

LAND RIGHTS NEWS

Volume 8, Number 3, December 2009



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Land Rights NEWS

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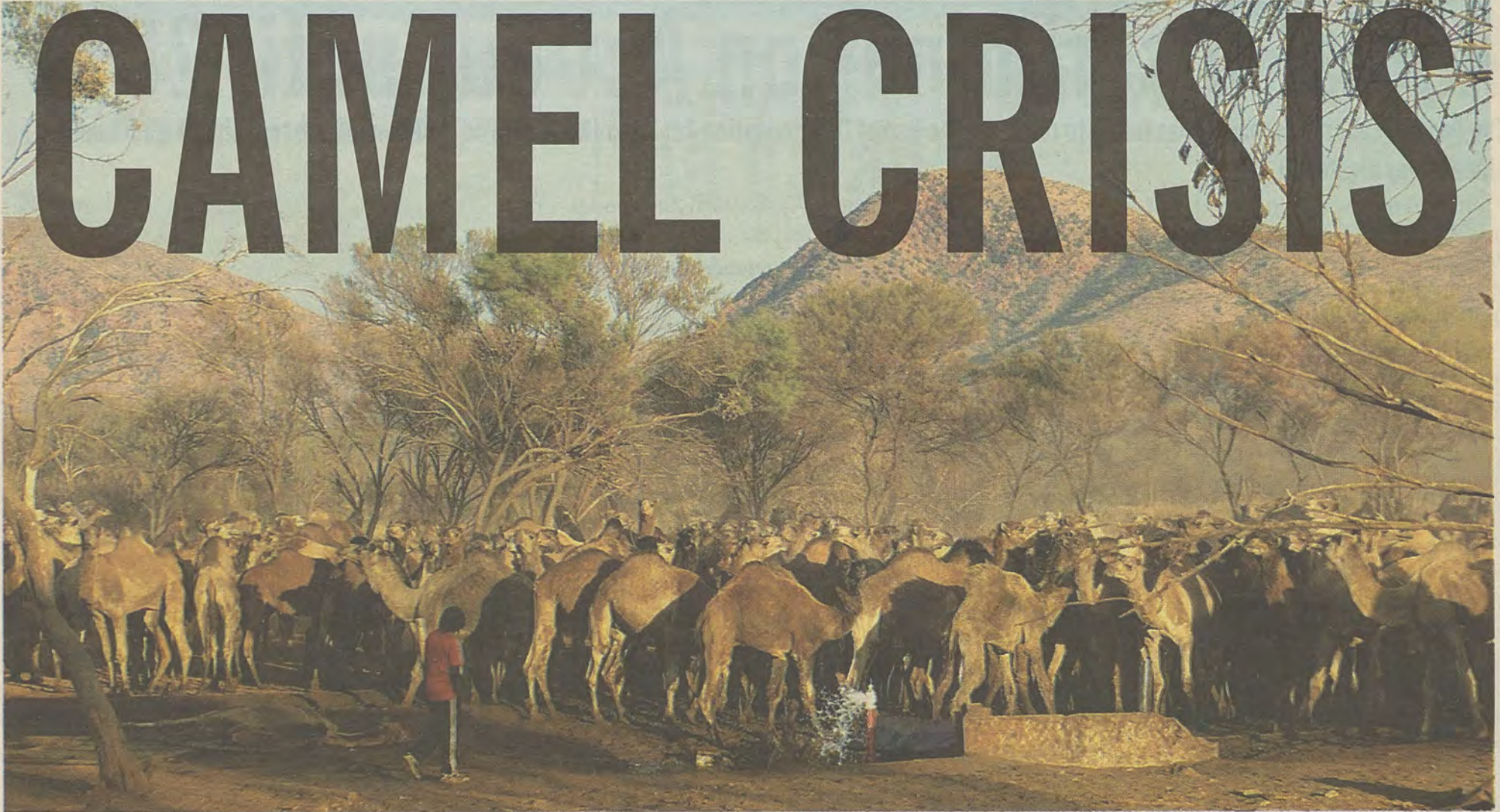
Birds of a feather: CLC staff member Jeff Hulcombe, CLC director David Ross and Keith Jurra admire a Hawthorn Hawks jumper signed by its 2008 AFL premiers team given to Mr Ross by his nephew.

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COVER PHOTO

Celebrations at the Djelk Indigenous Protected Area declaration Photo courtesy Francine Chinn



Central Land Council staff are working around the clock as Land Rights News goes to press to deal with a camel invasion of unprecedented proportions at the small community of Docker River near the West Australian border.

The CLC is preparing for an emergency cull, which it hopes will reduce the numbers by 3000 during four days of aerial shooting and finally give the besieged residents of Docker River a temporary break over Christmas.

It says that the cull will take place within a 50 kilometre radius and be well away from the community.

The damage the camels and other thirsty feral animals like horses have done to sacred sites and waterholes is already considerable.

Waterholes are littered with the bodies of the drought victims and the community swimming waterhole Tjilpuka has been tested and has been found to be a serious health risk to due to camel pollution.

CLC Director David Ross said that while the CLC is collaborating on multiple strategies to reduce the numbers of camels in Central Australia, the cull is an emergency measure.

"Unfortunately camels respond very quickly to weather conditions so if the temperature drops or there is rainfall the camels disperse very quickly.

"One day there may be 600 camels in the community and then the next morning there may be 60.

"We do stress this is an emergency stop gap measure only and we are working with the Desert Knowledge Centre, the Northern Territory and Federal Governments

and numerous other stakeholders to provide a long-term solution.

The CLC has worked for some years with communities to make them aware of the disastrous environmental impacts made by the animals.

"It is essential that Aboriginal people are consulted before action is taken on their land.

"There used to be resistance to culling because the idea that camels would be shot and left to rot rather than used goes completely against Aboriginal people's core beliefs," Mr Ross said.

"However, now we have found that people are so desperate because of the damage and distress that they are saying 'just get rid of them'.

"Everybody wants to ensure that it is done in the most humane way possible."

As a longer-term strategy, CLC staff are also preparing accessible watering points on the Land Trust, which it hopes will lure camels away from Docker River and enable them to be commercially harvested.

The staff are currently equipping one known bore site and searching for other suitable water sources.

The bore sites will be in accessible locations that are suitable to trap

and remove camels for harvest.

"We need funding urgently and in our submission to the Federal Government's Caring for Our Country program we have asked for bore funding, a community camel worker and trap yards," Mr Ross said.

The CLC says that while it has applied for funding in the past it has been unsuccessful because government agencies have been reluctant to fund camel control programs until a Desert Knowledge Centre

report had been finished.

That report, the product of several years of research, is now

finished and a funding agreement is waiting to be signed.

The Federal Government has put \$19 million towards camel control with an expectation the states and the Territory will also make substantial contributions.

Commercial operators

Since the crisis, which has been covered extensively by both the Australian and international media, a number of commercial operators have come forward.

The CLC is very keen to have commercial harvesting of camels and has several commercial proposals before it which involve and benefit the community while decreasing camels through commercial harvesting.

It says that proposals need to be

'sound'.

"A year or so ago a pet meater operated down there without a contract and left carcasses in hunting grounds and close to the community. People were very worried about the health issues," Mr Ross said.

"It's our job to ensure that these are fair and sustainable commercial contracts. The community have lost out quite badly in the past where people have operated without regard to the law or the community.

"They can bring weeds into undisturbed areas, make new tracks and create erosion, inadvertently access and damage sacred sites and further alienate community members from making decisions about their own country," Mr Ross said.

The CLC currently has several commercial proposals before it which involve and benefit the community while decreasing camels through commercial harvesting.

"Of course everybody would prefer that the camels were used rather than wasted, but the scale of the problem is so big that commercial culling alone is not a solution.

"Whatever the solution, it is not an opportunity for anyone to start wildly shooting all over the Land Trust," Mr Ross said.

"It requires a coordinated response and it requires the consent of the community and traditional owners of the areas affected."

Waterholes are littered with the bodies of the drought victims and the community swimming waterhole

Racial Discrimination Act out until 2010

The Federal Labor government has failed to reinstate the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (RDA) despite repeated assurances that it would do so since it was elected in 2007.

Instead the Federal Indigenous Affairs Minister, Jenny Macklin has announced that the RDA will not be reinstated until 31 December 2010.

The Federal government made this announcement in its latest policy statement, Landmark Reform to the Welfare System, Reinstatement of the Racial Discrimination Act and Strengthening of the Northern Territory Response, released in November.

The Northern and Central Land Councils have been calling on both the Federal Government and the Coalition of Australian Governments to reinstate the RDA and to restore Aboriginal people's legislative human rights – rights taken for granted by every other Australian citizen.

NLC Chief Executive Kim

Hill earlier said that without the RDA Aboriginal people will continue to have no legal redress under Australian law in relation to the Northern Territory Emergency Response laws, that is, the federal intervention.

"The Racial Discrimination Act was suspended with the express purpose of denying Aboriginal people everyday, common law human rights so that the federal government could implement its intervention into every aspect of our lives," he said.

"This does not happen to any other Australian citizen."

At a meeting of its 90 members in Tennant Creek in November, the Central Land Council said that the Federal Government had squandered a valuable opportunity to reset

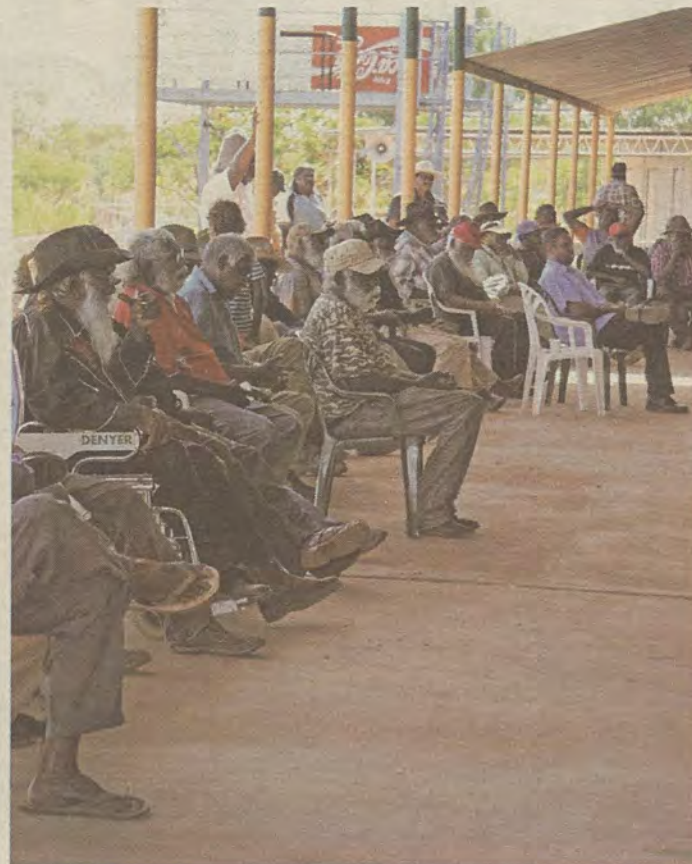
the relationship with Aboriginal people.

CLC members said that the Federal Government's application of the RDA to the Northern Territory Emergency Response legislation still ignores Aboriginal people's interests and its 'special measures' remain discriminatory.

CLC director David Ross said that he felt deeply disappointed with the Government.

"The Australian Government should instead be working with Aboriginal people to find solutions to some very difficult, long-term problems," Mr Ross said.

The RDA was suspended by the former Howard Government in July 2007 to enable the passage of the Northern Territory Emergency Response legislation.



CLC members at the Council's November meeting in Tennant Creek

Income quarantine laws set for a national roll out

In a bid to make its income management scheme non-discriminatory the Federal government announced in November that it will extend its income management laws and make it compulsory for all Australian welfare recipients and not just Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory.

This announcement came in the government's policy statement Landmark Reform to the Welfare System, Reinstatement of the Racial Discrimination Act and Strengthening of the Northern Territory Emergency Response and

will be implemented from 1 July 2010.

But the latest suite of "welfare reforms" will only apply to the Northern Territory before it is rolled out across the nation.

