



Land Rights

NEWS



One Mob, One Voice, One Land

Vol 4 No 2 June 2002



**INSIDE: Big Bill Tribute, Urapunga handback,
The last camel train, Book reviews
and more...**

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Borroloola women speaking strongly at the Ngalmuka Land Management Conference 2002, held from 4-6 June on Jawoyn land. The story is on page 18.

Land Rights NEWS

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COVER PHOTO

The picture of Big Bill Neidjie on the front cover of this issue of *Land Rights News* comes from the Northern Land Council's archives, and shows Big Bill shortly after his return to his traditional lands in the mid-1970s. It is being used with the full consent of Big Bill's immediate family. They state it was Big Bill's wish that his name continue to be used after his death.

Larrakia set for \$24m urban development project



Bill Risk and Kelvin Costello at the Darla development launch

Larrakia people have moved a step closer towards economic independence with the announcement on 28 June that a five-year, \$24 million development project is poised to commence in Darwin's satellite city of Palmerston within the next eight weeks.

The proposed development comes in the wake of the landmark Native Title agreement reached between the Larrakia people and the Northern Territory Government in December last year.

Spearheaded by the Larrakia Development Corporation (LDC), the first stage of the project will see up to 57 residential lots developed in the new Palmerston subdivision of Darla between

July and November this year at a cost of about \$2.5 million.

The first lots will hit the market by the end of this year, with the remaining 340 lots to be developed as demand dictates.

Project funding has been secured and will be provided by a major financial institution and government agencies.

LDC Chairman Bill Risk said the project would continue to set a benchmark for

successful Native Title negotiations and resolutions across Australia.

"This project not only gives Darwin the room to grow it so desperately needs, it also provides our people with training, jobs and a stake in a project which for the first time holds out the hope of real economic independence for the Larrakia people," he said.

"Our thanks go to the Northern Land Council, the Northern Territory Government and our financial backers for making this project possible."

NLC Chief Executive Norman Fry described the Darla development in the Rosebery/Bellamack area of Palmerston as a "terrific outcome" for all concerned after three years of hard work. Mr Fry said the project was hard evidence that Aboriginal

over Australia."

"I congratulate the LDC for all they have achieved. They are now one step closer to making their dream a reality."

Profits from the Darla development will flow into a tax-exempt trust set up for the Larrakia with no money to be released for three years.

Proceeds will be used firstly to retire debt and then to invest in training, education and community development for Larrakia.

The prime contractor has already agreed to minimum Aboriginal employment levels during both the construction and landscaping phase.

The Larrakia have also negotiated with the Aboriginal Development Foundation (ADF) and the NT University to offer a

"I congratulate the LDC for all they have achieved. They are now a step closer to making their dream a reality."

NLC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, NORMAN FRY

people were not anti-development so long as their rights were respected.

"Twelve months ago, the Larrakia had nothing beyond an agreement," he said.

"Today we learn that not only are they about to commence stage one of a multimillion dollar development, but in doing so, have set the standard in relation to native title negotiations between Indigenous and Government interests all

Certificate Two in Horticulture to Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) participants at a training facility to be located at the ADF.

"I understand a deal has been struck with ADF for this training to go ahead at their facilities," Mr Fry said. "This is a fantastic idea as it will allow for a unique urban landscape to be developed by Indigenous people."

Lhere Artepe Corporation represents Arrernte Native Title Holders

Alice Springs Arrernte native title holders cleared another legal milestone in May with the determination of Lhere Artepe Aboriginal Corporation as their prescribed body corporate.

Native title holders and supporters jammed into an Alice Springs courtroom to hear the decision by the Federal Court's Justice Olney to recognise the incorporated association they had set up to deal with their native title interests.

The short but emotional hearing was the culmination of legal processes launched eight years earlier when the Arrernte families lodged their application with the National Native Title Tribunal for recognition of their rights.

In May 2000 Justice Olney handed down the decision that native title co-existed with other interests on 118 parcels of land - reserves, parks and vacant crown land - within Alice Springs.

The judgement also required the

establishment of the body corporate to represent native title holders in matters relating to their native title.

The native title holders gathered on the steps of the Alice Springs court house after the hearing with a mixture of sadness for those who had not lived to see the day and pride in winning recognition of their status.

Lhere Artepe Chair Brian Stirling, addressing the gathered media, said. "This is an important and proud day for our Arrernte families of Alice Springs."

"The Lhere Artepe Aboriginal Corporation is now recognised as the united voice for all Arrernte native title holders of Alice Springs."

"For the first time we have a legally recognised body to represent the laws,



Arrernte native title holders on the steps of the Alice Springs court house

rights and responsibilities handed down to us by our ancestors."

"We want to work together positively as part of the community of Alice Springs and work with government and other Aboriginal organisations and interests to improve the future for us all."

Under the constitution developed by the native title holders for the corporation, they are represented by 30 members, an elected executive working committee and an elected chair, Brian Stirling. Native title

holders have recently held discussions with the NT Government and have previously negotiated a Land Use Agreement about Todd River management with the Alice Springs Town Council.

They have also been involved in decisions about works at Ilparpa Swamp.

Lhere Artepe translates approximately from Central Arrernte as the "river spine" or "river back".

See story on Ilparpa Swamp burn-off page 9.

Mining Myths peddled by Minister

Central Land Council Director David Ross described as "ill-informed rubbish" comments made by the Federal Immigration and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Minister Philip Ruddock about mining on Aboriginal Land in the Northern Territory.

Mr Ruddock, speaking on ABC Radio National in May, said: "We haven't seen any mining development in the Northern Territory on Aboriginal land, new mining development, for something like 25 years".

Mr Ross said: "The last new mine approved in the CLC area was Newmont's Groundrush gold mine in the Tanami in August last year just before Mr Ruddock became Minister for Aboriginal Affairs."

"In 1999 the Edna Beryl mine near Tennant Creek was approved."

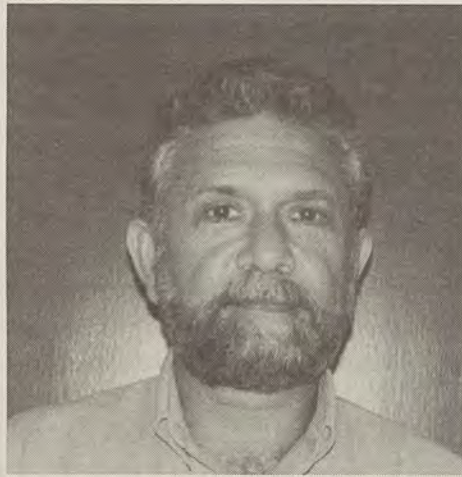
"The Molech mine was approved in 1998 and its owner the Tanami Joint Venture also had two new mining areas granted in 1995."

"The Dead Bullock Soak mine belonging to North Flinders Mines was approved in 1991."

"The Tanami Mine was approved in 1990 and the Granites gold mine was approved in 1984."

"All these deposits were discovered under exploration agreements negotiated under the Land Rights Act," Mr Ross said.

"In terms of the importance of the



David Ross

mining operations, Newmont's Tanami operations together are the third biggest gold producers in Australia."

"Mr Ruddock is also welcome to read the CLC's annual report prepared for the minister each year. As of the end of last financial year 164 mining exploration permits had been granted under the Act in the CLC area and another 229 were being negotiated. What we are seeing here is a deliberate camouflaging of the Land Rights Act at work," Mr Ross said.

Miriuwung, Gajerrong win right to negotiate over exploration

Aboriginal groups represented by the Northern Land Council have been successful in their opposition to two attempts by the NT Government to fast-track exploration licence applications over two pastoral leases in the Victoria River District under native title legislation.

In the first determination made on 10 April, the National Native Title Tribunal found that the proposed exploration area applied for by Ausquest Ltd contained several sites of particular cultural significance to the Miriuwung and Gajerrong peoples, whose claim over the Legune and Spirit Hill pastoral leases was registered on 3 January 1995.

The Tribunal said it was the first such determination out of 11 it had made in the Northern Territory where it had found the expedited procedure did not apply.

It said the proposed grant of an exploration licence would now be subject to the native title claimants' right to negotiate under the legislation.

A second determination made by the Tribunal on 12 June once again rejected the Government's attempt to fast-track minerals exploration over land claimed by the Miriuwung and Gajerrong peoples.

The explorer, Swiftel Ltd, will now have to negotiate with the claimants before minerals exploration can proceed.

Both exploration companies have the option to pursue negotiations based on a template agreement recently drawn up by the NLC.

This agreement has already been accepted by major mining companies Rio Tinto and De Beers for all of their exploration applications on Native Title land in the Top End.



John Berto, Galarrwuy Yunupingu and Ron Levy at NLC Full Council Meeting

Exploration approvals show Ruddock wrong

A further five exploration licence applications in the Northern Territory's Arnhem Land region have been approved by the Northern Land Council's Full Council, demonstrating that mineral exploration continues to progress in the Top End - despite recent comments to the contrary by Federal Aboriginal Affairs Minister Philip Ruddock.

NLC Chairman Galarrwuy Yunupingu said the vote to endorse traditional owners' prior consent to the ELAs was a clear example of how Aboriginal people and mining companies were continuing to work together in spite of negative Federal Government attitudes to the NT's Aboriginal Land Rights Act.

"On the one hand you've got a Minister in Canberra saying that the Land Rights Act is holding up development," Mr Yunupingu said.

"But the facts are you've got about 30 per cent of Aboriginal freehold land in the NLC's area currently under exploration, with further applications being regularly approved."

"Elsewhere in the Northern Territory the former CLP Government effectively froze applications to mine and explore on pastoral leases for four years from February 1996 in a pathetic attempt to undermine the Native Title Act."

"Even now, Land Councils are still processing the resulting backlog."

The unanimous decision to approve the five ELAs will see a further 1,827 square kilometres of land made available for exploration to some of the biggest mining companies operating in Australia, including Rio Tinto, BHP Billiton, De Beer's Australia and Cameco Australia.

All the companies have made commitments to traditional owners that sacred sites will be protected as well as putting in framework agreements for Aboriginal employment and royalties should exploration lead to the the development of mines.

"The journey from exploration to mining is usually a long and expensive process for the companies involved and Land Councils understand that," Mr Yunupingu said.

"Aboriginal people have demonstrated time and time again that we are not anti-development so long as our rights over ancestral lands are protected."

In more good news for the Northern Territory's mining and exploration industry, the Full Council also signed off on new exploration template agreements aimed at clearing the exploration and mining licence application backlog created by the former CLP government.

The agreements - with Rio Tinto, De Beers Exploration Australia, Tawana Resources and Bootu Creek Resources - mean that about 80 per cent of native title land in the Northern Territory's Top End is now covered by such deals.

The deals hold out the potential for fast-tracking the exploration licence application (ELA) process on more than 130,000 square kilometres of non-Aboriginal land in the NLC's area.

The biggest of the new agreements was put in place by a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the NLC and De Beers Australia Exploration Ltd on 22 May, establishing a procedure for dealing with ELAs on 57 of De Beers' tenement applications covering 82,833 sq km.

"These latest agreements are more evidence of the effort the NLC is putting in to help the mining industry in the NT," NLC Chief Executive Norman Fry said.

"Despite comments from some quarters that land councils are development-averse, here we are clearing up an exploration licence backlog bequeathed to us by the former NT CLP regime."

The template agreements provide for protection of sacred sites and cultural areas; protection for the environment; consultation with traditional owners; compensation in the form of community benefits regarding exploration; and parameters for any future mining agreement should exploration prove successful.

Under this process, native title holders retain the right to negotiate agreements outside the template parameters if they so desire.

In memory of Big Bill

The pictures that accompany this story, and the photograph appearing on the front cover of this issue of *Land Rights News*, are being used with the full consent of Big Bill's immediate family. They state it was Big Bill's wish that his name continue to be used after his death.

When Big Bill Neidjie, OAM, passed away on 23 May, the Indigenous people of the Northern Territory lost an outstanding leader and the wider community a great teacher.

Among the many eulogies voiced by people and organisations across the nation, Northern Land Council chairman Galarrwuy Yunupingu said it was Big Bill's constant endeavour to bridge the cultural and historical divide between black and white Australians that was his greatest gift.

Yet while Big Bill's death marked the passing of a great public figure, it should be remembered too that it represented an intensely personal loss to his own family. The NLC greatly appreciates the family's decision to allow Big Bill's life to be celebrated in such a public manner, as it contains a message for us all.

As his nephew and former NLC

Executive Member John Christopherson said:

"He was an educator all his life and it was the thing he loved doing most. At his funeral at Cannon Hill, he was still being an educator over that week in the bush."

John was still a small boy when he first remembers meeting his imposing, barrel-chested uncle at the old family home in Fannie Bay.

"I remember him taking me hunting in a canoe with some other fellas in Darwin Harbour," John said. "He was a good hunter – we caught a lot of dugong and turtle."

"Now, seeing how I was so taken by fishing, he went away and ... he made me a canoe. He brought it around from Coburg once he'd finished it and me and the other kids painted it yellow."

"I added to it by painting a shark's mouth on the front. It was a great canoe, but years

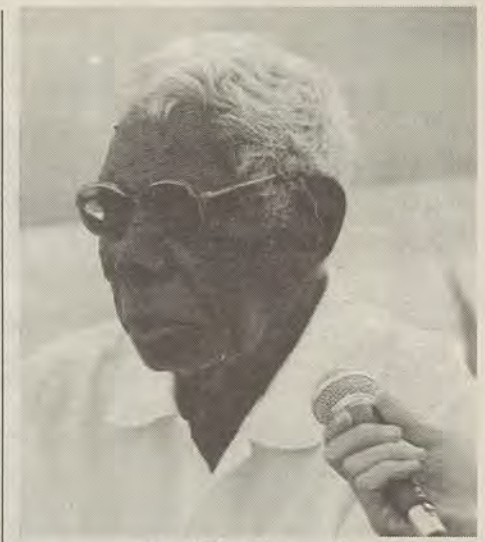
later I lost it. Now I'm hoping someone might read this and give it back to me."

The essential details of Bill's life have already passed into legend: the early years spent in buffalo hunters' camps in the East Alligator river region after his birth some time around 1920, followed by work as a forester on the Coburg Peninsula, a stint with the Australian Army during World War II, the post-War years spent on coastal luggers supplying remote communities, then the return to his traditional lands in 1975 to lead his Bunidj people's successful fight for land rights.

Then of course there was the public wake held in July last year to celebrate his life – while he was still alive. As Bill said, he wanted it that way so he could "be around to hear the nice things said about me".

But Big Bill's private life masked the private turmoil that affected so many Aboriginal families last century. His sister, John's mother, was part of the Stolen Generations.

John says Big Bill was not a man to dwell on past injustices, and it was only when John himself became involved with the land rights movement in the 1970s that Big Bill shared some of his thoughts about whitefella law.



Big Bill at his wake last year

Bill is deservedly famous for his role as principal claimant in the Alligator Rivers Stage II land claim, the creation of Kakadu National Park and as author of the acclaimed book *Kakadu Man*. But beyond the fame, Bill was also a private man who enjoyed spending time alone in his country.

"He fought hard for his land and he loved teaching, but he often resented the demands on his time. Sometimes he just wanted to be left alone," John said.

Now he is at one with his country. In Big Bill's own words: "My spirit has gone back to my country ... my mother." ●

Avoiding a silent future

In among all the other details of Big Bill Neidjie's amazing life is the fact that he was the last speaker of the Gagadju language. With his death, the language has ceased to exist in the spoken form.

It is yet another in a long line of Aboriginal languages that have vanished under the impact of white settlement – and many more are teetering on the brink of extinction throughout Australia.

In so many ways this is the unspoken tragedy underlying the whole history of Aboriginal dispossession. For when you lose your land, at least you can fight back to reclaim it. But when you lose your language, a whole way of being, a whole cultural universe, is lost forever.

It is thought about 250 Aboriginal languages were spoken around Australia at the time of the white invasion, with many dialects within each language group. Perhaps just 100 of these still survive, but of these most are expected to die within the next generation.

The recently released 2001 Census figures bear this out: across the country 80 per cent of Indigenous people now speak English at home.

In the Northern Territory the picture is nowhere near as bleak, with about 61 per cent of our Indigenous people speaking an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language at home. More than 20 Aboriginal languages spoken in the NT are still regarded as being healthy – that is, languages still being learnt by children

However, what has happened is that

traditional languages have been replaced by new Aboriginal languages, called variously Aboriginal English, pidgin and Kriol. Kriol grew out of the pidgin English used on early missions and cattle stations, and incorporates traditional language words, meanings and sounds. Indeed, linguists now regard Kriol as a language in its own right, with established grammar and vocabulary.

For when you lose your land, at least you can fight back to reclaim it. But when you lose your language, a whole way of being, a whole cultural universe, is lost forever.

In the Alice Springs region, linguist Robert Hoogenraad – who works with the NT Department of Employment, Education and Training – said the movement of groups of Aboriginal people onto other people's land over the past 100 years had led to much mixing of language.

"What you have around Alice Springs is the formation of a new Aboriginal language which, unlike Kriol to the north, is based almost entirely on Aboriginal words from a number of different Central Australian and Western Desert languages," he said.

Murray Garde, a consultant linguist working with the NLC in Jabiru, says that the Kakadu region – Big Bill's country – used to be highly linguistically diverse.

"Now there's just Gundjehmi left, and even that language is seriously threatened," he said.

Sadly, Mr Garde said most of the Kakadu region languages – Gagadju was an exception, thanks to the work of linguist Mark Harvey – died before linguists had any opportunity to describe them.

"In the past 20 years, most of the last

speakers of the now-vanished languages would have died," Mr Garde said.

Dr Harvey's work bears this out. Although Big Bill may have been the last speaker of Gagadju, the last fluent speaker was Peggy Balmana who died several years ago. Big Bill was also a fluent speaker of the near-extinct Amurdak – his mother's tongue – and spoke mainly Iwadja at home.

