

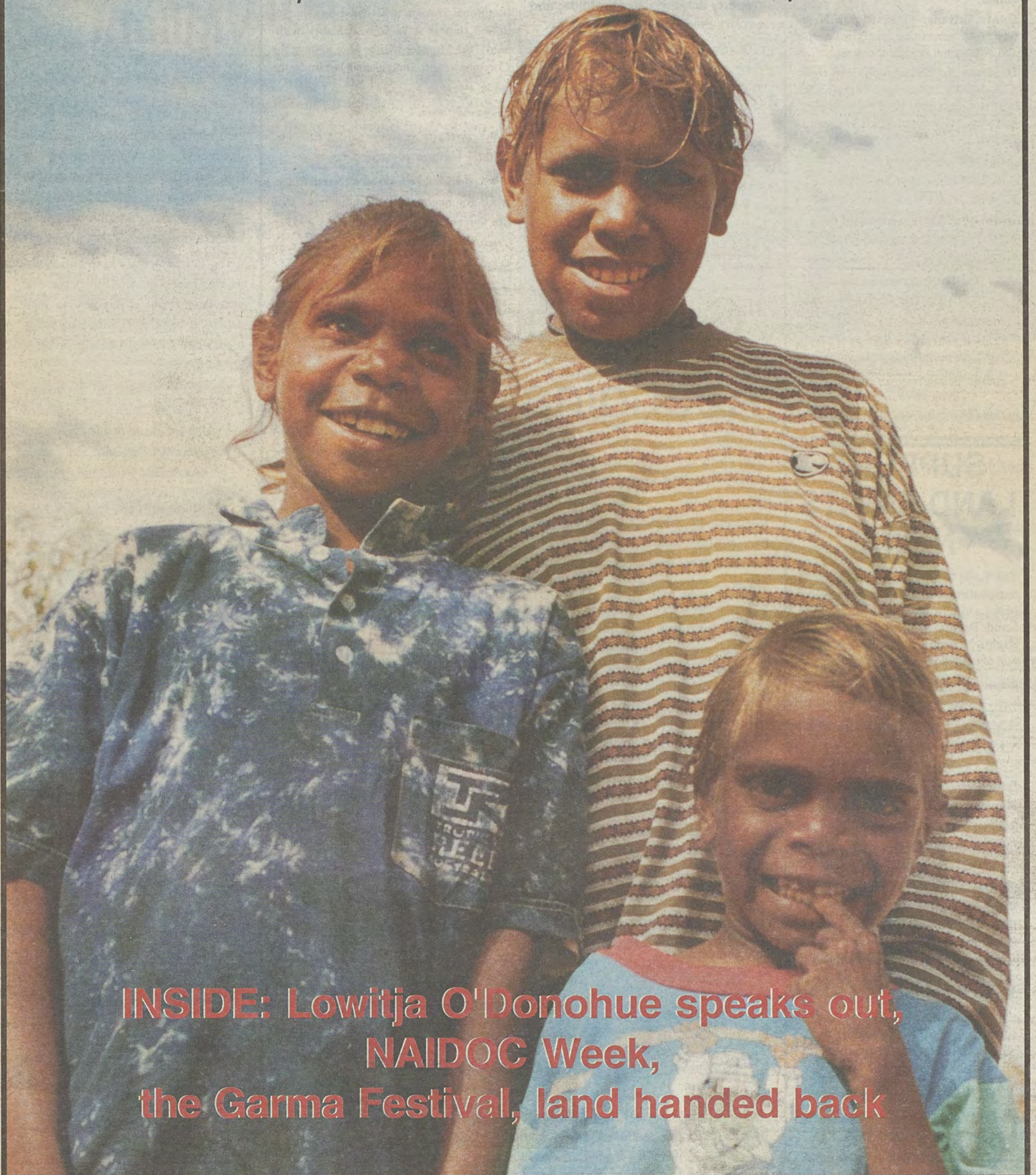


# LAND RIGHTS NEWS



## One Mob, One Voice, One Land

Produced by the Central and Northern Land Councils Vol 2, No 49, July 1999



**INSIDE: Lowitja O'Donohue speaks out,  
NAIDOC Week,  
the Garma Festival, land handed back**

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## COVER PHOTO

Yuyuya Nampijimpa, Renee Brown Nungarrayi and Shane Tjapaljarri from Kintore

## Problems with the new legislation

**The new Federal environment legislation waters down indigenous involvement in park protection and management; undermines traditional rights involving native title, intellectual property and the use of wildlife; and favours development at any price.**

The new Act also paves the way for a wholesale transfer of environment powers from the Commonwealth to the states and territories, which are not constitutionally bound by international conventions such as the World Heritage Convention.

The legislation leaves many decisions to the discretion of the Federal Minister for the Environment.

One of the best known shortcomings of the Bill - Senator Hill's proposal that a

Northern Territory Government representative sit on the Boards of the jointly managed parks, Uluru and Kakadu, regardless of traditional owners' wishes - was not repaired. Instead, the consent of traditional owners will ostensibly be required, but if it is "unreasonably withheld", the Minister will be able to have the Commonwealth Ombudsman arbitrate the issue.

The Act also:

- virtually ignores native title and cultural heritage protection laws
- does not provide an effective framework for negotiation of indigenous land use agreements (Native Title Act 1993)
- does not require consultation with indigenous stakeholders

## "Great sadness" to Aboriginal people

The chair of the Uluru Board of Management Ms Joanne Willmott and chair of the Kakadu Board of Management, Mr Mick Alderson said they felt "great sadness" about the whole parliamentary process and the contents of the new legislation.

"Our peoples have responsibilities that stretch back many thousands of years. The management of our lands is not done by simply mouthing words - we must practice our ownership and custodianship each and every day of our lives," they said.

"In the same way, you cannot maintain the international icons, which are Kakadu

and Uluru, by simply mouthing commitment to joint management...it must be practiced.

"The indigenous owners of Kakadu and Uluru have made it clear that we want to begin the new millennium on the basis of mutual trust between ourselves and the people of Australia.

"We want to go into the new century with a clean slate, with a proper model of world's best practice in joint management that we can all be proud of as a nation together.

"The events in the Senate carry the danger that our hopes will be dashed." ●



Hands up for the Land Rights Act - women at Yuendumu show their support for keeping the Land Rights Act strong - see pages 10-11

## Democrats urged to be more vigilant

The Central and Northern Land Councils have warned that major flaws in the new and complex Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Bill, which was rushed through Parliament in June, will quickly become apparent.

The Land Councils have also called on the Democrats, who struck the deal with the Federal government to limit debate, to be more vigilant with future legislation affecting Aboriginal people.

The Land Councils say the general public have not been fully informed and were not aware of the complexity of the Bill, which contained 528 clauses, 511 Government amendments, and some 300 non-Government amendments.

### Insulting

Although the Democrats claimed an 80 percent win for indigenous and green groups under their deal, the Land Councils point out that the Bill remains objectionable to environmental and indigenous groups in important ways.

The Act will become operational next year.

Northern Land Council Chief Executive Norman Fry said the deal struck in Parliament was insulting to Aboriginal traditional landowners and moved away from world best practice in joint management of national parks.

### "Fundamentally undemocratic"

Central Land Council Director Tracker Tilmouth said the process was fundamentally undemocratic and had excluded Aboriginal people from the beginning.

"Aboriginal people are key players in biodiversity and environmental protection issues but this legislation does not recognise our concerns in any way," he said.

"It is a huge body of legislation to have been pushed through in such a short time and without proper debate." ●

# Bauhinia Downs looks to the future

"Now it is time to look forward," Northern Land Council chief executive officer, Mr Norman Fry, told the traditional landowners of Bauhinia Downs cattle station at the official hand back of the property in June.

"You've always had your Dreamings for this country, you have held the pastoral lease since 1994: now you have what is rightfully yours – full control and ownership under both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal law."

Many of the Gurdanji-Bingninga people who have attachments to the country attended the formal ceremony conducted by the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Senator John Herron.

Traditional owner Mr Harry Lansen, accepted a plaque to mark the occasion. Bauhinia Downs cattle station covers 1450 square kilometres of spectacular country 100 kilometres west of Borrooloola.

The community has been extremely keen to maintain a cattle enterprise on the property, and has also organised housing and a school that is well attended.

The property has the potential to act as a profitable "calf factory" for other properties such as Elsey Station which are more suited for rearing young

stock. The community is also looking at economic ventures to supplement the cattle station operation, such as tourism, safari hunting and fodder production.

"You have planned and you have achieved a lot," Mr Fry told the traditional landowners.

Mr Fry said that the hand back of Bauhinia Downs was proof that the Land Rights Act was effective when everyone cooperates and acts in good faith and with goodwill.

The claim, lodged in 1994, was not opposed by the Northern Territory Government.

Senator Herron agreed, stating that the event demonstrated that land could be handed back by agreement under the Act.

"It is extremely fulfilling to see traditional lands returned to the people who have maintained strong cultural and spiritual links to the land," he said.

Commenting that many people with attachments to the land had moved away from the area over the years, Senator Herron pointed out: "Many people have returned to their land and now they can hold it for ever." ●



Traditional owner Harry Lansen and family receive title to Bauhinia Downs

# Kaytetye speak for Barrow Creek



Left to right: Eileen Brown Ngangkale, Patsy Brown Ngamepeyarte and Tommy Thompson Kngwarreye present their painting of Tyempelkere Spring to the Aboriginal Land Commissioner Justice Olney

The Aboriginal Land Commissioner, Justice Olney, was shown the birthplace of the Kaytetye language and culture by traditional owners at a land claim hearing at Barrow Creek, 280 kilometres north of Alice Springs.

More than 30 claimants took part in the hearing and showed Justice Olney many other sacred sites in the area.

The claim covers a little more than 12.5 square kilometres of land around the Barrow Creek area.

The land was in the past a reservation for the Barrow Creek Telegraph Station. The old racecourse, the Thangkenhareng Resource Centre and the old Telegraph Station are included in the area claimed but not the hotel at Barrow Creek.

Traditional owners still live on the claim area, despite a lack of housing and public facilities and the Stuart Highway running through the middle of their country.

Claimants said they would remain there and build houses if the land claim was successful.

Secure title under the Land Rights Act would enable claimants to get funding for houses and essential services.

Many Kaytetye people living in other areas will be able to visit Barrow Creek more often, or live there, if housing, electricity and other services are more readily available.

The Barrow Creek Telegraph Station, built in 1872, had a profound impact on the Kaytetye. Virtually overnight they were confronted with a new human presence in their lives, new animals like goats and cows, and

new technology such as the telegraph line strung across the country.

A Kaytetye man used to tell the story of an old man who told him about first encountering the 'singing wires' of the telegraph line.

The old man told of listening to the humming wires, and, thinking that bees were alerting him to honey, or 'sugarbag' inside the poles. When he chopped down the pole, he found iron inside instead, which he said, made an exceptional tomahawk.

The presence of a permanent settlement and large numbers of stock put heavy pressures on Kaytetye resources and in 1874 a police officer was stationed at Barrow Creek to prevent cattle killing.

A week later one of the most tragic events in the history of the region began. During the evening of 22 February 1874, a number of Aboriginal men descended from the hill behind the Telegraph Station and fatally speared the Station Master and a linesman.

The Kaytetye say the attack was in response to the theft of their land and the exploitation of the women by the new settlers.

Reprisal was swift and severe and many innocent Aboriginal people were killed in the months following the event.

It is expected that the Report from the Aboriginal Land Commissioner Mr Justice Olney will take some months. ●

## Land back after twenty years of struggle

The Tempe Downs and Middleton Ponds land claim, lodged in 1993 after twenty years of struggle by the traditional owners to return to their land, has finally been handed back.

Tempe Downs and Middleton Ponds are both of immense significance to traditional owners.

The Governor-General Sir William Deane handed Tempe Downs Station and Middleton Ponds Station in Central Australia back to traditional owners under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act.

The handback will benefit about 140 Luritja traditional owners and their families.

Tempe Downs, south west of Alice Springs, lies between the Finke Gorge National Park and Watarrka National Park, close to the popular tourist resort of Kings Canyon, and has within its own boundaries many rockholes and spectacular escarpments.

Both properties were cattle stations for many years and like many pastoral properties purchased by Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory, were severely run down at the time of purchase.

They both had long histories of struggle by traditional owners to win back their land.

The Luritja Land Association, formed in 1974, was the first Aboriginal land rights organisation in Central Australia.

Some of the original members of the Luritja land association who are traditional owners of Tempe Downs and Middleton Ponds are still alive.

The return of the land is a fitting culmination to a long struggle.

The first attempt to purchase Tempe in 1973 was turned down by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs on the grounds that parts of the lease were being considered for the national park that became the 800 square kilometre Kings Canyon/Watarrka National Park.

The claim was heard in 1994, by Justice Gray, who recommended the grant in 1998.

The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Senator John Herron, accepted Justice Gray's recommendations in early 1999.

The title will be handed to the Urrampinyi Itjiltjarri Aboriginal Land Trust on behalf of traditional owners.

Sir William was one of the majority in the High Court that recognised native title in the historic *Mabo (No 2)* decision in 1992. ●

## Elsey an ideal symbol of land rights

The Elsey cattle station near Katherine in the NT, immortalised in the Australian "classic" *We of the Never Never* by Jeannie Gunn, would be a perfect location for a national event to recognise the importance of Aboriginal land rights.

Northern Land Council chairman Galarrwuy Yunupingu said that the official hand over of the property to its rightful owners would be an ideal opportunity for all Australians, indigenous and non-indigenous, to come together to celebrate Australia's "united" history.

"The symbolism is perfect," Mr Yunupingu said. "It is the coming together of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal history.

"It is a story of coexistence and reconciliation, with non-Aboriginal law recognising Aboriginal law and Aboriginal Australians sharing their country with non-Aboriginal Australians."

Land ownership is a theme that weaves its way through this country's entire history, Mr Yunupingu said.

This hand over would illustrate a positive step forward in the on-going story.

"Elsey Station has meant a lot to the Mangarrayi people and this hand over would be the final piece of the jigsaw for this particular piece of land," he said.

"At long last, Elsey Station would be returned to its rightful owners and Aboriginal people want all Australians to join in the celebration.



Stockmen at the start of a 100km horseback cattle drive in June from Elsey Station to the Miniyeri community.

*We of the Never Never* was written by Jeannie Gunn following her time on Elsey cattle station at the turn of the century.

Originally titled *The Little Black Princess*, and telling the story of an Aboriginal orphan Bett-Bett, it was used as a textbook in many schools throughout the country until at least the 1950s.

The lease for Elsey station is currently owned by Aboriginal people who manage and run the property.

The traditional owners lodged their claim

over the land in 1991 under the Land Rights Act.

As his final major action before his retirement, former Land Commissioner Justice Gray in 1997 recommended to the Federal Aboriginal Affairs Minister, Senator Herron that the land claim be granted.

"What we need now is an official handing over of the land – and a celebration by all Australia," Mr Yunupingu said.

"What better way could there be to walk together into the 21<sup>st</sup> century." ●

## Land claim to protect dugong

The Yanyuwa and Garawa people from the coastline of the Gulf of Carpentaria are hoping a land claim for the intertidal zone on their country will enable them to be more closely involved in the protection of dugong.

Highly regarded for their dugong hunting abilities using spears, they are concerned about the large numbers of the mammal being killed through the extensive use of nets.

The first meetings have taken place to prepare for the land claim hearing, expected



Meeting of traditional owners with anthropological and legal advisers at Fat Fellows Creek.

in June 2000.

The claim covers an intertidal area of coastline near the Sir Edward Pellow Group of islands and the beds and banks of certain rivers in the region. The claim

also extends to land seawards of the low-water mark.

The first meetings were held in July at Fat Fellows Creek, followed by a large gathering at Kangaroo Island. ●

# Ross to return to the CLC

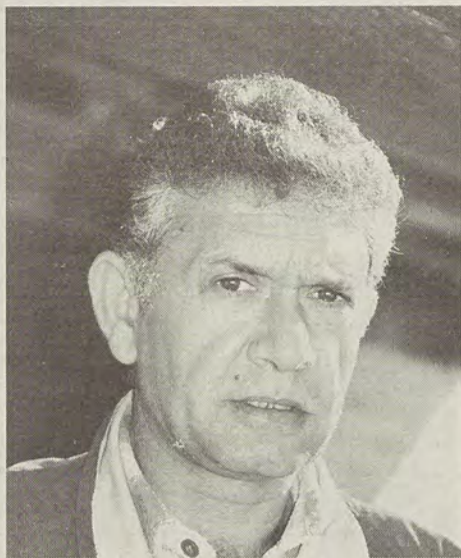
**Former Central Land Council director Kumantjay Ross will once again fill the director's post at the CLC.**

Mr Ross said he was looking forward to being back at the CLC. "I have never known a dull moment at the CLC," he said. "There's always something interesting to do and there is so much work to be done on all and every front in the organisation and it's not something that will stop."

CLC director Tracker Tilmouth is taking an eight month break.

Mr Ross completed his term as Chairman of the Indigenous Land Corporation at the end of June this year. Talking about native title he said, "There are always people who don't accept the umpire's decision, and in this case, the umpire's decision was Mabo.

"But on top of that, you are always going to come up against non-Aboriginal people



CLC director Mr Ross

who just can't deal with another way of life and a culture that happened to exist in this country long before they came along.

"They want everybody to live like they do but plenty of Aboriginal people don't

want to live like that and there's no reason why they should.

"They have the right to do what they want - that is living their life according to Aboriginal law and custom - and there's every reason why they should keep doing that.