This scheme will operate similarly to how it

operates for Aboriginal people living in Prescribed Areas of the Northern Territory: 50 percent of welfare payments will be quarantined so that it can only be spent on essentials such as food, clothing and rent.

Who will it apply to?

If you are:

- aged 15 to 24 and have been in receipt of youth allowance, newstart allowance, special benefit or parenting payment for more than 13 weeks in the last 26 weeks (disengaged youth);
- aged 25 and above (and younger than age pension age) who have been in long-term receipt of specified payments, including newstart allowance and parenting payment (long-term welfare payment

recipients);

- assessed by a delegate of the Secretary (in practice, a Centrelink social worker) as requiring income management for reasons including vulnerability to financial crisis, domestic violence or economic abuse; and
- referred for income management by child protection authorities.

Who will be exempt?

If you:

- can demonstrate that you are a responsible parent

- ensure your children attend school regularly and consistently
- have regular paid employment or are engaged in formal study
- are a veteran
- are on an aged or disability support pension

The government amendments are being referred to a Senate Inquiry.

The deadline for submissions is February 1, 2009 and the Committee will report by March 9, 2010

Lose community control, lose the battle

One of the most persistent criticisms of the intervention has been that Aboriginal people have been sidelined and not included in decision making

Valda Shannon, a cultural liaison officer with the Barkly Shire and a CLC delegate, said that the new alcohol restrictions imposed by the Australian Government further eroded Aboriginal people's ability to participate in a solution.

"I was involved with Julalikari Council back in 1995 as community development officer working with the Night Patrol and the Council to put some restrictions on alcohol because it was

causing problems for our people and a lot of the ideas came from the old people.

"Alcohol was taking up a lot of our time dealing with people and causing a lot of problems in our communities

"We had to fight for restrictions, that's how the idea of Thirsty Thursday came about.

Thirsty Thursday worked because most people were on social security and payments came on Thursday but the Government changed all that.

"Payments were made on different days.

"It felt like we weren't at the



table anymore.

"It had been hijacked by non-Aboriginal people and governments

"I think its important for Aboriginal people to control, to make decisions, to participate in discussions about how alcohol should be sold because we know our families.

"We live with them, we live with the issues that come with it. It is a stronger message coming from us rather than the Government.

Permits still required on Aboriginal land



The NLC has replaced the old sign (right) as you leave the Nhulunbuy Special Purpose Lease on the Melville Bay road that leads from Nhulunbuy to Yirrkala and Katherine. The original sign was erected more than 30-years ago. Above: The NLC's Alan Timms and Richard Singh at the new sign.



Permits are still required for all visitors to enter onto and to remain on Aboriginal land throughout the Northern Territory. To apply please contact the relevant Land Council

Central Arnhem Highway talks

Meetings have been held at many communities and outstations serviced by the Central Arnhem Highway to seek the opinions of Traditional Owners and residents about possible upgrades.

The 760km highway that passes near Barunga, Wugularr, Mainoru Store, Weemol, Bulman, the Raminging turnoff and Gapuwiyak.

At this stage these meetings are not about making decisions. Some of the possible upgrades TO's are being asked to consider include:

- bridges over the Mainoru, Goyder, Little Goyder and Dointji crossings (these upgrades could cut roads closure from 4 – 6 months to 1 – 2 months);
- a 150 metre wide corridor to allow for services and drainage – one option they want considered is for this corridor to be leased via a negotiated agreement with TO's for long term (50 years plus) to the NT Government. This

option would ensure TO's retain access control of the Central Arnhem Highway; and

- the progressive upgrade of the road to two lane sealed standard.

"The NLC plans to visit the region again after the Wet to undertake a Social Impact Assessment study. This process will give people time to consider all factors in deciding what they believe should happen in the longer term.

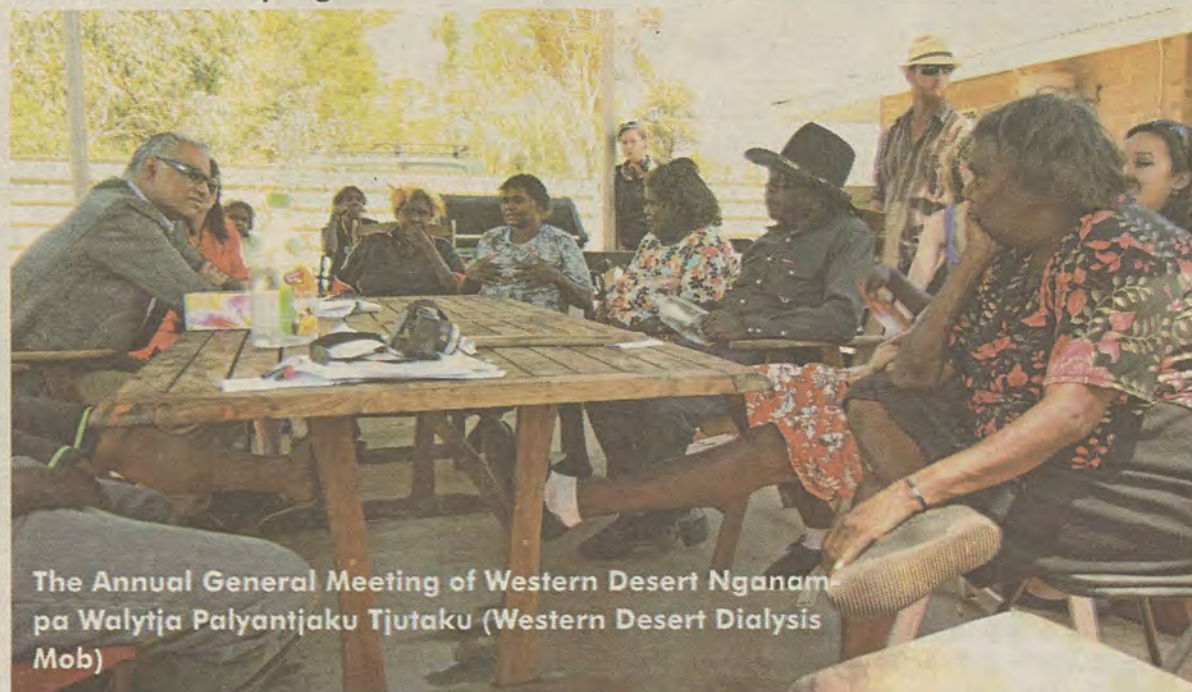
"A key thing for them to consider is the possible impact of having more outside people using the road and visiting the area.

"We want to make sure the government fully understands the views of Aboriginal people about this issue. It's about them being in a position to make a fully informed decision."

If you, your community or group would like further information about these consultations, please contact Syd Stirling at the NLC telephone: 8920 5113.

Renal ban leaves lives in the balance

The organisation that runs renal dialysis services for Aboriginal people from the Western Desert says it remains deeply worried about a Northern Territory Government order that patients from the West Australian side of the border travel to Perth for treatment rather than Alice Springs.



The Annual General Meeting of Western Desert Nganampa Walytja Palyantjaku Tjutaku (Western Desert Dialysis Mob)

Western Desert Nganampa Walytja Palyantjaku Tjutaku (Western Desert Dialysis Mob) has been running dialysis, advocacy and patient support services in Alice and Walungurru (Kintore) for five years. Its coordinator Sarah Brown said people are deeply worried for their family members who need dialysis.

"They want to be able to look after them in Alice," she said. "In February this year the NT Government banned patients from Central Australia who live on the other side of whitefella borders in WA and South Australia from coming to Alice Springs for dialysis.

"Desert people in communities such as Kiwirrkurra, Tjukula, Ernabella and Amata have always looked towards Alice for family and support. Now they are being told that they must move to Perth or Adelaide. Many are choosing to die on country rather than move so far from home."

Ms Brown said WDNWPT has received support from all over Australia with people writing letters to politicians asking them to change the policy, but as LRN went to print, the policy still stood.

The Central Land Council is among the organisations that have come out in support of scrapping the policy.

CLC director David Ross said it is a national disgrace and an act of unconscionable cruelty that Patrick Tjungurrayi, who painted for the fundraising campaign to provide dialysis equipment for Western Desert people, is unable to receive care in Central Australia.

Mr Tjungurrayi has been refused dialysis treatment in Alice Springs because he lives in Kiwirrkurra in Western Australia.

Mr Ross said the NT, SA and WA Governments need to sort the issue out as a matter of urgency.

"For Aboriginal people, state borders are arbitrary, just lines drawn by somebody across their traditional lands. They certainly don't align with Aboriginal cultural or linguistic boundaries or traditional Aboriginal land ownership," Mr Ross said.

In a letter to Greens Senator Rachel Siewert that she read in the Senate, manager of Papunya Tula Artists Paul Sweeney laid out the insulting way Mr Tjungurrayi had been treated after helping to raise \$1 million for dialysis

services in Central Australia.

"The tragic irony of this situation is that Patrick was one of the main contributors to the initial fund raiser by overseeing the collaborative painting done by the Kiwirrkurra men that went on to raise \$300,000 and now he is unable to access the facilities resulting from his effort," Mr Sweeney wrote.

A member of the renal fundraising campaign, the Art Gallery of New South Wales' Hetti Perkins wrote in a letter to Paul Sweeney of her father Dr Charlie Perkins' own personal battle with renal disease.

She wrote: "It was made profoundly apparent to my family through our experience that my father's relative longevity was greatly enhanced by his family being close to him. The mental health issues associated with end stage renal disease are well known and significantly curbed by family support," Ms Perkins wrote.

If you would like to help with the campaign to reverse this ban, please email Western Desert Dialysis on wdnwpt@bigpond.net.au or ring the Purple House in Alice Springs on (08) 89536444 and ask for Sarah.



McArthur River traditional owner Jack Green

McArthur River Mine Management Plan must be made public

In response to the second Independent Monitor's report released in November on the McArthur River Mine, the Northern Land Council (NLC) has called on the Northern Territory Government to amend its Mine Management Act so that Mine Management Plans are made public documents.

NLC Chief Executive Kim Hill said that McArthur River Mine (MRM) operates in virtual secrecy because Mine Management Plans are secret documents between mining companies and the NT Government.

"The NT Government must make the MRM Mine Management Plan a public document because neither Aboriginal Traditional Owners nor the general public knows whether MRM is actually complying as stipulated in their Mine Management plan," he said.

"We all have a right to know what's going on. We need

transparency in this process not a closed door – this report raises important issues of compliance, or the lack thereof!

"The reporting period was October 2007 to September 2008 so the information is now 14-months old; where has this report been for all this time? MRM was given this report on 10 September 2009 and we are only now finding out about it.

"And now the next Independent Monitor's report is not due until September next year! This is far too late for any of us to know whether MRM is complying with its

Mine Management Plan because it's secret," said Mr Hill.

"Consistently Traditional Owners, and others, have raised concerns about environmental damage to the McArthur River and surrounding environs and its incumbent on the NT Government and MRM to provide us with certainty that these concerns are being thoroughly addressed which currently does not happen.

"I reiterate - the first step in this process is to make Mine Management Plans public documents and ensure reporting on a timely basis."

Warlpiri spend royalties on community projects



The new Kurra WETT committee meet at the Central Land Council in October this year. The committee allocated \$650,000 to spend on community development projects

A Central Australian mining royalty association is leading the way in community development.

A new committee set up by the Kurra Aboriginal Corporation has just approved \$650,000 for community development projects for Warlpiri people.

The new committee, which makes decision making easier and simpler, will meet twice a year to discuss and approve funds for use by the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust (WETT).

Previously, Kurra would make these decisions during their royalty distribution meetings

The Warlpiri Education and Training Trust, (WETT) was set up in 2004 by Warlpiri traditional owners with additional royalties from Newmont's gold mining operations in the Tanami.

The Central Land Council administers the Trust on Kurra's behalf.

WETT money is used on education and training projects in Warlpiri communities to create a better future for Warlpiri people.

It is already in partnership with World Vision to deliver early childhood programs in some Warlpiri communities.

Some of the main decisions that were made by the Kurra committee at the October meeting were:

- o \$40,704 for the Central Desert Shire to establish and look after a training room at Willowra. This money will help to buy com-

puters, furniture and other equipment, and will also pay for training for Aboriginal community members in Willowra in 2010.