According to Two-Way Learning Program language resource officer Rebecca Green, still-vibrant language groups include Tiwi, Bininj Kun-Wok, Mawng, Iwadja, Burarra, Ndjebbana, Na-kara, Gurr-goni, Rembarrnga, Anindilyakwa, Murrinh-Patha, the Yolngu family of languages (including Dhuwal/Dhuwala dialects such as

Djambarrpuynu), Western Desert language (including Pitjantjatjara, Pintubi and Luritja), Warlpiri, Arrente, Alyawarr and Anmatyerr.

However, just as many, if not more, Aboriginal languages in the NT are in danger of extinction. Anthropologist Robin Hodgson from the Katherine Regional Language Centre said of the 32 languages spoken in the Katherine region, two-thirds were "seriously in danger" of dying out.

In the Central Australian region, Mr Hoogenraad said Pertame was the local language under the greatest stress while some local dialects had vanished entirely.

So what's been done to arrest this linguistic annihilation?

Paul Bubb, Manager of the Two-Way Learning program, told *Land Rights News* there were now 12 NT Government-funded two-way learning schools spread throughout the NT, with more funding available through the Commonwealth's Indigenous Education Strategic Initiative Program (IESIP) to teach Indigenous languages in NT schools.

The NLC is involved in the language preservation effort through its Caring for Country unit, which runs a Traditional Knowledge Recovery Project to record essential information about flora, fauna and bush tucker in the native tongues of Aboriginal people throughout the Top End.

ATSIC also helps via its Languages Access Initiatives Program (LAIP), which has helped fund the preservation of languages over the past three years.

Mr Garde says all of this and more is vital to maintain the NT's rich linguistic heritage – otherwise, thousands of years of accumulated wisdom will be lost. ●



Traditional owners celebrate the title handback with David Daniels (centre) while Daryl Williams (at rear) and Gallarrwuy Yunupingu (right) look on

Ngalakgan celebrate end to 30-year wait for land



The Ngalakgan people's 30-year wait for the return of traditional lands finally ended on 17 May when they participated in a ceremony for the handback of Urapunga Station in the Top End's Gulf Country, which was also attended by Federal Attorney General Daryl Williams.

Urapunga, approximately 600 kilometres south-east of Darwin, was returned to six local descent groups of the Ngalakgan people, including Burdal, Goyal, Mambali and Murrungan representatives. The station takes in more than 1,800 square kilometres of land in the Roper Valley region.

"It's a great day, a proud day for the Ngalakgan," Northern Land Council Chairman Gallarrwuy Yunupingu said.

"Traditional Owners began pressing for the return of their land in the 1970s, and now, after more than 30 years of patience, it's finally come back to them."

"The Ngalakgan have ancient connections to their land."

"The arrival of Europeans in the early 1870s failed to diminish these connections and they have continued to retain their cultural links and ceremonies."

"Like so many others, the Ngalakgan faced a variety of obstacles in the fight for their country, particularly from the former NT Government."

Despite the obvious joy in having his homeland back in his clan's possession, Traditional Owner David Daniels couldn't help but reflect on the price his people paid for its return.

"It's good that we have this land back, we have been fighting for a long time for this land. I am sorry that so many of the old people who started this fight have passed away," Mr Daniels said.

Ludwig Leichhardt was the first European explorer to travel through the region in 1845, naming the Roper River after his assistant John Roper.

A permanent European presence in the region dates from the 1870s, when the Roper River Supply Depot was established.

The name Urapunga is thought to be the Ngalakgan name for the general Roper Bar region and lived on when Paddy's Lagoon Station came to be called Urapunga Station in the early 20th Century.

Traditional Owners' links to the station were maintained right through the pastoral era due to the employment of local Aboriginal people as stockmen, housekeepers and police trackers as well as the residence of their families on the station.

However, the 1965 Equal Pay decision for NT cattle station workers saw the numbers of Indigenous workers at Urapunga severely reduced and the wholesale movement of Aboriginal people off the Urapunga pastoral lands.

"It's good that we have this land back, we have been fighting for a long time for this land. I am sorry that so many of the old people who started this fight have passed away."

TRADITIONAL OWNER,
DAVID DANIELS

Traditional Owners began pressing for land of their own in the Roper River area in the early 1970s. But it was only the provision of financial assistance from the

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) that finally allowed the Northern Land Council to purchase Urapunga in 1996.

The NLC held the station in trust for Traditional Owners pending the outcome of the land claim made under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act on 12 November 1996.

Land Commissioner Justice Olney ruled in favour of the claimants in June 2001, paving the way for the May 17 handback to occur.

The conversion to freehold title via the land claim process now provides surety for traditional owners, as the land can never be removed from their possession.

"The benefits of conversion to inalienable freehold title now provide the Ngalakgan with a host of options," Mr Yunupingu said.

Despite the station's neglected state at the time of its initial purchase by the NLC, it mattered little to the Ngalakgan.

Their focus now is on securing a strong economic outlook for future generations and an NLC-backed assessment process is already well underway to identify appropriate opportunities, which could include tourism, buffalo safari hunting and pastoral operations.



Walter Rogers and John Bern



NLC praises NT Govt move to drop Kenbi appeal

Larrakia people celebrated on 8 May when the Northern Territory's Labor Government announced it had dropped its appeal against the Kenbi land claim, removing the biggest remaining obstacle to settling the claim.

The decision on whether to grant the claim - which takes in Cox Peninsula and all islands and reefs to the west of the Peninsula in Bynoe Harbour - now rests in the hands of the Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Philip Ruddock, who has yet to decide on matters of detriment.

Northern Land Council Chief Executive Norman Fry described the Government's decision to drop its appeal against the Kenbi Land Claim recommendation as "sensible" and said it would allow further progress on negotiations towards resolving the future of the Cox Peninsula.

"It is time to move on from the former CLP government's shameful and antagonistic attitude towards Aboriginal

rights," Mr Fry said. "The Labor Government is showing by its actions that it is willing to consult with Aboriginal people as equal partners and take into account their concerns when it comes to development proposals."

The NT Government appeal against Land Commissioner Justice Gray's December 2000 decision to recommend the handback of the Cox Peninsula to Larrakia Traditional Owners was the final chapter in a 23-year-long history of CLP opposition to the Larrakia people's land rights.

It is estimated the CLP regime's long fight against the Kenbi claim cost NT taxpayers more than \$20 million.

"Thankfully a further waste of taxpayer

funds has been avoided and we can now move on to discuss the real issue - planning for the future of Darwin in a way that delivers the outcomes for Larrakia people and the other people in the Darwin region," Mr Fry said.

"The previous government's approach to the Kenbi Land Claim was characterised by abuse of planning principles and processes - as the Land Commissioner's report shows. The opportunity is now before us to develop a comprehensive and inclusive planning process based on mutual interests rather than political point-scoring," Mr Fry said the Larrakia people had already shown they could be willing participants in development initiatives with

the landmark Rosebery Bellamack land development agreement signed in December last year, and the Port and Wickham Point gas plant agreements.

NT Chief Minister Clare Martin said she had asked the Minister Assisting with Indigenous Affairs, John Ah Kit, to lead discussions with the traditional owners and the NLC regarding the future development of Cox Peninsula.

"The Rosebery Bellamack land development agreement with Larrakia people showed there can be a resolution to Indigenous land issues in the Darwin region when there is goodwill from the Government and the parties involved," Ms Martin said.



CLC delegates at Kalkaringi meeting in June

ABA changes coming soon to the Centre

Mr Ruddock is changing the way the Aboriginal Benefits Account (ABA) community grants program operates, removing ATSIC's administrative role and giving it to the land councils.

Northern Land Council has already come to an agreement with the minister on how the ABA community grants program will operate in the top end, as outlined in the last issue of *Land Rights News*.

CLC has in principle agreement from the minister to its preferred model.

Central Land Council discussed how the ABA community grants program should operate in Central Australia at their meeting in Kalkaringi in June.

The meeting resolved that each of the nine CLC regions should have a committee, made up of CLC delegates from the region, to prioritise projects for funding.

These projects would be developed at the community level with the assistance of CLC staff. The Central Australian ABA Advisory Committee, with strengthened powers, would then recommend which projects

across all regions would be funded.

The Advisory Committee would also develop the criteria and rules for funding under the categories of Land Management, Economic Development and Community Development.

The Central Land Council meeting also resolved that the extra costs to the CLC of administering the scheme should not come out of the community grants funds if other sources can be found.

The CLC's resolutions will be taken up with the minister and will require more detailed discussions by the ABA Advisory Committee.

Until the issue is decided the minister will not release any ABA community grant money in the CLC region, however the money will be distributed once a new mechanism is agreed on. ●

NAIDOC Week festivities

NAIDOC Week is upon us and as always there are major events and happenings planned to celebrate a great week of fun, festivity and culture.

NAIDOC is an opportunity to celebrate Indigenous culture and so present to the rest of the world a proud people dedicated to cultural retention and expression.

To coincide with this year's national theme of *Rights, Recognition and Reform*, local organisers have opted for *Culture, Community and Country*.

The week kicks off in Darwin on Sunday 7 July with a Mass in the city's Smith Street Cathedral commencing 10.30am, followed by a Family Fun Day.

There are sporting competitions, Open Days at various organisations and the annual march and rally through Darwin's city streets, backed up by the normally

well-attended NAIDOC Dinner Dance on Friday 12 July.

To wrap up the week's festivities a Festival Day will be held at Mindil Beach on Saturday 13 July from noon till 5pm, featuring stalls and cultural activities.

There will also be a rock concert - NAIDOC ROCKS - at the Darwin Amphitheatre starting at 6pm on the same night, featuring Coloured Stone, Warren Williams, Pigram Brothers and more.

If you want to know more about what's happening in your region, contact your local organising committee. The NLC is proud to be one of the sponsors of NAIDOC Week. ●

Ruddock Revisits Reeves

The Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Philip Ruddock visited the Central and Northern Land Councils in May to discuss his proposals to amend the Northern Territory Land Rights Act.

After listening carefully to the Minister, and looking at his options paper, it is clear his ideas are based on the 1998 Reeves Report with breaking up land councils and taking away powers from traditional owners being the central aims.

The Minister sees the Land Rights Act as a barrier to further economic development, especially mining, on Aboriginal land. An option floated by the Minister is that Aboriginal land could be mortgaged.

This would allow Land Trust members to borrow money for businesses or development but risk losing their land forever if they can't pay the money back.

Another suggestion is that there should be more mining on Aboriginal land, and one way to make this happen is to increase mining royalties paid to traditional owners.

Mr Ruddock has suggested that land councils could get less funding, and if land

councils want increased funding they should encourage more mining.

He would also take greater control of how and where the ABA money is spent.

Mr Ruddock is supporting the Reeves view that powers should be taken from the big land councils and handed to smaller regional land councils or bodies.

Even the mining industry however has expressed concerns that smaller land councils would not have the resources and expertise to handle the detailed negotiations over mining.

The land councils have objected to the Minister's assumption that the Land Rights Act has failed.

The central position of the land councils is that the rights of traditional owners should be strengthened, not weakened, and that no changes to the Act should be made without the informed consent of the traditional owners. ●

ALRA reform: Kim Hill says ATSIC backs TOs

ATSIC's NT Northern Zone Commissioner, Kim Hill, was invited to attend the Northern Land Council's Full Council Meeting on 28 May so that members could hear ATSIC's view on the Federal Government's proposed changes to the Land Rights Act.

Mr Hill, himself a former NLC staffer, indicated that over the past 18 months he had worked hard to ensure that ATSIC's principal policy-making functions on ALRA had been placed into the hands of the two NT Commissioners.

He emphasised that he was in favour of having no changes to ALRA without traditional owners' consent, saying that the majority of the ATSIC board was in agreement with that view.

Mr Hill also added that while ATSIC was obliged to make its own submission to the Federal Government on proposed changes to the Act, it would not submit these without first consulting with the land councils.

While emphasising that ATSIC's NT Commissioners had taken no view on ALRA reforms, Mr Hill thought it could be possible to change the way the Act worked without changing the Act itself.

Responding to Mr Hill's comments, NLC Chairman Galarwuy Yunupingu said Federal Minister Philip Ruddock was "playing around" with Aboriginal peoples' lives.

Mr Yunupingu said that amendments to the ALRA were aimed at changing Aboriginal peoples' lifestyles without their

consent, and Aboriginal people needed to be united in their opposition to this.

Mr Yunupingu urged all members at the meeting to put their own thoughts about ALRA reforms down on paper so Mr Hill could take them back to his Board of Commissioners as evidence of a united NLC position. The Full Council also adopted the following resolution:

"That the NLC Full Council advise ATSIC Commissioners and Regional Councils that in any matters involving Amendments to ALRA:-

1. *ATSIC should support the decisions of the traditional owners.*
2. *ATSIC should not support or propose any changes to the Government which do not have traditional owners' informed consent.*
3. *The NT Land Councils (ie the NLC in the ATSIC Northern Zone) represent the views of the traditional owners.*
4. *Where ATSIC has ideas about amendments to ALRA, they should present these to the Land Councils for their consideration and accept that the traditional owners and Land Councils have the final decision on any amendments."* ●

Goomadeer Walk



With the paper-bark off, the hungry walkers check the crocodile meat

It's the Dry Season in the Top End of the Northern Territory.

Little or no rain at this time of year transforms the landscape from green to brown. But from the air the escarpment country that passes below our helicopter has managed to retain a thin carpet of green, almost defying Mother Nature's seasonal patterns.

All that quickly changes as the chopper descends lower onto the flat country. It's here that the dry, parched landscape below begins to resemble a typical Dry Season setting.

In the distance thick clouds of smoke billow into the air. The pilot's voice crackles through our headsets, letting us know that it's these clouds we are headed for.

On the ground is a group of bush

walkers – 19 to be precise, 18 of whom are Aboriginal. All are learning new skills and all are committed to completing a seven-day trek through some of Australia's most rugged yet spectacular landscape on the Arnhem Land plateau next to the World Heritage-listed Kakadu National Park.

We touch down on the rocky-river bed of the dry Goomadeer River. The group resting nearby under the shade of leaning paperbark trees turn their heads to avoid the mini sandstorm our arrival has created, while on the opposite bank a bush fire snaps and crackles.

Lit by the group, its purpose is to rejuvenate the land. By removing the old, new growth can begin. This regrowth is designed to attract native game species, which in turn provides valuable hunting grounds for the Traditional Owners of this

country. It's a practice that's been utilised over countless years.

The walkers' presence along the banks of the Goomadeer River in Western Arnhem Land is all part of a greater purpose. Many of the group are trainee Rangers with the Northern Land Council's Caring For Country Unit. All are young men with a vested interest in caring for their traditional homelands.

They're not only learning a variety of skills - traditional and contemporary - but more importantly, they are learning how to care for their country.

Of great concern is the incursion of the dreaded cane toad. The walkers had already discovered this foreign invader two days before our arrival. The toad presents a worrying sign for traditional owners. Its impact on native fauna, and thus the traditional bush tucker diet, is well documented. Finding a way to eliminate them has been stamped 'urgent'.

Fortunately the toads haven't yet managed to impact on the local black

breast population. The bush walkers are doing a good enough job themselves to reduce these numbers.

It's day five of the walk and already the walkers have acquired valuable skills. They've not only managed to identify and record problem areas, but they've also honed their survival skills by living partially off foods provided by the bush.

The freshwater crocodile wrapped in paper-bark and cooking slowly in a nearby earth oven is a testimony to their hunting skills. With two days to go and plenty of walking in front of them, the walkers begin to stir - they're keen to keep moving, nightfall isn't too far off and they've still got to reach their overnight destination some seven kilometres away.

Sensing their restlessness, it's time we too were on our way. The chopper lifts off the rocky-river bed and swoops low over the walkers one final time before our paths diverge - ours heading for the comforts of Darwin and theirs to yet another night under the stars.



Bathing tired feet on the banks of the Goomadeer River

Ranger Program spreads its net

The Northern Land Council's Caring for Sea Country program continues to extend its network with the establishment of yet another Ranger program at Wadeye.

The Thammarrurr Ranger Group takes the number operating across the Top End to more than 20. Seed funding was provided by local councils and the Natural Heritage Trust, and membership has grown rapidly since the group started in February.

Now there are 15 young men and eight young women in the group, aged from their teens through to their early twenties.

The Senior Ranger is Arthur Karui although, as he says, "there are no bosses here". All members are being paid through the CDEP program.

On a visit to Darwin on 1 May Arthur – along with fellow rangers Mark Ninnal

and Paul Jinjair – took time out to explain the significance of the Ranger program for his community.

"First is to look after our countries and our cultures and all about our sacred sites. We've got many sacred sites and they've been in danger from people just coming in. Now we're getting control again," he said.

Another positive has been the solid community support for the scheme, especially among the young people who can now have another outlet for their energies.

"It's good for the kids. Teach them how to be Rangers but also cultural things and how to care for country, how to live on

country," Arthur said.

The first step for Thammarrurr Rangers was to put in place a management plan, then seek funding from various agencies to get training and implement the strategy.

"We're starting training with mimosa and then moving on to feral pigs," Mark said.

"Lots of mimosa, lots of pigs – too much. At least we can eat the pigs – we just want to keep the numbers down."

The Rangers expect the weed and feral animal control program to lead to a rebound in populations of native animals such as kangaroos, turtles, magpie geese and fish.

Eventually the Rangers hope funding will become available to allow the purchase of a boat, increasing their capacity to conduct surveillance work for the Immigration and Quarantine authorities.



Rangers Paul Jinjair, Mark Ninnal and Arthur Karui

Arrernte women help look after country

A group of Arrernte women showed their commitment to looking after country as they helped the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment with a controlled and authorised burn off at Ilparpa swamp south of Alice Springs in June.



Teresa Webb helping with the Ilparpa swamp burn off

The women, using matches at first and then fire torches, began to burn off grass and reeds during the two-day controlled burn off.

Native title holder Myra Hayes said the women's involvement was important because it was their job to look after the country, especially since there were sacred sites in the area.

The Ilparpa Swamp has become a health hazard with the escalation of mosquitos breeding in the area.

The Ilparpa Swamp Rehabilitation Committee was formed to fix the growing problems in the area.