"It's a unique law and culture that exists in this part of the world."

A Kaytetye/Arrernte person brought up in Alice Springs, Mr Ross was appointed deputy director of the Central Land Council in 1988 and became the director in July 1989.

He left in 1994 to become the ATSIC Commissioner for Central Australia and soon afterwards became the Chairman of the Indigenous Land Corporation.

Mr Tilmouth said he enjoyed being director of the Central Land Council but he was well overdue for a break.

"I'm heading off on holiday to have a look at life and a bit of relaxation and then come back and see how I can contribute to the Land Council. I come from a place called Alice Springs and I don't think I'll be leaving in a hurry." ●



Tracker Tilmouth

## Watchful eye on Jabiluka

**The Northern Land Council, on behalf of the Aboriginal people of Kakadu, will continue to keep a close watch on moves by the Federal Government and ERA to progress with plans to mine uranium at Jabiluka.**

Following the recent UNESCO decision not to list Kakadu as World Heritage "In Danger", NLC Chief Executive Norman Fry said the Government and the mining company must accept that this did not mean they could avoid their domestic or international responsibilities.

ERA has committed itself to limiting Jabiluka production until the Ranger uranium mine is exhausted, while the Government is required to report to the World Heritage Committee by April next year to explain how Jabiluka can proceed without damaging cultural values of the Mirrar traditional landowners.

The NLC has stated repeatedly that mining at Jabiluka should not proceed because issues of social, environmental and cultural impact have not been adequately dealt with.

"The Government and ERA have been put on notice now," said Mr Fry, "and the world is still watching. The NLC will be closely monitoring the fulfilment of all environmental and cultural responsibilities."

Mr Fry pointed out that the Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and Arts References Committee, which conducted a public inquiry into uranium mining, found serious flaws in the environmental impact assessment process undertaken for the Jabiluka mine.

Its report delivered in June states: "Most disturbing to the Committee was a consistent pattern of rushed and premature ministerial approvals given to the construction of the mine while outstanding concerns about tailings disposal, radiological protection, project design and cultural heritage protection remained unresolved."

The Committee has also recommended the reform of the environmental impact process and suspension of all further construction while environmental and cultural issues are dealt with.

"The findings of the Senate Committee and UNESCO on these matters are consistent with the approach taken by the NLC since 1996," Mr Fry said.

"In addition, the NLC wants to see the government redress its history of poor consultation with the NLC, particularly with new developments in the mining process." ●



The rich ceremonial life at Central Mt Wedge during the hearing impressed Aboriginal Land Commissioner Justice Gray

## Central Mt Wedge is now Aboriginal land

**A former pastoral lease, Central Mt Wedge, 350 kilometres north-west of Alice Springs has been handed back by the Governor-General Sir William Deane, to traditional owners under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act.**

Central Mt Wedge was purchased by the Ngarlatji Aboriginal Corporation on behalf of Luritja, Anmatyerr and Warlpiri traditional owners in 1995.

A land claim under the Land Rights Act was then lodged and a hearing was held in 1996. ●

Some 200 claimants showed the Aboriginal Land Commissioner, Justice Gray, the many sites and performed songs and ceremonies during the week long hearing.

Traditional owners faced particularly strong opposition from the NT Cattlemen's Association when they tried to establish an outstation on the property in the early 1990's.

The Ngalurrju Aboriginal Land Trust on behalf of traditional owners will now hold the title to the former station. ●

## Senate move gives more time to talk on native title

The Central and Northern Land Councils have welcomed moves which allow more time for discussion of the Northern Territory Government's new native title laws, before the Senate decides to allow or disallow the legislation.

The proposed legislation, if approved by the Senate, will replace the 'right to negotiate' under the Native Title Act - a valuable right for Aboriginal people which ensures that negotiation must occur before land acquisition or the grant of exploration, mining and petroleum interests.

The land councils and the Territory Government have until 31 August 1999 to resolve their differences. Senator Harradine had also intervened in the process in an attempt to get the Northern Territory Government to consult properly with the land councils - as is required by the Native Title Act.

"The Territory government rammed the legislation through the NT Parliament last August without any consultation and did not talk to the Land Councils until May this year when Senator Harradine intervened," Mr Tilmouth said.

As a result of Senator Harradine's intervention, the Government had been required to commence consultations with Land Councils and make amendments to its legislation.

Mr Tilmouth said further amendments were necessary as there were still problems with the content of the Territory legislation.

Mr Tilmouth also pointed out that the Government's self-imposed moratorium on mining and exploration applications over the past two-and-a-half years had left over 900 applications unresolved.

Mr Tilmouth questioned the long-term security of the alternative right-to-negotiate schemes for Aboriginal people.

"The moratorium on mining and exploration applications was unnecessary and led to a massive build up of applications - which the Government is now seeking to turn to its own political advantage by blaming native title for holding up development in the Northern Territory," Mr Tilmouth pointed out.

The introduction of the NT's proposed new scheme is a result of the Federal government's amendments to the Native Title Act last year to allow states and territories to make some of their own native title legislation.

The Northern Territory Government has been the first to present its proposals to the Federal Parliament. ●

## Urapunga claim is strong

The evidence of the Aboriginal claimants concerning their native title rights and interests over the gazetted township of Urapunga was heard before Justice O'Laughlin of the Federal Court between 12 and 16 July.

The Urapunga township, next to Roper Bar in the Ngukurr region, was gazetted as a township in 1887 but never developed.

The hearing took place at Buddawarka Outstation and at the claim area, and follows the lodgement of the Ngalakan peoples native title claim in September 1994.

The claimants demonstrated their continuing association with the area, including cultural and economic uses of the land.

The next stage of the claim is the hearing of expert evidence in Darwin later this year.

NLC legal advice suggests the claimants have very strong grounds for a successful outcome to their native title claim. ●



Roy Golokorndu, native title claimant at his Buddawarka Outstation where Aboriginal evidence was heard



Nellie Camfoo from Bulman at the women's meeting

## Top End Women Speak Up

The NLC Women's Committee hosted a weekend-long workshop for women representatives on law, land and culture issues at Yirrkala in northeast Arnhem Land.

The workshop was chaired by NLC member Dhuwarrwarr Marika, assisted by her sister Banduk Marika and other family members.

Women travelled from Ngukurr, Numbulwar, Port Keats, Daly River, Katherine, Bulman and Victoria River to attend the meeting.

The focus of much of the discussion was on the destructive Reeves Report on Land Rights. The women prepared a short submission rejecting the Reeves recommendations which has been sent to the House of Representatives Committee Inquiry.

The women also discussed the current Review of Aboriginal Education being

undertaken by former Labor Senator Bob Collins, and drafted a strong letter to Mr Collins calling for greater community involvement in education and the reinstatement of the bilingual program.

Other issues under discussion included community problems with alcohol and kava; recognition of traditional ownership in local government structures; and women's involvement in decision-making groups such as land councils, ATSIC and community organisations. ●

## Crabbing Agreements at Blue Mud Bay



Crab operator Boon Thong and traditional owner Djambawa Marawili

**After years of concern over illegal fishing and crabbing operations in the Blue Mud Bay area, four crabbing licence agreements covering specific bays have recently been signed.**

The agreements allow crabbers to harvest mud-crabs in specified areas and have been signed after lengthy and fruitful discussions between crabbing operators and the traditional owners.

The Blue Mud Bay area covers hundreds of square kilometres of coastline, sea, and off-shore islands, including particularly important sacred sites and stories for many Aboriginal peoples in Arnhem Land.

The job of patrolling this area is hampered by lack of resources.

Traditional owners have no motor vehicle and no boat to patrol the vast area and have resorted to borrowing, when available, the boat of one of the crabbing operators, Boon Thong, with whom the community has developed a friendship and understanding beyond the commercial nature of their agreement.

Traditional owner Djambawa Marawili welcomed the agreements as one way to control and manage the vast area of sea country for which he and his community have responsibility. "It is about time Yolngu and Balanda people started working together. We should work together, understand together and respect each other," he said. ●



## Pearling agreement gets green light

**Aboriginal traditional owners of sea country north of Gove in northeast Arnhem Land and two commercial companies, Arafura Pearls Pty Ltd and Toombridge Pty Ltd, have reached a 20-year agreement for a pearling venture.**

The agreement covers an area stretching over 1785 hectares and is the latest in a string of marine agreements in the Top End between traditional owners of sea country and commercial enterprises.

The agreement covers leases at Cape Wilberforce in Elizabeth Bay and an area known as the English Companys Islands and the Bromby Islands in northeast Arnhem Land. The companies also have land leases for a hatchery and other work areas.

The pearling operation will involve long

lines being placed beneath the surface of the water and anchored to the seabed, at a depth of about five metres, allowing boats to pass over the top. There is potential for seeding at least 120,000 pearl oysters a year.

The traditional owners involved include the Warramiri, Djambarrpuynu (pronounced Djambarrpoyngo), Galpu and Barrarrparrarr clans. Terry Yumbulul, representing the traditional owners, was at the announcement made by NLC chief executive Norman Fry and Principal of Arafura Pearls, Dr Bob Rose.

Mr Fry said the agreement illustrated how business ventures could benefit all parties - providing commercial interests with secure access to areas of water, while giving traditional owners protection of their sacred sites and economic opportunities.

"The Northern Land Council has worked for many years to have Aboriginal rights to the sea recognised and protected," Mr Fry said.

"Announcements such as this one shows what can happen when all parties negotiate in good faith."

Mr Fry said that the traditional owners welcomed the venture as it was environmentally sensitive and also offered the potential for employment and business opportunities for local people.

Dr Rose welcomed the agreement, explaining that up to 20 people could be employed on the project. "Pearl projects have a long lead time before they employ these numbers," he said. "But we have every confidence that, over the next few years, employment opportunities will be created and we welcome the participation of members of the local Aboriginal communities."

Pictured above: Terry Yumbulul and Dr Bob Rose shake hands. ●

## Marine workshop highlights cooperation

**The Northern Land Council held a marine protection workshop in Darwin in June which brought together traditional owners of sea country and representatives from the Police, Fisheries Department, Parks and Wildlife Commission and recreational fishers.**

Aboriginal people own more than 80 percent of the NT coastline under the Land Rights Act and have native title interests over sea country with which they have a strong spiritual and cultural connection.

Indigenous people in coastal areas not only rely on the sea for their sustenance, but have sacred sites and dreaming tracks in and under the sea, just like

they do on land.

The range of agreements now signed between traditional owners and commercial interests include a ten year pearling lease with Barrier Pearls at Croker Island, a 40 year agreement with Paspaley Pearls at Coburg Peninsula, a 20-year agreement with Toombridge/Arafura Pearls in northeast Arnhem Land (see story), trepang harvesting at Melville Bay and Croker Island and mud crabbing at Blue Mud Bay (see story).

An agreement has been reached between traditional owners in the Borrooloola region and the fishing industry to minimise accidental capture of dugong in fishing nets, and agreements with commercial fishing tour operators have been reached at Maningrida,

Coburg Peninsula, Croker Island, Gove, Port Keats and the Goomider and Glyde Rivers.

Recreational anglers are enjoying unprecedented access to water in and around Aboriginal land following agreements at Browns Creek, the Market Gardens on Daly River and Sandy Creek in north-west Arnhem, with discussions under way at Elsey Station and Gurig national park

Under this growing list of agreements, commercial interests gain secure access to areas of water, anglers gain access to waters, and Aboriginal landowners can protect their sacred sites and develop economic opportunities and employment for their communities. ●

# Beazley takes a Maak



Above left to right: Galarrwuy Yunipingu, Marcia Langton and Kim Beazley with the Maak

## Interpreter services under spotlight

Interpreter Christine Cumaiyi, from Port Keats, is one of many people looking forward to reading the report from the Northern Territory's anti-discrimination commissioner Dawn Lawrie into the provision of interpreter services in Aboriginal languages.

"The interest has been overwhelming, and it is now up to me to produce a straight forward report addressing all the issues," Ms Lawrie said.

It is Ms Lawrie's final report. Her appointment as the Territory's anti-discrimination Commissioner terminated at the end of July.

Ms Cumaiyi, who works as an interpreter in the legal and medical fields, is particularly interested in services for people with disabilities.

Earlier this year, she travelled to Bangladesh, Nepal, England and Canada as part of a Churchill Scholarship to visit establishments involved in providing services to people with disabilities.

Alice Springs lawyer Russell Goldflam, a strong advocate for the service, stressed that proper on-going training and support was essential for interpreters working in courts and hospitals.

"It is very demanding work, particularly in the courtroom and the most difficult thing is the transition from gaining a certificate in interpreting to working with other professionals on the job," he said.

"Without adequate on-going training and support, we would be setting up people to fail."

Meanwhile, Christine is preparing a report of her six-week overseas trip to present at a conference in Alice Springs in September.

While Christine found the Blackfoot people of Canada shared similarities in culture and issues with Australian Aboriginal people,



Above: Interpreter Christine Cumaiyi at Port Keats

she was overwhelmed by the hunger and poverty in places she visited in Bangladesh and Nepal. "If the opportunities were there, I think my people might like to help out with people with disabilities, as volunteers or training to become therapists," Christine said. "I definitely like this kind of work and I want to keep doing it until I get old." ●

A carved wooden *Maak* from Yolngu leaders in northeast Arnhem Land is on its way to research and tertiary institutions around Australia - promoting a new concept of learning linking traditional and contemporary knowledge systems.

The carved wooden message stick symbolises a five-part declaration that:

- introduces the ancient foundation of Yolngu knowledge systems
- shares the vision of the Garma, a ceremony which celebrates the pursuit of knowledge
- announces the establishment of the Garma Cultural Studies Institute at Gulkula near Nhulunbuy
- invites intellectual leaders to take part in a Garma ceremony on the site of the proposed institute in November
- seeks a commitment to accept the invitation.

The bush university is the way of the future, where Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people can learn from each other in an environment encompassing areas such as medicines and healing, arts, science, the environment and philosophy, according to Northern Land Council chairman Mr Galarrwuy Yunipingu.

"It is time to come together, to share our knowledge and use both systems for the benefit of all Australians," he said.

The *Maak* was presented to Opposition Leader Kim Beazley during the first annual Garma Festival of Traditional Culture at Gulkula in July.

He then handed the *Maak* to Professor Marcia Langton of the Northern Territory University, who has been charged with the responsibility of carrying the *Maak* to the leaders of universities and research institutions around the country.

"This is a challenge, not just for me, but for all those people to whom the message is sent," Professor Langton said.

"This is a unique opportunity for indigenous and non-indigenous scholars and researchers to develop new pathways through shared experiences in learning, teaching and knowledge exchange.

Mr Yunipingu said that land management was a perfect example to illustrate the benefits of shared knowledge.

"Caring for country is what we have done for tens of thousands of years and we intend to keep doing that," he said.

"The Land Councils have been helping Aboriginal people acquire back their land for the past 20 years or so, so they can once again look after their country." ●

photo: David Hancock/SkyScans



# Watch where you put that swag

The Yuendumu community is honouring the memory of a man who became lost and perished from attacks by ants and dingoes near the community more than 50 years ago.

Tiger Tjapaljarri and Jack Tjakamarra, who were both born at Mt Doreen, remember vividly the day they were sent to track the man.

Tiger Tjapaljarri tells the story which began at Mt Doreen some time before the Second World War.

"What happened, a young fella worked for Bill Braitling at Mt Doreen, long time. People were working in the wolfram mining out there.

"There was wolfram first before it became a pastoral lease. I worked there long time, I got whiskers out there.

"Braitling told us to find this white man he had sacked. That man had been working on wolfram.

He got sacked so Braitling told him to take his swag and maybe a billy can or something. He walked from Mt Doreen towards Coniston, then halfway he got lost. Long way.

"So Braitling ringing up the police, that policeman Kennedy, at Barrow Creek. Police got to come and pick him up on the road, come from Barrow Creek in the police car. Right? So I meet him.

## Dingoes

"So we went. We didn't track him down, we just went bush and then we found the tracks. The dingoes, a big mob, were crying everywhere! All around! That's the way we knew.

"In the morning we got up and got water out of a big rockhole there. And we've bin thinking about, me and old Jack, we've bin talking about, 'hey, we might have found something, someone. Is there a road around here? Yes over there. We'll go this way!' And we go down the road.

"Then we said, 'you go this way

and I'll go this way'. And then I said, 'Jack! Look this way! Right there along a big bloodwood. Something is dead! White one, it was a white head. Along the road there and the big rockhole we find him.'

Tiger said that ants had attacked and partially paralysed the man and, as he tried to climb a nearby tree to escape them, was attacked by a pack of dingoes.

The man had been dead some days and his bones had been scattered nearby.

## Cheeky ants

"Something had made a big hole and there was those big orange ants - cheeky one. Big mob of ants. And those cheeky ants got him while he was sleeping.

And this one had tried to get up in that tree and the dogs came and pulled him down.

"That man had been jumping this way and that way and run and the dogs pulled him all the way over there. We tracked him around and they had pulled him around every way. They grabbed him by the trousers.

"We bin come down at the rockhole and the policeman had just come. So we took him in the police car and we buried that man. Just bone.

"We put him in the bag and we took him and we bin buried him. One policeman come down here and the government here too.

"From there we got to go back to Mt Doreen. Right back. We bin get there after two nights.

"Bill Braitling bin asking me, 'did you bin find him?' 'Yeah, we got him,' we said."

The grave of the lost man, a few kilometres from Yuendumu, was recently marked with a painted white cross and the men say they would like to put a fence around the site. ●



Above top, left to right: Neville Poulson, CLC Yuendumu regional office Coordinator; Teddy Egan; Jack Tjakamarra and Tiger Tjapaljarri look at the tree the man tried to climb.