- o \$80,000 (\$2,500 for each student) to help Warlpiri students going to boarding school at Yirara, Kormilda and Worawa (Victoria) colleges to buy things they need for school and do extra curricular activities like excursions during 2010.

- o \$37,500 (\$2,500 for each student) to help Warlpiri students at schools outside the Warlpiri communities or boarding schools to buy things they need for school and participate in activities like school excursions during 2010.

- o \$200,000 (\$2,500 for each student) for secondary students at schools in the Warlpiri communities to go on excursions in 2010.

- o \$290,657 for Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education to operate and manage a new Nyirripi Learning Community Centre in 2010.

- o \$112,100 from money already given to World Vision Australia to be used to help pay for a governance support worker and a mentor for Warlpiri Early Childhood Care and Development workers as part of the WETT Early Childhood Program.

Some of these projects have been funded by WETT before and some of them are new, like the Nyirripi Learning Community Centre Coordinator position and the Willowra training room.

WARLPIRI RANGERS LOOK AFTER THE TANAMI

Warlpiri Rangers from the Tanami region are still on the case when it comes to bilbies

More than five years after they started monitoring bilbies in the Tanami Desert and looking at how foxes impact on the bilby population, they've now found more bilbies in other locations around the region.

The rangers found another bilby population last year while surveying country around the Lander River as part of an Indigenous Protected Area for the southern Tanami.

For the rangers this means more work – they are now trying to protect bilbies in the Tanami and all the way to Tennant Creek.

Key to this research project is the use of fox-baiting devices, made of steel and manufactured by a Tennant Creek ranger. They house poisonous baits containing 1080 and because of the larger muzzle size of dingos, only foxes are able to retrieve the baits.

This is important ecologically because cats do not readily take the baits and dingos play an important role in regulating cat numbers.

Two weeks after putting out the baits, the rangers have returned to start what are known as tracking transects.

At each trial site there is a baited transect and a non-baited transect

that provides a scientific control.

Rangers drag the vehicle track to eliminate all animal tracks and return early the next day to record all fresh tracks from the previous night.

Rangers also put out traps to see what effect the baiting is having on small mammal numbers.

By counting up the numbers of cats, foxes and dingos on the baited and non-baited transects, scientists are able to compare the impact of the predator baiting devices on predator prey dynamics.

Continued collection of this data over several years will help determine the best way to manage and protect our threatened species through the control of predators.

Involvement of Warlpiri traditional owners such as Tommy Watson has meant that rangers are learning Jukurrpa and traditional ecological knowledge for the area.

Monitoring trips also provide an important opportunity for rangers to do patch burning in the bilbies' habitat. This helps grow up fresh bilby foods and protect important refuge areas from hot summer wildfires by breaking up continuous fuels.

Willowra Warlpiri rangers (l-r) Cecelia Martin, Randy Morton, Doris Martin, Dominic Morton and Ritchie Williams undertake tracking transects at the Lander River



Look after the country, look after the cows

Cattle can soon turn good country into bad if they are left to graze too long in one spot or they can starve to death if there is nothing there that's suitable for them to eat.



Above: Audrey Rankin and Alfie Brown doing monitoring at Mungkarta;

Part of the Central Land Council's job is to help traditional owners who want to run cattle has been to show people how to assess country to see whether it's healthy, if there is grass there that cattle like to eat and how many cattle that country can support until they need to be moved around.

The CLC has taught traditional owners to set up monitoring sites on land where cattle are being run.

This year seven properties were monitored with more planned for next year.

Monitoring is also useful to prevent overgrazing on Aboriginal land that's been leased out for cattle grazing.

One of the important things people have learnt is to look closely

at the grass.

Some types of grass - like oat grass - are really good food for cattle, so if there's lots of these grasses around then that's a good sign.

If there's only grasses that cattle don't eat left, then that's a bad sign.

Photos are taken at the monitoring sites and compared year to year.

People also look for animal tracks - if there's lots of feral camels or horses they might be eating all the grass that the cattle need to eat.

The CLC has also done some excursions with school kids from Haasts Bluff and Mungkarta, so there's lots of budding "grass managers" out there.

Left: Paul Williams looking up plant species on Loves Creek; Below left: Jeremy Williams, William Oliver, Paul Williams, Damien Ryder, Chris Ryder; Below right: Monitoring training with school kids at Haasts Bluff, Anminari Nelson looking on.



RANGERS GRADUATE IN SEAFOOD INDUSTRY TRAINING



Above : Sea Rangers James Lam, Lami and James Marrawal with the boat they've named Jungkayi which means 'boss'.

Early next year 22 land and sea rangers from Bulgul, Croker Island, Elcho Island, Goulburn Island, Groote Eylandt, Larrakia, Maningrida, Ngukurr, Nhulunbuy, Ramingining and Wadeye will graduate with a Certificate 2 in Seafood Industry (fisheries compliance and support).

The NLC Rangers completed the field base course at the Katherine campus of the Charles Darwin University in November.

The Certificate covers many aspects of-ranger work including coxswain and marine radio qualifications, first aid, four wheel driving and wildlife identification.

Pending amendments to the NT Fisheries Act, possibly around April next year, the successful completion of this course will enable the Rangers to be issued limited powers that will build on the existing work that Sea Rangers do across the NT.

The course was coordinated and delivered by staff from the Charles Darwin University, Maritime studies, the Indigenous Fisheries Development unit of the Department of Regional Development, Primary Industries, Fisheries Resources and the NT Fisheries Police.

The NLC's Land and Sea Rangers continue to provide a valuable workforce contributing to the protection of NT's coast.

The next round of training begins in May 2010.

Desert dwellers hit the coast

They came to Broome from all ends of northern Australia, from Queensland to the Kimberleys and from the Pitjantjatjara lands to the Tiwi Islands, to talk, to listen and to have a bit of fun at an Indigenous Protected Area meeting in October this year..

The rangers all camped at at Nadja Nadja outstation on Karrajari country an hour and a half from Broome.

Never mind that the temperature went well over 40, the humidity was at an all time high and it had taken a three day drive to get there: Aboriginal rangers wanted to talk.

They talked about the work they have been doing, what it meant to them and what it meant to their families, to be back on country, bringing country back to life, visiting sacred sites and passing on knowledge to young people.

The rangers told of dealing with major issues such as quarantine problems, ghost nets, poachers, feral animals such as buffaloes and camels, weeds, fire and threatened species

The Karajarri Ranger group



Above: On the beach in Broome waiting to get the trailer fixed before the long drive back to Central Australia. I-r Paddy Doolac, Mark Burslem, Silas Allen, Jane walker and Eddie Robertson

worked constantly keeping everyone fed and watered.

Silas Allen, (Lajamanu ranger group) presented with Jane Walker and Paddy Doolak on the declared North Tanami IPA

Eddie Robertson from Yuen-dumu represented the develop-

ing Southern Tanami IPA .

The conference was organised by the Australian Government's Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) Indigenous Protected Areas section to discuss the future directions of the Northern Australia's IPAs.

Workshop for NLC rangers



Coordinators and Senior Rangers from the NLC's Caring for Country unit held a three day workshop in Darwin during November as part of staff training and development.

The workshop was aimed at empowering NLC Rangers through capacity building including management training for individual ranger groups, and covered issues from financial management,

HR issues relevant to their roles, and work program planning and reporting. The NLC employs up to 85 Rangers across the Top End.

IPAs – healthy country, healthy people

The signing of two new Indigenous Protected Area agreements in the Top End of the Northern Territory in late September was a time for celebration, but amidst the talk about culture and conservation, who in government cares about people living on country, let alone funding them to do so?

The word is kan-kangemang. In the Kunwinjku language it literally means 'take hold of our heart'.

That's how young Emmanuel Namarnyilka describes how he feels about this particular place, Kundjorlom-djorlom.

It is located high on the Arnhem Land plateau, near the tiny homeland of Kabulwarnamyo, and a mix of people, around 150 Bininj and Balanda (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal), gathered in late September for the signing of the Warddeken Indigenous Protected Area agreement with Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett.

"These places have emotional significance for us," Namarnyilka says through translator Dr Murray Garde.

"They remind us of our parents and our grandparents and our great grandparents as sometimes we can come to these places and we can cry because we see, we see our family here in these places, generation after generation after generation, living for so long in places like this."

The IPA, covering 1.4 million hectares, is the first of two such agreements that has brought the Minister to the Northern Territory.

The second, the Djelk IPA totalling 673,000 hectares managed by the Maningrida-based rangers, relates to adjacent land east of Warddeken that belongs to an estimated 102 clan groups. Negotiations for this have taken over eight years but, as pointed out by NLC Chairman Kim Hill, the issue of sea country has still to be settled.

"While these IPA's only cover terrestrial areas it is intended to include marine estates at a future date, which will be a win-win situation for the nation because it will also recognise the fabulous role that rangers have on coastal surveillance and will help develop good policies and practices for marine conservation, biosecurity, including fishing," he said.

Combined, Mr Garrett says development of the new IPAs "provides for Australia, one of the great conservation corridors of our continent and one of the most important areas, more particularly

of rich culture and rock art and conservation, than anywhere else in the world".

He is seated at Kundjorlom-djorlom beside the renowned artist and Traditional Owner (now referred to as Waymud Namok) who will pass away in a few weeks. Aged in his 80's, he is very proud of this day and is one of the last of his people to have grown up in a traditionally nomadic way at this site, a wet season haven.

The encircling art galleries are a testament to the popularity of the area with his ancestors. The paintings have been dated at thousands of years old.

For the federal environment minister, the contemporary emphasis is on the importance of both culture and conservation.

"It's a very, very important day," he tells the West Arnhem gathering.

"And that's because with the declaration today, you're giving a gift to your own people. You're giving a gift to the country.

John Wiornowski, director of biodiversity conservation with the Northern Territory Government, has no doubt about the conservation values of the Warddeken IPA.

"Of all the Territory's lands, this is the most important for biodiversity," he explains.

"It's the richest, it's got the most endemic species and it's got species of great antiquity that live here and nowhere else. By international standards, Northern Australia has some of the most pristine landscapes that we know, some of the most unmodified lands."

He is one of the few NT Government people around at the first IPA signing, and their numbers are further depleted the next day when the only politician, ALP local member Marion Scrymgour, doesn't appear at Maningrida.

At issue is the NT Government's A Working Future policy, which focuses funding for regional and remote areas on 20 key centres at the expense of resources to homelands such as that set up at by the late artist at nearby Kabulwarnamyo.



Warddeken ranger Romeo Lane (top) shows visitors some local bee hives. Minister Peter Garrett (above left) signs the Djelk IPA. Bawinanga's Matthew Ryan with the NLC's Kim Hill (above right). Rocky Point Traditional Owners (right) at the Djelk IPA signing.



A recent study published by the Medical Journal of Australia titled Healthy country, healthy people: the relationship between Indigenous health status and "caring for country" confirms the overall health benefits of Indigenous Territorians living in homelands

The next day, when the rocky inland high country is replaced with pristine coastal beaches, the minister is welcomed by the internationally-travelled White Cockatoo dancers, but the message is the same.

"It's about getting people back to country," says Bawinanga Corporation's Mathew Ryan.

"Because government policy and government is always changing. So it's good having IPA out bush and getting them to work in their own way and at their own pace," he says.

Asked about NT Government funding priorities, Mr Ryan responds:

"To be honest, the government don't know what they're talking about. Having people on country is much healthier.

"Healthy people, healthy country."

Back at Kundjorlom-djorlom, 42-year-old Warddeken ranger Romeo Lane has no doubt about his obligations. Dr Garde translates again.

"Our ancestors lived here, they looked after these places. The stories they have left in the paintings tells us about their history and the kind of lives they lived.

"They lived here at a time before the feral animals here today like buffalos ... (they) come in and they rub themselves on the edge of these panels and they destroy the art.

"So our job today is to continue to look after these places in the same way our ancestors looked after them. And so we're following their footsteps – our heritage".

