn Earn Legend message we can turn that attention we've received into a lasting message for the kids we've met, so they can set education goals and plan



Top: Andrew McLeod was a hit with traditional owners during a tour of the NT which followed the cancellation of the Aboriginal All Stars match

their future," he said.

The Federal Government's Learn.Earn.Legend!

program will see Indigenous career and employment expos run in conjunc-

tion with football events throughout the season.

All-Stars cancellation leaves footy fans high and dry

Football fans in Central Australia were left disappointed when the AFL cancelled its Aboriginal All Stars versus Richmond game in Alice Springs in February.

The match had been moved to Traeger Park in Alice Springs from Darwin after Marrara Stadium was declared unplayable, but the AFL cancelled the match when storms caused

by Cyclone Yasi in Queensland threatened strong winds and heavy rain.

The decision meant local fans missed an opportunity to see Central Australian heroes such as Matthew Campbell (Pioneers/North Melbourne) and Liam Jurrah (Yuendumu/Melbourne) play for the All Stars and Troy Taylor (Souths) for Richmond.

Ironically, the night of Friday February 4 turned out to be a fine evening.

On the morning of the game's cancellation, the AFL's General Manager Football Operations Adrian Anderson said the AFL and the NT Government had done everything possible to ensure the game could go ahead.

"The latest warning from the Bureau of Meteorology at 5am this morning included heavy rains, damaging winds and flash flooding for the township of Alice Springs today, and

we now have no choice but to cancel the match," Mr Anderson said.

"While this will be a disappointment to fans, we must put the welfare of players and spectators first."

Mr Anderson thanked the NT Government, AFL NT, the Federal Government, ABC-TV and radio broadcasters ABC Radio, NIRS and CAAMA for their efforts to make the game possible and for their sup-

port for the AFL Indigenous All-Stars. He also thanked the Richmond Football Club and the AFL Indigenous All-Stars squad and coaching staff.

Anyone who purchased a ticket for the match was eligible for a refund.

IMPARJA CUP

THE coach of the Northern Territory team which placed fourth at the recent Imparja Cup National Indigenous Cricket Championships in Alice Springs said the team could easily have finished higher up the table.

Greg Aldam said he was extremely pleased with the team's performance over a demanding Twenty20 format, but said narrow losses ultimately cost it higher honours.

"We won three games, lost three games by six runs or less, while in all honesty we were on the receiving end of a pretty good hiding by the New South Wales team which powered through the tournament undefeated," Aldam said.

"Had we won two of those three close ones we could have found ourselves playing in the final and, who knows what could have happened from there.

"Losing the first game by four runs was heartbreaking for the boys, but to their credit, they didn't let it get them down.

"They went out and played super-competitive cricket and showed the other states the Northern Territory lads could match it with anyone."

The Northern Territory had wins over the ACT, Victoria and Tasmania and the 2011 results were the team's strongest in almost a decade.

"We had a great blend of youth and experience and you need that when you're playing such a high-level tournament.

"At one end we had veterans like Kenny Vowles, Adrian McAdam, Darrell Lowe and Charlie Dick, while we also had some really promising teenagers like Ayden Allen-Vowles, Dillon Fuller and Doug Mc-



Clure.

"The young fellas really emerged under the guidance of the older players as the week went on and it was no surprise to see Ayden, Dillon and Doug play important roles in our win over the Victorians on the final day of the tournament."

Aldam singled out McAdam's feats for special praise after the former North Melbourne and Collingwood AFL star was named in the honour squad, recognising the tournament's best 11 cricketers.

"Adrian McAdam is an absolute freak and genuinely one of the best cricketers to come out of the Northern Territory," he said.

"Heading into the last day of play he was leading all the aggregates and had it not been for a nagging hamstring, which hampered him while batting against Victoria, he may well have been named player of the tournament."

Aldam said while he was keen to retain as many players from this year's

team for the 2012 Imparja Cup as possible, he was also keen to identify new talent.

"The team has to keep evolving and there's already new players putting their hands up to be selected for next year.

"Young Jono Rioli, who bowls very nice left-arm wrist spin, was named best player in the major centres division this year so he's obviously a player we're keen to see get involved in the NT team."

Aldam said the completion of the new NT Cricket indoor net and training complex at Marrara later this year would help enhance the team's preparations for next year's tournament.

"The reality is the guys that come from Darwin are out of season when the tournament is played and, with the wet season, it's virtually impossible to get into the nets.

"This year we made do by training at an indoor cricket centre, but to prepare in a purpose-built facility with run ups for the



bowlers will provide a huge boost to the indigenous program."

Top: The NT team at Imparja Cup 2011. Above: Father and son: Ken Vowles and Ayden Allen-Vowles celebrate a Victorian wicket