Bottom: Tiger Tjapaljarri and Jack Tjakamarra with the painted cross they have recently put on the grave.



Margaret Napanangka speaking at the Parliamentary committee inquiring into the Reeves Review of the Land Rights Act. See stories overleaf.

## Liberals Line Up Against Reeves

Former Liberal Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser, and four former Liberal Ministers for Aboriginal Affairs, publicly attacked the Reeves Review of the Land Rights Act in an open letter to the *Northern Territory News* on 17 July 1999. (see right)

Northern Territory Chief Minister Denis Burke has responded to the letter by launching a personal attack on Mr Fraser, saying he should stay out of Territory politics.

Malcolm Fraser was Prime Minister at the time the Land Rights Act was passed by the Australian Federal Parliament and is now one of Australia's leading champions of human rights, a role for which he has received international recognition.

In addition, the Land Rights Act is Federal, not Northern Territory, legislation.

NLC Chairman Galarrwuy Yunupingu commented: "It is unfortunate that the local Country Liberal Party doesn't take notice of these elders of conservative politics."

"However we are hopeful that the current Federal Liberal party will keep faith with us and protect the historical legislation, which they passed in 1976, from Reeves' destructive amendments."

The criticism of the Reeves Review by the leading former Liberals is in line with the views of the majority of submissions to the House of Representatives Inquiry in describing the Reeves model as "turning land rights on its head."

Ian Viner, the Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs at the time of the passage of the Land Rights Act has also provided a detailed submission to the House of Representatives Inquiry criticising the Reeves report.

"Reeves proposals would mean a major shift of power and control over Aboriginal land to the Northern Territory Government," Mr Viner said. "They would take away the right of traditional owners to consent to or veto proposals over how their traditional lands are used."

"The land councils, ATSIC and Aboriginal communities have been put in the position of having to defend an Aboriginal land tenure system which has been in operation for nearly 25 years. It has become a benchmark of achievement, recognised nationally and internationally," Mr Viner told the House of Representatives Committee. ●

Northern Territory News, Saturday, July 17, 1999

### Leave Land Rights Act: it works

We were in the Parliament that introduced and passed the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976.

We all voted for the passage of the Act.

The Act has worked well and has brought benefits to the Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory.

Changes proposed by the recommendations of Reeves, QC, would centralise control of Aboriginal lands in an authority appointed and controlled by the Northern Territory and Commonwealth Governments and take away title now vested in land trusts for the traditional owners.

This is turning Aboriginal land rights on its head despite the rationale of the Act in returning Aboriginal lands to the traditional owners.

We believe that the Act should not be amended in ways which ignore traditional property rights of established traditional owners or which remove legal protections which allow those rights to be enjoyed.

Malcolm Fraser  
Prime Minister 1975-83  
Ian Viner  
Minister for Aboriginal  
Affairs 1975-78  
Fred Chaney  
Minister for Aboriginal  
Affairs 1978-80  
Peter Baume  
Minister for Aboriginal  
Affairs 1980-82  
Ian Wilson  
Minister for Aboriginal  
Affairs 1982-83

## Woodward warns against "Long Leap in the Dark"

The man who wrote the original Land Rights reports, Sir Edward Woodward, has joined the ranks of critics of the Reeves Review.

Sir Edward Woodward, now Chancellor of the University of Melbourne, was commissioned by the Whitlam Labor Government to report on mechanisms for recognising land rights in 1973.

He travelled widely throughout the NT in fulfilling his commission and consulted with Aboriginal people, eminent anthropologists and lawyers.

His two reports, published in 1973 and 1974, formed the basis for the 1976 Act.

Woodward said he could not support Reeves' recommendations about traditional ownership.

He said the emphasis he placed on the local descent group was right at the time and was still right.

In relation to abolishing the Central and Northern Land Councils, Woodward said, "I do not believe Mr Reeves has made out a sufficient case for such a radical step."

"To do as he suggests would constitute a long leap in the dark, which could have very serious consequences." ●

# Making Land Rights Stronger

The Northern Land Council says the only changes to the Land Rights Act should be to make it stronger.

NLC Chairman Galarrwuy Yunupingu told the Parliamentary Committee inquiring into the recommendations of the Reeves Review of the Land Rights Act, that the NLC had developed an alternative model to the Reeves suggestions.

The NLC model is one that supports Aboriginal aspirations for economic development while protecting and respecting the rights of traditional Aboriginal owners to control their country.

Mr Yunupingu told the Committee that it was clear that the Reeves Report has been totally discredited by the vast number of expert submissions received by the Committee.

Senior anthropologists, lawyers, researchers and economists have all found substantial problems with Reeves' proposals for major change to the Act.

Aboriginal people at hearings around the Northern Territory in recent months have clearly told the Committee they do not support the Reeves model.

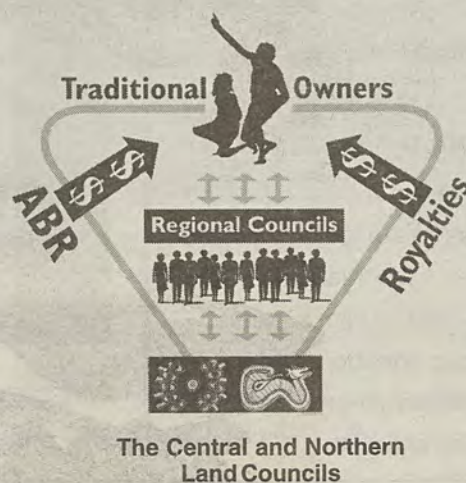
"The onus is now on the House of Representatives Committee to do what Reeves failed to do - produce a model for change which takes Aboriginal land rights into the next century," said Mr Yunupingu.

The NLC presented its final submission to the Committee in June.

The House of Representatives Committee is due to report to the Federal Parliament in the week of 23 August. ●

This is what you have NOW.  
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This is Reeves' idea.  
NTAC is APPOINTED by Government





## Around the Territory the Reeves Review gets the thumbs down...

Aboriginal people in communities throughout the Northern Territory have spent the last year talking about the importance of land rights.

Clockwise from above: Norma Joshua at a meeting in Ngukurr; ladies from Yuendumu and Papunya came out in force to tell the parliamentary committee inquiring into the Reeves Report at Yuendumu how strongly they felt about any changes to their land rights; Felix Buduck at a meeting at Port Keats, Dora Dawson at the Tennant Creek committee hearing; men at Yuendumu burn the Reeves Report.



## Co-existence the purpose of Katherine claim

Aboriginal people from Katherine have lodged a native title claim to seek recognition and protection of their native title interests in and around the town.

"This claim is not about claiming backyards or affecting the lifestyles of the people of Katherine," said NLC Chairman Galarrwuy Yunupingu. "It's more of a formal necessity to ensure that as the town of Katherine grows, the rights and interests of Aboriginal people are protected and respected."

"Everybody who lives in Katherine is aware of the ongoing traditional connection that Aboriginal people have with the area," he said.

"In order to ensure ongoing protection of native title interests, the new Native Title Act requires that we formally lodge these claims so that Aboriginal people can be consulted over developments which might affect their interests."

Responding to news of the claim, NT Chief Minister Denis Burke said that land claims were a fact of life in the Territory and should not automatically be regarded as a threat.

"This is certainly not an anti-development claim," Mr Yunupingu said. "Many Aboriginal people in Katherine are keen to see accelerated economic developments in the town. However we are all concerned that our culture and heritage are recognised and protected at the same time."

"We are all aware of the increasing pressure for land in Katherine, and the claim is lodged now so that future rezoning, release of Crown land and development is done following proper consultation to protect our interests."

"The claim is also an opportunity for Government and traditional owners to work together on the ongoing problems of housing and homelessness in Katherine. Agreement on these issues will benefit all people in Katherine," said Mr Yunupingu.

The claim was lodged by the Northern Land Council with the Federal Court in Darwin on behalf of the Dagoman, Jawoyn and Wardaman Aboriginal peoples. Under the amended Native Title Act, the lodgement of the claim means that the native title holders will be consulted over any future acts on land and waters covered by the application. ●

## Urrpantyenye land claim settled

The Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Senator Herron will hand over title to the Urrpantyenye area to the Yewerre Aboriginal Land Trust in August.

The Urrpantyenye (Repeat) land claim followed the North-West Simpson Desert land claim, and was settled by agreement between the traditional owners, neighbouring pastoralists and the Northern Territory Government.

Had amendments to the Land Rights Act presently before the Commonwealth Parliament been in effect at the time, the repeat land claim could not have been made. ●

## Date Set for Republic Vote

The referendum on whether Australia should become a republic is to be held on Saturday 6 November 1999.

All Australians who are registered to vote will be obliged to go to the polls to decide whether we should have an Australian chosen by the parliament as our head of state or whether we should stick with the hereditary monarchy.

It is still not clear whether there will also be a vote on a change to the preamble of the Constitution.

The Prime Minister John Howard has proposed a preamble, and other politicians have put up alternatives, but so far no legislation to include a vote on the preamble has been passed.

### Sticking point

One of the key sticking points in the preamble debate has been the wording of recognition of Aboriginal people and their rights.

The Prime Minister is loath to use even the weak word "custodianship" to describe the relationship of Aboriginal people to their land.

Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory have made their position on this issue clear at the Batchelor and Kalkaringi conventions and at the recent committee meeting in Alice Springs.

The indigenous conventions made it clear that the wording of the preamble was window-dressing, and Aboriginal people wanted to see substantive change to the body of the Constitution to recognise and protect pre-existing and continuing rights and interests. ●

## Fischer apology a cop out

Tim Fischer's belated apology to indigenous Australians has received a lukewarm reception from Northern Land Council chairman Mr Galarrwuy Yunupingu.

"It's a bit of a cop-out," Mr Yunupingu said, referring to the timing of the apology. Mr Fischer's apology came as he resigned as deputy Prime Minister to take a seat on the backbench.

"He was in government (as deputy), so why didn't he take the opportunity to say it then?" Mr Yunupingu said.

Mr Yunupingu also criticised Mr Fischer for stopping short of an official apology, pointing out that, while anyone could personally apologise, it was the Commonwealth government which had the responsibility.

This view was echoed by a spokesperson

for the chairman of ATSIC, Mr Gatjil Djerrkura, who said that indigenous people were looking for an official apology from the Government over what happened to stolen children.

In his final major television interview before his resignation as deputy Prime Minister, Mr Fischer, apologised personally for "all that has happened over the years" to indigenous Australia.

"The Government has steadfastly refused to offer that official apology... that is what is outstanding," the ATSIC spokesperson said.

During the interview, Mr Fischer also repeated his apology for labelling the Land Councils as "blood-sucking bureaucracies", a comment he had made in the lead-up to last year's federal election. ●

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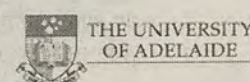
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# Don't cut off our tongues!

Australian actor Jack Thompson has joined the growing number of people throughout Australia who are campaigning against the NT Government's plans to scrap bilingual education.

He was one of scores of people at a workshop during the Garma Cultural Festival in northeast Arnhem Land in July who heard that remote communities were not asked what they thought of the programs before the decision was made to end them.

Bilingual education is basically learning and teaching in and through two languages. The general approach is that students are first taught literacy (reading and writing) in their first language, combined with a strong oral language foundation in English in the early years of schooling.

In many Aboriginal communities, children come to school with a strong oral language background in their first language and English is like a foreign language as not everyone speaks it and daily life is conducted in the local Aboriginal language.

During 1998, about 47 percent of all Aboriginal students in remote Aboriginal community schools were enrolled in schools with bilingual education programs.

Gurrwun Yunupingu, a teacher at Yirrkala CEC School, told the audience that she was in tears when she found out the program was being phased out.

"It is very important to us. We don't want to phase it out," she said.

**"If they're going to stop bilingual studies, they might as well choke the children."**

**Jack Thompson**

Ms Yunupingu said her own personal education journey began in 1974, the first year of the bilingual programs, and she quickly decided she wanted to be a teacher.

A strong supporter of the programs, she pointed out many of the benefits to the students of the "both ways" educational system.

"We also take them out to the bush - because we know there is a classroom out there too," she said.

Principal of Papunya School in Central Australia, Ms Diane deVere said many teachers and parents were "shattered" to hear about the end of the program, but it



Gurrwun Yunupingu (right) and Merrkiyawuy Ganambarr (left), both teachers at Yirrkala CEC, with Mandawuy Yunupingu and a framed cover of the first edition of the Australian Educator journal produced by the Australian Education Union.

was perhaps not such a shock as it was for the Top End, as many programs had already faced severe cutbacks.

"It is a known fact that we learn best in our first language and that the acquisition of a second language has many beneficial outcomes for learners," she said.

A paper produced by the Anangu Tjuta Nintirikupayi Aboriginal Corporation in the Papunya Community states that the suggestion that Aboriginal students should be instructed in English only "generates a killing of the spirit in our students and leads to an education which is more about forgetting: forgetting your culture, your identity and values."

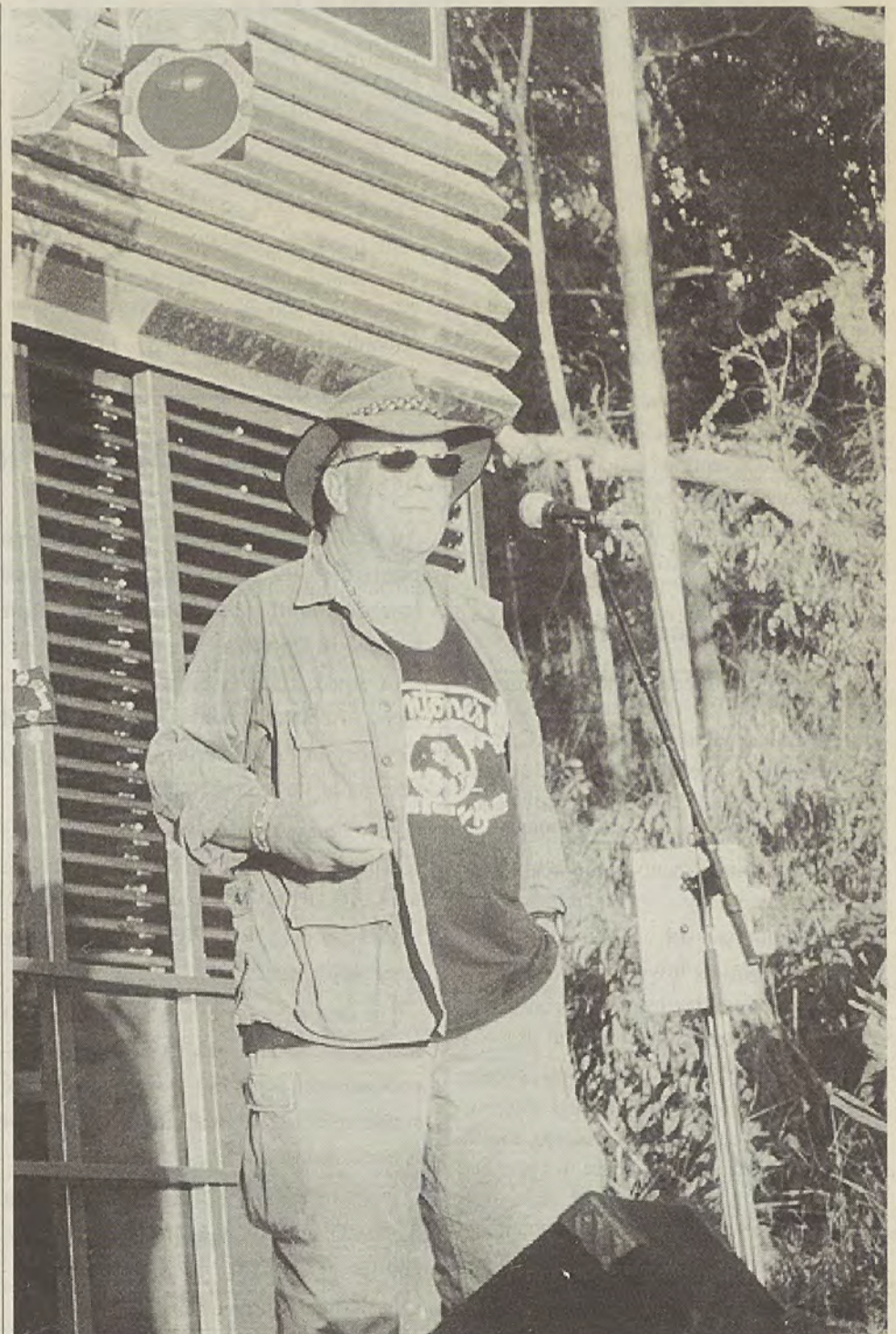
Mandawuy Yunupingu, former principal of the school at Yirrkala, another strong advocate of "both ways" education explained that, while he had a conventional western education "including reciting the Lords Prayer and saluting the flag", something different was happening at home.

"To have a pride in my culture was something I could learn at home. I learned to sing it and dance it," he said.

"I wanted to go teaching and challenge white education. I knew there was a better way."

Many workshop participants asked how they could help in the campaign to save the bilingual education programs and were encouraged to write to their local politicians to indicate their concerns.

Actor Jack Thompson stated that he considered the scrapping of bilingual programs a crime and commented: "If they're going to stop bilingual studies, they might as well choke the children." ●



Jack Thompson on stage at the opening of the Yirrnga Music Development Centre near Yirrkala.

## No Statehood without consensus

The Northern Territory Government appears confused over the next steps in its revived Statehood campaign.