Djelk mark out sacred sea country

The Djelk rangers have been busy replacing sacred site signage around the mouth of the Blyth River, east of Maningrida, to ensure the exclusion zone is clearly marked out to all users.

For many years Djelk Rangers and Traditional Owners have lobbied for the replacement of the Sacred Site Marker Buoys. This has finally taken place following clear directives from the Traditional Owners.

Twelve buoys with mooring tackle, all made to Aus-

tralian Standards, were purchased. The rangers collaborated with NT Fisheries and Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority on locations for deploying the buoys and it was decided the best approach was to clearly mark the seaward boundary of the sacred site

exclusion zone.

This is to assist all users in determining whether or not they are within the sacred site exclusion zone.

The exercise was the result of practical collaborations between Traditional Owners, Djelk Rangers, NT Fisheries,



Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority and the NT Police Fisheries Enforcement Section.



Rangers prepare new sacred site marker buoys at the mouth of the Blyth River.

cross border culture and country collaboration

In late August, traditional owners of two indigenous protected areas from either side of the Northern Territory/South Australian border joined forces to conduct a fauna survey in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara region.

In late August, traditional owners of two Indigenous Protected Areas from either side of the Northern Territory/South Australian border joined forces to conduct a fauna survey in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara region.

About 40 traditional owners of the Katiti Petermann IPA in the NT and the Kalka IPA in SA met up at an outstation about one hour from the Kalka community, but inside the Territory. They included people from Mutitjulu, Docker River, Pipalyatjara and Kalka.

Apart from the

fauna survey, families caught up with each other and shared stories about country and elders passed on the protocols of the places they were visiting to young people and others who hadn't been to those areas before.

Meanwhile, the older women sang songs for country as they traveled to different places while the senior men were taking plenty of young fellas off to see significant sites.

The transfer of traditional knowledge between older and younger generations is not only important for

cultural reasons. It can directly impact on the effectiveness of scientific research.

This is often difficult to convey to funding bodies, but engaging both the young and the old in such field trips has beneficial outcomes from a western environmental perspective.

Sometimes it can be difficult getting young people involved in the work because they are worried about doing the wrong thing out on country. This is often because they have not spent enough time in those areas learning the Tjukurpa.



Traditional owners from the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara cross border region during a fauna survey.



Tennant Creek rangers prepare to load machinery onto a trailer during machine operation training.

RANGERS UPSKILLING

The development of professional skills among the Central Land Council's ranger groups is continuing with machine operation and maintenance training provided for Muru-Warinyi Ankkul (Warumungu) rangers in Tennant Creek.

The training was held over four days in late November and included four Muru-Warinyi Ankkul

rangers and three from the Julalikari Kargaru rangers in Tennant Creek.

It was part of the rangers' studies in Certificate II of Conservation and Land management at the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE), which they and other CLC ranger groups across the Territory have been undertaking.

Planning is underway

for the rangers to put their new skills to use early next year when some minor ground works are likely to be undertaken.

The Muru-Warinyi Ankkul rangers who took part in the course included Gladys Brown (new ranger), Gerry Price (new ranger), Ervin Dickenson (new ranger) and Lisa Rex (ranger of three years).

CHOPPERS THE ANSWER FOR TANAMI TRADITIONAL OWNERS

For the first time, traditional owners have used aerial burning technology to keep country healthy in two of Australia's most remote areas.

Earlier this year, senior traditional land owners in the southern and central Tanami trialled the 'Raindance' machine, which allows them to drop small incendiary devices from a low flying helicopter this year.

In the trails, the traditional owners directed burning on their family lands near Lake Mackay and Lake Surprise and burnt a total of around 50,000 hectares of country in hundreds of patch burns under mild conditions. It is hoped to expand these trials next year.

People were very pleased with the results of their burning work.

They were able to first visit sites on their country and then burn lots of small fires exactly where they wanted.

It is the only way that traditional owners of very remote, inaccessible lands can do enough burning to keep their country healthy.

The CLC sourced funding for the \$20,000 machine from the federal

Caring for Our Country and Natural Disaster Mitigation programs.

Aboriginal Rangers and CLC Land Management staff were trained in operating the machine in Alice Springs before the trials started.

The CLC hopes to be able to support interested traditional owners in other remote areas to trial the aerial burning technology on their country in the future.

HOW IT WORKS...

The aerial burning device is mounted in a helicopter and at the press of a button, two chemicals are mixed together in a small plastic capsule, which drops down a chute and on to the ground.

After less than a minute, the chemicals react and ignite.

A computer records exactly where each one of these incendiaries is dropped.

Thousands of incendiaries have been used in a single day, to light lots of small fires across the vast Tanami lands, which will help protect their country from the devastation of massive summer wildfires



(Above) Smoke drifts across the Tanami Desert during burn offs lit from the air. (Below) Traditional owners Mickey Singleton addresses rangers during planning for burn offs in the Tanami.



New Warlu Committee for the Tanami

Fire management in the vast Tanami Desert will get a significant boost from a new committee made up of Aboriginal fire practitioners from the area.

The Warlu (meaning 'fire' in Warlpiri) Committee is made up of two community members and a senior ranger from Daguragu, Lajamanu, Tennant Creek, Alekerange, Willowra, Yuendumu and Nyirripi.

These members were chosen based on their knowledge of country, culture and fire and their willingness to speak up strong about fire management on Aboriginal Land.

Importantly, there is a broad mix of old people, young people, ladies and men on the committee.

Fire management has become critical in the Tanami where large, uncontrolled wildfires spread across vast tracts of inaccessible spinifex country every few years.

Between 1999 and 2002 there were good rainfalls in the Tanami and fuel loads became extremely high in some areas.

Fires frequently burnt out of control and in 2002 smoke could be seen for several weeks west of Alice Springs from several very large fires in the region.

In 2007, after two good rainfall seasons, almost half of the Tanami was again consumed by fire.

In such a big landscape, fire management needs to be considered at a strategic level to be effective.

The Warlu Committee will begin to tackle big-picture fire issues across the Tanami and provide strategic direction to the CLC's fire program.

The committee decided on its rules and structure and the types of issues it would talk about at a meeting held by the CLC in September.

It's been a busy time for Aboriginal fire management in the

Tanami, so the Warlu Committee had a lot to discuss.

Some regional issues talked about were: aerial burning; the committees' boundary and representation; firebreaks and protection of outstations; and how the old and new fire laws work.

Senior rangers from Lajamanu, Tennant Creek and Yuendumu proudly talked about fire work their ranger groups did in 2009.

The committee met with scientists from CSIRO to talk about the greenhouse effect and fire management.

They also visited Bushfires NT to hear about the Bushfires Council and how Bushfires NT can help the committee and ranger groups.

Funding for the committee was provided through the Natural Resource Management Board (NT) and the Central Land Council.



The newly-created Warlu Committee (above) that will look at "big picture" fire issues and a CSIRO presentation on the greenhouse effect of fires.



A growing force in gold mining

Through perseverance and innovative programs a partnership between Newmont Mining and the Central Land Council is seeing a gradual increase in the number of Aboriginal workers employed at the company's Granites mine.

The partnership includes the "Prevoc" training course and the "Yappa Crew" labour force. Both help Aboriginal workers who may have limited education or work experience settle into the rigours of 12 hour shifts and 12 days on and seven days off routines.

Newmont's Indigenous mentor Murray Liddle said Newmont recognises that if more local Aboriginal people from the Warlpiri communities become long-term employees then it will benefit the mine's operation.

"You've got a couple of communities within a 300 kilometre radius and when you think about the airfares that are costing the company to fly people from interstate as far as Perth, Brisbane and Adelaide you've got communities just here," Mr Liddle said.

Many of the Aboriginal people who work at the Granites will say it was very difficult for them in the first few months to be away from their family for weeks at a time and getting used to the work routine, but the longer-term employees say it gets better.

Robert Janima is a Kaytetye man from Barrow Creek region, but travels down to Alice Springs for his flight out to the mine for each work deployment. He's been making the trip for three years.

"You see a lot of our mob working out here, makes it alright," he said.

Mr Janima said it is possible to maintain his Aboriginal culture and work at the mine, although it can be a challenge.

"I try not to lose interest in my culture," he said. "Try to do everything that my elders tell me to do. Then come out here (the mine) and it's different again. Try to listen to the bosses and what they want me to do."

Steven Collins is from Yuendumu, the closest Aboriginal community to The Granites, and would like to see more people from the Warlpiri communities to take up jobs at the mine.

"I want more people, especially my tribe," he said.

"The mine site is really good and different from the community and more jobs. Work here and get more tickets. Sometimes it's hard to get tickets in a community. I've got a few - loader ticket, dozer, grader, cranes and fork lift."

Lachlan Henderson is an Arrernte man who grew up in Alice Springs but now lives in Darwin. He's worked at the mine for 12 years and has risen to the position of back fill foreman.

Mr Henderson said mining is modernising and there's more reasons to need literacy and numeracy and so he encourages all young people to keep attending school.

"There's a lot of procedures and practices that we've all got to read and understand and stick to so that'd be a good stepping stone to those fellas getting a job out here and feeling com-



Vaughan Hampton (foreground) is a community relations officer and coordinates the Yappa Crew at The Granites. Yappa Crew members include (from left) Steven Wilson and Dillon Ross from Yuendumu and Dillon Miller from Lajamanu.

fortable," he said.

Newmont community relations officer Vaughan Hampton is a Warlpiri man with family in Yuendumu.

He said the company's "Yappa Crew" is helping provide Aboriginal people with a pathway onto the mine's workforce.

"They start off as the casual, like a casual worker and then hopefully during that time, a good track record of coming out here will help them get into full-time employment," he said.

Sarah Hudson has worked at the mine twice for a total of three years. Harold "Chongy" Howard from the CLC's employment unit helped her get a start at the mine.

"This time around I came back as an underground truck driver. It's good, better than the office," she said.

A helping hand over looming obstacles

Newmont employs a mentor to help Indigenous employees settle into the lifestyle at The Granites mine.

Murray Liddle will assist Aboriginal workers adjust to the demands a two week on, one week off, 12 hours a day working regime places on the individuals, their families and culture.

He said those changes can be difficult for anyone to cope with, but especially for people who have limited education or work experience.

"I guess the ones that come

straight off the bat are the commitment and sacrifices they have to make and without the support they need from the home base and also on site then it makes the transition from normal CDEP or work in town a bit harder," he said.

"I think a lot of Aboriginal people, when they've had enough, just walk off or don't say anything and just let it build up," Mr Liddle adds. "My role is a first option to get in contact with and if anything comes up they can run it by me. I'm an ear anyway at least."

He said many of The Granites' longest serving employees are Ab-

original people, some for about 20 years.

"They've been here for a long time and I think once you've got over that first year the rest comes a bit easier."

Mr Liddle said workers' self esteem rises as they settle into the job.

"I think that's a huge thing. People walk a little straighter with their nose a bit higher without looking down and at the end of the day say 'Yeah, I've done some hard work today'.



Murray Liddle works at the mine as a mentor for indigenous employees.

"There's always opportunities here if you just look for them."

Doing it for themselves and their families

Below are just a few of the 100 Aboriginal workers now employed at The Granites mine in the Tanmai Desert.

They come from a range of states, but the greatest number are from Central Australia, including a growing number of Warlpiri, the traditional owners of the land the mine sits on.

NAME: LEIGHTON MASON

Live: Alice Springs

Length of employment: Three years

Hard bits: "Coming to a new environment, being away from my family and basically the hours, 12 hours a day, 14 days a week."

Good bits: "Basically a bit more money, a secure job and more experience."

Advice: "If you want to come to the mines do it, don't muck around."

NAME: STEVEN COLLINS

Live: Yuendumu

Length of employment: Seven years

Hard bits: "Sometimes I miss my family, wife, kids and grandkids."

Good bits: "Something different working at a mine rather than in a community. More fun."

Advice: "The mine site is really good and different from the community and more jobs."

NAME: JOHN PEPPERILL



John Pepperill

Live: Laramba

Length of employment: Seven years

Good bits: "I'd like to stay until the end of it (the mine) just to pay off the house."

Advice: "I think you've got to think about what job you like and stick with it."