Native title holders along with the Power and Water Authority and other land care groups form the committee which reports to the Urban Water Strategy Group where native title holders are also represented.

The controlled burn off was in response to the rehabilitation committee's concerns over eradicating an introduced grass whilst protecting the coolabah trees in the area.

Arrernte native title holders Myra Hayes, Teresa Webb, Louise Webb and Sheila Conway were happy to work with Fire Officers in cleaning up the swamp.

"They want the traditional owners to burn the land, burn the grass make it clear and make the place look tidy. It needs a good cleaning up," said Myra.

This is just one example of the importance of recognising native title rights in and around Alice Springs and it showcases the co-existence which is evolving between native title holders and



Myra Hayes

other agencies concerning country in and around Alice Springs.

"Yeah it makes a lot of difference, we get the land back and look after the land. Go out to the land that the old people left for us and have a look what's happening there," said Myra.

"It was very important for us and we had a hard struggle to get the land back. A lot of the people enjoy looking after the land because before we never had a chance to light a fire, light the grass in our homelands because you had the police come around and fire trucks would be there with their big sirens."

"Now we can work together to look after the country and clean the country up and it's very important."

"Things have got better and better for Aboriginal people to sit down and talk to white people, when they ask questions, how we are connected to the land and who they take the land from, that's what the story is and we gotta follow their tracks," said Myra.

Ritjingka Land Care Project



A small outstation near a popular tourist route is actively developing a land care plan to protect country and revegetate a sustainable environment.

The Ritjingka outstation, 35 kilometres south east of Titjikala, has completed a revegetation program as part of a plan of management developed by the traditional owners, Central Land Council and Tangentyere Land Care for the outstation.

The outstation is located on the Inarnme Aboriginal Land where the Australian Heritage Commission has a declared heritage site at Alice Well.

Alice Well was established in 1872 during the construction of the Overland Telegraph Station and was used as a stopover for many travellers in the early days.

Also during this time a police station was erected at Alice Well and is a tourist attraction for many people travelling in the area today.

The Finke area has become a popular tourist place for four wheel drive travellers and continues to draw large numbers of tourists thanks to better mapping of the area and the annual Finke desert race.

The increased presence of tourists in the area is a growing concern for traditional owners living on the Inarnme Aboriginal Land Trust.

In response to traditional owners' concerns the CLC submitted a funding application to the Heritage Commission to finance the erection of a fence around Alice Well.

In conjunction with the fencing, improved signage in the area has been erected to tell tourists they are entering Aboriginal land and a permit is necessary.

Other signs explaining the cultural significance of the area for Aboriginal people and the European significance of the area is still to be erected by the Heritage Commission.

Traditional owners have also been working closely with Tangentyere Land Care to prioritise their community's needs which included more shady trees, trees for wind breaks, citrus trees, mulga trees for easy access wood, dust suppression, irrigation and a play area for children.

The Tangentyere Land Care Unit helped the outstation draw up plans based on the needs set out by the community.



Sammy Campbell - Planting tree



Improving signage on Ritjingka outstation

As well as designing and planning the landscape for the outstation, traditional owners learnt about and discussed weed prevention, planting techniques, water harvesting and the re-establishment of original native plants in and around their homes on the outstation.

During three consecutive days members of the community planted over 50 trees and shrubs, laid irrigation and collected sand for the kid's playground.

The CLC is waiting for a response from the Heritage Commission about erecting appropriate cultural and historical signs for the area.

Let there be Bushlight!



ATSI NT Central Zone Commissioner Alison Anderson speaking at the Bushlight launch in Alice Springs

The sun is up, but your outstation's solar power system is down and you are hoping the diesel genset will kick in.

If so, you are not alone as over one in three small remote communities or outstations have problems with their solar power at any time.

A new scheme called Bushlight aims to overcome these technical problems for up

to 200 lucky communities over the next four years. ATSI Regional Councils in the NT, Western Australia, Queensland and South Australia are being asked to recommend communities that should be considered for improved renewable energy systems. These

renewable systems will mostly be solar powered but could also be wind or water powered in suitable conditions.

The ideal community for the project will have less than 50 people, have no access to the electricity grid (no power lines) so it either has no power, diesel power or a combination of renewable energy systems and diesel power.

The community should have secure land tenure or occupation and at least one permanent building that meets building standards. Other factors will also be considered, such as access, before ATSI Regional Councils and Bushlight agree on the best communities for the renewable energy systems.

Bushlight is a joint project of the Centre for Appropriate Technology (CAT) and the Australian Cooperative Research Centre for Renewable Energy (ACRE). The Chairman of CAT, James Bray, said at the Bushlight launch: "It was seven years ago that the Indigenous Board of our organisation took the decision to become one of the founding members of the Australian Centre for

Renewable Energy. We made this commitment because we realised just how critical energy is to our people living in remote communities. After water, the challenge of securing a reliable, affordable source of energy has been a central issue in communities for generations."

The \$24m project is funded by ATSI, the Australian Greenhouse Office and State and Territory governments.

As well as benefiting the communities involved and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, ATSI NT Central Zone Commissioner Alison Anderson said: "Bushlight will provide for Indigenous employment and training outcomes and will also ensure greater opportunity to develop Indigenous business."

The first communities getting the new systems will be in Central Australia and the Kimberley.

Consultations with each community will cover its power needs, how a system can be reliably maintained and the siting of a system. Bushlight will then develop an individual solution for the community and arrange its installation using private contractors as required.

Community members will be offered training in basic maintenance needs while mobile regional service teams will regularly visit to maintain the system. ●

Consultations begin on Black Tip gas pipeline

While debate continues to rage over the merits of bringing gas onshore to Darwin from the Sunrise field in the Timor Sea, Woodside Petroleum has begun to brief Northern Land Council members in the Darwin Daly Wagait region about another gas project based on its smaller Black Tip find in the Bonaparte Gulf.



The plan is for gas to be piped ashore at Wadeye from the Black Tip field – located 110 kms offshore – and then transported by an underground onshore pipeline to Mataranka where it could join up with the existing gas pipeline running north from the Central Australian gas fields or another north-south pipeline.

In its presentations to Council members, Woodside has said the known gas reserves in the Black Tip field could supply current demand in Darwin and Gove for at least 20 years.

Two other fields in the Bonaparte Gulf – Petrel and Tern (both operated by Santos Ltd) – and any other future discoveries could eventually be linked to this pipeline, more than doubling available gas reserves.

As part of the project Woodside said it would need to build a gas cleaning plant near Wadeye. Such a plant may generate extra power capacity to feed into Wadeye and neighbouring communities. The plant could also produce diesel for sale.

Woodside says that gas from Black Tip

could be piped from Mataranka to Gove for use by Nabalco's bauxite mine and nearby towns, with some associated employment opportunities for Indigenous people from the Daly River region to Arnhem Land.

Woodside has stressed that the project is only in its very early stages and that before it proceeds the company will need:

- to finalise feasibility studies into the viability of the project;
- obtain clearance from traditional owners for parts of the pipeline route;
- obtain a Native Title agreement over parts of the route;
- complete environmental assessments and gain the necessary approvals.

The NLC, on behalf of traditional owners and native title holders, will seek assurances of protection of sacred sites; protection of the environment; minimum employment and training levels; and opportunities to participate in economic benefits through a land use agreement, before the project will be allowed to proceed to its final construction stage. ●

Two inquiries launched into Ranger, Jabiluka



The Ranger and Jabiluka uranium mining sites will be the subject of two separate inquiries announced over the past month, both of them looking into environmental monitoring arrangements at the sites following the spate of effluent spills and other incidents this year.

The Northern Territory Government moved first, with Resource Development Minister Paul Henderson announcing on 3 June that an independent expert would be appointed to mount a review into the environmental regulation regime in place at Ranger and Jabiluka.

Terms of Reference for the review include:

- examining the adequacy of existing arrangements to safeguard the environment and workers' health;
- examining the adequacy of monitoring and reporting systems at the mine site, including the NT Government's role in ensuring compliance;
- examining whether the NT Government is meeting its obligations to the Commonwealth under the watchdog agreement signed in November 2000.

Mr Henderson said he expected to receive the independent expert's report by the end of September.

In Federal Parliament an alliance of

Labor, Greens and Australian Democrats has led to the establishment of a broader Senate Inquiry into operations at all Australian uranium mines, including those in South Australia as well as in the NT.

The Senate inquiry – announced on 20 June – will also focus on monitoring and reporting regimes, but in addition will examine the effectiveness of Commonwealth agencies involved in the monitoring process and review Commonwealth responsibilities and mechanisms with a view to improving the standards of environmental protection.

This Inquiry is expected to report back to Federal Parliament in December.

The operator of Ranger and Jabiluka, ERA Ltd, has already agreed to comply with international environmental management standard ISO 14001 by July next year as a result of pressure from the Northern Land Council and traditional owners over the recent incidents. ●

Kaltukatjara kicks off a better future for their youth

The Docker River community, 700 kilometres south west of Alice Springs, is taking steps to further develop its potential through a number of initiatives aimed at combating anti-social behaviour and meeting the needs of the younger population.

A Docker River Community Youth Program kicked off earlier this year with a week-long youth festival which included making and learning drums, painting murals on the recreation hall, workshops about drugs and alcohol, men's health and other health-related workshops.

Anangu youth workers have been organising a range of popular activities for young people such as local swimming trips, hunting and gathering bush tucker trips and a variety of sporting events.

Problems facing Docker River are family dysfunction or complete breakdown, major youth problems, high levels of petrol sniffing and other substance abuse and a near total community dependence on Centrelink benefits.

The community is fighting bureaucratic institutions at a Territory and federal level to gain access to programs and funding to address the increasing problems faced in their community.

Access to programs and funding is very



Docker River youth with youth workers Gerald Mitchell and Denise Brady

difficult due to the community's remoteness with many problems going unseen.

Two Anangu youth workers, Denise Brady and Gerald Mitchell, help support the young people at Docker River.

"The youth festival was really good because it was good to see the young people painting murals on the recreation hall instead of smashing the hall up. The young people have something constructive to do now," said Denise.

At present Docker River is receiving

funding through the Federal Department of Family and Community Services.

However there is no commitment to ongoing funding at this stage although the community remains hopeful.

Ngaanyatjara Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council is providing Docker River with support for the youth program, which aims to recognise and promote the importance of strong families among Aboriginal people and to promote healthy lifestyles in the community.

Pottery studio starts up at Docker



Potters at work in the Docker River studio

A new pottery project at Kaltukatjara has established regular pottery classes, a pottery studio and is developing existing artistic skills thanks to the local community and the Voluntary Service to Indigenous Communities Foundation.

The pottery project is an initiative of community members and the elected council, concerned about almost 100 per cent unemployment, with no CDEP funding and minimal operational funding from the Northern Territory Government.

This project is seen as a means to relieve boredom in the community and provide an outlet for some of the art and craft produced at Docker River.

At the request of the community, the foundation provided an experienced potter

with teaching skills from South Australia.

The potter will work with the community for about 12 weeks, made up of three four-week blocks of intensive training.

Beryl and Beverley Edimintja have had little or no previous experience working with clay but are already producing good quality pottery.

"Pottery gives us something to do and allows us to do paintings showing our country and dreaming," said Beverley.

Both women see the studio as a place

where they can take their children and spend the day as a family producing good work.

The pottery studio is a place for men, women and young people.

The setting up of a pottery studio was not expensive, as there was a building full of pottery equipment, including a kiln. The building had not been used for many years.

The foundation is also assisting Docker River community to establish a feral camel industry for live export and for meat.

The camel project will be set up and operated on Bill Edimintja's country in the Tjunti area, about 40 kilometres east of Docker River.

The camel project aims to provide training to young people in fencing, stock

work, chainsaw operation, welding and general labour. By training a young workforce in these skills it is planned that Docker River will have a profitable and self-running camel export business benefiting the community.

Other projects organised through the foundation will kick off later in July. These include setting up a five-acre market garden and a poultry project.

The market garden will help the community to develop skills to produce fresh produce.

The fresh fruit and vegetables will be provided to the aged care centre, the women's centre and the local store to improve the nutrition of people at Docker River.



Bill Edimintja with daughters Beryl and Beverley and grand-daughter Tanisha

Education crisis: finally some movement

In 1999, Bob Collins released "Learning Lessons", the most comprehensive study into Indigenous education ever undertaken in the NT.

The report was a wake-up call to Territory and Commonwealth governments, describing Indigenous education in the NT as in crisis.

All the indications were that educational achievement was going backwards.

This was particularly alarming as significant sums of Commonwealth funds had been specifically earmarked to address the inequities in Indigenous educational achievement in the NT.

Mr Collins made 151 recommendations in his report across a range of issues, but placed his main emphasis on poor attendance at schools in remote areas.

Robert Laird, President of the NT branch of the Australian Education Union, believes the main reason for the crisis is a systematic failure by past NT Governments to commit Commonwealth funds to address Indigenous peoples' special needs.

Those special needs, he explains, arise from a combination of factors which include geographic remoteness, low socio-economic status and English as a second language in many communities.

"If there were more teachers and better schools, attendance would improve," Mr Laird said during an interview with *Land Rights News*.

Mr Laird's concern over funding is backed up by the recently released ANAO review into Commonwealth education programs (see article below - *Auditors bag NT Education Dept*).

The ANAO devotes a chapter to the NT,

Department of Education to address the low levels of educational outcomes of Indigenous students in remote areas of the Northern Territory".

The NT Government has announced a Steering committee to implement the recommendations of the Collins report and has endorsed an Indigenous Education Strategic Plan to Improve Student Outcomes.

"If there were more teachers and better schools, attendance would improve."

ROBERT LAIRD

the only State or Territory to be singled out for special concern.

However, both Mr Laird and the ANAO are encouraged by recent steps taken by the new NT Government to address these issues. The ANAO draws attention to parliamentary statements from the Minister, Syd Stirling, which the ANAO describes as "an opportunity for the Commonwealth to work with the Northern Territory

This strategy is a direct response to the Collins report and focuses on six key elements. Students should be fit and able to learn, have good schooling and have their education tracked and their educational outcomes measured.

Programs should be managed with full accountability and Indigenous parents and communities should share responsibility with government for educational outcomes.

The Learning Lessons Steering Committee was launched in March.

Co-chaired by Mr Collins and the highly respected principal of Gunbalanya Community Education Centre, Ms Esther Djayhurrnga, the committee also has 10 senior Indigenous leaders among its members including CLC Director David Ross and ATSIIC Commissioner Kim Hill.

Key conclusions from the March meeting included strong concerns about the lack of progress on health issues, particularly hearing, which affects Indigenous students' ability to learn, and the importance of providing housing for Indigenous teachers in communities.

The committee plans to establish four pilot schools to improve education and attendance through initiatives such as a Local Education Advisory Board to pilot regional and community-based partnerships in remote area communities.

Mr Laird is encouraged by recent approaches from the NT Government, but is keen to see immediate announcements concerning the provision of housing for locally recruited staff in remote areas and measures to encourage more Aboriginal people to become teachers.

Auditors bag NT Education Dept

A review of Commonwealth indigenous education strategies claims the NT Department of Education was a major barrier to getting programs and funding in place.

The Australian National Audit Office reviewed the implementation of the Indigenous education strategies administered by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training and its predecessor, DEETYA.

The Audit Office singled out the NT Department of Education as a special problem for the Commonwealth Department. It was the only State or Territory department with a specific chapter devoted to it in the report.

The negotiations for Commonwealth Aboriginal education funding covering 2001-4 took the longest in the NT and in the first year only resulted in two six-month agreements and major underspending of what funds were available to the NT.

"The Commonwealth's options in addressing this situation are restricted because it is reliant on the Northern Territory Department of Education," the report says.

A new agreement was finally signed in October last year and the Audit Office placed great hopes in a change of attitude by the NT under the new government.

The Audit office noted that only three to four per cent of year three students in remote NT Aboriginal communities achieved the national benchmark for reading skills and that even this low figure

overstated the reality of the situation. It noted concerns of some Aboriginal parents that the standard of education they had received was better than their children were getting.

It said "performance in general terms of remote students in the Northern Territory appears to be some eight or ten times worse than the lowest performing region of Western Australia".

The report shows schools and public servants failing to keep up with the Commonwealth's constantly changing funding guidelines and performance indicators. It paints a picture of the departmental staff struggling to understand complex programs without the skills or staff available to explain them to the schools.

The report is available on the web at www.anao.gov.au.



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Pat is new Deputy Administrator

The director of the Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aide Service and Alice Springs native title holder, Pat Miller, has been appointed the Deputy Administrator of the NT.



moment to see an Arrernte woman from central Australia, who is well known and respected throughout the Territory, appointed as the new Deputy Administrator.

Ms Miller, a member of the Liddle family, spent her early years on Angus Downs Station before returning to Alice Springs aged 11.

She joined CAALAS about 20 years ago, gradually working her way up to becoming director.

Ms Miller is currently Chair of the Imparja Television Board.

She has represented Alice Springs in basketball and the Northern Territory in hockey and has served on a range of committees including:

Sadadeen Secondary College Board, Red Cross Alice Springs Committee, Women's Community House, Alice Springs Hockey/Basketball Associations, Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association, Institute of Aboriginal Development Board and Arrernte Council.

She and husband David have two sons, Allan and Steve, and two grandchildren. ●

The position involves representing the Government at a range of functions and ceremonies.

In announcing the appointment, Chief Minister Clare Martin said: "This is a great day for the Northern Territory with Ms Miller the first Indigenous person appointed to this position."

Central Land Council Director David Ross congratulated Ms Miller on her appointment and said it was a very proud

John Daly elected NLC deputy chairperson

Congratulations to Darwin Daly Wagait and Executive Council member John Daly, who will take on the previously vacant position of Deputy Chairperson.

His election at the NLC's recent Full Council Meeting fills an important gap in the NLC's hierarchy, as the deputy chair traditionally shares the workload otherwise borne exclusively by the chair.

Mr Daly brings to his new role not only his experience as an NLC councillor but also a broad exposure to the issues faced by Indigenous communities due to his work as a policeman based at Police Headquarters, Berrimah.