Despite Chief Minister Denis Burke's Territory Day speech putting Statehood back on the agenda, the Government is yet to respond to the report by the Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs on statehood which was tabled in April this year.

The Committee report called for Parliament to reach an agreement with Aboriginal people in the NT that secures their full involvement in the future development of the Territory.

The Northern Land Council has called on both political parties to take a bipartisan approach to this important issue, and for Parliament to endorse the recommendations of the Committee report.

"We want to have a "full, active and



NLC chief executive Norman Fry

equal participation in the Northern Territory's future, as the report states," said NLC chief executive Norman Fry.

"This was the central plank of both the Kalkaringi and Batchelor indigenous constitutional conventions held last year, and was endorsed again by the recent meeting of the Committee of the Indigenous Constitutional Convention, held in Alice Springs in April."

### Call for commitment

The April meeting in Alice Springs of representatives from the Top End and central Australia, including ATSIC, NLC, CLC, the Combined Aboriginal Nations of Central Australia, and other community representatives called for the NT Government to make a commitment to the negotiation of a framework agreement including:

- protecting the Aboriginal Land Rights Act in its current form, and no change without the informed consent of Aboriginal people;
- a guarantee that no major reforms affecting Aboriginal people and their inherent rights (e.g. local government, health, education and housing) are to proceed without recognition of Aboriginal law, recognition of traditional land ownership, or informed consent of Aboriginal people.

"The framework agreement must precede Statehood," Mr Fry said. We are not interested in talking about Statehood again until we get some advancement in this area." ●

# Ironbar Tuckey does a backflip

**Federal Conservation Minister Wilson Tuckey gave mixed messages about the value of Aboriginal control of land issues during a recent visit to Alice Springs.**

Moments after he declared his support for the Reeves Review of the Land Rights Act and the breaking up of the Central and Northern Land Councils on ABC Radio, Mr Tuckey declared his support for the innovative inclusive planning techniques used by the Central Land Council in land management.

And then he commented that control of Uluru and Kakadu National Parks should be handed over to the NT Government.

Mr Tuckey advocated that the Territory should try again for statehood, and said, if it had succeeded last time, the NT Government would automatically have taken over management of the Rock and Kakadu.



CLC director Tracker Tilmouth explaining land management techniques to Mr Tuckey

However, he was openly impressed when he visited the Central Land Council with the work undertaken by the Land Assessment Unit.

"It's good stuff. It really is and it brings an entirely different perspective to some of the things we have been talking about," he said.

"I thought I was coming here to see a tree planting project or something of that nature and in every case I have been presented with very sophisticated planning activities which I think are very creditable."

Mr Tuckey said he was impressed by the CLC's land usage databases and the use of pictorial techniques to help people understand land use planning.

"A bottoms-up approach to a lot of these things is smarter than a top down one where Canberra sends you a heap of forms and says fill them in and if you get it right we'll send you some money.

"This suggestion lets us come up with a different proposal for an application which has been devised locally and is what people can handle," Mr Tuckey said.

"I've got a data bank called my brain and I store all this information over time and you'd be surprised how often in discussions that we have, regularly looking at how best to administer these programs, I say hang on a minute don't tell me that. 'Remember what I saw at X place', and so the great benefit of these visits is for me to pick up a cross section of these views of what people think." ●

## Canada's Inuit gain self government

**Australia's indigenous people have been closely following the process towards self government for Inuit people in Canada.**

In April, Canada granted self-government to Nunavut, a new Inuit-dominated Territory in its far north which covers 20 percent of the country's land mass.

As Nunavut's 16,000 Inuit residents comprise 85 percent of the population, the new territory is effectively an Inuit homeland for a people that trace their ancestry back 4000 years.

The first Premier is a 34 year old Inuit man, Paul Okalik, who has visited Australia several times and is familiar with the situation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Two aspects of the Nunavut example that Australia's indigenous communities are familiar with involve native title and responsibility for social problems.

The Inuit government will now be responsible for the terrible social problems that their people suffer, and it is recog-

nised that this could be a way for outside critics to label the new government as a "failure", even though they will be dealing with the problems resulting from colonisation.

The process towards self-government for Nunavut has been going on for more than 20 years.

A major milestone was the settlement of the Nunavut Land Claim in 1992, the largest native land claim settlement in Canadian history, and one of the most innovative of the "modern day treaties" concluded in Canada.

The settlement included an agreement to forego any other native-title style claims in the future, so the Inuit can not claim any more land than they have currently got.

From April 1 1999, the Government of Nunavut is gradually assuming responsibilities now exercised by the Government of the Northwest Territories, with the transfer of administration for programs in areas such as culture, public housing and

health care, to be complete by 2009.

The self-government process is being supported by the Canadian Federal Government which will continue to supply more than 90% of the finance to run the new Territory as well as making a number of large "one-off" payments to establish the new Territory.

Nunavut is rich in copper, lead, silver, zinc, iron, and other metals, but the long winters and severe climate make extraction difficult and expensive. There are few roads, and most transportation is by snowmobile and airplane.

Much of Nunavut is uninhabited, although settlements stretch as far north as Ellesmere Island. In the past, the Inuit were a nomadic people who followed the seals that they relied on almost exclusively for their survival. Through trading with European settlers and government programs, most Inuit now live in fixed settlements along the coast of Hudson Bay and the Labrador Sea and depend on trapping and mining for their income. ●



Above left: Warai man Gabe Hazelbane received a community award in recognition of service to the community at the 1999 Naidoc Ball in Darwin. Above right: Hilda Muir (left) and Barbara Cummings (centre) who received community awards in recognition of service to the community, pictured with Veronica McLintock at the 1999 Naidoc Ball.

## Local government reform threatens to reduce Aboriginal control

Late last year the Northern Territory Government proposed wide-ranging reforms to Local Government in the NT. Because these reforms would affect the operation of Aboriginal local government councils, the Northern Land Council is making sure traditional Aboriginal land owners are involved in the reform process.

The current review of local government in the NT is a chance for Aboriginal local governing bodies, traditional owners and government agencies to correct many of the problems that have come up in this area over recent years.

The NLC has continually told the NT Government that Aboriginal people must be involved in this review process and that the existing rights of traditional Aboriginal owners must be recognised and protected in any changes to local government.

On a positive note, the NT Government has agreed with the NLC that formal Land Use Agreements between local government councils and traditional Aboriginal owners are a positive way of resolving issues at the local level.

The NLC considers that formal Land Use Agreements between local government councils and traditional Aboriginal owners are the best way of protecting the rights of traditional Aboriginal owners while providing the council and the community with the certainty required for councils to do their work.

The NLC looks forward to working closely with NT government Ministers and departments to ensure that these Land Use Agreements are developed and implemented throughout the NLC area.

However, a number of the proposals for local government reform put forward so

far have raised concerns.

The NLC is worried that the proposed reforms may reduce the control that traditional Aboriginal owners have over their land and that people who are not traditional owners will make decisions over Aboriginal land. It is also concerned that the proposed "traditional decision-making processes" will not accord with how Aboriginal landowners really make decisions.

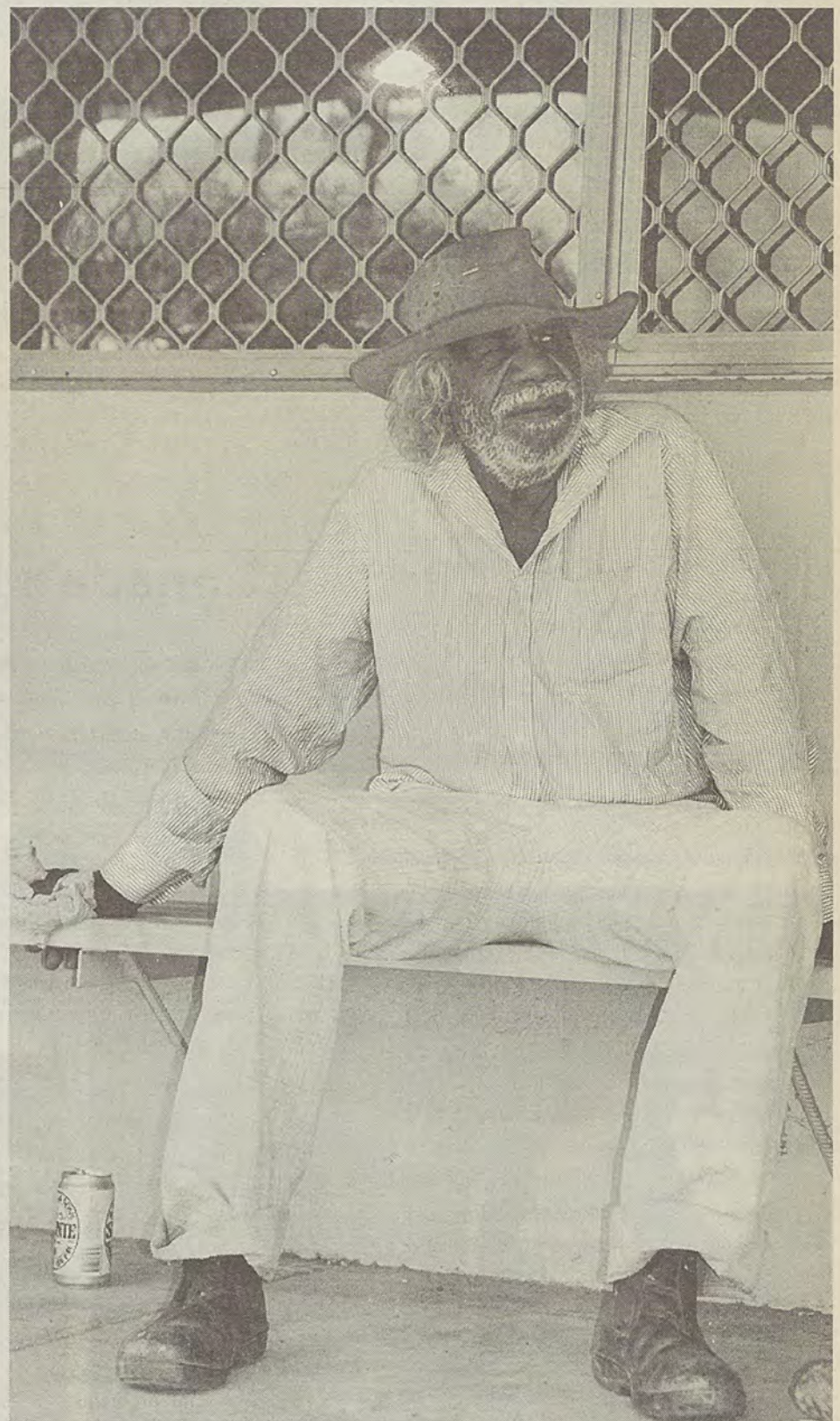
The NLC considers the NT government still does not understand or recognise how the Land Rights Act works – especially where councils operate on Aboriginal land.

A further worry is that the Government will force small councils and outstations Resource Centres (ORCs) to amalgamate with larger councils in their area – and that this will affect the operations of the smaller councils and ORCs.

In addition, the NT Department of Local Government field officers have been telling contradictory, confusing and inaccurate stories to communities and councils.

Throughout this process, NLC staff continue to offer advice and assistance to community members, Councils and staff who have questions about this issue and are available to attend local meetings about the reform process.

For information, contact Bob Gosford at the NLC Darwin office on 08 89205116. ●



Dinny Nolan at the opening of the Central Land Council's new office at Yuendumu

# Gathering of the clans

About 500 people from five clan groups in Arnhem Land gathered at Gulkula near Nhulunbuy to enact the Garma ceremony celebrating the teachings of the ancestral hero Ganbulabula.

The Garma festival events, designed to encourage the practice, preservation and maintenance of traditional dance (bunggul), song (manikay), art and ceremony on Yolngu lands in north east Arnhem Land, included daily workshops on skills such as traditional weaving, bark painting, language and collecting bush tucker.

A number of overseas students attended yidaki (didjeridoo) classes and guest tutors including Paul Kelly and INXS songwriter Andrew Farriss conducted contemporary music workshops.

The Centre for Indigenous Natural and Cultural Resource Management (CINCRM) also conducted seminars to highlight cross-cultural collaboration in a range of research

projects involving scientists, social scientists and linguists.

Evening presentations of bunggul condensed the six to 12 month funeral ceremonies into one week and culminated with the log coffin ceremony, which was painted during the week by the clan groups before being erected in the centre of the grounds at Gulkula. ●



photo: David Hancock/Sky Scans



Photos (clockwise from left): Clans present traditional dancing each evening; Nicole, Renee and Rebecca enjoy the festival; dancers begin the evening's bunggul; Djalu Gurriwiwi gets painted up; Mandawuy Yunupingu watches proceedings; young boys participate in a bunggul; George Rurrurrambu from the Wurumpi band plays at the opening of the music studio.





# Looking ahead

*Plans are afoot to ensure Yolngu culture has a secure future and a role in Australian cultural and intellectual life.*

While the camp fires were still smouldering at Gulkula, brothers Galarrwuy and Mandawuy Yunupingu were busy planning next year's Garma Festival of Traditional Culture.

"We have been thinking and hoping and talking about this for 15 years – it will not go backwards," said Galarrwuy, who is chair of the Yothu Yindi Foundation and chair of the Northern Land Council.

"It has been really good and we have achieved everything we set out to achieve.

"We brought together a number of clan groups and next year I would like to see more."

Mr Yunupingu said that a future aim was also to involve more non-Aboriginal people in activities, opening visitors to deeper aspects of Yolngu culture.

"This festival is an important stage in our history, we are calling on the intellectual, artistic and cultural leaders of the nation to sit down with us to participate in our ceremony and to learn together."

The festival is an important first step in the establishment of the Garma Cultural Studies Institute, to be built on the site by 2003. ●



# Bush university taking shape



*The opening of the new Yirrnga Music Development Centre near Yirrkala at the conclusion of the festival heralded the first stage in the establishment of the Garma Cultural Studies Institute.*

"It is my dream that the Institute will provide culturally relevant education and training programs to supplement those provided by the government," said Mandawuy Yunupingu, lead singer of the band Yothu Yindi, which launched its new CD *One Blood* at the opening

The 'bush university' will also provide an environment offering tuition in the traditional and skills of the Yolngu people to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

"I have long been aware of the need to pursue "both ways" education which recognises the importance of Aboriginal knowledge and tradition as well as Balanda (white) skills and information," said Mandawuy, one of the first Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory to receive a tertiary degree.

Long term objectives include vocational and education training programs for Yolngu youth, higher education workshops as part of formal degree courses, workshops for academics from Australia and overseas, cultural recovery programs for urban indigenous people, cultural and eco tourism courses and cross cultural education.

A highlight of the Garma festival was the message of collaboration in learning and shared respect between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people that was delivered to Opposition Leader Kim Beazley (see story page 8). ●

## Agreement to build on goodwill

Negotiations for an indigenous land use agreement at Pine Hill Station south east of Ti Tree have begun after a native title claim was lodged by the Central Land Council on behalf of Anmatyerre people in July.

The claim was lodged in response to a non-claimant application by the Pine Hill Pastoral Company, which wants to develop the area to grow grapes. This would require the pastoral lease to be changed to a Crown lease which could later be convertible to freehold.

Central Land Council director Tracker Tilmouth said the agreement would build on the existing good will between the parties and there was already a desire by all parties to include native titleholders' interests in future developments.

"We see it as an extremely positive avenue to pursue - it is consensual, rather than adversarial and builds on positive relationships. It is not a compensation claim, it is a way of achieving a consensus on what, and how, developments on land can go ahead."

The Pine Hill Pastoral Company lodged their non-claimant application last year but changes to the legislation delayed the process. ●

## Negotiation is the way to go

**The Northern Land Council has welcomed the registration of the Territory's first Indigenous Land Use Agreement under the Native Title Act, relating to the Venn Blocks in Katherine.**

"This is an example of how native title issues can be resolved through negotiation rather than through lengthy and costly legal processes," chief executive Norman Fry said.

Mr Fry said that the registration of the Agreement should send signals to the NT Government that negotiated agreements, like Indigenous Land Use Agreements, were the most workable way of getting benefits for all Territorians.

"We are seeking to have negotiated agreements as the corner-stone of the proposed NT native title legislation," Mr Fry said.

"This approach to native title gives us the opportunity to develop a truly Territorian solution to Territorian issues.

"There is some fine-tuning still to be done on the proposed legislation," Mr Fry said. ●

## Daly River actor knocks them down

**Top End actor Tessa Rose, from Daly River, has secured leading roles in two plays performed in the region in recent months.**

She has just finished appearing in Knock-Em-Down Theatre's production *Block* at Brown's Mart in Darwin, in *In Terms of Your Life* by Marian Devitt, directed by Tessa Pauling, one of the four one-act plays which make up the *Block* production.

Tessa previously played the lead role of Annie in *Luck of the Draw*, a Darwin Theatre Company play about the journey of a family dealing with love, loss and a reunion spanning four decades.

Tessa would like to see this play, which ran for two weeks in May at Browns Mart Theatre, Darwin, go on national tour.

"This story relates to people universally," Tessa said, "as we all have family, some who were fortunate to have grown up with their family then lost them, or others who never had the joy of being with their loved ones ever."