NAME: NATHAN ARGENT

Live: Alice Springs

Length of employment: Eight months

Hard bits: "It's good but it's hard waking up early."

Good bits: "It's worth it when you



Sarah Hudson has returned to The Granites mine for a second time. She's currently an underground truck driver, but not of the one behind her.

go back in to town, you have that experience."

Advice: "Go to the CLC, go through the Prevoc Course and it'll be an easier transition into it."

NAME: ROBERT JANEMA

Live: Barrow Creek

Length of employment: Four years.

Hard bits: "Gets lonely now and then."



Robert Janima

Good bits: "It might be good for them (my kids) seeing someone out here doing it and think they can or any other mine site."

Advice: "Just got to stay in school, get through, get educated and get into work, but at the same time try not to lose your culture. That's important."

NAME: VAUGHAN HAMPTON

Live: Alice Springs

Length of employment: Almost two years.

Hard bits: "Definitely I've had challenges and obstacles to get across."

Good bits: "Plenty of training opportunities, development and the pay packet's pretty good."

Advice: "Either speak to Chongy, Wayne or Becky at the CLC. Get off the weed and make sure you're healthy because you have to pass health checks."

NAME: MIKE DOOLAN

Live: Lajamanu



Mike Doolan

Length of employment: Three years

Hard bits: "Yeah some hard times, but not really that hard. Just had to learn."

Good bits: "Help and support.

Heaps. Encouragement and stuff too from work-mates and bosses."

Advice: "You can make it possible. You've got to be strong inside."

NAME: SARAH HUDSON

Live: Alice Springs

Length of employment: Three years.

Hard bits: "Getting up early and working 14 days straight."

Good bits: "Save up to buy a house. It's good fast money. You work hard for it, but it comes in a lot quicker than town jobs."

Advice: "Have a go, it's good money and there's lots of good people out here."

NAME: RICHARD MACK

Live: Alice Springs

Length of employment: Eight years

Hard bits: "You need to get your sleep so you can concentrate. I think that's the hardest thing. The fact that it's long hours and you need to get a good night's sleep to be able to concentrate and do your work."

Good bits: "It's not too bad from the money side of things and that's the reason why everyone works out on mines."

Advice: "I'd just encourage more young Aboriginal people to get a job out at the mine. Opportunities are here to earn a bit of money for themselves."

NAME: TROY ERLANDSON

Live: Alice Springs

Length of employment: Four years

Hard bits: "When you're home the break's pretty short and that's the only thing that gets to you."

Good bits: "The money, the environment and pretty much I love the work.

I'm doing it for my children."



Troy Erlandson

Advice: "The only advice I can give them is try to hang in there like I did and you'll find it'll get easier in life."

NAME: TONI PAYNE

Live: Alice Springs

Length of employment: Four years

Hard bits: "Everyone's quite friendly out here so I didn't have any problems or anything getting to know people."

Good bits: "The people out here, the work, the money."

Advice: "All you can do is give it a try."

NAME: BEVERLEY HUBERT

Live: Alice Springs

Length of employment: Nine years.

Hard bits: "It was hard for six months."

Good bits: "I say if you're here to buy what you want and what you need, you get to do it."

Advice: "If your dream is making the good money you've got to do something with that money."



Toni Payne



Beverley Hubert

Rainstorm bringing new life to Lajamanu

The rain cloud spirit saw the bushfire smoke cloud in the distance and he travelled to it. They clashed, made lightning, thunder and fierce winds, then came together to form the Milpirri, the big rainstorm cloud. And from the storm came rain, and from the rain came new life.

Milpirri is a festival hosted by the Warlpiri people in Lajamanu and surrounding communities. It's held every two years in collaboration with Darwin-based dance company TRACKS. About 80 percent of the Lajamanu community get involved in the performances in some way. This was the third Milpirri after 2005 and 2007.

The Milpirri story is a metaphor for the meeting of Warlpiri and mainstream cultures and peoples and the positive benefits that can come from this meeting.

The TRACKS web site says: "Milpirri follows the storm created by the coming together of Australia's Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures. Looking to the new life that comes after this storm, we all learn more about what it truly is to be an Australian person living on this land."

This year's Milpirri was focused on Kuruwarri or Warlpiri law. The performance showed how Warlpiri people are bound by the law and must face the consequence of their actions.

The aim of Milpirri is to foster learning and understanding between Warlpiri and mainstream cultures.

Steven Jampijinpa Patrick is the driving force behind Milpirri in Lajamanu.

"Milpirri is making a real attempt of getting into each other's feelings and minds," he said. "Some of us who have been studying our culture are now comparing it with this other culture and there seems to be not much difference in that.

"So there is a commonness, a humanness in all of us and that brings an understanding and makes us think about what it feels like, to be living here in this country and knowing it in a Yapa way and knowing it in a Kardiya (white fella) way."

An important aspect of Milpirri is teaching

"Milpirri follows the storm created by the coming together of Australia's Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures" - TRACKS Dance Company



(Above and below) Dancers during the Milpirri Festival at Lajamanu. Photos: Jane Walker

the younger people about skins and traditional stories. Everyone involved in Milpirri, including some of the audience, wear a coloured wrist band - blue, green, red or yellow - one for each of the groups, to help the kids understand the importance of skin names.

Mr Patrick added: "Skin name is a deceiving sort of thing if you just see it as a name. It's a grouping that represents direction. It allows us to walk in that direction and it directs us into that direction. Skin name is more than just a name".

This year's Milpirri ceremony was divided into four sections representing justice, respect, discipline and responsibility and then the finale, which represented the Milky Way.

Each section had a modern hip-hop interpretation of the stories performed by the younger generation and included children as young as five-years-old performing to modern music. This was complemented by the traditional Warlpiri performance by the older dancers and singers.

Each section of the Milpirri dance was led by a different group and started with artefacts being presented on stage.

The first section was the Red group (Jakamara/Jupurrula). The black-headed spear, coolamon and grinding stone symbolised justice. Mr Patrick said it's about "Justice, not payback. We want to get rid of that name. It's deceiving".

The second section of the dance was the Yellow group

(Japaljarri/Jungarrayi). In the men's dances the Boomerangs symbolised respect and the women's artefact is the ceremonial poles. Then came the Green group (Japanangka/Japangardi). Mr Patrick said: "The stone knife symbolised discipline and indiscipline."

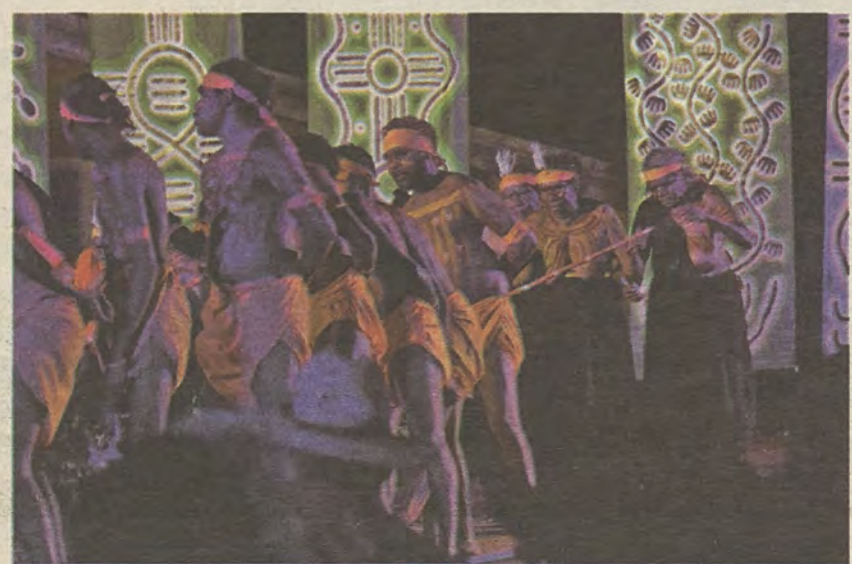
The women's artefact was the digging stick. The last of the groups was the Blue group (Janjala/Jampijinpa). The stone axe and the water carrier symbolised responsibility.

The finale included a lantern display, which represented the Milky Way with the Southern Cross and the sacred Emu. Lanterns were lit and as the flames filled each of them with warm air they were released and allowed to float into the sky with the breeze.

Milpirri is a celebration of all that it means to be Warlpiri including health, education, country, culture, performance, arts, family relationships and more.

Wangkayarla nguruku, kapungku nguruju pina wangkami-jarla - Speak to the Land and the Land will speak back.

Story by Alison Reardon



Tennant Creek supports white ribbon day



Residents of Tennant Creek march down Paterson St in November as part of White Ribbon Day.

White Ribbon Day, held on 25 November this year, marked the beginning of a national campaign to get all Australian men and boys to take positive action and put an end to one of the most widespread human rights abuses taking place in our country.

The White Ribbon Foundation of Australia aims to eliminate violence against women by promoting a change in culture.

The major strategies to achieve this are a national media campaign as well as education and male leadership programmes aimed at men and boys around Australia.

All funds received by the White Ribbon Foundation will support

the implementation of these strategies.

The organisation calls on men to swear never to commit, never to excuse and never to remain silent about violence against women at www.myoath.com.au.

The campaign already has the support of high profile men such as Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, Lt Gen Ken Gillespie, Hazem El Masri, Rove, Keith Urban, Wil Anderson, David Koch, Adam Goodes, Shannon Noll, Jason Culina and Dicko.

White Ribbon Day was created by a handful of Canadian men in 1991 on the second anniversary of one man's massacre of 14 women in Montreal. They began the White Ribbon Campaign to urge men to speak out against violence against women.

Larapinta Valley town camp moves on and up



Milton Armstrong receives a graduating school award (above left); Randall Armstrong, Lekita Malbunka and Ansumal Malbunka (above).



There was cause for celebration at Larapinta Valley town camp in November and so community residents did celebrate.

They held a party on November 25 at the Yarrenyty Arltere Learning Centre in the camp to mark the transition of the centre's learning program to Gillen Primary School and the first anniversary of the operation of the Yarrenyty Arltere Artists enterprise.

During the celebrations, community president Daniel Forrester welcomed the guests, the principal of the Gillen Primary School presented awards to students and congratulated the community and Tangentyere Council director William

Tilmouth thanked the school, Batchelor College, learning centre staff and the community who have worked in partnership over nine years since the program began.

Janella Ebatarinja, a parent and community member, who attended the night was one of the original students in the school in 2000.

After graduating she went on to further study in art and has been a strong community leader.

"The school started at the camp because there were lots of

kids who didn't go to school anymore," Ms Ebatarinja said, "and there were many who were sniffing all the time. But now the kids are stronger and we wanted them to go to Gillen."

Tristam Malbunka, who works part-time at the learning centre said: "Now at the learning centre we have the art business and people work there. We also have playgroups for little kids.

"We want to get the vegetable garden going again and do more horticulture training," he said.

Ntaria celebrates 'staying strong'



More than 600 people passed through the gates of the Hermannsburg Historic Precinct when Ntaria held its inaugural 'staying strong' event in October this year.

The community event included art displays, children's face painting, story telling and music all afternoon.

The Utju Band and Tjupi Band made special performances along with Ntaria regulars such as Darryl Kantawarra and Warren H Williams.

Utju and Hermannsburg choirs gave some strong performances and combined together for a few songs.

Guests sat under the shades of the big gums, while eating strudel and scones from the precinct café.

The event was supported by WAHAC, Emergency Services, Hermannsburg School, Imparja, CAAMA Radio, Centralian Advocate and ABC Radio.



Left: Utju Choir and above Utju Band

Jabiru native title settled



Traditional owner Yvonne Maragarula.

A settlement over the Jabiru native title claim has been reached recognising Mirarr traditional ownership by a grant of Aboriginal land under the Land Rights Act with an immediate 99 year leaseback of the town.

Filed in 1997 by Yvonne Margarula on behalf of the Mirarr Gundjeihmi people, it was one of Australia's longest running active native title claims.

A statement by the Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation said legal recognition of Jabiru was denied the Mirarr traditional ownership in 1977 when the town area was excised from the Alligator Rivers Region Stage 1 land grant.