Growing up in the Daly River region, Mr Daly spent a great deal of his teenage years working in surrounding cattle stations before pursuing a career with the NT Police Force at the age of 19. This initial stint in the police force lasted five years.



Now back with the police force after several years travelling and working, Mr Daly has always held an interest in the work of the land council. He says maintaining his involvement with the NLC despite the demands of a hectic working life has been the best way of keeping in touch with issues of significance.

"I enjoy the challenges that the work at the land council has to offer and it puts me in the best place to assist countrymen," Mr Daly said.

Land Rights News looks back at...That Banned Dam

In June the CLP member for eastern Alice Springs, Dr Lim, called for a reopening of the Todd River dam debate on the tenth anniversary of the heritage order protecting sacred sites from being bulldozed.

Ten years ago Alice Springs was in the grip of one of the most bitter of many sacred site battles. Custodians were fighting to stop the NT Government destroying a series of women's sites by building a dam on the Todd River at Junction Waterhole nine kilometres north of Alice Springs.

The sites have significance to the Arrernte custodians and to groups far to the north and south of Central Australia.

In the face of protests the then Chief Minister, Marshall Perron, said: "We have the resources to build this dam, both financially and in manpower – and we have jails big enough to ensure that we do get it built."

May 17th was the 10th anniversary of a heritage protection order banning work on the dam that had already damaged part of an important series of sacred sites.

The date is also the halfway mark in the 20-year protection order issued by the then Federal Aboriginal Affairs Minister Robert Tickner.

The dam was to provide some extra flood protection for Alice Springs but experts doubted how effective it would be.

The CLP government since the late 1970s had promised a flood mitigation dam in various forms and plans had included a large recreational dam for swimming and boating.

The government announced the plan for the \$20 million dam at Junction Waterhole in 1990, saying it had won the approval of the custodians and had a sacred sites clearance certificate.

Soon after the people who had been consulted said the government had deceived them about the plan and that more people needed to be included.

In early 1991 earthmoving and blasting in the area of the proposed dam wall damaged the Women's Cave at Atniltye.

In March 1991 the Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Robert Tickner, issued an emergency 30-day stop work order to

allow more discussions.

After further consultations in April 1991 the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority withdrew its site clearance despite enormous pressure from the NT Government.

However the sacred sites laws had been weakened in 1989 so in April 1992 Max Ortmann, the NT Lands and Housing Minister, used his new powers to override the authority and allow damage to the site.

Mr Tickner meanwhile had issued temporary stop work orders in March and April while awaiting a report into the issue by Hal Wooten QC.

According to *Land Rights News* 10 years ago on 17 May 1992, when the 20 year protection order was announced to a meeting at the old Telegraph Station: "There were tears and cheers, traditional singing and dancing as the custodians ...heard the news that the sites were now protected."

Addressing the meeting CLC Director David Ross said, "The dreamings that form these sites connect Aboriginal groups throughout the region. Luritja, Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjarra, Warlpiri, Warrumungu and Yunkanyatjatjara people have all actively supported the Arrernte custodians throughout their long fight to defend these sacred sites."

"Today's decision is a turning point. Too often in the past the development of Alice Springs has been at the expense of Aboriginal people. Sacred sites have been destroyed and desecrated and the protests of Aboriginal people have been rubbished and ignored. Now at last we have some justice."

The ATSI Heritage Act 1984, under which the sites are currently protected, became the responsibility of the Minister for the Environment in 1998 and amendments to the Act thought to weaken it have been before Parliament for several years. ●

He sees his election as an endorsement from senior people that the time is right for the younger generation to make the step forward.

"It's a privilege to have been elected to the deputy's position, and I see it in some ways as an indication from the old people that it's time for the young to come through so that they can pass on their leadership skills," Mr Daly said.

Mr Daly and the other candidates had to undergo an anxious wait throughout the

voting process, the result not known until a third round of votes had been cast. In the end a margin of just five votes separated Mr Daly from closest rival Andy Andrews.

Chairman Galarrwuy Yunupingu congratulated Mr Daly on his election success, saying he looked forward to working closely with his new deputy.

The nominees were: Andy Andrews (Katherine), John Daly (Darwin Daly Wagait), Max Finlay (Borroloola/Barkly), and Mary Yarmirr (East Arnhem). ●

Recreational fishers 'must respect' Indigenous rights

If recreational fishers want to gain access to Aboriginal-controlled marine and estuarine resources, then they must change their attitude to Indigenous rights from one of conflict to one of negotiation.

That was the message delivered at the Third World Recreational Fishing Conference on 22 May by Northern Land Council Chief Executive Norman Fry and Garig Gunak Barlu (Cobourg Peninsula Sanctuary and Marine Park) National Park Board Chairman John Christopherson.

Both leaders were invited to make formal presentations to delegates at the conference, a major biennial international event held for the first time in Darwin in recognition of the appeal of the Territory's pristine waters and abundant fish stocks to recreational fishers from all over the world.

Mr Fry said recreational fishers faced a choice: either to move forward in a co-operative fashion or risk having the seas 'locked up' through ongoing conflict and antagonism.

"We share an interest in protecting and preserving the sea and its resources," Mr Fry said. "Our interests are in many ways different but we have a choice in how we deal with those differences."

Mr Christopherson added his weight to these comments, saying: "Our people's history in this country does not accommodate for, nor accept the laws introduced by colonisation, as the sole laws that should govern our estates and then vest conditional ownership upon us."

He said his experience first on the board and then as chairman of the Garig Gunak Barlu National Park had led him to realise that the relationship with recreational fishers was an important one that, carefully nurtured, would provide benefits in an economic sense while allowing

sustainable use of resources.

Mr Fry said Aboriginal people had maintained mutually beneficial relationships with trepangers over centuries before European colonisation, and had "achieved a high level of cooperation regarding access and what we would now call benefit sharing.

"The Macassans obviously understood what was important to their trading partners," he said. "The desire by recreational fishers to access Aboriginal lands and waters is not so dissimilar to that of the Macassans."

Mr Fry went on to outline the NLC's Caring for Sea Country strategy, which included management of sea resources by Indigenous people through their own community-based Ranger programs and participation in a broad range of activities up to and including large-scale commercial fishing operations.

Mr Christopherson said successful Indigenous participation in seas management could involve specific recognition of Indigenous people as managers within an international code of conduct. He said Canada and New Zealand were both countries that were successfully negotiating and implementing agreements that recognised Indigenous peoples as key players in marine management.

"Australia and in particular the Northern Territory needs to recognise this and implement legislative mechanisms to allow it," he concluded.

The workshop session aimed at developing an international code of conduct was well attended by representatives from Garig Gunak Barlu National Park, Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation and Dhimurru. ●



Senior Djelk Ranger Charles Godjuwa with Sir Tipene and Lady Sandra in community gardens

Sir Tipene backs aquaculture

The breeding and harvesting of fish and other marketable species through aquaculture programs could pave the way for Indigenous involvement in the commercial fishing industry.

That was the message conveyed to a group of interested traditional owners when a world-renowned authority on fishing, senior Maori man Sir Tipene O'Regan, visited the community of Maningrida on 20 May as part of his trip to the Recreational Fishing Conference.

Surrounded by virtually untouched wilderness areas, the waters off Maningrida haven't yet begun to feel the effects of over-fishing. But that, it seems, is not too far away.

The traditional owners have been shut out of any opportunity to establish sustainable, commercial utilisation of their marine resources, while having to watch the negative impacts of commercial barramundi fishing.

The dumping of fish species other than barramundi and the unnecessary drowning of turtles and dugongs is becoming too much for traditional owners, who are finding it increasingly difficult to stand by and look on.

They're keen to explore options on how best to deal with this situation. It's here that Sir Tipene was able to provide a level of wisdom and experience obtained over many years of involvement in the global fishing industry.

Sir Tipene is recognised as being a major player in the rise of the New Zealand-based seafood company, Sealords.

Under Sir Tipene's direction, this predominantly Maori-controlled company now enjoys a significant slice of New Zealand's commercial fishing industry, making it one of, if not "the", major participant in a lucrative industry.

A proponent of aquaculture programs, Sir Tipene believes Maningrida may be best placed to pursue this form of commercial fishing, rather than the existing practice of netting favoured by non-Indigenous operators. Not only will this process address the concerns of wastage, but ensures the survival of fish stocks for tomorrow.

It's a suggestion put forward with the belief that Indigenous involvement in commercial fishing ventures is inevitable. Work, he says, needs to be done now on defining just how much of an involvement there will be.

"My interest and your interest is, what is the place of the Indigenous communities going to be in that business? And I think it is inevitable that over time they will have a larger view, and a larger position, and I think it's time to work out the how's of doing it," Sir Tipene said during an interview with *Land Rights News*.

One thing appears certain. For any commercial success to be achieved, bipartisan support must also be attained. Sir Tipene said this was in the interests of all concerned.

"It is clearly in the interests of both Indigenous and white Australian that Aboriginal people have a vibrant and active commercial fishery," he said. ●



More raids on illegal crabbers' camps

The Northern Land Council has continued to back traditional owners in their fight against crabbers operating illegally in the Limmen Bight area.

Illegal incursions into Mara Land Trust and Arnhem Land Trust land continue to occur despite recent joint operations between the police and traditional owners that have already led to several prosecutions for trespass under the Aboriginal Land Act.

Formal crabbing agreements have been in place in Blue Mud Bay with traditional owners for several years and Mara traditional owners are interested in entering into similar agreements for the Limmen Bight area.

However, after the most recent unsatisfactory meeting with offending crabbers in early May, Traditional Owners decided to enforce their rights with yet more raids.

Accompanied by police and NLC representatives, Traditional Owner Roy Hammer flew in by helicopter to a number of different sites from Rosie Creek to Port Roper. A number of illegal camps were detected, along with evidence of accompanying environmental damage, and more court action is now pending. ●

Communities must act on drug abuse: Scrymgour

"The danger of this committee is that it will become just another committee inquiry into what we already know are problems. What we have to do is to be able to turn around the terms of reference and that's the job that we've been given. Have that equate to resources and look at the gaps and service delivery and make it a bit more worthwhile rather than being another talk-fest with more money wasted."

Marion Scrymgour, Member for Arafura

It's a documented fact that the balance of health in Australia is heavily stacked against its Indigenous occupants.

Concerned with this imbalance, the Northern Territory Government has taken a number of initiatives including revamping the provision of health services to remote Aboriginal communities and establishing a Government Inquiry to look into substance abuse among Indigenous people.

And it's the fear of going over old ground that has emerged as a motivating force for the *Substance Abuse in the Community Committee* (SACC), which is inquiring into the misuse of "soft drugs" in remote communities.

The level of petrol sniffing, alcohol abuse and cannabis use is either on the rise in remote locations, or remains consistent, but any use is still too high.

Addressing these issues and those associated with them is what the committee is all about, according to SACC Chairperson and the Member for the



she expresses concern about the SACC becoming "just another committee".

"For me it is very frustrating having been on the other side and to be asking communities questions when you know that there are problems out there," she said.

It's also true that the committee's impact may well be determined not only by its findings but by the level of funding made available to implement recommended policy changes. Ms Scrymgour said only a

"For me it is very frustrating having been on the other side and to be asking communities questions when you know that there are problems out there."

MARION SCRYMGOUR, MEMBER FOR ARAFURA

electorate of Arafura, Marion Scrymgour. Having completed all the necessary briefings with relevant government departments, the SACC is now looking to liaise with communities to identify problems they may have, and how best to deal with them. And it has no intention of recommending legislation to control the problem, unless it is in the communities' best interests.

"I've stressed ... at a committee level - and all members agree - we won't legislate or take anything on unless the community has said, 'look, this is a real issue here!'" Ms Scrymgour said.

"It's got to be community-driven."

With a strong background in Indigenous health, Ms Scrymgour's appointment to the committee is appropriate.

Her time spent with the Tiwi Islands and Katherine Health Boards provides her with detailed knowledge of the practices and procedures at work. And it is also a reason

holistic approach involving government and the communities would succeed in tackling substance abuse problems.

"That's the thing that the committee wants to look at - what does it take, what's the capacity and what's there so that the community can become one that makes decisions," she said.

"The reality is, in the communities that I've seen, you (must) have one or two leaders who are quite strong in terms of saying: this has got to stop and we've got to make this decision."

"We need the communities to participate when we come around and to tell us how it is. Unless we get this process driven by the community, it's not going to be any good."

"We don't want to be the ones saying it, we need the communities to participate 100 per cent and tell us like it is and say, 'you people as government, you have an obligation to us, this is the problem here!'"

Indigenous population on the up in NT - along with the opportunity gap

The Northern Territory's Indigenous population has continued to grow at a faster rate than the national average and has even outstripped the Territory's own high growth rate over the past five years, according to the 2001 Census figures.

However, the Census has also revealed a disturbingly wide gap in educational attainment and opportunities to access new technology between the general population and the NT's Indigenous people.

Updated Census estimates released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics on 26 June - which take account of people absent on census night and those who didn't fill in their forms properly - put the NT's Indigenous population at 57,550, representing 29 per cent of the NT's total population and an 11 per cent rise on the 1996 Census estimates.

This confirms the NT as the jurisdiction in Australia with the highest proportion of Indigenous people, although New South Wales had the highest total number of Indigenous people with a count of 135,319.


Over the same time the NT's population grew by 10 per cent to 200,019 while the national population grew by 6.4 per cent

to 19,485,278 people. The numbers of people reporting themselves to be of an Indigenous background across the nation shot up 16 per cent to 460,140 - 2.4 per cent of the national total.

The average age of the NT's Indigenous people is also significantly younger than the rest of the Australian population, with 56 per cent aged under 25 years and just 3 per cent aged above 65 years. Nationally, the figures are 35 per cent and 13 per cent.

Education levels among Indigenous people continue to lag the broader population, with 7 per cent of NT Indigenous students aged 15 years and older completing Year 12 compared with the national rate of 30 per cent.

And while 42 per cent of the general population and 31 per cent of the NT's population is likely to use a computer at home, only 5 per cent of Indigenous people in the NT have similar access.



Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory

SELECT COMMITTEE ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN THE COMMUNITY

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

The Legislative Assembly has established the Select Committee on Substance Abuse in the Community to inquire into and report on issues with regard to the use and abuse of licit and illicit drugs in the Northern Territory. A copy of the full Terms of Reference can be obtained from the address shown below.

In the Northern Territory context, the Committee has established the following priorities for its initial focus:

- Alcohol
- Petrol sniffing
- Cannabis

and is keen, in the first instance, to receive submissions in relation to these areas of substance abuse in particular.

It is intended to hold meetings and hearings in all major centres and selected communities later in 2002.

Individuals and organisations are invited to make submissions to the Committee and/or express interest in meeting with the Committee or appearing at a public hearing.

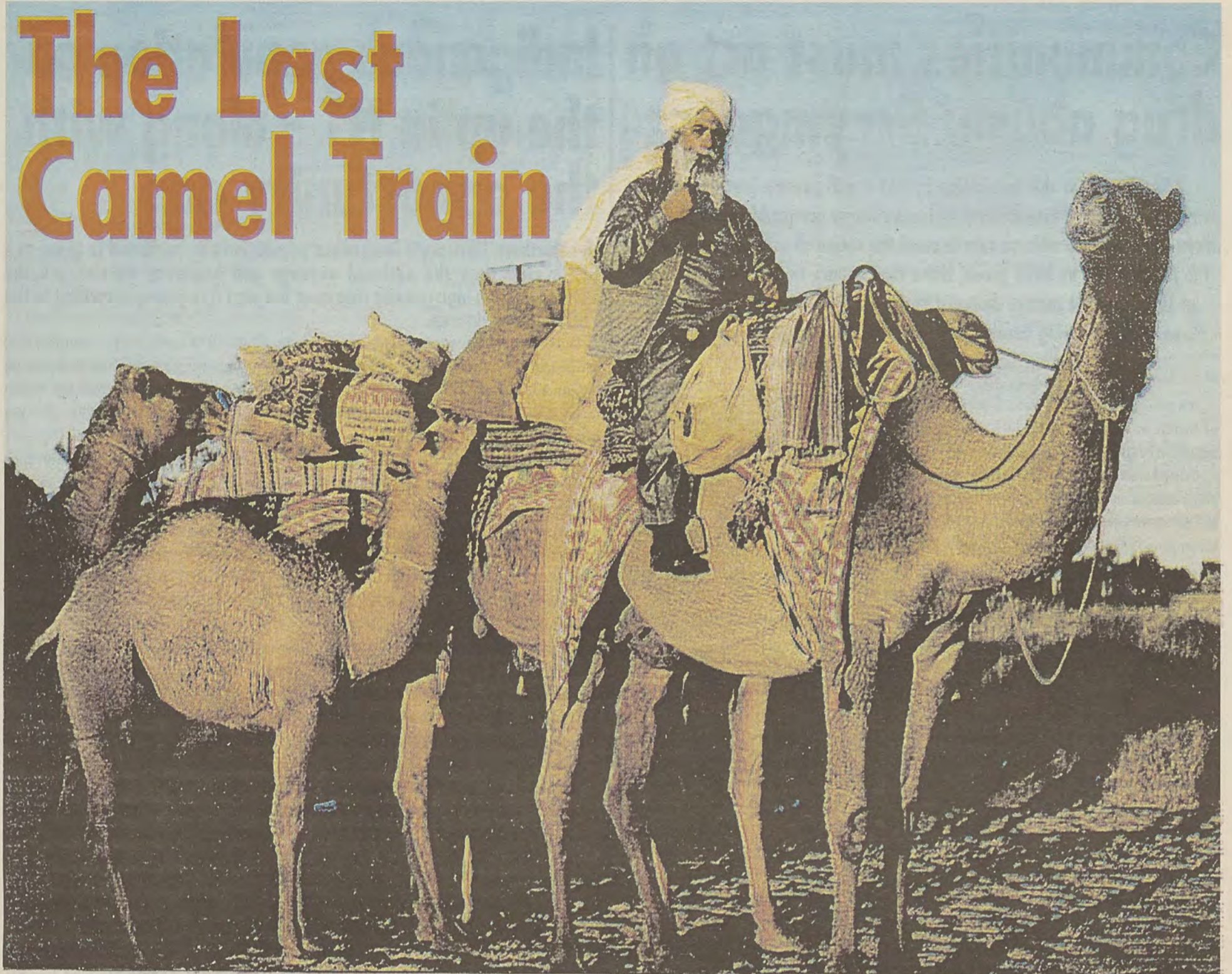
Where possible, electronic submissions are preferred. Submissions should be lodged with:

The Committee Secretariat
 GPO Box 3721
 DARWIN NT 0821

Telephone: 8946 1429
 Facsimile: 8946 1420
 Email: SubstanceAbuse.LA@nt.gov.au
 Website: <http://www.nt.gov.au/lant/parliament/committees/substance>

Further information on the role of the Committee and the process of the inquiry, can be obtained from Pat Hancock, Secretary on 8946 1429.