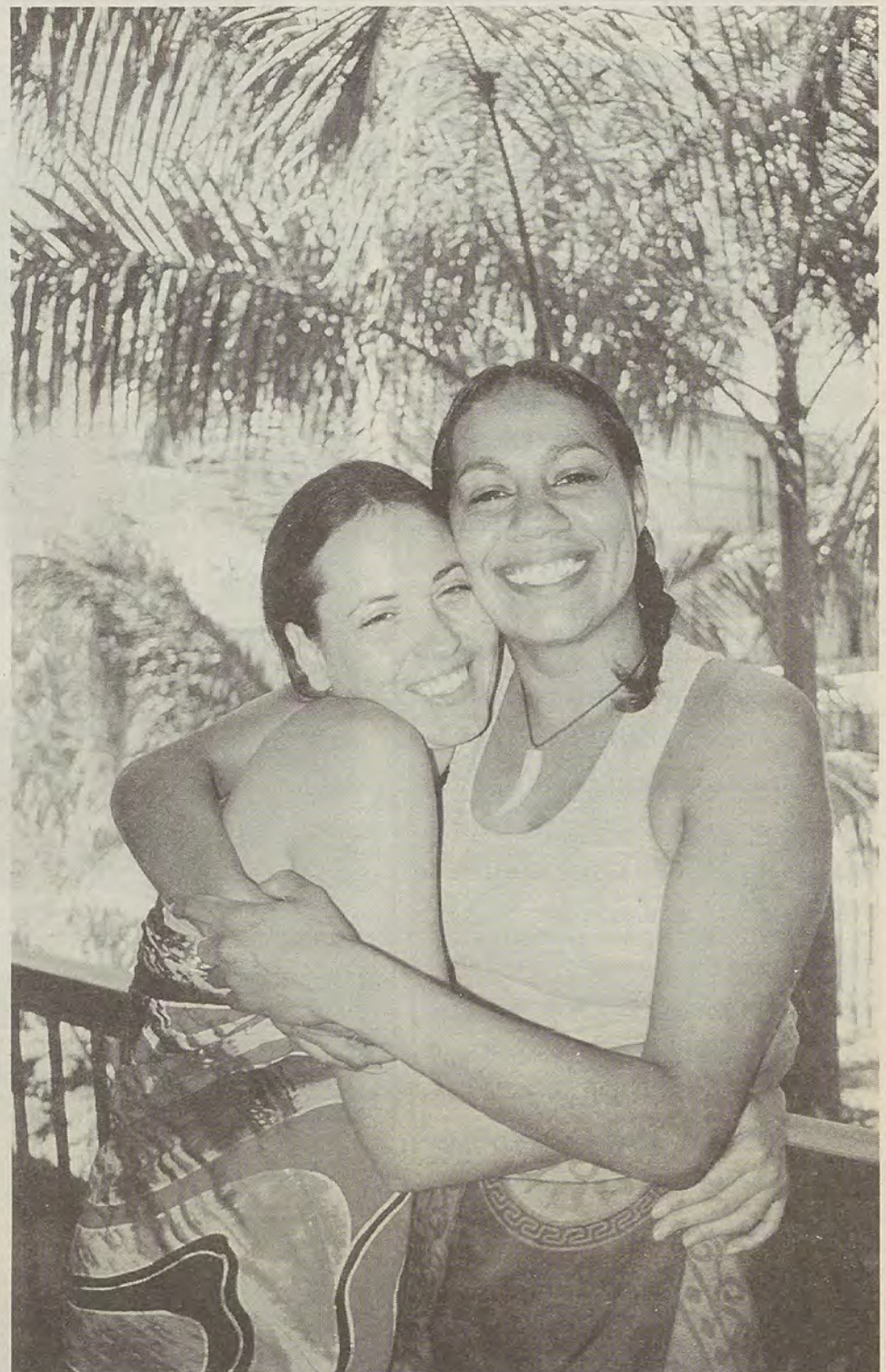
Tessa, from the Ngangiwumirri clan and whose mother Mary Joan Wilson still lives at Daly River, grew up in Perth, returning to the Top End for some time as a teenager.

"Something I wanted people to go away with from that play was an understanding of our Australian history, and to know the effects it has had on our people," she said.

"The effects are still ever present. It is not something that happened and now, in the 90s, has just gone away.

"These forced tragedies dealt to us are still embedded in our hearts and we are still struggling to stay strong.

"But it is not entirely sad. The message is one of hope."



**Above: Tessa Rose with fellow actor Suzanne Clark, who played Tessa's daughter Pearl in *Luck of the Draw***

Tessa graduated with a Diploma in Dance from NAISDA College of Dance. In 1998 she toured Australia for three months as part of Bangarra Dance Theatre's production of *Fish*.

She appeared in the short film *Two Bob*

*Mermaid*, one of six short films in the "Sand to Celluloid" collection, she has worked as a reporter on SBS TV's ICAM program and appeared as Titania/Hippolyta in STC's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1997. ●

### WHATS ON... WHATS ON... WHATS ON... WHATS ON... WHATS ON... WHATS ON...

- August 3** "Property, Permission and Permits in the Aboriginal Domain", public lecture by Nancy Williams, Adjunct Professor CIMCRM, Building 22, Room 19, Northern Territory University, Casuarina, 12noon-1pm
- August 4** "Traditional environmental Knowledge and Biodiversity." Public lecture by Professor Eugene Hunn, organised by the Centre for Indigenous Natural and Cultural Resource Management. NT Museum Theatre. 7pm
- August 10** "Dugongs and Turtles in Torres Strait: Management, Monitoring and Research." Public lecture by Donna Kwan, School of Tropical Environmental Studies and Geography, James Cook University, Building 22, Room 19, Northern Territory University, Casuarina, 12noon-1pm
- August 16-20** Central Australia Combined Aboriginal Womens Law and Culture meeting
- August 23** The report by the Parliamentary Committee into the Reeves report is due this week
- August 9- December 6** Public meetings about the draft Document for Reconciliation (Ring1800 060 268 for dates in your area)
- August 31** Last day for the Senate to either pass or disallow the new native title legislation proposed by the NT Government
- September 8** Closing date for nomination of candidates in the ATSIC elections
- September 24** Closing date to enrol to vote in the ATSIC elections
- October 9** ATSIC elections

## Gina Bennett celebrates 10 years at the CLC



Gina Bennett celebrated 10 years at the Central Land Council's Tennant Creek office recently.

Gina started as an administrative assistant in 1989 and later became a field officer.

During her years with the CLC, Gina worked on a number of land claims, including the Warrumungu land claim which was finally settled in 1996 after 20 years.

Gina also worked on the Bamboo Springs, Brumby Plains, Wakaya, Cattle Creek and Wakaya/Alyawarra Repeat land claims.

Gina is now a project officer. ●

## Catering venture is a first

Eurest Australia, caterers at the Tanami Mine, are entering a joint venture with Aboriginal Catering Service Pty Ltd.

The proceeds from the venture will be used for health welfare, education and employment.

Eurest's venture with the indigenous enterprise is the first of its kind in the mining industry.

CLC Director Mr Tracker Tilmouth said the venture would ensure that more proceeds from mining in Central Australia would go to local business.

Eurest General Manager Northern Region Mr Michael O'Brien has signed the agreement with the directors of the Aboriginal Catering Service - Des Rogers (Red Centre Produce), Alice Snape (Cuz Café) and Willy Tilmouth (Centrecorp). ●



Traditional owners inspected a new tailings dam at the Granites Gold Mine in the Tanami during a liaison meeting in May. Traditional owner Lorna Spencer Napurrula, is pictured standing in front of the Granites.



## Golden Key for Alice Springs student

Alice Springs distance education student Faye Strachan nee Trindle has been awarded a Golden Key National Honour Award for outstanding academic performance.

The Golden Key National Honour recognises the top 15 percent of students and is a world wide organisation.

Ms Strachan returned to study as a ma-

ture age student 22 years after leaving school. She is completing an arts degree majoring in Aboriginal Affairs Administration.

"Education is really important and our kids should stay at school as long as they can," Ms Strachan said. "It's hard work balancing school, home and work and its been hard learning academic ways of writing but an award like this makes it all worthwhile." ●

Left: Faye Strachan (nee Trindle) accepting her membership into the Golden Key National Honour Society at the University of South Australia.

Right: Youngmen from Tennant Creek watch the 3 on 3 basketball Challenge in Alice Springs at the beginning of NAIDOC Week.



## Bawinanga Djelk Rangers take the initiative

Contemporary fire management and using combinations of traditional and new land management techniques were key topics at a major conference in Arnhem Land for Aboriginal rangers, land managers and traditional landowners throughout the Top End.

The inaugural Bininj/Yolngu Ranger Conference took place on Rembarrnga country on the banks of the Blythe River, approximately 60kms from Maningrida.

Facilitated by the Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation, the Northern Land Council and the Faculty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (FATSIS) at the Northern Territory University, the conference was the initiative of the Bawinanga Djelk Rangers.

First discussed over a year ago during classroom discussions for the FATSIS certificate courses in resource and land management, the proposal developed momentum at the Wise Use of Wetlands Workshop in Batchelor last year where Aboriginal participants felt they needed more control over running their own conference.

The conference brought together about 60 Bininj (from west Arnhem) and Yolngu (from east Arnhem) from throughout the Top End including Yirrkala, Ramingining, Bulman, Gundjehmi, Demed (Gunbalanya), Ngukurr, Robinson River, Gurig, Kakadu and Djukbinj National Parks, and representatives from NT Parks and Wildlife and Greening Australia land care and land management programs.



Bawinanga women's CDEP group at the conference

The key guests for the conference were NLC Chairman Galarwuy Yunupingu and CINCRM Director Professor Marcia Langton.

Mr Yunupingu stressed the importance of Aboriginal rangers fulfilling their responsibility to manage land according to traditional ways, but also incorporating new ways and techniques to respond to new problems.

Professor Langton spoke of the history of fire in land management and stressed the key role rangers had to play in contemporary fire management practice.

Among the issues discussed were the impact of chemical control of weeds on water quality; the need for more comprehensive biological research, including data on flora and fauna, prior to any development; and mechanisms to prevent the spread of weeds including washing facilities for motor vehicles, a ban or controls on hay, grass seed and mulch, and adequate controls over introduced exotics like Gamba grass.

The Conference drew particular attention to the need to ensure a seasonal presence of traditional owners in depopulated

areas to re-establish traditional burning practices for the maintenance of flora and fauna habitats; and discussed the potential of commercial harvesting of pigs and buffaloes, including safari hunting and bounty systems for the control of feral animals.

The Bawinanga women's CDEP group, which provided the catering, met with women from other communities in an effort to focus on issues concerning women and land management. A further Ranger Conference is being planned for the Ngukurr region. ●

## health news ...health news ...health news ...health news ...health news ...

### Top End Health Summit

An Aboriginal health summit to talk about ways to build healthy communities will take place at Banatjal, near Katherine, from 2-6 August.

The Top End Aboriginal Health Summit will discuss health concerns from an Aboriginal community viewpoint.

It is based on the idea of the 'cycle of life' and a whole-of-life approach to the health of Aboriginal peoples.

Further information: Wurli-Wurlinjang Aboriginal Health Service, (08) 8971 1156; or Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance of the NT, (08) 8936 1800.

### Health checks for women

Indigenous women throughout the

Northern Territory are urged to take advantage of free services to check for breast and cervical cancer.

BreastScreen NT, which offers free mammograms (breast x-rays) has a particular interest in women who are over 50 years old.

The mammograms help to find breast cancers when they are very small.

The service is available in Alice Springs and Darwin, and BreastScreen NT also regularly visits Katherine, Tennant Creek and Nhulunbuy.

Women are also urged to have Pap smears every two years to check for cervical cancer.

This can be done by your doctor or at Aboriginal medical services, Family Plan-

ning NT, some community care centres, remote community health centres and Clinic 34.

For more information about Breastscreen NT, ring 132 050, and for Pap smears, ring 13 15 556.

### Listen to your heart

A new video by the Heart Foundation aims to give people in Aboriginal communities more information about the risk factors for heart disease and stroke.

It also gives information about how to reduce the risk and talks about the importance of getting help quickly for symptoms of heart attack.

The 11-minute video uses a family story, music, humour, animation and artwork to put across important messages about

health.

For further information phone: (08) 8981 1966, or email to: Marie.Connor@heartfoundation.com.au.

### Health workers conference

A major Indigenous Health Workers Conference will take place in Cairns from 16-19 August.

The conference will address many career path opportunities including working in remote communities, drug and alcohol dependencies, HIV/AIDS, mental health, men's, women's and pre-natal health, public and environmental health, disease control and diabetes.

For more information, ring (07) 4945 7122 or email: icsa@mackay.net.au

## Sea turtles under threat

The annual 'dry season' winds in the Top End are again delivering a deadly cargo to the beaches of northeast Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory.

For the fourth year in a row, sections of coastline on the western shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria are beginning to resemble a dumping ground for marine debris – and several threatened sea turtle species are becoming entangled in drift and trawl nets from the fisheries of Australia's northern neighbours.

Dhimurru Land Management has recorded 120 turtle strandings in recent years. About half of these animals were dead as a result of exposure and injuries caused by the nets. Live turtles have been tagged and released.

"It's really sad to see turtles getting caught in the nets and being washed ashore," Nanikiya Munungguritj, Chief Ranger at Dhimurru, said. "If you look closely into the eyes of the turtle you can see tears. The turtle is suffering. That makes Yolngu (Aboriginal) people feel sorry for the turtles. It is very sad. We don't like to see turtles in such pain struggling to survive."

Dhimurru's monitoring and rescue efforts have been hampered by the fact that the majority of the 50km stretch of coastline where these strandings are concentrated is not accessible by vehicle.

A helicopter has proven to be the most effective method for monitoring and reducing the mortality rate.

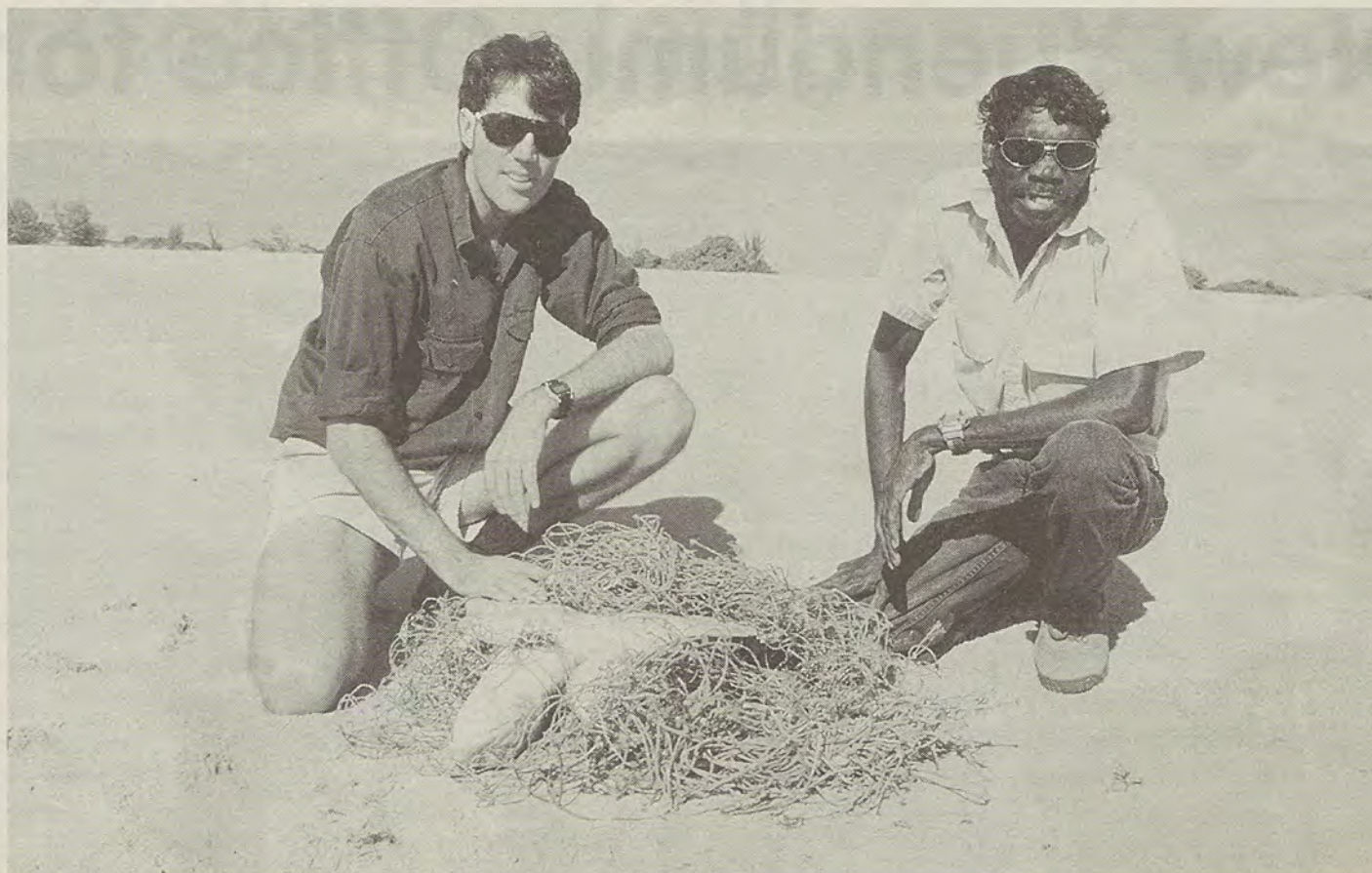
However, Dhimurru has been unable to secure any government support for this activity.

This is despite the involvement of both the Northern Territory and the Commonwealth in developing draft recovery plan strategies for threatened marine turtles which specifically endorses Dhimurru's work.