This was done to prevent a 'veto' over the construction of the town necessary for the operation of the

Ranger uranium mine.

The NLC congratulated the Mirarr on their tenacity and their strength to keep fighting for their native title rights and their willingness to reach a negotiated settlement with the Commonwealth Government for the benefit of all Australians.

"This proposed settlement provides certainty for the future of Jabiru," NLC Chief Executive Kim Hill said.

The proposal requires federal legislation to schedule the claim area as Aboriginal land and to facilitate the leasing arrangements. Discussions aimed at the finalisation of the proposed settlement will continue early into 2010.

"The NLC will continue to work closely with the Mirarr people and the Commonwealth to finalise the leasing arrangements and the scheduling of the claim areas as Aboriginal land," he said.

LEASES FOR TOWN CAMPS PUSHED THROUGH

Major upgrades on Alice Springs town camps were due to start in the second week of December after residents lost their case in the Federal Court against the Australian Government's plan to impose leases on them.

The government had threatened town camp residents with compulsorily acquiring the camps if residents, through Tangentyere Council and the 16 housing associations they represent, didn't agree to sign the 40 year leases.

The Federal Indigenous Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin had said promised new houses and upgrades to existing houses wouldn't go ahead in the town camps without the leases being signed.

Town camp resident Barbara Shaw opposed the signing of the leases in the Federal Court arguing there'd been insufficient consultation and misrepresentation of residents' interests.

That case was lost in late November and on December 3 a deadline for an appeal against that decision passed clearing the way for the leases to be signed and work to begin.

In a joint statement released on December 3 Ms Macklin, Northern Territory Chief Minister Paul Henderson and the Member for

Lingiari Warren Snowden said: "a major clean up and 'fix and make safe' program in Alice Springs town camps" would begin the following week.

"With the last legal obstacle removed, work can now start in the Alice Springs town camps to make the changes essential to provide safe and healthy living conditions for residents," the statement said.

"The orders of the Federal Court, which had prevented the finalisation of leases agreed over 16 of the town camps expired this morning giving the Australian and Northern Territory Governments the capacity to make real changes for residents of the camps.

"Today, the signed leases have been collected from Tangentyere Council and sent to Darwin for execution by the Northern Territory Government and the Commonwealth Executive Director of Township Leasing.

"They are expected to be in place by the end of the week."

The statement went on to say that the new houses would quickly start appearing in town camps under a \$150 million Alice Springs Transformation Plan.

"In the New Year, work will start on the construction of 85 new houses, essential infrastructure and significant rebuilds and refurbishments of existing houses in poor condition," it said.

"Housing reference groups will be set up so camp residents can contribute their knowledge and experience to the transformation process."

Housing associations and Tangentyere Council had reluctantly agreed to the leases under the threat of compulsory acquisition of the camps by the Federal Government.

They'd also opposed the Northern Territory Government's housing department managing the houses and residents' rental agreements, believing Territory Housing has a poor track record of working with Aboriginal people.

repatriation work continues

The NLC Chairman and several other Full Council members visited the South Australian Museum to discuss repatriation issues, to view the Museum's collections generally and also to look at software for the maintaining of data bases of cultural material.



Above: From left, Mr John Ellice-Flint, (Chairman of the Museum Board), NLC Chairman, Wali Wunungmurra, Dr Phillip Clark (Head of Anthropology and Manager of Sciences), Dr Suzanne Miller, (Museum Director).

Briefs... briefs...

GBM lashes government inaction

Alan Hudson, a former Government Business Manager placed at Ampilatwatja under the Federal Intervention, has told ABC Radio in Alice Springs that relocating people to growth towns would be "disasterous".

He said the town of Wadeye is proof that developing large towns where different clans are forced to live together is a "flawed" plan.

"How many Wadeyes do you want?" Mr Hudson told ABC Radio.

"It's as simple as that.

"How many times do people have to prove putting people from different language and cultural groups together is social engineering which is just disastrous."

He also spoke about the conditions of some outstations in the Amplatwatja region which he said had 'fifth world' conditions, not Third World.

Mr Hudson said he walked away from the GBM position because he could no longer represent a Government that was so unresponsive to the concerns of people living in communities.

Gurrumul flying high

Skinnyfish Music has released a 40 minute inflight video program to QANTAS called Gurrumul - Live and Behind the Scenes which will play on all QANTAS international flights between 1st Dec and 30th May 2010.

The musician is currently in Europe on his first serious European tour taking in Germany, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Belgium, Britain and Ireland. In Paris he was joined by Sting and performed "Every Breath You Take" with him for French television. "There's always something to learn from other musicians," Sting told AFP.

In Britain, The Times said the blind singer's voice was "as sumptuously soothing as a log fire on a freezing night":.

NTG releases 2030 policy

The NT Government has released a long-term strategic plan for the future of the Northern Territory.

Territory 2030 plan has 129 tar-

gets linked to six key priorities.

These include increasing the number of graduating students, setting up an Institute for Education and Child Development, Statehood by 2020, a light rail system for Darwin, development of Weddell as a 'green city'; and increasing the number of NT sporting teams competing in national competitions.

A scorecard on progress against targets will also be published every two years.

AFI and Academy hopes for Thornton

Warwick Thornton's star continues to rise with his film *Samson & Delilah* taking out the Best Feature award at the third annual Asia Pacific Screen Awards announced at the Gold Coast convention centre in late November.

The Alice Springs director and cinematographer has had a stellar year winning six major prizes at the Inside Film awards in Sydney in November and the Camera d'Or award for best first feature at the Cannes Festival in May.

Samson & Delilah, featuring local non-professional actors Rowan McNamara and Marissa Gibson will compete in 11 award categories at the Australian Film Institute awards in Melbourne on December 12, including Best Feature.

Batchelor to scale back

The Batchelor Institute of Tertiary Education says it will reduce the delivery of its courses to 22 main locations in the Northern Territory.

It has spent the past year battling financial problems and in October obtained a government \$6.4m bailout.

Speaking to the Institute's Acting Director, Brian McMaster said Batchelor has been operating at more than 70 sites but this has been costly and not always successful.

He said in future the focus will be on places where the Institute has established a presence or classrooms and will need to undertake research on how to approach delivering programs outside these areas.

No shortage of bulldust



Above: CLC staff mustering a cheeky bull on the Yuendumu Land Trust

Hundreds of bulls have been rounded up and sold off after musters on Aboriginal land trusts in Central Australia in recent months.

Staff from the Central Land Council's Regional Enterprise Unit helped with the musters on the Yuendumu and Yalpirakinu (Mt Allan) Aboriginal land trusts north-west of Alice Springs in August and October respectively.

In total, 600 head of cattle were yarded during the muster at Yuendumu with 375 bulls and 46 feral horses trucked off after being sold to the Tongala meat works.

At Yalpirakinu, 203 head of cattle were yarded with 128 bulls and three giant bullocks sent to Tongala.

In 2009, the CLC's Rural Enterprise Unit has also assisted with a horse muster on the Angarapa ALT (Utopia), a cattle muster on the Anurrete ALT (Hatches Creek), an Indigenous cattleman's workshop at Ross River and Loves Creek and a horsemanship school at Mistake Creek

Arnhem cable wins Telstra acclaim

The NLC has congratulated Telstra on winning two major awards including international recognition for its Arnhem Land fibre optic cable project that has brought broadband to the bush.

Telstra worked closely with the NLC and traditional owners to bring the \$34 million project, that laid around 800 kilometres of fibre optics from Jabiru to Nhulunbuy, to fruition.

The Northern Territory Government and Rio Tinto Alcan were part of the productive relationship.

Some 10,000 people in communities across the Top End are now able to receive high speed broadband internet connections, an essential element for the development of remote enterprises such as Aboriginal tourism, land manage-

ment, arts industry as well offering video conferencing and e-learning facilities.

The project, officially completed in early December, has won

The Australian Institute of Project Management Awards in the category of Construction/Engineering projects with a total budget of less than \$100M and also overall 'Project of the Year' for the NT.

And late in November Telstra took out the 'Best Project Management' prize at the World Communications Awards held in London in late November.

100 year old ancestral remains returned to Gunbalanya

In late November Manilkarr traditional owner Mr Alfred Nayinggul was engaged in one of the most important heritage exercises of recent times: the return of 22 human skulls from Museum Victoria in Melbourne to the small community of Gunbalanya in Western Arnhem Land.

The eldest son of Mr Jacob Nayinggul, who is Gunbalanya's senior ceremonial leader, Alfred traveled over 6500 kilometres in order to return to their place of origin the skulls which had remained for almost a century in the vaults of what used to be the National Museum of Victoria.

Alfred is no stranger to global travel in search of his community's heritage. In 2008 he traveled to the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, USA, to take charge of diverse remains which were appropriated from the Gunbalanya region during the 1948 American-Australian Scientific Expedition to Arnhem Land.

But by comparison with the skulls which were held by Museum Victoria, the cultural artifacts which Alfred brought back from America last year were relatively recent.

The 22 skulls were first transported, probably by sea, to Melbourne in 1913, having been acquired by Patrick (Paddy) Cahill.

In his day, Cahill was a renowned buffalo shooter, farmer and businessman, as well as the founder of Oenpelli, as Gunbal-

anya is also known.

Little is recorded about the skulls' origins other than that they came from the region surrounding Gunbalanya.

What is known is that they were sent by Cahill to one of the most eminent Australian anthropologists of the early 20th century, Professor Baldwin Spencer, who was then the Director of the National Museum of Victoria.

When the Commonwealth government assumed control over the Northern Territory, Spencer was given responsibility for reporting on the condition of the Aboriginal population.

It was in this capacity that he traveled to Gunbalanya in 1912, and there he met Cahill for the first time.

When he himself was appointed Protector of Aborigines, Cahill sent substantial and diverse quantities of Aboriginal artifacts to Baldwin Spencer, including numerous bark paintings which remain in superb condition in the museum's archives.

The official handover of the skulls took place in a small meet-



Mr Nayinggul signs the agreement to repatriate with Museum Victoria

ing room inside Museum Victoria.

A smoking ceremony had been planned, but on Friday 20th November there was a blanket fire ban across Victoria.

The formal ceremony was nevertheless a moving event. Dr Robin Hirst, Director of Collections, Research and Exhibitions, read a formal apology which expressed 'sincere regret for the indignity suffered by your ancestors whose remains we are now returning.'

In his generous reply, Mr Nayinggul thanked Museum Victoria for the well-organized and sensitive way in

which the remains of his ancestors were now being returned to him and his people.

'I'm very happy to take them back, back home to the place and the community where they really belong,' Alfred said.

Museum Victoria's repatriation program and the repatriation of the remains to Gunbalanya were supported through its Return of Indigenous Cultural Property Program.

The Northern Land Council also played a part. Mr Nayinggul was accompanied throughout his trip by NLC Anthropologist, Dr Adrian Peace

LEASES FOR NGUKURR, GAPUWIYAK & MILINGIMBI

The Full Council of the NLC signed off on three 40-year leases covering Ngukurr, Gapuwiyak and Milingimbi in early November.

Each of the communities will receive major works under the Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program (SIHIP) including new houses and refurbishments at a cost over five years of \$24.3m for Milingimbi, \$26.9m for Ngukurr and \$13.9m to be spent at Gapuwiyak.

Territory Housing has responsibility for deliver-

ing SIHIP on behalf of the Northern Territory and Australian governments.

NLC Chief Executive, Kim Hill, said comprehensive consultations had taken place with traditional owners of the three communities and the lease agreements were in accordance with NLC's legal

obligations under the NT Land Rights Act.

"The NLC has continued

\$24.3m for Milingimbi, \$26.9m for Ngukurr and \$13.9m to be spent at Gapuwiyak.

to do its job in relation to SIHIP," Mr Hill said. "We have been out on the

ground, in the communities talking to people and explaining what is on offer.

"Aboriginal people need houses and they are keen for it happen as soon as possible."

It is anticipated consultations in the remaining two communities in the NLC region - Numbulwar and Yirrkala will be completed in the

New Year."

The leasing agreement follows those signed in February covering the NLC communities of Gunbalanya, Wadeye, Galiwinku, and Maningrida.