The Last Camel Train



Above: Eric Sultan in costume dressed as Saleh Sadadeen, one of the best known of the Afghan cameleers, with an Alice Springs suburb named after him



A re-enactment in August of the camel trains that used to carry freight and mail from the old railhead at Oodnadatta in South Australia to Alice Springs will celebrate the old Afghan, Aboriginal and European cameleers.

The teams of camels will take about 20 days to make the 520-kilometre trip passing near communities such as Apatula and Titjakala on the way.

Alice Springs will celebrate their arrival at the end of August during the Outback Expo, the centrepiece event of the 2002 of Year of the Outback.

Schools can get a resource kit about the trip and more information is available on the web at www.lastcameltrain.com.

Afghan cameleers came to Central Australia in the late 19th Century to manage camel trains carrying freight to remote communities.

They also brought the Islamic religion to the centre and in line with their religious convictions many refused to transport alcohol or pork.

Like Aboriginal people, the Afghans were useful to the European pastoralists and miners but not readily accepted by them because of their different religion and culture.

The completion of the railway from Oodnadatta to Alice Springs in 1929 spelt the end of the camel trains, which were already becoming less common due to competition from trucks.

Cameleers CD

The idea of recording a CD of songs about the cameleers arose out of talks between Eric Sultan and the man behind the Last Camel Train concept, Alex Sherrin.

CAAMA Music manager Gillian Harrison and a range of songwriters and musicians enthusiastically backed the idea.

Artists such as Warren Williams, Ted Egan, Doug Abbot, Lynden Reid, Bill Davis, Keith Buzzacott, Gerry Laughton, Bloodwood with Alex "hooshta" Sherrin, Steve Smith, Ross Magnay and Patsy Mohamed, the daughter of cameleer Gool Mohamed, are donating their talents to the project.

Lisa Breadon, a rising star, features on harmonies on several songs.

CAAMA Music producer Stan Satour, who is recording the songs, said: "Not many people know about the Afghan side of things."

"The Afghans, like Aboriginal people, were discriminated against by white society so naturally they came together and people got to know each other."

Mr Satour says he is still learning about his Aboriginal

and Afghan heritage: "Since starting recording the album I've driven (from Alice Springs) down to Oodnadatta to see the old camel route and to wonder what it was like and what it means to me. This project is great because it will keep the light on the Afghan contribution to Central Australia."

Warren Williams, who sings on the album, said: "It's interesting as an Aboriginal person finding out about the Afghans."

"They used to take the mail out to Hermannsburg and had respect for Aboriginal people there."

CAAMA will stage a live-to-air concert in its Alice Springs studio to launch the album on 24 August during the Alice Springs Festival.

It will feature the artists and songs on the album and is timed so that the people on the Last Camel Train will be able to hear it while still on the trail a week from Alice Springs.



Aboriginal cameleers with an Afghan (far right) resting on the route from Oodnadatta in 1925

The Afghan Aboriginal Heritage

Eric Sultan is a patron of the Last Camel Train re-enactment and President of the Alice Springs Islamic Society. He is one of many people in Central Australia with a proud Aboriginal and Afghan heritage.

"The Afghan cameleers and Aboriginal people lived side by side in the Centre."

"The co-existence lead to friendships and marriages," he said.

The cross-cultural marriages are reflected in Afghan surnames amongst Aboriginal families in the Centre such as the Sultan, Satour, Hoosan, Sideek, Mulladad, Munjaloon and Khan clans.

Mr Sultan says that among the families with Aboriginal and Afghan heritage the Islamic religion was largely lost for one and a half generations.

Now some people are turning towards their grandfather's religion and exploring another part of their heritage.

Mr Sultan says some families are sending their children to learn about their religion at the Alice Springs Mosque and to participate in youth activities.

They are also looking at setting up an after-school homework centre at the Mosque and investigating getting Aboriginal Student Support and Parental Awareness

(ASSPA) funding for it. Mr Sultan sees it as giving kids more options for a better education and lifestyle as well as the chance to learn more about Islam if they wish.

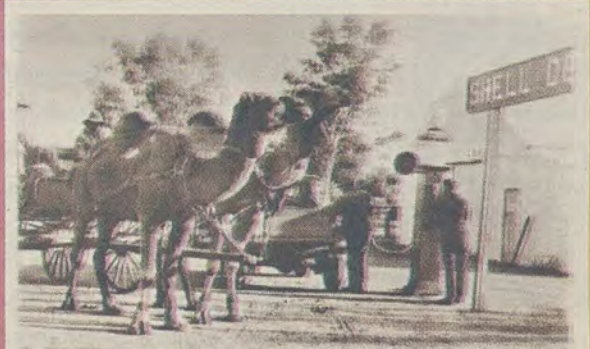
"It's about knowing who you are and where you have come from," he said.

Mr Sultan was christened in the Church of England but his father and grandfather, Sultan Mohamed, were born into Islam.

When his father died the family didn't know how he should be buried according to custom.

"The religion had been lost with assimilation," Mr Sultan said.

Islam was brought to the centre by cameleers in the 1860s and flourished for more than 60 years. Then, with the assimilation of people with Afghan-Aboriginal heritage into the wider community, it was difficult to maintain the Islamic religion. It has been revived in the Centre with the arrival of migrants from Islamic countries since the 1970s and the building of the Alice Springs Mosque.



Camel wagon at the Alice Springs Shell depot in 1928, the year before the railway from Oodnadatta to Alice was completed. Even before the railway, trucks were replacing camels on many routes.

The Camel Industry

Many camels were let free when they were no longer needed.

They prospered in central Australia and now, with an estimated half million camels, form the largest wild camel population in the world.

While there are many tourist ventures in Central Australia based on camel rides and expeditions, the biggest economic growth is in the camel meat industry. At present camel meat is worth 30 cents more a kilogram than beef.

In June a shipment of over 100 camels from the centre were sent to Saudi Arabia for the restaurant trade and they follow other shipments to Kuwait and Jordan.

Tjuwanpa Outstation Resource Centre near Hermannsburg is about to launch a camel enterprise. They plan to capture camels roaming to the west around Gosses Bluff. The camels will then be kept in paddocks ready to fill live export orders.

Docker River community also plans another camel project.

In the 1920 the block was home to Saleh Sadadeen who set up a market garden there after retiring as a cameleer. He originally came to Australia to lead camel trains after working as a cameleer for the British Army in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border region.



Above: At the re-naming of the Alice Springs Civic Centre park in December as Nishaan-e-Afghan Park (meaning "in memory of the Afghans" in the Pushto language of southern Afghanistan) from left: Imam of the Alice Springs Mosque Ahmed Hussain, with Ronnie Satour, Beryl White, Kenny Satour, Eric Sultan with camel, Betty Rawson, Eileen Hoosan, Dianne Linton, Clyde Harris, Barbara Ross and Sandy Satour.

Borrooloola Women's Shelter nears reality



Roddy Friday and grandchild with the Blimbirra Women's Committee

A breakthrough Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) is set to be signed in Borrooloola within weeks, paving the way for work to start on the community's long-sought-after women's shelter.

Work on the \$400,000 project is due to start early next year, with funds already allocated by Territory Housing for the construction phase and funding allotted by Territory Health to cover the shelter's initial set-up costs.

It is hoped ATSIC will cover running expenses in future years.

An architect, Ken Russell, has already been selected and is working with the Blimbirra Women's Committee to come up with a design.

Management arrangements are currently being fast-tracked by a Government interdepartmental committee put together at the urging of the NLC.

Key to the project is the security of its location, sandwiched in between the Borrooloola Police Station, the Borrooloola Norforce headquarters and the Borrooloola Night Patrol on a block currently occupied by the Women's Centre and health clinic.

Already it is being touted as a model for similar developments in other remote communities.

Women's Committee member Thelma Douglas said the shelter would provide 24-hour care for women and their children, with facilities for up to 10 adults and five children – including those visiting from other communities or interstate – to stay for up to two weeks.

The shelter's permanent staff will comprise a co-ordinator and two assistants, all with first aid training.

It would also link up with all the other women's services in Borrooloola, such as the children's creche and the health clinic.

"The safe house is important for everyone in Borrooloola because there's too much fighting, too much domestic violence every night," Ms Douglas said.

"There's been nowhere to put women

in a safe place, just go to the clinic and then they've got to go back to the camp. We've asked the police every time to do something but they won't. So we've put our hand across that we really want to get somewhere safe, and now we've got it."

The chairperson for the 21-member Women's Committee, Ms Roddy Friday, said the shelter's position in the middle of the township also made it a neutral sanctuary for women from the four Indigenous communities around Borrooloola – Yanyuwa, Garawa, Mara and Kurdanji.

"Borrooloola is not like any other town and it's been very important for the local women to take charge of the project," Ms Friday said.

"It's very unusual for this amount of consultation to take place for women from remote communities."

The land for the shelter was given by the Department of Land to the Rumburra Malandri Council Aboriginal Corporation in February 2000 but Rumburra's subsequent slide into administration delayed the project's start date.

The previous Northern Territory Government had also used specious Native Title issues in an attempt to frustrate the process.

However, such was the desire of the local community to provide a safe haven for women and their children that Native Title claimants subsequently waived their rights to compensation for use of the land.

With the assistance of the Territory's new Labor Government, an ILUA was prepared to protect Native Title claimants' rights while still allowing the shelter to go ahead.

The Borrooloola women said they especially wanted to thank the NLC, Territory Housing and Territory Health for their assistance in progressing the project. ●

Waltja talks careers

Waltja Tjutanku Palyapayi in Alice Springs has been offering groups of girls from remote communities work placement thanks to funding from the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

The week-long work placement at Waltja offers young women the opportunity to visit a number of organisations in Alice Springs and talk about career opportunities as well as giving the girls a chance to do activities not offered on their communities.

During the program Waltja has hosted three blocks of work placements for girls from communities such as Nyirripi, Yuendumu, Santa Teresa, Titjikala,

Engawala, Eagle Beak and Utopia.

Waltja is hoping the funding will be ongoing to allow more girls to participate in the career-developing program.

Also as part of the program Waltja hosted a career workshop at Ross River where over 40 girls attended information talks from a number of organisations and participated in activities such as tie dying and lino printing. ●

Below: A group of young women from Santa Teresa visited the Central Land Council as part of their work placement in Alice Springs at Waltja (l to r): Heather Oliver, Kelly Palmer, Sylvia Heffernan, Sharon Eilis, Athelita Yunupingu



Conference calls for more Women's Ranger Groups

“The Land is our identity, Identity is in our ceremony, our language and our life, Good to see women talking strong”

These were just some of the comments that came out of this year's Ngalmuka Land Management Conference, which saw 100 women camped together for three days from 4-6 June. Women spoke freely about their feelings and aspirations and there was a wonderful energy from everyone sharing together.

Women came from the communities of Yirrkala, Ramingining, Maningrida, Gunbalanya, Larrakia, Adelaide River, Jabiru, Pine Creek, Werenbun, Beswick, Barunga, Borrooloola, Ngukurr, Roper Valley and Pigeon Hole. The Conference was held at Gunlom in the southern part of Kakadu National Park on Jawoyn lands. Beryl Smith and the Kakadu Rangers, who hosted this year's event, wish to thank all who attended for making it a success.

Women worked in small groups to develop their own action plans for projects in their communities. These included:

- setting up Ranger groups and getting young women involved;
- running bush culture camps;
- caring for country;
- planting bush tucker and medicine gardens;
- cleaning up rubbish and weeds;
- collecting bush tucker for aged care;
- doing flora and fauna surveys and pollutant research;
- working in schools and setting up Junior Ranger groups.

The women heard a number of interesting presentations from speakers working in the areas of fauna and flora preservation, bush tucker, mapping, education and health.

Two resolutions were passed, calling for the establishment of fully resourced Women's Ranger Programs in the Borrooloola and Ngukurr regions.

Mamadawarre and Manmoyi women are also planning to start land management work in their area. ●



Three Napurrurla's at the Nyirrpi meeting



Tiger Japaljarri Morris was happy to take the group on an excursion to visit his country during the Warlpiri Triangle meeting at Nyirrpi.

Warlpiri Triangle keeping language and culture strong

Songwriting in Warlpiri was just one of the workshops buzzing with excitement as Warlpiri women young and old came together at Nyirrpi for the annual Warlpiri Triangle meeting.

Some 80 women from Yuendumu, Willowra, Lajamanu and Nyirrpi who are involved in education in their communities attended the meeting to talk about the Northern Territory curriculum framework for pre-school to secondary students.

During the week-long meeting women discussed a six-month study on how to form a Warlpiri Education region.

The proposal has been under discussion for the last three years and received endorsement from the Warlpiri Triangle at the last meeting in 2001 at Lajamanu.

It is envisaged that the Warlpiri Education Region will parallel Warlpiri-patu-kurlangu Jaru Inc, also known as the Warlpiri Triangle, and will provide a means for Warlpiri people to exercise greater participation in, and control over, the delivery of education in their region.

The proposed Warlpiri Education Region will also provide a number of important efficiencies through:

- Tracking students as they move between communities, and providing a common teaching program for them across the schools;
- Integrating all aspects of education delivery, 'cradle to grave', and the use and deployment of staff, including specialist support staff;
- Making more effective use of materials, resources and infrastructure.

A grant from the NT Government will assist the study into how a Warlpiri Education Region can maximise outcomes.

The Warlpiri Triangle decided that one

or more representative from each of the core communities will work with the principle researcher who will negotiate with the Department of Education, Employment and Training and Batchelor Institute for Indigenous Tertiary Education.

Warlpiri Triangle Deputy Chairperson, Barbara Napanangka Martin, said the meetings are important for Warlpiri educators to get together and talk about education issues and concerns in their community.

"Every year we get together to talk about how our kids are learning in schools and we bring their work to these workshops and talk about what we teach."

"We share ideas and support each other and talk about how we can make changes and listen to what others are doing in their

"We are both learning from each other, young teachers are learning from elders and elders are learning from us. We are both teaching each other and we are all aiming to teach our Aboriginal kids."

BARBRA NAPANANGKA MARTIN

schools."

"We talk about the NT curriculum framework and how we want to put Warlpiri language and culture in the curriculum and how we want to use it in our schools.

"Old people are also getting involved in the Warlpiri Triangle and we are happy to have old people involved because they have important knowledge to write into the curriculum for teaching our kids in the classroom. Old people are the ones that

have really strong knowledge and experience to keep our language strong and culture going."

"We are both learning from each other, young teachers are learning from elders and elders are learning from us. We are both teaching each other and we are all aiming to teach our Aboriginal kids," said Barbara.

Barbara is a qualified senior teacher at Yuendumu School which is one of four Warlpiri schools using Two Way Learning.

"We are working strong to make sure Warlpiri language and culture is part of the school curriculum and we want to learn and gain more knowledge so we can become senior teachers and principals of our schools," Barbara said.

The women at the meeting also discussed the building of a secondary school in the

Tanami region.

They said a secondary school should be built in a more self-contained area away from the problems of any communities, where students could concentrate on their studies.

Newly elected chairperson of Warlpiri-patu-kurlangu Jaru Inc and Nyirrpi School's current assistant teacher, Ormay Nangala Gallagher, said the meetings were really important and very interesting for all concerned.

"I've been involved in a workshop



Madelaine Napangardi Dixon and Ormay Nangala Gallagher



Warlpiri women during a community literacy workshop

talking about maths for preschoolers and transitions - about how the little kids can learn to do maths in Warlpiri language," said Ormay.

The Warlpiri Triangle continues to grow as a strong united voice for Warlpiri education. The Warlpiri Triangle originally grew out of kinship links between Warlpiri people working in Warlpiri schools.

This close relationship led to sharing of materials and teaching programs from the early 1980s onwards.

During the 1990's, bilingual education programs were cut in many communities and it was here that Warlpiri educators decided unanimously that Warlpiri schools would continue to teach bilingually, in both Warlpiri and English.

The Warlpiri Triangle was incorporated in 2000 at Yuendumu to formalise its objectives and rules.

Itinerants project up and running

A unique project looking at community concerns about 'itinerant' behaviour in Darwin and Palmerston has now reached the stage where recommendations from a year-long research project are ready to be implemented.

On 14 May 2002, John Ah Kit, MLA, Minister for Community Development, announced that the Government would be funding a Project Coordinator and "will devote substantial funding to the key strategic areas outlined in the report."

A Project Coordinator has since been appointed and has already moved into the Larrakia Nation office.

Community concerns over "itinerant" behaviour, and the Government's inappropriate and often heavy-handed reaction, led NLC Chairman Galarrwuy Yunupingu to initiate discussions two years ago on a proposal to establish a broad-based community response.

Subsequently a meeting of over 20 organisations recommended a research project to "provide a comprehensive understanding of the nature of the issues facing Indigenous 'itinerants' and service providers in the Darwin region and provide recommendations for addressing these issues."

A Project Management Committee comprising representatives from the NT Government, ATSIC, Larrakia Nation, North Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service (NAALAS), NLC and the Aboriginal Medical Service Alliance of the NT (AMSANT) was established to run the research project.