Northern Land Council Chairman Galarrwuy Yunupingu explained that the Arnhem Land coastline was Aboriginal land under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*.

Dhimurru was established to enable the traditional owners to manage and care for their country.

"This is an example of an Aboriginal organisation trying to look after the Australian coastline for the benefit of all Australians," Mr Yunupingu said. "They need help, not obstacles. The litter on the beaches and the effect of discarded nets on marine life, especially turtles, is a national and international disgrace."



Rod Kennett, Senior Research Fellow at CINCRM and Nanikiya Munungguritj, Chief Ranger at Dhimurru, with a stranded turtle.

## BRIEFS... BRIEFS...BRIEFS...BRIEFS...BRIEFS...

### Avgas conference

More than 40 communities from as far afield as Balgo, Ngukurr, Yalata and Maningrida will be represented at an Avgas Conference in Central Australia, organised by NPY Womens Council on 28-29 July at the Red Centre Resort in Alice Springs. The conference will discuss petrol sniffing and the needs of youth on communities.

### New NLC website

The Northern Land Council is developing a new website to provide information about the Northern Land Council, about Land Rights and about Aboriginal issues in general. The address is [www.nlc.org.au](http://www.nlc.org.au)

It will be useful for a range of people including students and researchers, people who want to visit Aboriginal land, people interested in doing business on Aboriginal land, and members of the public who want to know more about land rights.

The first stage is an informative website, providing historical information as well as background information on issues now affecting Aboriginal people in the Top End.

The website will be continually updated and developed to include features that introduce people to Aboriginal culture, the views and opinions of Aboriginal people and how issues such as new legislation is affecting their lifestyles and their future.

### Central Australian Women's Law and Culture meeting

August 16-20 is the CLC, NPY Womens Council and Kintore Womens Centre Combined Aboriginal Women's Law and Culture Meeting at Kintore (for indigenous women). For information, contact Barb Cox (CLC) on 8951 6211, Maggie Kavanagh (NPY) on 8950 5452 or Kerry Ganley (NLC) on 8920 5118.

### Women's Officer

Robin Knox has been appointed the women's officer in the *Caring for Country Unit* of the Northern Land Council.

The *Caring for Country Unit* is about looking after land and keeping it healthy. Issues that arise may be very specific to a small area, such as a swimming hole, or may occur over larger areas of land or swamp.

Robin's work is to help women to be involved in land management and for their voice to be heard on issues that concern them and their land. She can be contacted at the Northern Land Council office in Darwin on 8920 5189.

### School holidays on the AP lands

Between 4-8 October this year a school holiday program will be held at Umuwa.

More details contact NPY Womens Council on 8950 5452.

### NLC at Palmerston

The new NLC office for the Darwin-Daly-Wagait region is at Unit 1, 17 Georgina Crescent, Palmerston.

The postal address is Northern Land Council, Darwin Daly Wagait Regional Office, PO Box 1249, Palmerston NT 0831. Phone: 89 311 910; Fax: 89 311 875.

Senior project officer for the region is Eddie Ross.

### Land Rights at Risk?

*Land Rights at Risk?* Edited by JC Altman, F. Morphy and T. Rowse provides extensive evaluation of the report by John Reeves into the Aboriginal Land Rights Act.

The publication follows a two-day conference in Canberra, held earlier this year in recognition of a need for open and independent evaluation and debate of the Report from a wide range of disciplines.

The majority of the contributors have a long-term professional involvement in land rights issues.

It is a comprehensive and informed critique of the Reeves Report.

It is produced by the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research at the Australian National University. ●

# New Yuendumu Office for the CLC



CLC Chairman Max Stuart, Napanankas and Executive member Mr Brown cut the ribbon opening the first CLC office in Yuendumu.

The Central Land Council has opened a new regional office at Yuendumu, about 290km northwest of Alice Springs.

Around 60 people turned out for the official opening in April, marked by a special ceremony and speeches by community leaders.

The Yuendumu office is the ninth in the Central Land Council's network of regional offices. It will serve around 3000 Aboriginal people in the Tanami region, covering an area of thousands of square kilometres.

CLC Chairman Max Stuart said he was proud to see the office opened.

"I'm really happy to open this office," Mr Stuart said. "It's another step in the regionalisation process that the Central Land Council has been working on for years.

"This is a really busy and important area for the CLC and this office will mean we will be able to provide a better service to the people in this area."

Warlpiri man Neville Poulson has been appointed co-ordinator for the Yuendumu office. ●

# G-G Honours NLC Chairman

About 200 people representing families throughout northeast Arnhem Land gathered at Drimmie Heads near Nhulunbuy to witness the Governor General Sir William Deane bestow a special award to NLC Chairman Gallarwuy Yunupingu.

Sir William, who presented the plaque in recognition of Mr Yunupingu's status as an "Australian Living National Treasure" spoke of the NLC chairman's leadership and historic role in the land rights movement.

He said Mr Yunupingu was worthy of a spe-

cial plaque – an honour rarely bestowed on any individual or organisation by the Governor General.

Mr Yunupingu is one of 100 "Australian National Living Treasures" selected by the National Trust as leaders in society "considered to have a great influence over our environment because of the standards and examples they set."

Australian Living National Treasures are considered to be men and women who have a profound effect on the way we live and on the values we adopt. ●



Australia's Governor General, Sir William Deane, officially opened the new regional Northern Land Council office in Nhulunbuy in June.



# Batchelor College - Indigenous and Independent

The creation of the independent Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education is a milestone in the history of tertiary education in Australia.

The Institute, born out of the Batchelor College, is the country's first ever tertiary education institution owned and governed by indigenous Australians with the power to accredit and offer higher education courses up to doctorate level.

At the final Graduation Ceremony for Batchelor College students in April, before the changeover, council chairman Gatjil Djerrkura said the college had been working for quite some time to achieve independence.

"The future of Batchelor is built on the achievements of the past including the achievements of hundreds of students over the years, and the achievements of staff who have worked with dedication to provide approaches to education to meet the needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people," he said.

A total of 288 students graduated or received certificates at the final ceremony.

From its initial offering some 30 years ago of an assistant teacher's course, Batchelor now has 30 vocational and higher education courses from certificate level

to advanced diploma and graduate diploma in education, health and community studies.

Ms Veronica Arbon, the new director of the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, is the first indigenous director of the establishment.

During a three-day cultural festival in the Institute grounds to mark the official handover on July 1, Ms Arbon said that, in the progression towards first degree and postgraduate programs, she wanted to ensure the special qualities of Batchelor were preserved.

One graduate at the final ceremony in April was Andrea Collins, from Katherine, who received a Certificate Level 111 in Social and Behavioural Health.

Andrea has followed in the footsteps of her mother, Emma, a former graduate at the college and now a lecturer.

"I am hooked on learning," said Andrea, who would like to continue studying and eventually become a psychiatric nurse.

Meanwhile Andrea, who says there is a severe lack of mental health workers in the Katherine region for Aboriginal people, would like to work in that area.



Andrea Collins (centre) with her Certificate, with mum, Emma Collins and two-year-old son Kierin.

"At the moment, if you are an Aboriginal person with a mental health issue, the only place to go is the government health centre where you will be confronted by white faces. It is very hard for

people," she said.

"Taking the first step and seeking help is one of the hardest steps when you have a mental health problem - and if you come face to face with a white person,

it is not easy."

Andrea also said she was concerned about the turnover of staff working in communities, with staff leaving just as people were getting to know them. ●



New Batchelor Director Ms Veronica Arbon at the April graduation ceremony.



## 1999 ATSIC REGIONAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The elections are to be held on Saturday October 9.

To vote you must be an Aborigine or a Torres Strait Islander, 18 years of age or over and have your name on the Commonwealth electoral roll

If your name is not on the electoral roll, fill out an enrolment form and make sure it reaches the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) by Friday 24 September.

Enrolment forms and addressed envelopes are available from any Post Office, AEC office, ATSIC office or from the AEC Internet home page [www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au)

For further information contact the AEC on  
**13 23 26**  
(for the cost of a local call)

**Australian Electoral Commission / AEC**

# Sorry Day the start of a "Journey of Healing"

Lowitja O'Donohue talks about the "Journey of Healing" to Uluru by members of the Stolen Generation and the importance of the peoples' movement in the face of the Prime Minister's refusal to offer an apology.

Lowitja O'Donohue, in Alice Springs recently, talked about the change in direction for the Stolen Generation in undertaking their "Journey of Healing" to Uluru to mark the first anniversary of Sorry Day.

While 1998 was an opportunity for all Australians to take the opportunity, if they wanted, to sign the Sorry Books and express their sorrow about the removal process, it was a stressful time for members of the Stolen Generation responsible for telling their stories, she said.

This year, the focus was on individual members of the Stolen Generation embarking on a personal "Journey of Healing".

"In the sorry books, the majority of the comments were expressions of sorrow about the policy of forced removal, but over the top of it were comments by people who weren't as supportive as they might have been," Dr O'Donohue said.

"So, last year, I actually went to the last meeting with a fairly heavy heart about what we had or had not achieved. Basically I felt that we were speaking to the converted and all of us needed to reach out and reach other people."

The national committee decided that each Sorry Day Committee would select two Aboriginal people from the Stolen Generation to journey to Uluru, with the Mutitjulu community agreeing to sponsor a healing inma.

Dr O'Donohue said she wished every Australian could have witnessed the occasion "to see the looks on their faces, and to see how they went through that ceremony."

"For many of them the healing process hasn't even begun because many haven't even found their families at this point," she said. "I think all will go back to work hard at what they see as the personal journey."

She said that the ceremony at Uluru moved from formal speeches to individuals unwinding and "getting to the heart of the matter."

Everyone, not only those who were removed from the area, were received into the healing process.

"The women performed from early in the morning until late and it was quite amazing that all of those people who were used to time schedules and so on were able to sit around and wait while the spirit moved in relation to whatever happened," Ms O'Donohue said. ●



Above: Ms O'Donohue in Alice Springs with the message sticks from Mutitjulu. Below: Anzac High School kids start the walk to the Telegraph Station in recognition of the Stolen Generation's "Journey of Healing".



## Have your say...

The Northern and Central Land Councils are urging Aboriginal people throughout the Territory to read the Draft Document of Reconciliation and attend a local meeting to present their views.

"The document is not as strong as we would have liked, but we would like people to read it for themselves and comment," NLC Chief Executive Officer Mr Norman Fry said.

"Remember it is a draft document - it is not the final one."

"Perhaps people might like to suggest a completely new declaration and also suggest how the final document can be implemented."

The Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation is holding a series of meetings in urban and remote communities as part of the consultation process.

As the Council Chairperson Ms Evelyn Scott said: "Without the people's input, this document means nothing."

For information about the meetings contact the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation on Freecall 1800 807 071. For a copy of the draft Declaration, call 1800 060 268 ●

## Heal and remember

A consultant to the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission Father Michael Lapsley visited Alice Springs in June to speak at a church service for Reconciliation Week.

In 1990 Father Lapsley lost both hands and an eye in a letter bomb attack in retaliation against his work for the African National Congress (ANC) fighting the racist apartheid regime in South Africa.

Father Lapsley was born in New Zealand but joined an Anglican religious order in Australia before going to work in South Africa. He was expelled from South Africa in 1976 and moved to neighbouring Lesotholand to continue work with the ANC.

In Alice Springs, Father Lapsley spoke of the parallels between South Africa and Australia trying to face up to their treatment of indigenous people. He stressed the need "to heal and to remember".

In South Africa the Truth and Reconciliation Commission held public hearings looking into crimes committed under the apartheid regime. People who admitted their crimes were forgiven.

"We decided that the page of history was too heavy to turn," Father Lapsley said. "We needed to look into the face of what we had done to each other as a people, what had been done under the cover of darkness needed to be exposed to the light." ●



# NAIDOC WEEK - ALICE SPRINGS

The national focus was on Alice Springs for this year's NAIDOC Week. The line up for the week included Ruby and Archie Roach who had a concert at Traeger Park and also performed for prisoners at the Alice Springs jail.



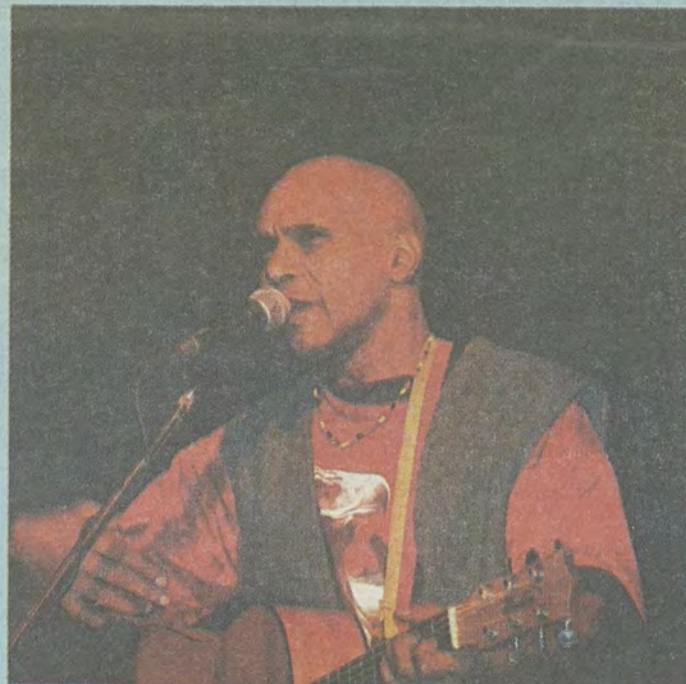
Hip Hop and rapping proved to be a major force during NAIDOC Week in Alice Springs.

The three-week project devised by Triple J Radio was aimed at indigenous youth in the town.

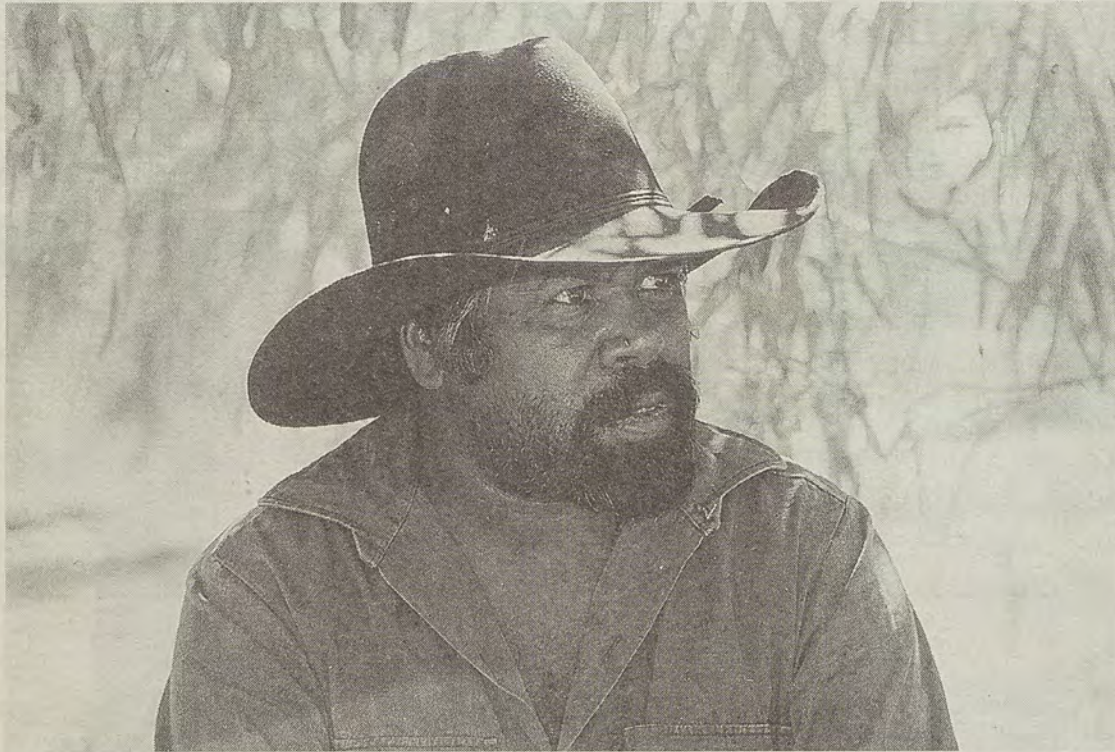
The project's finale was a youth night at Legends Nightclub where local rappers did their stuff. Inspiration came from Brother Black, Morganics and Monkey Mark, rappers brought especially from Sydney to facilitate the workshops. Triple J broadcasted live from Alice Springs for NAIDOC week.