\$9 million in ABA grants spread across NT

Regions across the Northern Territory are set to benefit from more than nine million dollars worth of grants from the Aboriginals Benefit Account.

The Federal Indigenous Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin said a recreation precinct at Mutitjulu, an early childhood centre at Willowra, an Aboriginal cattle enterprise near Tennant Creek, a program to introduce students to the media industry in Alice Springs and the Garma Festival are among the beneficiaries.

Imparja Television in Alice Springs will receive a grant of \$132,150 to teach Year 12 students in Alice Springs all aspects of the television industry.

The Just Imagine 2009 program will cover work practises and budgets and the maintenance and operation of a wide range of media equipment.

The students' final project will be the production of a documentary, which will involve filming, editing and recording voiceovers. The documentary will be aired on Imparja

Television in December this year.

The Bluebush Cattle Aboriginal Corporation on the Karlantijipa North Aboriginal Land Trust receives \$496,533 for fencing, equipping a new bore and infrastructure projects.

The community's Gina Bennett said the corporation is slowly building up its herd of cattle.

"We've built up a small herd of about 250 head in the past couple of years," she said.

"We've struggled without any outside help to get to this stage so the grant will give us a welcome boost."

The Papula Apparr-Kari Aboriginal Corporation in Tennant Creek provided Bluebush with help to secure the grant.

There's funding also for the control of dogs in remote communities and to help

Aboriginal organisations improve services for their clients, including funding to help the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency buy new premises in Darwin and the refurbishment and upgrade of the Alice Springs office of the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association.

The ABA grants aim to fund priority projects which will help improve the lives of Aboriginal people living throughout the Northern Territory.

The ABA was established under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*.

It receives financial compensation from the Commonwealth Government equivalent to the value of royalties paid by mining interests on Aboriginal land.

Grants: Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association, Alice Springs, upgrade property, \$636,000;

Yothu Yindi Foundation, Yirrkala, Garma Festival 2010, \$150,000; North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency, Darwin, office building, \$941,000; Shepherdson College, Galiwinku, school bus, \$92,120; Imparja Television, Alice Springs, Just imagine 2009, \$132,150; Warluku-rangu Artists Aboriginal Corporation, Yuendumu, Restoration of the Men's Museum, \$250,000; Central Desert Shire Council, Engawala, Engawala Basketball court roofing and lighting, \$252,000; Animal Management in Rural and Remote Communities, NT wide, Dog health manuals for remote communities, \$76,663; Art-back NT Arts Development, Alice Springs, Indigenous traditional dance project, \$170,000; Papulu Apparr-Kari Aboriginal Corporation, Tennant Creek, Cattle Enterprise, \$496,533; Nauiyu Nambiyu Inc, Nauiyu Nambiyu, Vehicle breakdown and recovery, \$140,327; North-

ern Land Council; NT North Region, Women's consultations in Central Australia, \$100,000; Mabunji Aboriginal Resource Association, Borroloola, Sea ranger vessel, \$98,300;

Central Land Council, NT Central Region, Ceremonial and Funeral, \$500,000; Gurindji Freedom Day Committee, Daguragu/Kalkaringi; Gurindji Freedom Day 2009, \$50,000; Central Land Council, Willowra, Construction of early childhood centre and duplex accommodation for staff and visitors; \$2,602,374; Central Land Council, Mutitjulu; Construction of a youth and recreation precinct, \$2,257,500; Thamarrurr Development Corporation, Wadeye, Purchase construction machinery and upgrade housing and construction workshop OHS standards, \$500,000; TOTAL: \$9,444,967

Mutitjulu and Willowra community development projects get a boost

The Central Land Council has welcomed the commitment of Aboriginals Benefit Account (ABA) funds to its community development initiatives in two of Central Australia's most neglected communities.

The Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs Jenny Macklin announced that \$2,257,500 had been granted for a recreation precinct at Mutitjulu and \$2,602,374 for construction of an early childhood centre and accommodation for staff and visitors at Willowra.

CLC Director David Ross said that these funds supplemented the investments already put in by the communities.

"Traditional owners of the Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park committed \$500,000 of their share of the rent from the Park to building a pool at Mutitjulu and upgrading the recreation hall in that community," Mr Ross said.

"With \$105,000 from the Mutitjulu Foundation and the ABA

funds, this project is going to make a huge difference to the lives of the people there, especially the children," he said.

"The Willowra Early Childhood and Learning Centre is a critical

"Traditional owners of the Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park committed \$500,000 of their share of the rent from the Park to building a pool at Mutitjulu"

project that has very strong community support.

"Willowra has suffered a disgraceful level of government neglect and has virtually nothing in terms of infrastructure despite being home to 300 people.

"Through the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust (WETT), Warlpiri traditional owners committed \$660,000 of their mining

royalties to building a centre but needed more to get the project up and running.

"WETT already pays for World Vision to run early childhood programs on Warlpiri lands and their

commitment of further funds and the \$2,602,374 from the ABA will enable the Willowra project to go ahead.

"Operational funding is still unclear, even after months of negotiation with the Australian Government.

"Willowra isn't designated as a 'Growth Town' under the Northern Territory and Australian

Government's Indigenous funding policies and therefore like some 25 other communities in our region, not eligible for much at all.

"But in Willowra alone there are at least 30 children under five who are set to benefit from an early childhood centre," Mr Ross said.

"Under the Growth Towns policy the only alternative for these children would have been to spend four hours a day travelling to Yuendumu and back every day.

"These types of community development projects which have community involvement and support make positive and tangible differences to peoples lives.

Abbott to chair AAPA

The Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority has elected only its second chairman from Central Australia.

Long-serving board member Bernard Abbott from the Wallace Rockhole community west of Alice Springs has been elected to the position after 14 years of service.

A Southern Arrernte man, Mr Abbott said he's looking forward to taking on the role.

"It's a great honour to represent all the Aboriginal people of Central Australia, like in the Central Land Council region," he said.

"It's a challenge because I go to a lot of places where only the traditional owners go through and they give me the power to go with them where it's really out of bounds for other people. They trust me."

Mr Abbott said the late Mr Rabuntja, a well known campaigner for Aboriginal people



Bernard Abbott

and former chairman of the Central Land Council was AAPA's first Central Australian chairman.

AAPA is a statutory authority under the Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act responsible for overseeing the protection of Aboriginal sacred sites on land and sea.



Above: L to R: Joseph Cox, Roslyn Frith, Jack Little

New Chair for Katherine West Health Board

In September Ms Roslyn Frith was appointed as the new Chairperson of the Katherine West Health Board. Roslyn is a Gurindji woman from the Kalkarindji community in Katherine West region.

Ms Frith has had the confidence of her community since she was a young woman. At age 19, she was elected the Daguragu Community Government Council, and remained a Councillor for the best part of 20 years, many of them as President. She was an elected ATSIC regional councillor and a Council representative on LGANT.

With a strong background and proven commitment in community-based social services, Ms Frith has held positions of responsibility in the Community Government Council, the local school, health

centre and Kalkarindji Family Centre.

The KWHB said its excited that she will now bring her considerable experience to her new role as Chairperson.

Roslyn thanked the Board for their faith in her and looked forward to the challenges ahead but "working together as one, supporting each other... we will fight health issues and... make it a success". Roslyn referred to the Katherine West motto of *Jirntangku Miyrtu* 'one shield for all' as still being important today as it was in the past.

Joseph Cox (outgoing

Chairperson and newly appointed Honorary Board Member) said "It's really important that Katherine West remains a strong health board and keeps providing a quality health service to our mob in the bush".

"RF will be a strong leader and I'm going to be there to support KWHB and her",

Honorary Member Jack Little emphasized that "we're really happy that Roslyn will come behind us and keep Katherine West out front, standing up for Aboriginal people and making sure they get a fair go".

Bell re-elected AMSANT chair

The Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT) re-elected Stephanie Bell as its chairperson at its annual general meeting in Darwin in early September.

Ms Bell thanked AMSANT members for their support, and pointed to the vital importance of the Aboriginal-controlled comprehensive primary health care sector in "closing the gap".

"The National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission has embraced the importance of primary health care to all Australians and in particular its critical role in closing the gap in Aboriginal health," she said.

"We look forward to keeping up a strong dialogue with the Commonwealth and Territory governments in building comprehensive primary health care across the Northern Territory.

"Our members will continue to work at the grassroots level of health care here in the



Above: re-elected AMSANT chair Stephanie Bell

Territory to achieve real change in the conditions of our people."

ASMANT Board Members are:

Anyinginyi Congress, Urapuntja Health, Sunrise Health, Katherine West Health Board, Wurli Wurlinjang Health, Pintupi Homelands Health, Miwatj and Danila Dilba.

Become an NLC Full Council Member

Between February & June 2010 the NLC will be calling for Nominations for the next three year term. Nominations close mid August 2010.

Executive members for the seven regions are selected by the members of the Regional Council at the first meeting of the new Council in October/November 2010.

Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson are selected by the Council members at the first meeting of the new Council in October/November 2010.

Enquires: Maria Singh 8920 5118 or maria.singh@nlc.org.au

Course turns out a new wave of workers



Above and below: pre voc course students check out the various duties at the Granites Gold mine in the Tanami

The latest wave of workers have graduated from the Central Land Council's Prevoc Training Course which prepares Aboriginal men and women for jobs in the mining industry.

The course is conducted at Newmont Mining's Granites mine site and run by Central Desert Training and Industry Services Training.

It is specifically designed to train people for jobs that are available in the mining industry.

The course has also been arranged to overcome education shortcomings in remote communities in the Territory.

The latest recruits set out on their adventure on the 20th of August, 10 starting and nine completing the course.

During the three month course, the students spent

nine days at the Granites mine and five days off, working 12 hours per day. For some of the students this was their first experience in a work environment.

The course involved completing cert II in mining operations and included the following modules: work safely; conduct local risk control; operate fire fighting equipment; conduct forklift operations; conduct skid steer operation; senior first aid and alcohol awareness.

Eight of the graduates have returned to the mine to work.

Seven will work on a three

month rotation allowing them to gain experience in the mill, mill maintenance, HWE maintenance, HWE underground (truck driving), HWE surface and ESS and Gilberts earth moving sections before deciding which area they'd prefer to work in for the longer-term.

Five of them will be offered full time work after completing the rotation while the other two will take up apprenticeships.

One of the graduates has decided not to pursue the three month rotation after securing a permanent position with Gilberts.

Vale Wamud Namok

One of the Northern Territory's most distinguished and respected Aboriginal leaders has passed away aged 83 on his country at the remote West Arnhem Land Outstation of Kabulwarnamyo.

Wamud Namok was made an Officer in the Order of Australia for his services to the arts and Aboriginal land management in 2004. Only two Aboriginal Territorians have received this national honour.

Born on the Arnhem Land Plateau in 1926 Wamud Namok spent much of his life travelling across the traditional walking tracks of western and southern Arnhem Land hunting, participating in ceremonies, trading

He was also a regular speaker at regional land management conferences.

He has been extremely generous with his knowledge taking on an important role as teacher to both non-Aboriginal people and younger generations of Aboriginal kin.

Wamud Namok has been one of the region's most important and loved artists.

His works are held by most major state cultural institutions in

His knowledge of the contemporary significance of rock art in the region was unparalleled

extended kin networks.

As a youth he worked in the tin mining industry and gave otherwise unrecognised service in the Katherine region with the military during the Second World War.

His extensive travel has been the basis for his exceptional knowledge about places, their land ownership status, their physical peculiarities, available resources and religious significance as well as their history passed on by previous generations.

In his senior years Wamud Namok worked as a consultant to anthropologists, art historians, botanists and a diverse group of other researchers from both the social and natural sciences.

Australia and overseas. He is also known as the

last Aboriginal artist to have painted works on the walls of rock shelters in western Arnhem Land.

His knowledge of the contemporary significance of rock art in the region was unparalleled and represents a link with the past and a particular way of life which has now changed forever.

In Late September this year he saw the rock country lands of the West Arnhem Plateau declared as an Indigenous Protected Area at a ceremony attended by the Environment Minister Peter Garrett and other dignitaries.