This committee set out defining principles for the research including adopting a pro-active rather than punitive approach; recognising the legitimate rights of both "itinerants" and the wider community; and acknowledging that traditional owners (the Larrakia) have the



Long-grass protestors, Parliament House, Darwin

right to determine what is appropriate behaviour on Larrakia country.

The consultant's report, *The Long Grassers: A Strategic Report on Indigenous 'itinerants' in the Darwin and*

increase the hours of the current Night Patrol and change the nature of the Night Patrol to a more pro-active Community Patrol including the introduction of Outreach Referral Workers.

Larrakia and key regional leaders will visit remote communities to discuss effective information and education campaigns in home communities.

Palmerston Area, was completed and presented to the Project Management Committee in November 2001.

The report recommends four key strategies with a Working Party of stakeholders for each strategy to provide specialist advice on the implementation of recommendations.

The Patrolling Strategy aims to coordinate existing patrolling activities,

The Education and Regional Strategy is aimed at educating visitors to Darwin on the importance of respecting Aboriginal law through Larrakia protocols developed during the project.

Larrakia and key regional leaders will visit remote communities to discuss effective information and education campaigns in home communities.

Information aimed at the wider

community will explain the nature of the project and the legitimate rights of Indigenous people to visit Darwin and access services and public spaces.

The Alcohol Strategy is aimed at introducing coordinated service delivery to assist those itinerants with alcohol abuse problems to move away from this destructive life-cycle.

The Accommodation Strategy is aimed at helping those people who wish to stay in Darwin and Palmerston to find safe, appropriate and permanent accommodation.

Submissions currently being considered by ATSIC and the Northern Territory Government identify immediate measures required to implement report recommendations.

These include key patrolling and education initiatives, pilot withdrawal services and diversionary day-time activities to encourage people away from alcohol abuse.

Positive signs for the project include widespread community and organisational support, the establishment of a Coordinating Office at the Larrakia Nation in Alawa and a range of discrete initiatives.

These include a two-month pilot cultural and tourism project at Darwin's NT Museum, and the Larrakia Ambassadors program, which – in conjunction with Darwin City Promotions – will train Larrakia to provide a visitors' service in the CBD area.

A scheme to expand the Ambassadors project into the Casuarina area is being backed by the Minister for Parks and Wildlife, the Hon Kon Vatskalis MLA.

Other initiatives include a Proof of Identification Strategy to establish uniform ID standards, currently being developed by ATSIC in association with Centrelink, and building shared positions with government agencies on a range of issues. ●

Reports discredit key Fed Govt Indigenous policies

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Dr William Jonas has strongly criticised the Commonwealth Government's approach to reconciliation and native title in two reports released in May.

In the *2001 Social Justice Report* Dr Jonas says there is nothing on the public record to indicate that the Government is showing good faith towards the reconciliation process. He says the Government has used its stated commitment to practical reconciliation "to shut down debate and avoid any engagement" with recommendations from the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation.

Dr Jonas describes practical reconciliation as an assimilationist policy that responds to Indigenous disadvantage without looking at Indigenous rights, and has called for a Senate inquiry into the reconciliation process.

Dr Jonas also looks at the situation 10

years on from the *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody*, noting that while there have been some improvements, "the situation generally has deteriorated significantly with continuing high rates of over-representation in custody, significant increases in rates of imprisonment of Indigenous women, and a nationwide trend towards tougher law and order policies."

The one positive note in the report is Dr Jonas' finding that the introduction of the NT's Pre-court Juvenile Diversion Scheme is a "positive development" for the NT, where 73 per cent of juvenile detainees are Indigenous.

However, the Commissioner expresses some important concerns about the scheme

including limited availability of community-based alternatives.

Dr Jonas's views on Native Title – contained in the *Native Title Report 2001* – are particularly damning, and echo recent calls by senior Indigenous leaders for a major review of native title and land rights.

Dr Jonas says the *Native Title Act* has failed to deliver lasting outcomes for Indigenous peoples.

"As an embodiment of social relations, the native title system places Indigenous interests at a lower level than non-Indigenous interests, every time," he says.

The report expresses serious concerns over how the right to negotiate is operated and identifies that serious under-funding of

native title representative bodies "limits the options for Indigenous people in protecting their native title rights."

Dr Jonas is highly critical of the NT Government's release of mining tenements. He says that up to 8 August 2001 the Northern Territory Government issued 347 proposals to grant exploration in 11 months.

Dr Jonas says there are "serious human rights concerns with the issue of section 29 notices in this manner".

"While the NT Government's actions may not be explicitly directed at nullifying the rights of native title holders, the effect ... is to substantially reduce the level of assistance that can be provided by the representative bodies to claim groups." ●

Mabo: Ten years on

BY: Galarrwuy Yunupingu, Chairman, Northern Land Council

Attending the ceremonies last month for late, great Bunidj elder – the “Kakadu Man” – Big Bill Neidje, I have been thinking of his legacy, and that of other Indigenous heroes who led the hard-won battle for land and native title.

Along with Big Bill, other giants of our movement include Eddie Mabo, Vincent Lingiari and my own father, Munggaraway Yunupingu.

Like the Kakadu Man, my father was a giant in more ways than one.

In the early 1960s he, along with the leaders of the other 12 Yolgnu clans, was faced with the imposition of a huge bauxite mine on their country without their permission or even consultation.

That event, like the Wave Hill walkoff led by Vincent Lingiari, was one of the seminal incidents that led to the recognition of traditional land rights in the Northern Territory in 1976.

Along the way to the establishment of land rights, my father and his clansmen fought and lost a battle in the NT Supreme Court, where Justice Blackburn famously invoked the doctrine of *terra nullius*.

While the NT won land rights in 1976, for the rest of Australia it took another 16 years before the legal lie of *terra nullius* was successfully challenged, when Eddie Mabo took his fight for Mer Island to the High Court and won in 1992.

That was only 10 years ago.

The Meriam people finished the legal battle started by the Yolgnu in 1961; and Australian law finally recognised native title.

The question I am constantly asked is whether the recognition of our traditional rights to land has made things “better” for our people. I am also asked how the “dysfunction” of Aboriginal communities can be reconciled with the great advances we have made in the recognition of our rights.

I know that if my father were still alive today he would give short shrift to those who seem to be arguing that the recognition of our law and our links to land and sea has further disadvantaged our people. I know that he would think that no people could be more disadvantaged than the Yolgnu when they had to watch, powerlessly, as bulldozers tore down sacred trees and built a huge mine on their land.

And having lived through those times myself, when I could not vote and was only educated through the charity of missionaries, I challenge anyone to say that we were better off before our rights were recognised.

However, I have never believed in rights for rights' sake. It is not the acquisition or recognition of our rights that is important, but the enjoyment of those rights. We are still struggling for that enjoyment today, and constant attacks from successive governments over the past 20 years have made that enjoyment appear elusive and unattainable.

There are many good news stories about what Aboriginal people are doing with their native title and land rights, but there are not as many as there should be due to the constant rearguard actions we must fight.

In the Northern Territory, we are proud of achievements such as the Alice Springs to Darwin railway corridor – negotiated under both Land Rights and Native Title regimes. We are proud of the fact that 30 per cent of available land in the Top End is under mineral exploration, and equally proud that traditional owners of other land



have decided against that particular form of development.

Our pride comes from being able to decide, on our own terms, what happens on our land.

On a community level, through innovative use of western and Aboriginal knowledge, we have developed employment and career options in land management. The NLC has helped established Ranger programs across the Top End, and we are now busy networking those rangers to provide support to each other and share their unique knowledge with the world.

It is hard, however, to find the resources to build upon these successes when the other pieces of the puzzle are not in place. Land rights (and native title rights) are only part of the set of rights which must be established and enjoyed.

As the Commonwealth Grants Commission highlighted last year, adequate funding is simply not getting through to provide health, housing and education of a decent standard. There are also many other social problems which stem from poverty: substance abuse, family violence and despair.

Indigenous leaders are hard-pressed to deal with these systemic and structural problems when – again and again – we are forced back into the same arenas to fight to retain the rights we have gained.

The experience of the emasculation of the Native Title Act was a bitter one for many of us, and in the NT, once the cradle of land rights, we have been dealing with successive “reviews” of land rights for the past five years.

However, the efforts of Howard, Ruddock and their ilk to squander the opportunity for justice and reconciliation will not prevail.

We must press on with utilising those rights we have won and with securing further rights. We are working to build sustainable futures through better management and utilisation of the resources on our lands and seas.

As a saltwater person, I look to the seas as the next frontier for the recognition and ultimately enjoyment and utilisation of our rights. Despite recent legal losses, I am confident that we will achieve that goal in my lifetime.

Today as I think of my father, Big Bill Neidji, Vincent Lingiari and Eddie Mabo, I am determined that we will not disgrace their great legacy in a war of attrition, self-blame and shame with the small of spirit. ●

Aboriginal people must nation build: Yunupingu

Northern Land Council Chairman Galarrwuy Yunupingu has called on Aboriginal people to build institutions based on their own law and their own culture as a way out of their social and economic difficulties.

In a speech presented on his behalf at the Reconciliation Australia Conference on Indigenous Governance, which took place on 3-5 April in Canberra, Mr Yunupingu said Aboriginal people had yet to see any benefits from the so-called self-determination policies brought in after the discredited assimilationist era.

“It is time to clear our heads of the past,” he said. “We need to understand why some things fail while others succeed.”

“Vehicles for economic development must have the legitimacy of our own law, and accountability to our own people, in order to work.”

Mr Yunupingu was addressing the Conference’s key themes, where were to define what constituted good governance at a local level, how to build leadership skills and community capacity, and what lessons Australia’s Indigenous people could learn from overseas.

Mr Yunupingu paid tribute to another speaker at the conference, Professor Stephen Cornell from Harvard University in the United States, whose work had demonstrated the destructive effects of focusing too much on individual rights and material benefits at the expense of cultural values.

He said this was why Indigenous Affairs Minister Philip Ruddock’s recently announced ‘five-point plan’ for Indigenous development had been of such concern.

“Professor Cornell has shown that, for Indigenous groups, nation-building is ‘the only game in town’,” Mr Yunupingu said.

He said the closest Australian legislation had come to recognising traditional laws and principles of Indigenous governance was the Northern Territory’s Land Rights Act. The Act and the institutions it had established had led to some remarkable outcomes.

One recent example was the Larrakia people’s increasingly successful struggle to determine their own economic future via a development corporation that was already involved in housing projects (*see story page 3*).

However, Mr Yunupingu said other Aboriginal institutions not grounded in traditional law – including ATSIC – had failed to live up to expectations either in Indigenous or non-Indigenous Australia.

“Our ancient system of law has its own power and legitimacy, and it is from this that we can draw the strength to enter into the non-Aboriginal world on our own terms,” he said. ●



Willowra school open day

Willowra school, 340 kilometres north west of Alice Springs, opened its doors to the public with a feast of activities for students and community members.

A traditional dancing ceremony opened the day as students eagerly participated in an array of fun activities for all ages.

The activities included face painting, ball skill tasks, sports, music, a BBQ lunch and an evening disco.

Women from the community ran workshops in canvas painting, damper making and music.

The Yirra College band provided music for the day with Willowra musicians also having a jam.

The day was organised by school staff for the community to come together and celebrate the positive strengths Willowra has to offer as a community.



Elliott Hawks fly above the pack

Ask any respected expert and they'll tell you that Australian Rules football is a game filled with peaks and troughs - one day you're up, the next you are down. Unless of course you're a member of the Elliott Hawks Junior football team, in which case there are no "downs" just "ups".



Coach Michael Neade (l) and assistant coach Daniel Campbell (r) with the Hawks

You see, the Hawks finished third in their pool at the recent NT Secondary Schools Football Championships in Darwin. And yes, it could be argued that this is still not a good result considering there were only four teams in the pool. But you'd be missing the point. Which is - that the Hawks didn't finish last as expected!

The Elliott Hawks were expected to be the "easy-beats". Fortunately the players never read the script and played their football with all the fun and excitement that is arguably the true essence of Aussie Rules footy.

Despite the associated logistics of making the long

600km trek north to compete, Coach Michael Neade was the first person to be pleasantly surprised with the end result.

It was a beaming coach who, at the conclusion of their final game said: "I'm proud of them, they set their goals and met them."

Just getting to Darwin was an effort in itself. With only a modest population to lobby, the team hosted a variety of fund raising efforts to meet the costs of a trip north for a weekend. But, with a little help from the Northern Land Council, the necessary funds were eventually raised.

"We conducted all sorts of events to fund the trip. It's hard for small communities to often do things like that," Michael said.

While the whole experience has been a learning curve for the team, there were a host of new adventures enjoyed along the way. For many, it was their very first time away from home, a trip to the beach a special highlight for the boys.

"Many of them hadn't seen the sea before," Michael said. "That's been one of the highlights of the trip."

While not expecting a ticker-tape parade to rain coloured streamers down on them on their return home, Michale

Neade is certain the community of Elliott will share in the joy of the team's achievements.

"I think everyone's going to be proud and overwhelmed at our achievements. We're looking at coming back next year and I guarantee we'll be better prepared."

For the record, Elliott finished third in Group "C" with a 25-point final round victory over PARCS (Palmerston and Rural Combined Schools).

In the final irony, though Elliott's mascot is a Hawk, the team actually wore Kangaroo jumpers throughout the carnival, as their original strip hadn't arrived in time from Brisbane.

Be they Hawks or Kangaroos - the game of football was the winner.



Team members take a half-time breather

Roper Valley weighs future options



Traditional owners in the Roper Valley region are in the early stages of building a regional economic development plan that will not only identify individual clan needs, but could eventually benefit the entire region.

Backed by the Northern Land Council and the Indigenous Land Corporation, a four-day workshop was held during mid-April at the community of Ngukurr.

Its purpose was to identify potential ventures and assist traditional owners where possible to pursue opportunities, such as those identified in the recently released Mitchell/Cummins Report.

Commissioned by the Roper Valley Steering Committee, the report by consultants Paul Mitchell and Tim Cummins provides a comprehensive outlook for the Roper Valley region – past and present, its positives and negatives. The authors were on hand to present their report to the meeting.

Historical links to pastoral development in the region is just one option being considered, but new and diverse opportunities are also being thought

through, particularly agriculture/horticulture ventures, as well as aquaculture projects.

The meeting also considered multiple land use options, land management projects and environmental care issues as well as the more directly commercial activities.

The Steering Committee will workshop local and regional land use ideas and create action plans for each of them.

The next phase is to correlate the projects and coordinate the resources necessary to get the projects happening.

“The idea is to have a mechanism already existing that can be directly accessed. The working party will act on traditional owners’ instructions and ensure that information is relayed back to the originating party,” an NLC spokesperson said.

Day Patrol

Tangentyere Day Patrol started in May funded by the NT Government as part of the complimentary measures of the Alice Springs alcohol trial controls.

It operates three days a week, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 2 pm to 9 pm. Unlike Tangentyere Night Patrol which mainly covers the 18 Alice Springs town camps, the day service focuses on the town centre.

Like other patrols its effectiveness comes from local people with local expertise and languages dealing with problems many have seen before.

Robert Hoosan, Coordinator of the Day Patrol, and a former night patroller, when asked how day patrolling was different, smiled and said, “you can see things a lot better”.

He said the patrol was useful in taking people home before they get into more trouble, “but it is still new, I want to see how it goes over time, when people are used to it”.

Police liaison is going well with regular meetings between the two and good cooperation on the streets.

One concern of Mr Hoosan is that people are still getting four litre wine casks from somewhere despite the banning of the sales of casks over two litres since April in Alice Springs. ●

Lyle heads the Docker River Night Patrol

A new Night Patrol Service has started at Kaltukatjara (Docker River), as the community looks at ways to fight the growing problems of petrol sniffing and anti-social behaviour in the community.

The community relies heavily on police from the Yulara station, 250 kilometres away, including 195 kilometres of rough, corrugated, sandy road. At the request of the Kaltukatjara Community Council, the police have increased their presence at Docker River.

Utilising non-government funding, the community purchased a twin cab Toyota Hilux ute and decked it out as a proper Night Patrol vehicle, complete with the Docker River Night Patrol signs on the doors.

Local Anangu man Lyle Kenny is the coordinator of the program and is working for the dole until the community council can attract operational funding through ATSIC.

“It is hard work running a Night Patrol but the community sees this service as an important step to making Docker River a good and safe place to live,” said Lyle.

Most of Lyle’s work is done in the late afternoon and through the night.

“Young people are bored and can get themselves into trouble easy so I try and give them some support. I also help organising discos and other activities in the community. My job is not just policing and being the bad guy.”

Lyle works closely with the police from Yulara and further training and support is being organised through the Drug and Alcohol Services Association in Alice Springs. ●

Night Patrols Conference

Representatives of 13 Central Australian Night Patrols and patrols from Borroloola and Tennant Creek’s Jululikari Council attended a three-day workshop at Hamilton Downs in April.

Patrols attended from Yuendumu, Ali Curung, Ntaria/Tjwumpa, Laramba, Utju, Santa Teresa, Atitjere, Apatula, Ampilatwatja, Titjikala and from Alice Springs the Tangentyere Night Patrol, Day Patrol and Tangentyere Wardens.

Other central Australian Night Patrols from Yuelumu, Lake Nash and Ikuuji couldn’t make it to the meeting

The conference unanimously recommended that alcohol be banned at football matches.

The patrols are concerned in particular about football supporters from dry communities coming to the community

competition played in Alice Springs and being encouraged to drink.

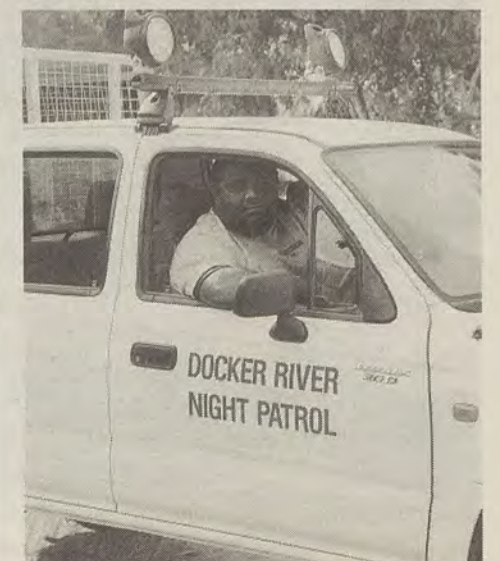
In response to community concerns several years ago the Central Australian Football League switched to selling only low alcohol beer at their Traeger Park matches in Alice Springs.