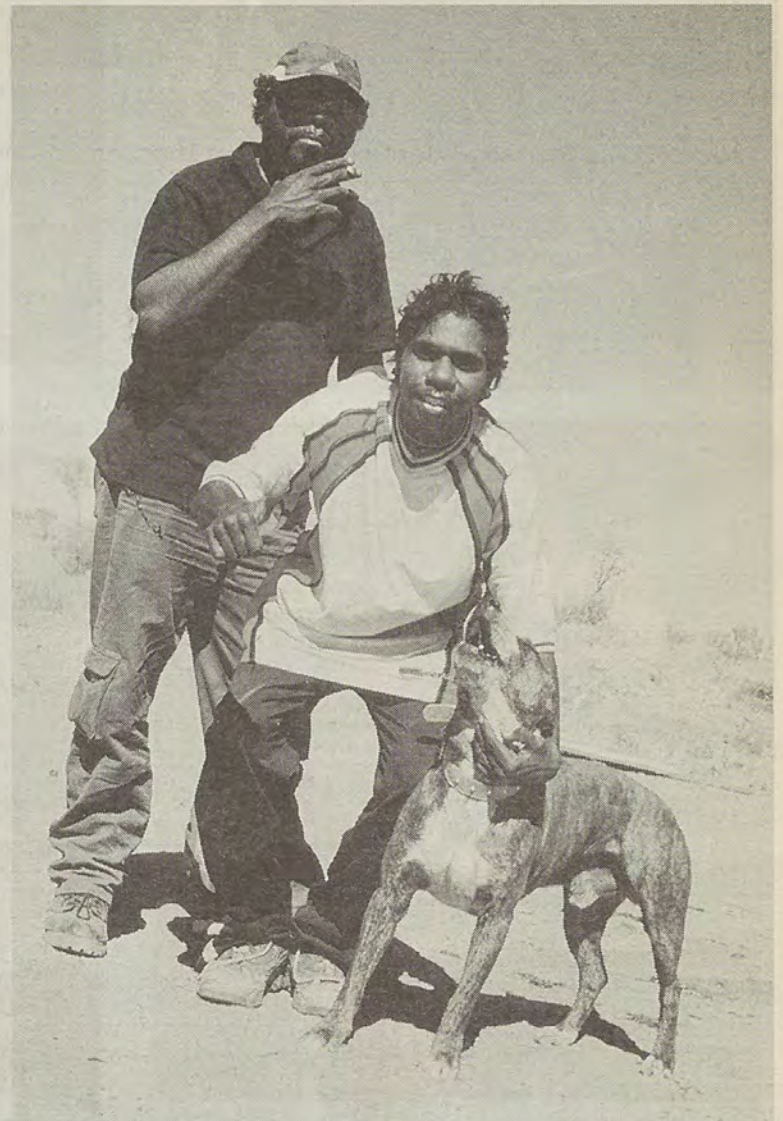
Clockwise from top: Arrernte dancers from Alice Springs performed a rare dance on the cultural day; Ruby Hunter; Archie Roach; Torres Strait Islander dancer; Cassandra Williams who sent the crowd wild when she sang with her father Warren at Traeger Park; rapper from Charles Creek camp does his stuff; Yuma Cavanagh from Santa Teresa BRACS unit.



# AROUND CENTRAL AUSTRALIA

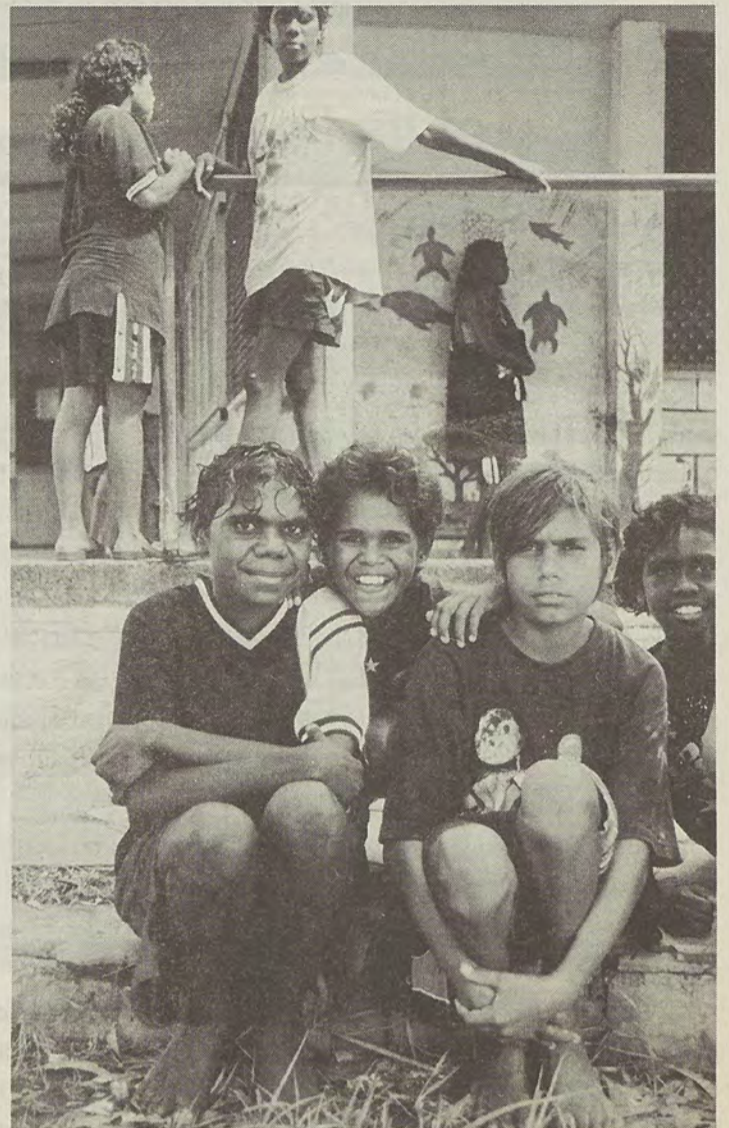


Clockwise from above left: Kym Brown Apenangke at the Barrow Creek land claim; Yipirinya students Danielle Turner, Wyona Palmer and Jeannie Ross; posing for Land Rights News at Whitegate; Jackie Okai (right) and friend during Reconciliation Week; school students during Reconciliation Week.





Above: Gawurin Gumana, senior elder from Gan Gan with grandchildren at a waterhole on the Gan Gan river used during important Yolngu ceremonies.



Above and below: Youngsters at Ngukurr



Above: Dorita Thomson, wife of the late Donald Thomson, on a visit to Arnhem Land (see story page 29)

Below: Debra Jones from Timber Creek, Executive Member on the NLC Full Council representing the Victoria River District.



## Central Australia loses one of its finest

**Sadly, one of the most respected elders of the Alyawarre passed away in July.**

Kwementeye Corbett Kamara, in his 70s, was a traditional owner of land in the Ammaroo / Derry Downs region.

He was a well known and admired figure from Tennant Creek, Alekarenge and through out the eastern region of Central Australia.

He lived for many years at Alekarenge, where he was renowned for his skills as the community baker providing hundreds of loaves of freshly baked bread each morning.

Kwementeye Corbett Kamara eventually returned to his traditional land at Atnwengerrpe on the Sandover River on the Ammaroo pastoral lease.

He set up camp with his family on a traditional soakage in the river and began a long struggle to gain title to a living area.

Faced with hostility from the pastoral property owner who he had grown up with and repeated threats to bulldoze his camp,

Kwementeye Corbett Kamara stood firm and asserted his rights to live on his grandfather's country.

The CLC lodged a claim to a portion of the Sandover Stock route and eventually, in 1991, he was able to gain freehold title to about 15 square kilometres for his community living area.

Kwementeye Corbett Kamara was a CLC delegate for many years and will always be remembered for his kindness and good humour.

He acquired his nickname in his droving days apparently as a reference to his small stature when sitting in the saddle.

In his later years he suffered from kidney problems and had to travel regularly to Alice Springs for dialysis, a problem which is affecting more and more Aboriginal people in Central Australia.

His son Gilbert has taken over his father's role as CLC delegate and as community leader.

The CLC mourns his passing and passes on its sympathies to his family. ●

## Ramingining artist's legacy lives on

**The passing of senior Ramingining artist, Dr David Daymirringu, has caused sadness among family, friends and the international art community.**

The senior elder from the Manyarnngu clan was one of Australia's foremost artists.

Since the 1960's his paintings and carvings have been collected by all state and territory art galleries, the National Gallery of Australia and by major galleries in Germany and France.

He helped to pave the way for Ramingining artists to gain recognition on the international art scene and was one of the artists who contributed to the Aboriginal Memorial - 200 painted and carved hollow log coffins produced for the 1998 bi-centennial and now on permanent exhibition at the National Gallery of Australia.

The use of his *Gurrmirringu's Funeral Scene* on the Australian



one dollar note was an important chapter in the struggle for Aboriginal artists to gain respect and recognition for their moral and property rights.

Following an exhibition in Paris in the early 1960s, the scene was incorporated into the design of the one dollar note, and the Reserve Bank of Australia was later obliged to make a copyright payment to the artist.

A special medallion was subsequently struck in honour of the artist.

In 1998 he was awarded the

Australia Council's Visual Arts/Craft Fund Emeritus Award for his lifelong contribution to indigenous art in Australia and overseas.

The legacy of his work will live on in art galleries throughout the world and in the minds of all people he came into contact with.

Dr Daymirringu is survived by three wives and a large family of children and grandchildren living at Yathalamarra outstation, approximately 20kms north east of Ramingining. ●

## A great law man

**Justice James Muirhead, former Commissioner in the Aboriginal Deaths in Custody inquiry, and former Administrator of the Northern Territory, who died on July 20, will be remembered in indigenous communities for his belief in justice, mutual respect and recognition.**

NLC chief executive Norman Fry stated that Justice Muirhead's work as Commissioner was ground-breaking and of national significance for Aboriginal people.

The release of that report and its adoption by the governments of Australia was an historic moment for this country, a turning point for the relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians.

Mr Fry said he hoped that others would take up the challenge to complete what Justice Muirhead started in bringing greater justice, equality and respect to Australia's legal system.

At his state funeral on July 24, Larrakia spokesperson Bill Risk stated that Justice Muirhead was "one of Australia's great law men."

"As Administrator of the Northern Territory, he opened the doors of Government House to us for the very first time," Mr Risk said.

"He recognised the Larrakia people and sought to build bridges with us that had long been broken.

"This action is symbolic of the approach he took to Aboriginal issues throughout his distinguished career."

"Let us remember the courage and vision of one man who believed in justice and was not afraid to work against the odds to see it achieved."

Mr Risk said Justice Muirhead was clearly determined to make Australia a better and fairer place for Aboriginal people. "It takes great courage, vision and leadership to stand against the tide of public opinion for what you believe is right," he said. ●

Right: Djambawa Marawili in front of one of his paintings. See story page 31.



# Djutjadjutja Mununggurr

Aboriginal painter and sculptor, senior Djapu clansman.

Born Dhuruputjpi, north east Arnhem Land. c.1935. Died Wandawuy, north east Arnhem Land 16 July 1999.

At the time of his birth in 1935 at his mother's mother's country, Dhuruputjpi, three of Djutjadjutja's brothers were serving life sentences in Darwin's Fannie Bay Gaol for the murder of Japanese pearl-ers.

The gaoling was a flashpoint in black-white relations in the remote Blue Mud Bay region of eastern Arnhem Land.

Djutjadjutja was the last living son of the legendary Wonggu, a Djapu clansman who for most of the first half of the century was a powerful and renowned Yolngu (Aboriginal) leader of the region.

His reputation was not just the one he earned as a warrior, but also as an emissary of the Yolngu as they confronted the Balanda (white people) who were encroaching on their traditional lands.

Carrying a maak, or message stick, from the gaoled sons Natjialma, Mau and Ngarkaiya, the young anthropologist Donald Thomson met with Wonggu where he was able to confirm that the killings were justifiable responses to trespass, aggression and rape.

Wonggu gave Thomson, as a representative of the Commonwealth, another maak, explaining that the designs inscribed on it represented "himself sitting down quietly and maintaining peace among his people".

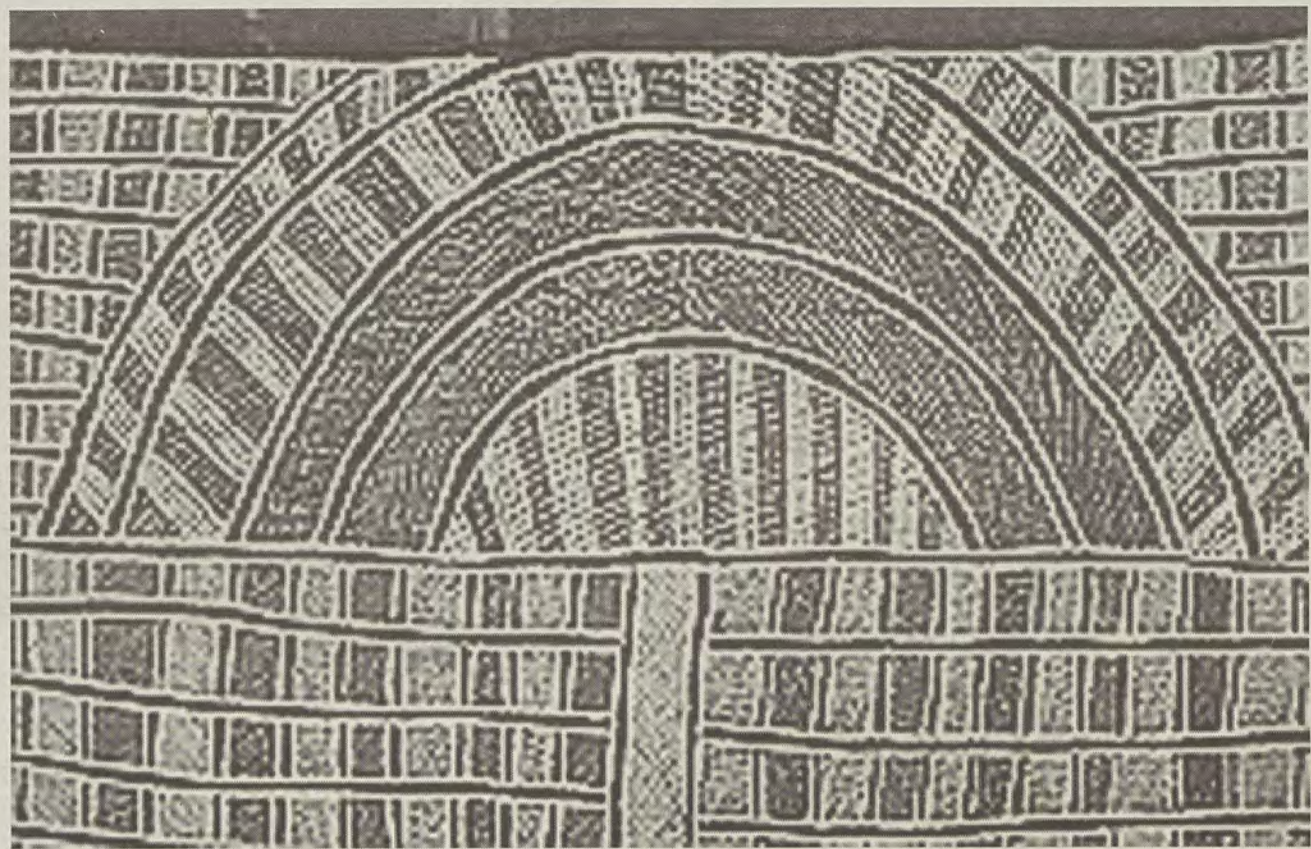
Thomson succeeded in freeing and returning with Wonggu's sons in 1936.

Six years later, Thomson was to return to Wonggu - this time to recruit Aboriginal people in the war against Japan.

According to Thomson "it took some time to convince these people that they could really kill Japanese who landed in this territory, without incurring the ire of the Government, and being visited with another punitive expedition.

But that night the ring of iron on iron, the sound of the forging of 'shovel' spears was heard in camp - it would have been difficult indeed for even a large enemy landing party to have progressed far in the territory of these warrior people".

Djutjadjutja lived under the inspiration of his powerful father even after his death in 1959.



Above: an example one of Djutjadjutja Mununggurr's bark paintings which feature in Australian and international art collections

Moving in to the Yirrkala Mission in the 1950s, Djutjadjutja worked as a building labourer for a time, and later in the 1960s as an aircraft marshaller at Gove Airport.

### Homeland movement

Deeply committed to his traditional estates and steeped in Yolngu ceremonial law, he was one of the leaders of the "homeland movement" - the move away from missions and settlements back to traditional lands which gathered pace from the early 1970s.

**"He was showing all the tribes from Djapu, he looked after his mother's paintings from Madarpa (clan), and took care for Dhudi-Djapu (his mother's mother's clan) painting. He was a great man."**

In that period he founded Wandawuy homeland centre, a focal site in his father's territory.

He started painting and carving in the 1970s and was a highly regarded artist, though he exhibited rarely.

It was not until 1994 that his work reached full maturity. In that year he revived - for the first time in two decades - the production of very large bark paintings for which the artists of Yirrkala have gained world renown.

In this he was joined by senior painters from other clans.

The then director of the National Gallery of Victoria, James Mollison, was an enthusiastic supporter of the importance of the revival.

In a major showing of the NGV's pur-

chases in 1995 (which followed on the heels of a Van Gogh "blockbuster") Mollison was to say of the Miny'tji Buku-Larrnggay exhibit which included Djutjadjutja's work, "this is the best exhibition of art I've been involved in".

In the four years since that show, Djutjadjutja was to feature in 12 major exhibitions, with his work acquired for major public and private collections in Australia and overseas.

### Yolngu tradition

The power of his work was deeply rooted in Yolngu tradition.

Current chairman of Yirrkala's Buku-Larrnggay Mulka arts and crafts, Djambawa Marawili, describing Djutjadjutja as a gentle and thoughtful man, praised him for "keeping our Law strong through his art."

"He was showing all the tribes from Djapu, he looked after his mother's paint-

**He died two days later, as Djambawa tells it: "making all our people feel proud and strong that he died with (ceremonial) white ochre on his body."**

ings from Madarpa (clan), and took care for Dhudi-Djapu (his mother's mother's clan) painting. He was a great man."

A continuing theme of Djutjadjutja's art was that of Banumbirr, the Morning Star ceremony.

Although ill with cancer, he neverthe-

less prepared over the last two years for his final Banumbirr.