The declaration was a great step towards his vision of bringing his people back to care for their traditional lands.



M (KUNMANARA) WILSON

The Pitjantjatjara Woman Who Stopped the World

by Maggie Kavanagh who was the Co-ordinator of the NPY Women's Council from 1988 - 2003.

Many in Central Australia were shocked and saddened by the death of significant Pitjantjatjara leader, Mrs. M. Wilson, in Adelaide on 10th October.

Her death is a tremendous loss for many—black and white—locally, nationally and internationally. We all looked to her for guidance and strength.

She was truly an extraordinary woman. She has left behind an enormous legacy that is testimony to her great intellect, unwavering leadership, depth of traditional knowledge and authority and irrepressible personality.

Many regarded her as a formidable life force - a trailblazer - who opened many doors, particularly for Aboriginal women and children.

Many Australians will recall her powerful and moving interview about child sexual abuse on the ABC's Lateline in June 2006.

Moved to tears, she spoke openly about the extent of these serious problems that were devastating communities, including within her own family.

She was born in 1944 near Pipalyatjara in SA, in the heart of Pitjantjatjara country.

Her name in Pitjantjatjara means of the land.

No other person has this name.

As a young girl she led a very traditional life with her family travelling widely in the cross border region of WA, SA & NT and going to school at Ernabella Mission.

Her first job was in the Ernabella Art Centre making floor rugs and moccasins out of kangaroo skin.

She was also an original member of the famous Ernabella Choir.

She worked in the clinic as a health worker before she moved to Kalka, SA, where she spent her early adult years with her husband and two young sons.

As an experienced health worker she played a pivotal role in establishing the Pitjantjatjara Homelands Health Service in the 1970s.

She was influential in setting up many other organisations in Central Australia including the Pitjantjatjara Council in 1976, Nganampa Health Council in 1983, the Alukura Women's Health Council in 1987 and the Central Australian Advocacy Service in 1990.

She was also a highly valued Aboriginal liaison officer at the Alice Springs hospital in the early 1990s.

Arguably one of her greatest achievements was her role in establishing the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Women's Council.

Mentored by senior women like Nganyinytja Ilyatjari and Myra Watson she too was greatly concerned that men were excluding women from the Pitjantjatjara lands rights debate in South Australia in the 1970s.

The older women were saying they needed their own council and she was listening.

As part of a delegation of women from the tri-state area she attended the ANZAAS Aboriginal women's conference in Adelaide in May 1980.

Convened by Professor Fay Gale, it was the first Australia-wide meeting of Aboriginal women at an ANZAAS conference. Her political awareness was rapidly developing and following the conference Mrs Wilson was ready to act.

Her desire for women to have a voice was the passion that would constitute her *raison d'être* for the rest of her life.

She made a cassette tape of her thoughts and asked the Institute for Aboriginal Development in Alice Springs to make copies and send them to communities in the tri-state region where her female relatives resided.

Her heralding call resulted in a major gathering of women at Kanpi on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara lands in South Australia in November 1980.

With the support of long time friend and community development worker at Pipalyatjara, Dianne James, the NPY Women's Council was formed.

From that time she led the way in all the significant work of the organisation.

continued next page



Above top: Part of the enormous crowd of mourners at the funeral
Middle: Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Women's Council members and staff lead funeral procession
Bottom: An outpouring of grief at the service

M WILSON

continued from p22

In the early days she played a major role in supporting the protection of women's sacred sites, working closely with anthropologists and lawyers from a number of Aboriginal organisations.

Later she would stand side by side with Arrernte women to oppose, successfully, bulldozers set to destroy major sacred sites for the damming of the Todd River just north of Alice Springs in 1994.

She fought tirelessly to curb the devastating flow of alcohol from the Curtin Springs Roadhouse, in 1989 leading 300 women in a protest march down the Lasseter Highway and finally saw an agreement brokered between the licensee and the Women's Council that has continued for a more than a decade.

She spearheaded the establishment of aged care and disability services in the communities.

She raised her voice for the old people at times when they were in distress, far away from country.

She made extensive national and international links with other Indigenous women and travelled widely to speak at conferences and meet with countless government people.

She was invited to speak overseas and travelled on a number of occasions to New Zealand, Canada and the USA.

Former NPY Women's Council chair-woman and friend Yanyi Baker remembers: "She was someone who was not afraid to speak to anyone, different states, different languages, different cultures. She was a strong fighter for Land Rights.

"She was 'the lady who made the road', small road to a bigger road with women and children following behind. Just the way Moses led the people to the Promised Land. She is like a hero."

At great personal cost she advocated for the NPY Women's Council to establish a domestic violence service and guided it in its early days.

Whilst living at Mutitjulu community she provided refuge to many women and kids at a time when the police would not attend domestic violence incidents.

She is widely acknowledged by women for being the courageous woman who stood up to men in communities and challenged their positions of power and privilege.

She did not shirk away from the difficult subjects and was, in her own words "not scared of anyone".

Tragically, in recent years she lost both of her sons through alcohol abuse.

She was devastated that in spite of

all her hard work and years of advocacy about substance abuse, domestic violence and child sexual assault she could not protect her own close family members from their horrendous effects.

From her colleagues she commanded absolute respect and admiration.

Many will remember her ferocious loyalty to and protectiveness of 'her' workers.

Not surprisingly, she was a talented and prodigious artist.

She created an outstanding series of dot paintings over many years depicting modern narratives of social and political issues important to her - including domestic violence, child protection, substance misuse, the needs of the aged and people with disabilities and the importance of Aboriginal women's Law.

We loved her mischievous humour, her quick wit, her strong spirit, her ability to be 10 steps ahead of everyone else and to make us laugh raucously.

Many of us were lucky to bear witness to her vast ceremonial knowledge.

When she danced, the Two Sisters or sang one of the countless verses from Kutungu, the hairs would stand up on the back of your neck.

She was so graceful and commanding when she took the desert stage - her magnetism always drawing you into her world.

To countless Aboriginal women in Central Australia she is remembered for her prodigious ritual knowledge and her generosity in sharing it.

On a personal note I am proud to call her my malpa - friend - for the past 22 years.

I regard her as one of the most significant influences in my life.

On the night of the opening ceremony of the Sydney Olympics in 2000, I sat on the ground of the stadium next to her in the dark. The 327 Aboriginal women from Central Australia filed past us for the start of the Awakenings Ceremony.

She softly spoke into a loud hailer coaching the women to keep their lines straight, not to be nervous and to hold their heads up proud.

Suddenly a magnificent soaring voice pierced the darkness with an intense series of spine tingling notes.

It was Mrs Wilson intoning the Seven Sisters to the universe.

For 15 seconds her voice alone reverberated in the still air in front of 100,000 people.

As I held her hand I whispered "That's you. The whole world can hear only your voice."

These moments will remain one of the highlights of my life.

Her name we cannot yet utter but we will always treasure her in our hearts.

She was our fearless leader with the unforgettable voice.

A WOMAN OF INFLUENCE

TRIBUTE TO J EGAN

The recent death of J. Nungarrayi Egan, a Warlpiri woman who fought for years to improve life for Warlpiri children and young people is a devastating loss for the people of Yuendumu and the wider Central Australian community.

Central Land Council Director David Ross said Ms Egan's contribution to education in the Warlpiri region was enormous.

"Ms Egan worked at the Yuendumu School for many years and she had a long-term commitment to bilingual education and the importance of learning Warlpiri culture," Mr Ross said.

"She was a long time member of the Land Council and always made a valuable contribution to discussion.

"Her concerns were always for young people and equipping them to cope in a rapidly changing world

without losing their Warlpiri culture.

"With her husband, she was also a founder of the Jaru Pirrjirdi Program after working for many years with Mt Theo," he said.

"They often took young Warlpiri men and women to Dreamtime sites to sing the songs and stories of that area and teach them the proper way of doing things.

"Now, thanks to their inspiration, many young men and women are taking their place as the future leaders of Yuendumu," Mr Ross said.

Ms Egan represented Central Australian people at the highest levels, most recently at Kevin Rudd's Summit.

Mr Ross said she left a "lasting and priceless legacy to us all".

"On behalf of the CLC members and staff, I offer our most sincere condolences to Ms Egan's family.

We are all deeply saddened by her passing," he said.

CLC ELECTIONS 2010

Between February and April 2010, the CLC will be visiting communities to hold secret ballot style elections for new Council members.

The CLC will put out public notices when a meeting is due to be held in your region.

Elections for the Chair, Deputy Chair and Executive will be held at the CLC's meeting in April supervised by the Australian Electoral Commission.

Clontarf brings Tennant boys back to school

The football program that has helped bring disenfranchised boys across the country back to school has opened an academy in Tennant Creek.

The Clontarf Foundation has just over 50 boys signed up at Tennant Creek



High School and a further 30 in grade six at the Tennant Creek Primary School.

The foundation uses Australian rules football to encourage boys to stay in school by rewarding them for attendance and achievement in classes with participation in football matches and trips.

"These are young

blokes, some haven't been to school for two years," Clontarf Tennant Creek coordinator Graeme Smith said. "We help get them to school, mentor them in school."

Mr Smith said many of the boys in the Clontarf

program are from Barkly Aboriginal communities as well as

within the Tennant Creek town itself.

He said some have had to deal with grown up issues such as violence, neglect and death.

"We can deal with that a bit better than teachers can," Mr Smith said. "Some might have seen stuff. Sorry business, the sadness. We can come at it from a different angle."



"There's lots of these kids who come with that kind of baggage."

He said using statistics alone, positive changes are already being seen in Tennant Creek since the Clontarf program was introduced in early October.

Mr Smith said before Clontarf, males made up the greatest proportion of non-attendees to school, but since Clontarf, that has been reversed with female

non-attendees now outnumbering the boys three to one. "Just going off the stats

it's positive," Mr Smith said. "We've got to get our young fellas capable of taking on leadership roles because there's a vast vacuum at the moment."

Above: Clontarf footy action in Tennant Creek

Alice Springs boxing champs take them on

It's late on a Tuesday afternoon and two Alice Springs fighters are helping a group of young women and a young teenage boy through a boxing training session at the town's youth centre.

It's not typical of the image boxing has. They seem to be fulfilling their role with a high degree of responsibility and respect, but if you speak to these men, you'll soon find they believe boxing is misunderstood.

"Boxing as a sport shouldn't be frowned upon," Reuben Mack said, "It's a good way to discipline yourself, keeps you focussed, keeps your fitness up and keeps you out of trouble. It's frowned upon too much I reckon."

Reuben has had nine fights and won eight of them.

He said he doesn't have lofty ambitions of becoming a world champion, just to be the best he can be.

"I want to have between 20 and 40 amateur fights and then I want to get into a good stable and have a few professional fights. See how it is, see if I like it," he said.

His training partner, 31-year-old David Galvin, has only had five fights but two of them were for Australian titles in the Global competition.

He recently lost another crack at a national title in Brisbane.

Like Reuben, David said he's enjoying what is often described as a tough sport.

"You don't feel that much pain when you actually fight because you've got that adrenalin pumping through you," he said. "Training can sting you up if you're the sort of bloke who really loves to push yourself and you only get out what you put in."

"It's good discipline, good fitness. I love the fitness, good training. It gives you confidence in everything because you feel you can look after yourself no worries. Just gives you that confidence that you can try anything out."

Both are Aboriginal men, Reuben from Alice Springs and David from South Australia. Each would love to see more Indigenous boys and men taking up the sport.

"Boxing I think is good for young Indigenous people," Reuben said. "They're very competitive, the young fellas and they're



really good sportsmen, they are fast, have good hands, good footwork, they just need to commit and be disciplined and they'll go a long way because they have all the skills.

"A lot of young blokes like to go out and drink and get in a fight but if you're training and dedicated it makes you not want to drink as much because it interferes with your sport so it's a good way to keep you off the grog as well and keep you focussed on your sport."

David agreed that boxing offers a range of benefits to young men and women who take it up.

"Especially on the communities, those young kids have got a lot of skills, beautiful balance, eye hand co-ordination, just really good athletes," he said.

Above left to right: Reuben Mack and David Galvin.