The League, however, relies on the income from alcohol sales to fund its operations.

The conference also called for better wages for Night Patrol positions. At present Night Patrollers are a mix of volunteers, CDEP workers and a few who have partly funded positions. ●



Above: Night Patrollers from Yuendumu in the foreground, Tangentyere, Jululikari, Borroloola and Titjikala at the Hamilton Downs conference in April



Boom year for Merrepen



More than 2,000 people flocked to this year's Merrepen Arts Festival on the first weekend in June to enjoy what has become one of the great art events in the Top End.



Not that it's just art sales and auctions.

A two-day sports carnival and a Saturday night concert – which this year featured Archie Roach, Ruby Hunter and the Darwin Symphony Orchestra – made the 15th Festival the most successful yet, according to organisers.

And the Northern Land Council was there too, not just as a sponsor but as a fully-fledged stall holder.

Thanks go to Geoff Little for organising it all at the last moment.

Festival coordinator Meng Hoeschle said sales of art and craft were up about 10 per cent on last year, with all the paintings bar one at the art auction fetching prices well above the reserve price.

The top price went to Gracie Kumbi

for her painting Barramundi, which had a reserve of \$1,000 but ended up fetching \$1,600 after a spirited bidding duel.

Sports organiser Snowy Day estimated about 350 people from 11 different communities took part in the football, softball and basketball competitions, including Daly River, Peppimenarti, Palumpa, Pine Creek, Timber Creek, Ngaliwurru-Wuli, Namarluk and teams from Norforce.

In the footy grand final, St John's College defeated the Nauiyu Hawks 6.9 to 6.0, while in the softball grand final Peppi won over the gallant Daly River with a score of 10-9. The men's basketball final saw St Johns defeat Timber Creek 75-35, while in the women's Marrara defeated Timber Creek 59-33.



Didgeridoo master honoured at Barunga



The memory of didgeridoo master and senior man David Blanasí loomed large at this year's Barunga Festival, held in perfect weather at the community on the Queen's Birthday weekend of 7-10 June.

Festival organisers estimate about 4,000 people took advantage of the conditions to join in the fun.

Mr Blanasí disappeared from the Beswick Community on Picnic Day 6 August 2001 when he went to collect wood for his didgeridoos from the bush. Since then no word has been heard from him and a comprehensive search failed to turn up any trace of him.

So it was Mr Blanasí that Barunga organisers chose to honour at this year's festival, and the Northern Land Council chipped in with sponsorship of the two didgeridoo competitions. As usual, there was also a comprehensive sports carnival and two great nights of music on the Saturday and Sunday nights.

Top prize in the Indigenous section of the Didgeridoo competition went to Jamie Ah Fat from the Katherine region, who took home a \$350 cheque for his efforts. Alec Young took out the non-Indigenous award which included a genuine David Blanasí didgeridoo and a practice didge to go with the \$150 cheque.

Highlight of the sports carnival was the football comp, with Santa Teresa and Kalano stealing past their highly fancied rivals – the Arnhem Crows and the Ngukurr Bulldogs – in the semis to set up a thrilling grand final which Santa Teresa took out by the slim margin of 4:6 to 4:3.

There was another thriller in the men's basketball final, with Katherine High School taking out the comp after the siren when a penalty allowed them to pip Kalano by one point. Final scores were 37-36.

The popularity of the women's basketball comp saw the 19 teams split into two divisions, with Ngukurr beating the Arnhem Crows 22-11 in the first division final while Kalano made amends for their men's team loss by beating St Johns College 10-9 in the second division final.

Other winners included Doomadgee High Flyers in the softball comp, the Kalkaringi women in the traditional dance comp and Darryl Miller in the spear throwing event.



The Kalkaringi women in action during the traditional dance competition, which they won



Clockwise from top left: Barunga revellers; Jamie Ah Fat wins on the didge; football action; junior hot rodders





Digging footings - Evalissa Gibson and Judith Rowe

Kintore women build new skills



Young women at Kintore, 600 kilometres north west of Alice Springs, have shown they have the enthusiasm and drive to construct a building by hand and are using these work skills to fix their own homes and further their studies.

In sweltering heat the young women began to build a museum for their elders to house sacred objects and artefacts.

The labour-intensive job included pouring concrete by hand and making mud bricks for the walls.

At one stage a creche was set up on site with one girl employed to look after all the children whilst their mothers worked on the building.

The women aged between 15 to 22 built the Ngintaka Women's Museum as part of a Centre for Appropriate Technology (CAT) project. The women received certificates 1 and 2 in construction studies.

The Aboriginal and Technical Worker (Atwork)

Program provided by CAT teaches students technical skills and knowledge based around selected technology such as using power tools, welding, construction and plumbing.

The students also specialise in problem solving and design.

The initial stages of the project included the older women finding the culturally significant site for the museum, which was a women's dancing ground.

Work on the museum took longer than expected due to sorry business, problems with getting equipment, rain and a number of other challenges.

However the young women persevered and as a result have gained important work skills and knowledge which will benefit the whole community.

Women's efforts pays dividends



Women in the Resource Centre's kitchen area

Living conditions: better, but still awful, says ABS

An Australian Bureau of Statistics survey into Community Housing and Infrastructure needs in remote communities has found that there have been small improvements since the last survey was conducted in 1999, but remote Aboriginal communities still suffer from considerable deprivation.

Marginal improvements in housing infrastructure, water supply and sewerage systems have made small inroads into an unmet need of approximately \$3 billion for indigenous housing.

While there has been a 4 per cent increase in the number of permanent dwellings since 1999, about one in four dwellings in Indigenous Housing Organisations are in need of repair and nearly half of all communities of more than 50 people reported sewerage overflows or leakages.

Disadvantage in access to health and education facilities is particularly worrying.

Students in seven out of 10 remote communities are at least 100 kilometres from the nearest high school, with many more than 250km from the nearest high school. While most communities have access to some form of health service, seven out of 10 communities are at least 100km from the nearest hospital.

NLC Chief Executive Norman Fry said the survey results showed how dismal the situation was.

"Improvements in housing and water supply are measured in tiny percentages," he said.

"This means many of our communities are still living in sub-standard conditions without proper housing, sewerage, water and electricity supplies."

"This in turn affects the health of our children and consequently their ability to attend school, that is, if the school isn't hundreds of kilometres away.

There is an urgent need for both increased funding and a coordinated approach to service delivery between Commonwealth and Territory governments."

The efforts of a group of Barunga women to set up their own resource centre has paid off with the opening in May of the Ngalmulka Resource Centre, the second such centre in the Jawoyn traditional lands east of Katherine.

With assistance from the Fred Hollows Foundation and the backing of the local Barunga Council, the community managed to pull the project together in just six months.

It is yet another positive outcome from a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Foundation and the Jawoyn Association two years ago, which filled a gap left by cuts in government funding for such projects by the incoming Howard Government in 1996.

The head of the Resource Centre's five-strong Women's Committee, Esther Bulumbara, said the centre provided a focal point for young mothers in particular.

"We get the young mothers come over with the younger kids to stop them losing weight," Esther said. "We've only been going a month but we're trying to get stuff in for them (young mothers) to do, like sewing."

Starting with an old disused building, one of the unique features of the project was that renovations were carried out by local men who were also learning a trade under a CDEP program overseen by the Council.

Among the many renovations carried out was the

installation of a new roof and a kitchen purpose-built for the needs of the community.

One of the key benefits of the Women's Resource Centre lies in improving the diet of the local community, with a special focus on providing nutritious meals to toddlers, young school children and the elderly. Breakfasts and cooked lunches are prepared twice daily and distributed to the elderly by a Wheels on Meals service.

"Our nutritionist Sue Wellings comes in every now and then and teaches us how to take care of food, what food is good for old people," Esther said.

A similar service at the Beswick Resource Centre - set up two years ago in the first such initiative by the Foundation - has already seen school attendance soar from zero to 36 with an accompanying increase in student performance.

Other services provided by the Barunga Centre include health promotion activities such as ante-natal courses and alcohol awareness campaigns, while future projects could include the establishment of a creche.



The Belyuen Dancers

BATCHELOR GRADUATION CEREMONY

Cool breeze, soft light, all the colours of the rainbow – that pretty much encapsulates this year's Batchelor Institute graduation ceremony, which couldn't have asked for more perfect conditions to go with the celebratory mood.

With hundreds of students and their families gathered on lawns and under tent canopies, the program got under way with the Belyuen Dancers leading in the Academic Procession.

After a welcome from the Kungarakany traditional owner Speedy McGuinness, Batchelor Institute Council chairman Mr Gatjil Djerrkura opened proceedings with a speech laying out the future course for the Institute.

He said it remained the Institute's goal to become the first Indigenous university in Australia, and that if anything the desire to achieve this goal had become stronger with each passing year.

"As the chairman of this Council, I will make it my business for the Council to set a timeframe to achieve University status," Mr Djerrkura said.

Then it was the turn of the students, with more than 240 from the Schools of Education Studies, Health Studies, Community Studies and the Community Education and Training Division making their way to the podium to receive their individual certificates of graduation.

Veronica Arbon and Gatjil Djerrkura lead in the academics' parade

Some were danced up by the Belyuen Dancers, some needed the support of relatives, some cried, but for all it was clearly a moment of triumph as the accompanying photographs demonstrate.

A final dash of colour from the Mer Peibre Dance and Cultural Troupe and then, almost too soon, the curtain fell on yet another successful year at the Institute.



Above: Students await the presentations
Below: (l to r) Nicole Saunders, Bevan Simpson, Wendy Lange, Carol Hart and Natasha McAdam



Construction begins on new study centres



The Central Land Council has negotiated two lease agreements between traditional landowners and Batchelor Institute to provide land to build study centres in Nyirripi and Alpara.

The CLC consulted traditional landowners at both communities who were happy to facilitate the agreements for the delivery of tertiary studies to students in their own communities.

The construction of the Nyirripi study centre has begun with the new centre designed specifically for the harsh climatic conditions in the arid outback. This building will be ready in late August.

Ormay Nangala Gallagher, a student at Batchelor Institute and assistant teacher at the Nyirripi School, says the community has been waiting a long time to get a building for adult students.

"We were using a school building and at the moment we are using a silver bullet caravan. Students got together with the community and started talking about having a real study centre," she said.

"The community are all really happy because they wanted to see their own students doing work back here in the community."

"There's a lot of students, about 29 plus, who are enrolled in written English and there are two assistant teachers doing teachers' education and there's many more too still enrolling," Ormay said.

Nyirripi currently has over 60 students enrolled in various accredited VET and higher education courses including Teacher Training, Early Childhood, Interpreting, Art and Craft, Aboriginal Health Workers, Community Maintenance, Recreation Studies, Broadcasting and Journalism and Community Services.

The Batchelor Institute has already completed study centres in Maningrida and Ngukurr as part of its course delivery to remote communities throughout the Northern Territory.



Ngangkari - Healing Traditional Way



Above: Andy Tjilari a Senior Pitjantjatjara man

Two senior Anangu ngangkari or traditional healers star in a documentary, Ngangkari Way, to be shown on SBS TV this year.

Andy Tjilari, a senior Pitjantjatjara man, and Rupert Peters, a senior Yankunytjatjara man, work as ngangkari for the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council Aboriginal Corporation (NPYWC).

The Council commissioned the documentary produced by PY Media based at Umuwa on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands in South Australia.

It was directed by well-known Aboriginal director Erica Glynn.

It traces Andy and Rupert's work in various communities in the NPY area, and demonstrates how they work co-operatively with clinics as well as treating those who approach them during their travels.

Viewers will also meet some trainee ngangkari.

Andy Tjilari and Rupert Peters have headed the NPYWC Emotional and Social Well-Being Project (ESWB) and Ngangkari Project for four years, providing traditional healing to Anangu in the 350,000 square kilometre cross border region of NT, WA, and SA.

Andy and Rupert hope the film will help explain their work to the wider community and bring about a better understanding of traditional Aboriginal health care.

Andy Tjilari and Rupert Peters say their grandfathers gave them the ngangkari powers.

The brothers-in-law enjoy working together and say they are equally matched in their healing skills using their hands, breath and the power of thought.

"We use mapanpa or "spirit tools" to detect illness or depression, for instance. We heal people physically and emotionally. We work healing Anangu people's spirits" says Andy Tjilari.

They have been doing ngangkari work since they were children, for more than 50 years. They say there are many ngangkari but they are in great demand.

The documentary, launched at the Message Sticks Film Festival in May, and the accompanying publicity have already sparked great interest in traditional healers.

Andy and Rupert have invited other ngangkari to contribute their experiences for a book and NPYWC are also developing a book on ngangkari in the context of modern health service delivery.

Below: Rupert Peters, a senior Yankunytjatjara man



Garma Festival spreads environmental message

The fourth annual Garma Festival of Traditional Culture takes place from 13-17 August at Gulkula, an ancestral meeting site of profound significance to Yolngu clans in north-east Arnhem Land.

The Yothu Yindi Foundation hosts visitors from all over the world who come to Garma to celebrate and share the Indigenous knowledge and culture of Yolngu from north-east Arnhem Land and related areas.

The Garma Festival encourages the practice, preservation and maintenance of traditional dance (bunggul), song (manikay), art and ceremony on Yolngu lands in a series of cultural workshops and ceremonial activities that are open to Indigenous and non-Indigenous guests.

The Festival's workshop program includes arts and crafts, interpretive walks, field trips, bush foods, bush medicine, spear making and story telling. Bunggul (ceremonial dancing) from a number of different clan groups is performed each evening throughout the festival.

Additionally, each year's festival has a themed forum which is part of the ongoing development of the Garma Cultural Studies Institute. Last year the festival attracted leading lawyers, judges and academics to the Ngaarra legal forum on Indigenous Australians and the criminal justice system.

This year, from August 14 -16, WWF Australia are joining with the Yothu Yindi Foundation to present a forum entitled 'Indigenous people and the environment'. The forum themes will include Indigenous governance and natural resource management, caring for country and sustainable occupation of traditional lands, intellectual and cultural property rights and eco-tourism.

The forum will bring together Indigenous peoples from throughout Australia and from PNG, Canada and the Arctic Circle with scientists, conservationists, venture capitalists, social scientists and eco-tourism experts.

The Garma Festival itself is now an innovative eco-tourism product, marketed through a Telstra-sponsored web-site (<http://www.garma.telstra.com>).

Non-Yolngu visitors can book a five day package through World Expeditions, the official booking agents for the festival, for \$1650.

Yolngu and related clans should contact the Yothu Yindi Foundation to arrange their attendance.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Inquiry into Capacity building in Indigenous Communities

The House of Representatives Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Committee has begun an inquiry examining strategies to assist Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders to better manage the delivery of services within their communities.

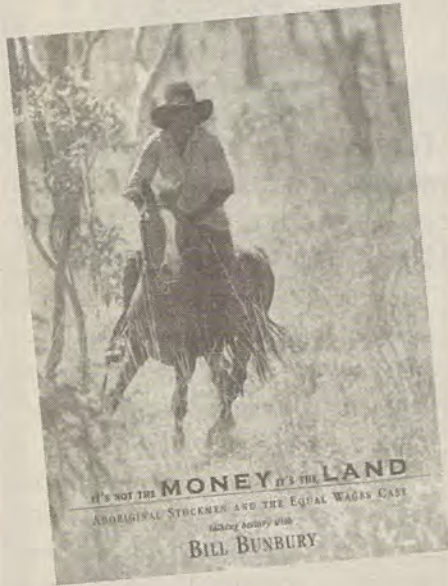
The Committee will consider issues of community governance; Indigenous leadership; and the use of partnership agreements between Indigenous groups and governments – all to encourage well managed communities and better service delivery.

The Committee welcomes submissions on the terms of reference from individuals and organisations – both Indigenous and non Indigenous. For the terms of reference and advice on making a submission see www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/atsia; or phone (02) 6277 4559; or email atsia.reps@aph.gov.au

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Committee



BOOKS



IT'S NOT THE MONEY IT'S THE LAND

By Bill Bunbury

Published by Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 2002, \$24.95 rrp

This is a sad tale of dispossession and lost opportunities, where even those with good intentions contributed to the downward spiral that ends where we sit today – cultures and peoples only slowly emerging from the wreck of the old pastoral industry.

Bill Bunbury, the presenter of ABC Radio's *Hindsight* program and a prolific historical writer, uses the voices of Aboriginal people and other onlookers to good effect in this chronicle of the events leading up to the Equal Wages Case of 1965 – and the disaster that unfolded afterwards.

Dispossession had already occurred across the top of Australia in the late 19th century but, unlike earlier dispossessions down south, the needs of the pastoral industry had seen to it that Aboriginal people remained on their country.

Wages weren't paid, living conditions were often appalling and some managers were tyrants, yet the link with traditional lands and traditional ways of living remained unbroken.

Bunbury uses the words of historian Ann McGrath to capture the relationship between white pastoralists and their Aboriginal workers: "I think the white employer just wanted a labour force and the Aboriginal people basically said, you only get this labour force if you have our community camping on your station, so the white people had no choice about it."

There were ructions and strikes, most notably in Western Australia following World War Two during the period known as the Blackfellas' Eureka. But for most black station workers the rhythms of station life continued unchanged during the post-War period.

Then came the Equal Wages Case. Brought by the Northern Australian Workers Union on behalf of Indigenous

workers on NT cattle stations and contested by the pastoralists, it made the unassailable point that black workers should receive the same pay as white workers for doing the same job.