At that ceremony, held at his Dhuruputjpi birthplace, he enacted Barrathun, a ritual held in the imminent expectation of death, a way of "leading his spirit back home to country".

He died two days later, as Djambawa tells it: "making all our people feel proud and strong that he died with (ceremonial) white ochre on his body."

Three weeks before his death, Governor General Sir William Deane visited Djutjadjutja, accompanied by the late Donald Thomson's wife, Dorita.

His mission was to return to the eldest surviving son of Wonggu the two message sticks that so prominently marked the year of Djutjadjutja's birth.

Describing the event as "one of the most rewarding moments of my life", Sir William said Djutjadjutja's death was "a great loss to indigenous Australia and us all."

Djutjadjutja is survived by his wives Nongirringa and Wapukay, five daughters and six sons.

His work is currently on tour with the "Saltwater" exhibition which Djutjadjutja initiated to explain Yolngu traditional rights to the seas.

It will open next at the John Curtin University in Perth in November.

The book of the exhibition, to be released in Perth, will be dedicated to Djutjadjutja. ●

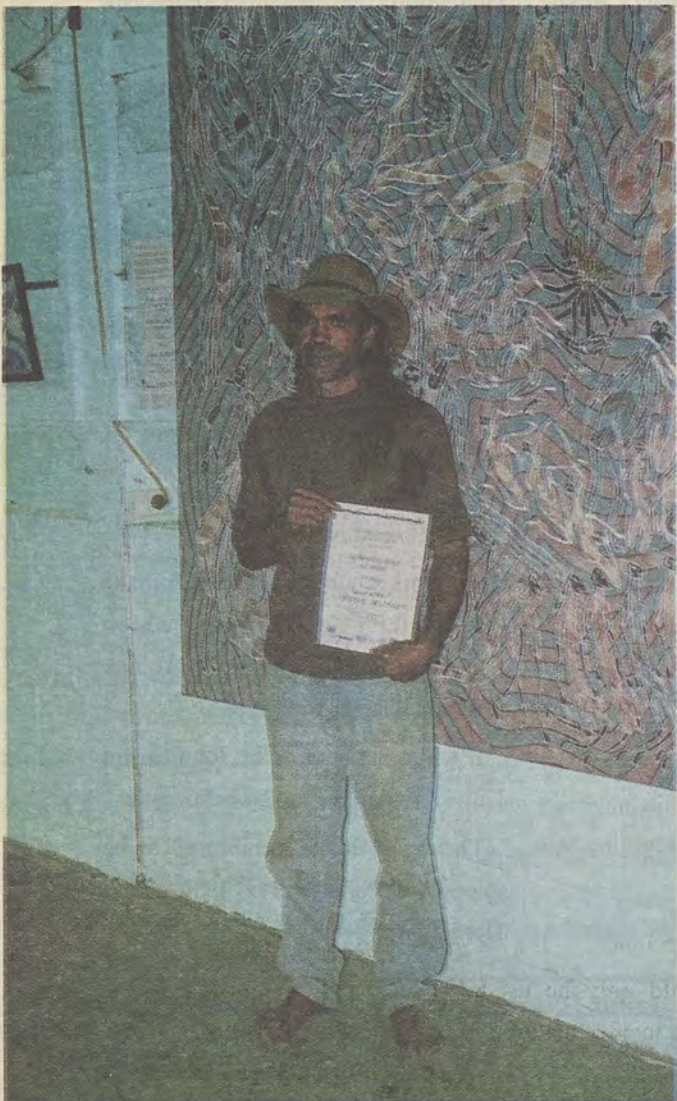
# FESTIVALS



Photos (clockwise from left): Netball stars at Nauiyu; artist Mary Lemon from Peppiminarti with grandson Travis Mollony, displaying her crafts at the Merrepen Arts Festival; David Blanas, Beswick, who won the Didgeridoo competition at Barunga; dancers at Barunga; Eddie Blitner who won the Raymond Fordinall Art Award at Barunga with "One Fire".

The festival season in the Northern Territory is in full swing. Photos here show activities at the Merrepen Arts Festival, Nauiyu (Daly River) and Barunga Festivals, which took place in June.

The Open Day at Oenpelli (Kunbarlanjanja) and the Borroloola Rodeo are on the August calendar with the Jabiru Wind Festival coming up in September.



## Choice and Control: The Development of Indigenous Tourism in Australia

by Merridy Pitcher, Penny van Oosterzee and Lisa Palmer

Published by Centre for Indigenous Natural and Cultural Resource Management and the CRC for Sustainable Tourism

This report on the state of the indigenous tourism industry asks more questions than it answers. Intended as a literature survey drawing together information from the widest possible sources, its authors identify that "the lack of integration of information from various sources is a problem that needs to be addressed."

The report provides a useful survey of the history of indigenous tourism from the early 1900s through to the development of a range of industry strategies on national and local levels in recent years.

It also canvasses a range of issues including tourism marketing and the use of indigenous imagery, tourism demand and satisfaction, and the range of options for indigenous tourism products from cultural centres to festivals, tours and nature based attractions.

The report concludes that "Tourism is an economic and social reality, and for some Aboriginal people the question is not whether to accept or reject tourism, but how to make it work better for them."

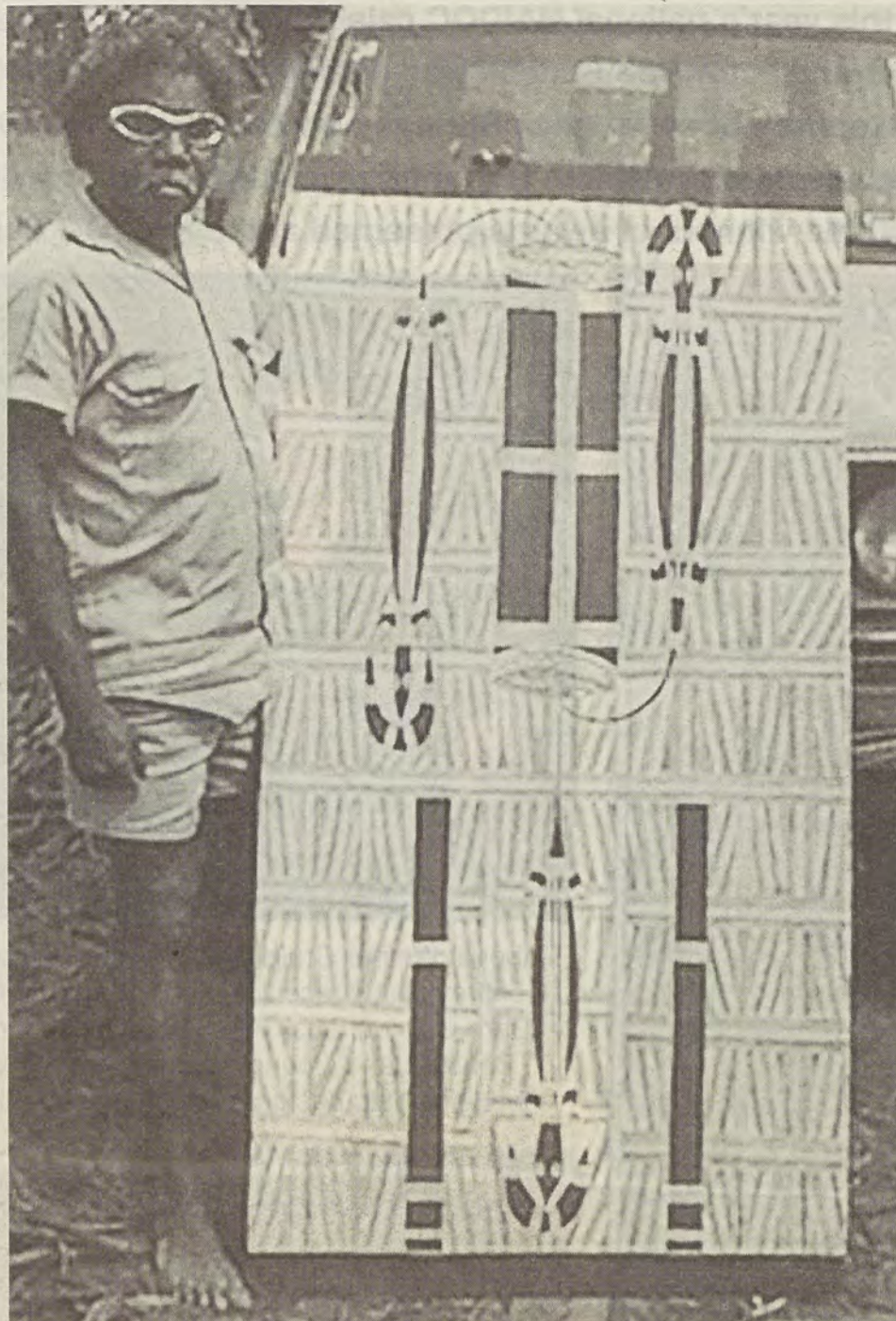
The value of this report is that it pulls together all the available literature in a concise and manageable form, while clearly identifying the areas where further research and evaluation is required to ensure Indigenous engagement in the industry is culturally and economically sustainable. ●

### New Video from the NLC

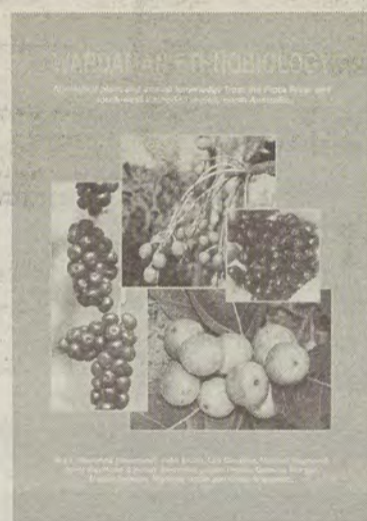
The NLC has launched a new video, "Marine Agreements".

The video highlights the large number of agreements being signed between traditional Aboriginal landowners and commercial fishing interests in the Northern Territory on the use of resources in seas and waterways across the Top End.

For more information, contact Peter Pender at the Northern Land Council on (08) 8920 5167.



Guwayguway Wanambi with his contribution to the Saltwater Country exhibition



### Wardaman Ethnobiology:

Aboriginal plant and animal knowledge from the Flora River and south-west Katherine region, north Australia

by Mrs E Raymond (deceased), Julai Blutja, Lily Gingina, Michael Raymond, Oliver Raymond, Jessie Brown, Queenie Morgan, Donna Jackson, Nicholas Smith and Glenn Wightman

Published by the Centre for Indigenous Natural and Cultural Resource Management, Northern Territory University

This book is an important step in recording and conserving the traditional and contemporary knowledge held by Wardaman people of plants and animals associated with the Wardaman language.

The comprehensive ethnobiology with lavish illustrations lists Wardaman plant and animal information for 276 plants and 177 animals which are also described by their English and common names.

Wardaman biological knowledge is categorised, discussed and compared with other language groups.

The impetus for this book came from senior Wardaman elder Mrs E. Raymond (deceased) who was worried that the Wardaman knowledge relating to plants and animals would be lost and the book is dedicated to her memory.

It was her desire to conserve and pass on Wardaman culture and she was the driving force behind the book until she passed away in February 1997.

The Wardaman plant and animal names and uses in this book are the intellectual property of Wardaman people.

This knowledge should only be used with the permission of the intellectual property owners. ●

## National tour for bark exhibition

"Saltwater Country", an exhibition of 80 monumental bark paintings depicting Yolngu understanding of sea country has impressed leading art experts in Australia.

Saltwater Country is the latest in a distinguished list of Yolngu art projects including the Yirrkala Church Panels, the Bark Petition and the Barunga Statement which have been used as tools to achieve recognition of Aboriginal law and rights.

The exhibition is to tour galleries in Canberra, Perth, Sydney, Melbourne and Alice Springs for the next 18 months.

The 'Saltwater Country' tour was launched in June at the Drill Hall Gallery, Canberra by Gatjil Djerkurra.

Leading Aboriginal art expert Professor Howard Morphy, described the exhibition as "the best art exhibition Australia is likely to see this year".

In explaining the importance of sea rights for Aboriginal people, Djambawa Marawili, Chairperson of Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre (who coordinated the exhibition) explains: "In the sea country, there are ritual ceremonies. They teach us who the country belongs to, who is spiritually linked to that sea country. It is this that we live and breathe."

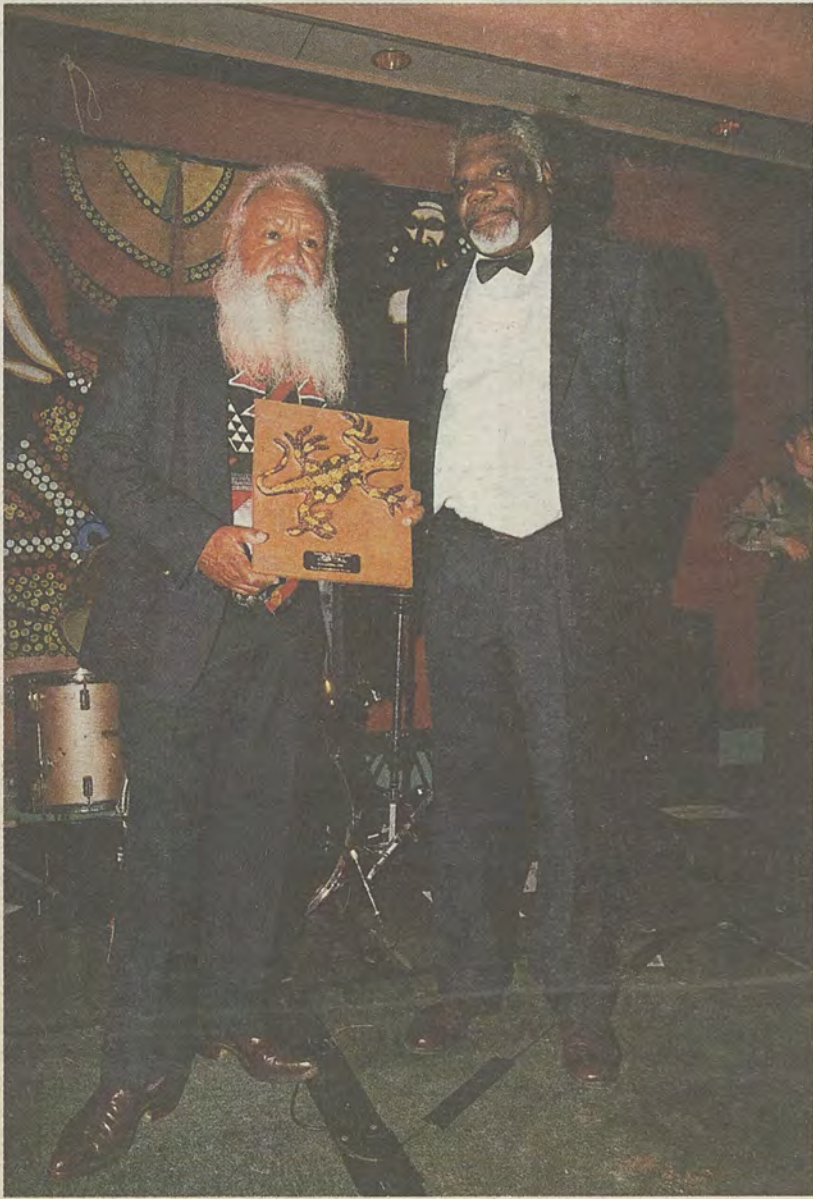
The exhibition and the publication of a detailed catalogue is a call for shared learning in the spirit of reconciliation. "This is letting you know so you will learn from us. Learn from these words like we have learnt from you. Both sides, Yolngu and Balanda knowledge," he said.

The exhibition tour continues at:

- John Curtin Gallery, Curtin University, Perth 4th - 28th November 1999
- Australian National Maritime Museum, Darling Harbour, Sydney May-June 2000
- Museum of Modern Art at Heide, via Melbourne 19th Aug - 15th October 2000
- The Araluen Centre for Arts and Entertainment - Alice Springs December 2000-January 2001 ●

# NAIDOC winners

Alice Springs hosted this year's national NAIDOC celebrations and the awards ceremony where campaigner, songwriter and actor Bob Randall was named National NAIDOC Person of the Year. Elders of the Year were Geoffrey Shaw of Alice Springs and Zona Martin of Toowoomba Queensland. Arrernte lawman and painter Wenten Rubuntja received the Artist of the Year award. Congratulation to all the winners of awards presented at the NAIDOC Ball in Alice Springs.



Above: Winner Craig Greene with his mother and sister at the awards, left: Geoffrey Shaw receiving his award from Gatjil Djerrkura, bottom left: winner Barb Cox 'out bush' where she has spent much of her life working for the Central Land Council; bottom right: Top End community Award winner, Aboriginal flag designer and internationally renowned artist Harold Thomas



## National NAIDOC Awards

- Person of the Year, Bob Randall (Alice Springs NT)
- Sports Achiever of the Year, Nicky Winmar (VIC)
- Elder of the Year, Geoffrey Shaw (Alice Springs NT)
- Elder of the Year, Ms Zona Martin (Toowoomba QLD)
- Artist of the Year, Mr Wenten Rubuntja (Alice Springs NT)
- Scholar Achiever of the Year, Tracey Brand (Alice Springs NT)
- Youth of the Year, Jeremy Geia (Alice Springs NT)
- Youth of the Year, Samantha Cook (Broome WA)
- Apprentice/Trainee of the Year, Gary Bonney (Boulder WA)

**MORE NAIDOC PICTURES INSIDE...**