The tragic irony was that not a single Aboriginal person was present in court to hear argument or voice opinions about the likely outcome – mass lay-offs of Aboriginal stockmen and forced expulsion of entire communities from their ancestral lands. While it was foreseen by some, no plans were put in place to offer alternatives.

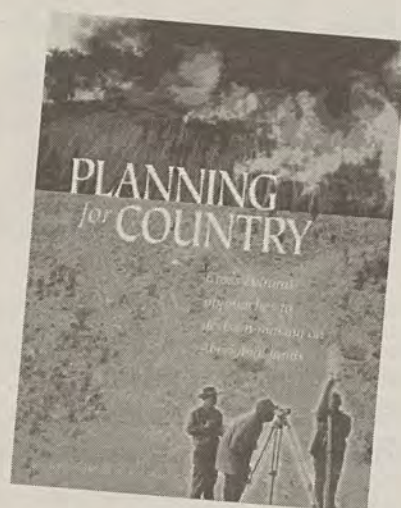
When the decision came down the effect was almost immediate across the NT and not long delayed in WA's Kimberley region. Fringe-dwelling populations around remote townships such as Katherine, Tennant Creek, Hall's Creek, Broome and Fitzroy Crossing suddenly boomed in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Food was in short supply, there was no money and – if there was – no understanding of what it stood for. Alcohol and violence took hold. Government welfare agencies were unprepared and could offer little in response.

If there was a positive, it was the rise to prominence of Aboriginal leaders and their fight for country that in the NT culminated in the famous Gove Land Rights case, which led on to the Woodward Royal Commission and the passing of the Federal NT Land Rights Act in 1976.

While the position of Aboriginal people in northern Australia may have stabilised since then, even improved in some areas, it remains a fact that much culture and knowledge was sacrificed in the winning of equal pay.

Bunbury leaves it to the reader to decide whether it was worth it.



PLANNING FOR COUNTRY

cross-cultural approaches to decision making on Aboriginal lands

256 pages full colour, soft cover RRP \$45.00

In her foreword to *Planning for Country* Marcia Langton says: "This book will give heart to those who live and work in the sublime, fragile homelands of Australia. Contributors to this book bring together years of expert and practical experience.



MUSIC

That soul kind of feeling



Matter of Soul band left to right: jimmy kris, guitar and lead vocals, jaye galaminda, guitar and lead vocals, russell agalara, bass and vocals

The May Day long weekend on 4-6 May wasn't just a celebration of workers' rights in the Top End – it was also the major coming out of Goulburn Island band Matter of Soul as part of the NT Trades and Labor Council's May Day Concert held in Darwin's Bicentennial Park.

The six piece group – featuring Jaye Galaminda (guitar and vocals), Jimmy Kris (guitar and vocals), Russell Agalara (bass and vocals), Renfred Manmurulu (keyboards and vocals), Patrik Lee (drums and vocals) and Misman Kris (backup vocals) – only formed in November last year but has already developed into a tight unit under the guiding hand of Northern Territory University's Steve Teakle.

Opening the show in the warm glow of a tropical sunset, the Matter of Soul boys – whose appearance was sponsored by the Northern Land Council – showcased their distinctive feel which

owes much to the Caribbean rhythms of reggae and ska.

Already the band's commitment to rehearsal and professional development under the NTU's contemporary music course has seen it snare a recording deal with Darwin-based company Skinnyfish Music. The next step is the release of an album, which hopefully will take place in the not-too-distant future.

And if any more encouragement was needed, it is worth remembering that one of Aboriginal music's all-time great acts – Yothu Yindi – also had its first major public outing at the May Day concert. ●

"They address the challenges with well written and useful accounts of land use planning among Aboriginal people: people who have pressing needs, face rapid change and whose cultures are embedded in Australian landscapes."

The book is a guide to planning methods developed for use with Aboriginal communities tackling landcare, business planning and community development.

At its core is participatory planning and action, which covers a range of strategies to encourage people "to talk up, work as a group, plan and put their ideas into practice".

While it primarily reflects experience gained working with Aboriginal people in Central Australia, many of the lessons can be applied to a range of circumstances and

cross-cultural environments.

It includes an extensive guide to planning methods and 21 stories by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal contributors about planning experiences in the field.

These range from the academic to the humorous.

This beautiful book is lavishly illustrated with over 150 photos, diagrams, drawings and maps, giving an insight to the people, places and methods referred to in the text.

Jukurrpa Books, based at the Institute for Aboriginal Development in Alice Springs, published the book, which was funded by the Central Land Council, the Indigenous Land Fund, Land and Water Australia and the World Wide Fund for Nature Australia. It is distributed nationally by Tower Books and JB Books. ●

Papunya School Book Breaks Barriers



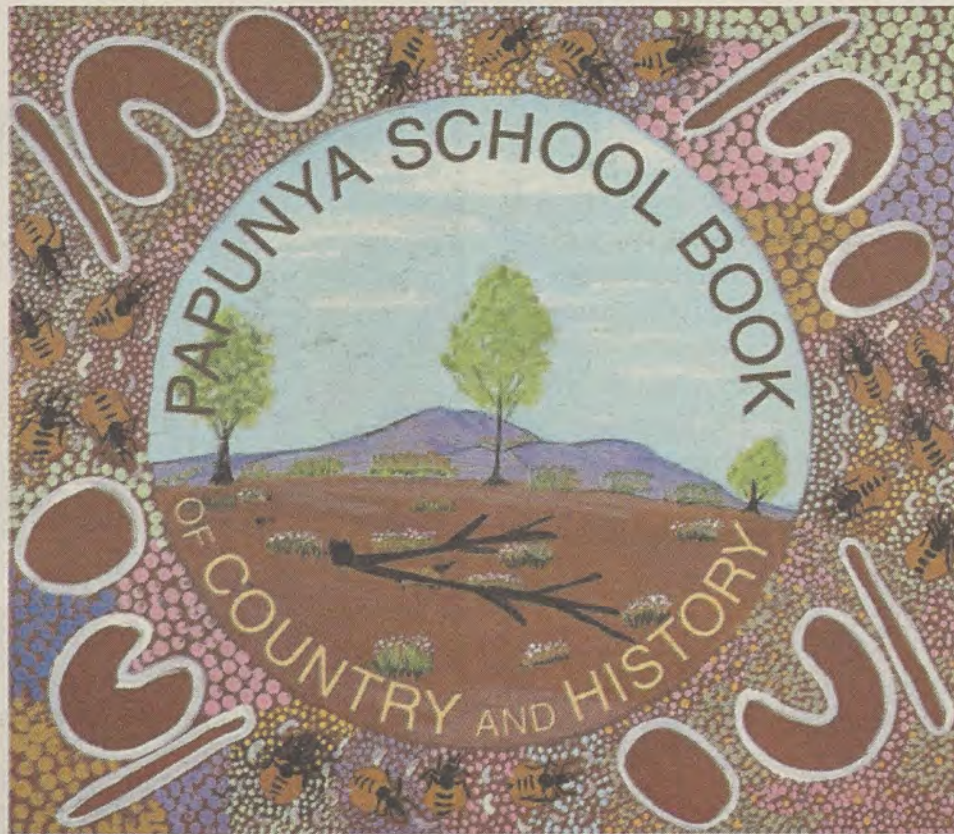
A book produced by the Papunya School, 240-km north west of Alice Springs, is one of 20 books short-listed in this year's prestigious Children's Book Council of Australia Awards.

The *Papunya School Book of Country and History* is nominated in the picture and information book categories with the winners to be announced in August. In June it won the Australian Publishers Association award for excellence in educational publishing and, with 10,000 copies sold, it could become a best seller.

The beautifully illustrated book, "tells the story of what happened in the early days, when the white people came to the centre of Australia. It tells what happened then to Anangu – Aboriginal people – living in their traditional country. And it tells why our families ended up living in Papunya".

Pictures, quotes of elders, maps and a timeline all add to the story in different ways compiling an enormous amount of information into 48 beautifully laid out pages.

Starting with the Tjukurrpa (Anangu law), the book follows the first encounters with white explorers, pastoralists and missionaries. It talks of the Barrow Creek



and Coniston massacres and follows the effect the development of Alice Springs and changes in transport and health had on Anangu. It follows the drought and dispossession that drove Anangu, refugees in their own country, to live under the protection of missionaries at Haasts Bluff, and later Papunya. It then follows the development of the Papunya School, the Papunya art movement, the move to outstations, the rise of the Warumpi Band, the power dispute and school strike in 1992

and the winning back of land under native title and land rights.

The work of over 30 artists and eight writers was used in the book credited to the Papunya School Publishing Committee.

The hardback book published in September last year by Allen and Unwin retails at \$29.95 with royalties going to Papunya School. While the book is a brilliant resource for school children, it should also be read by anyone wanting an insight into Central Australia today. ●

FINDING ULLAGUNDAHI ISLAND



Fabienne Bayet-Charlton's memoir is a fascinating collection of historical and contemporary vignettes.

The book focuses on Fabienne's life, the lives of her family - mainly her grandmother Mabel - and her search to find her Aboriginality and, most importantly, a place to belong.

Although the book is not a true autobiography, as some times and events are not entirely precise, it is none the less an accurate account of certain aspects of Fabienne and her family's lives.

The book flashes between past and present beautifully, and its stories are so descriptive and emotive you can almost imagine yourself being there.

The majority of the book revolves around Fabienne's quest to find her Aboriginal self and Ullagundahi Island, the place where her grandmother was born. She believes that if she can make a connection with the country of her ancestors then she will truly know who and what she is, and thus overcome her sense of dispossession.

True to her word Fabienne discovers that her family were the original occupants of the Bundjalung area in central New South Wales, but that as the "white man's hunt for red cedar spread north from Sydney... the Bundjalung found their homeland occupied". As compensation for this invasion her ancestors were offered a small piece of land situated in the middle of the Clarence River which came to be known as Ullagundahi Island.

Like so many urban Aboriginals who are now far removed from our traditions and our culture, it is easy to identify with Fabienne's internal struggle to connect with her Aboriginality and with her past. With each passing day it becomes increasingly harder to track down people, stories and the always-scant historical records.

However, unearthing these rich histories is vital in order to fill in the missing pieces of so many of our lives.

Fabienne is a great example of how patience and perseverance can eventually prevail.

"*Finding Ullagundahi Island*" is a great book. It is short and easy to read and further more, its lively account of family, place and a sense of belonging make it an enjoyable way to pass a couple of hours. ●

By Fabienne Bayet-Charlton
Published By Allen & Unwin
RRP \$19.95



Jirrbal: Rainforest Dreamtime Stories



This anthology of Dreamtime stories from the Atherton Tablelands of Northern Queensland has been short-listed for the 2002 Children's Book Council of Australia awards – and rightly so.

The book - up for an award in the information book section - has apparently been flying off shelves across the nation, with children entranced by the storytelling abilities of Maisie Barlow and the superb illustrations of Michael Anning.

Both Maisie and Michael grew up in far northern Queensland, Maisie in the Jirrbal people's traditional tableland country around Ravenshoe and Michael in Yidinji rainforest lands to the south of Cairns.

They bring to their work a deep passion for their country and their culture, which translates into simple but powerful tableaux capturing the mythical nature of Jujaba time.

First comes the *Story of the Narool (Grass)*, the *Gargarra (New Moon)* and the *Meedin (Possum)*, which tells of how the greedy Gargarra quite literally comes unstuck only to be rescued by the grass people. From then on he repays their kindness, sending down the life-giving dew each time he shines as the new moon.

Following on is *The Buni (Fire) Story*, which tells of how the animals finally stole fire from the selfish brown snake Walguy, and the *Fishing Story About Us*, which is quite reminiscent of Grimm Brothers tales with its child-eating monsters.

Finishing up the series is *The Water Story*, another tale about a selfish creature

– this time the blue-tongue lizard Bangarra – who winds up the worse for trying to keep all the water for himself.

All these stories have a common theme – the need for kindness and compassion, the need to share and the need for obedience in a land where lack of discipline can mean trouble for an entire community.

And, as icing on the cake, there's a beginner's English-Jirrbal dictionary along with Maisie's potted history of her life growing up around Ravenshoe in the far-off days of the 1920s.

Almost as long ago to today's kids as the Dreamtime tales in the book. ●

By Maisie (Yarrcali) Barlow,
Illustrations: Michael (Boiyool) Anning
Published by Magabala Books
Aboriginal Corporation, \$24.95

Kumantjayi Tjapaltjarri

The world loses a leading Aboriginal artist

The centre has lost a leading artist following the passing of Kumantjayi Tjapaltjarri, a renowned western desert artist whose paintings have become world known.

An Anmatyerre man, he was born in the 1930s at Napperby Station, 200 kilometres north west of Alice Springs.

When still a child he spent time at Hermannsburg where he met Namatjira and saw how his art showed the significance of his country.

Kumantjayi Tjapaltjarri then worked as a stockman at Napperby Station while also making carvings for tourists.

He later moved to Glen Helen to carve full time and began drawing. After working in the construction of Papunya in the late 1950s he taught carving to students there and was painting seriously by the 1970s.

He was a founding member of Papunya Tula Arts in the early 1970s which brought the Western Desert dot

style, incorporating the mapping of country and dreamings, to a worldwide audience.

His art has toured extensively throughout the world and is housed in many galleries in Australia and overseas.

Mr Tjapaltjarri was recently honoured in the Queens Birthday list and was appointed an Officer in the Order of Australia for his service and contribution to the Western Desert art movement.

Alison Anderson, NT ATSIC Central Zone Commissioner, said: "His life was dedicated to ensuring Aboriginal art and culture remained strong and alive. I offer my deepest condolences to this great artist's family, friends and community." ●



The Belyuen Dancers' mourning dance at Chris Uren's memorial service

NLC mourns victims of helicopter tragedy

The Northern Land Council has been in mourning following the deaths of four men – two of them NLC representatives – in a helicopter crash on Wednesday 5 June.

The Laynhapuy Aviation helicopter had been engaged in survey work for a proposed gas pipeline route across Arnhem Land to the Nabalco bauxite mine at Gove when it crashed in unexplained circumstances.

There was one survivor, Robert Graham, an anthropologist who had also been engaged by the NLC for the pipeline survey route.

NLC Chief Executive Norman Fry extended his condolences to the families and relatives of the four deceased, who included a senior man from the Birdingal Clan, NLC senior project officer Chris Uren, Laynhapuy Aviation pilot Adrian Wagg and John Girle from gas pipeline developer Epic Energy.

Mr Fry said the deaths had been deeply felt at the NLC.

"Because of the nature of our work staff establish very strong bonds, and to lose

two well-respected and long-standing representatives in such horrific circumstances has really hit home," he said. "Equally, our hearts go out to the families of John Girle and Adrian Wagg, both of whom had a close association with NLC staff."

Amid the tragedy, Mr Fry said the NLC was grateful that Mr Graham had been spared and wished him well in his recovery.

"We look forward to Robert returning to work in our office once he is ready," he said.

NLC staff attended a memorial service for Mr Uren at Darwin's Uniting Church on 14 June, at which family, friends and work mates expressed their sense of loss.

The congregation also heard some of Mr Uren's musical compositions, highlighting his talent as a songwriter and guitarist.

Daisy Ruddick (nee Cusack) Nawala 1915 - 2002

"If you only believe and have faith. To me that is Nanna's legacy, nothing was ever too hard for her."

NICOLE LEWIS, GRAND DAUGHTER

Daisy Florence Ruddick (nee Cusack) had an impact on the lives of so many people, it came as no surprise to see such a large gathering on hand to bid their final farewells to a woman many simply knew as "Aunty Daisy."

A member of the Stolen Generation, Daisy was born on Limbunyah Station in the Victoria River District of the Northern Territory (NT) in 1915.

At the age of eight, like so many of her generation, Daisy was removed from her Gurindji mother Demae and transferred to Darwin. A move that would change her life forever.

It would be over 40 years before she would meet family members again.

At the tender age of 12 Daisy was put into civil service as a nanny for the family of the then Crown Solicitor of the NT, Mr Asche.

By the age of 19 Daisy's attention turned to nursing. Relocation to the NT town of Katherine followed where she

became a member of the medical team lead by Dr Clive Fenton.

Her marriage to Joseph Ruddick in 1939 resulted in the birth of four children, William (dec), Rosanne, Esther and Josie.

Daisy encouraged and nurtured her family and helped those less fortunate than herself or who had just fallen on hard times.

She stressed the importance of a good education and fought the injustices that impacted on her life and that of her family.

Daisy will be remembered by many for her warm heart, bright smile and passion for life. An incredibly beautiful person who meant so much to so many people.

At the age of 86, Daisy was laid to rest in Darwin on April 30th 2002. She is survived by three daughters, seven grandchildren and four great grandchildren. But there are many more that will mourn her passing.

Farewell Aunty Daisy. ●

Memorial to great Pintubi man

A newly erected memorial to the late Smithy Zimran was dedicated at a moving ceremony in Kintore in May.

Among the tributes, gospel choirs sang honouring the man who, among many other achievements, brought the gospel music he loved so much to Kintore.

A fighter all his life for a better future for his people, he was a leader and visionary prepared to do the hard work to achieve what he thought was right.

After being born into a traditional life out of European contact, in the Western Desert of Central Australia, his education at Papunya helped to give him the cross cultural tools he used so successfully to negotiate both worlds.

He was part of the Pintubi movement back to their homelands from Papunya in the 1980s. This saw the establishment of Kintore and its outstations.

The same drive led him to become chair of the Walungurru Outstation movement, a leader of the Haasts Bluff Association, a leader of the Pintupi Homelands Health Service, the Kintore Council, a coordinator of the Combined Aboriginal Nations of Central Australia and to take a leading role at the Kalkarindji Constitutional convention.

He passed away two years ago. ●

19th **TELSTRA** National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award

Ensuring indigenous art receives the recognition it deserves.

Dorothy Napangardi 'Salt on Mina Mina' 2001. Acrylic on canvas.
Winner, Telstra First Prize, 18th NATSIAA, 2001.



© Dorothy Napangardi, 2001.

Museum and Art Gallery
of the Northern Territory
10 August – 27 October 2002



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