



Land Rights

NEWS



One Mob, One Voice, One Land

Vol 5 No 1 March 2003



**INSIDE: gun control, stores,
crazy ants, quolls and centre spread
of the Aboriginal Allstars**

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Cuz Congress and friends last seen at Wallace Rockhole but apparently about to appear at a place near you

Land Rights NEWS

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Editorial, Advertising:

PO Box 3321, Alice Springs NT 0871
Ph: (0889) 516215 Fax: (0889) 534344

PO Box 42921, Casuarina NT 0811
Ph: (0889) 205100 Fax: (0889) 452615

Subscriptions:

PO Box 42921, Casuarina NT 0811
Ph: (0889) 205100 Fax: (0889) 452615

Accounts:

PO Box 3321, Alice Springs NT 0871
Ph: (0889) 516215 Fax: (0889) 534344

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

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

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Petrol sniffing - should it be illegal?	9	Mr Williams wishes to make it clear that while he is of Larrakia descent and identifies with Larrakia country, he does not consider himself to be a Larrakia elder. Land Rights News has apologised to Mr Williams for the incorrect use of the word "elder".	
Gun Control	10	COVER PHOTO Irrkerlantye School kids set off on the five-day hike to Wallace Rockhole 80 kilometres west of Alice Springs to attend a forum for workers dealing with youth issues in Central Australia. Kids from the Larapinta Valley School rode the camels back to town. The camel ride was intended as a demonstration of creative youth programming for community groups represented at the forum.	
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Cane toads force Quolls into island exile



They're small, they're furry, they have sharp teeth and they know how to use them. They've also been identified as one of the native animals most at risk from the relentless spread of cane toads throughout the Top End.



Yolngu rangers with a captured quoll

Welcome to the precarious world of the carnivorous northern quoll, currently the subject of a major fauna rescue program developed by the NT Department of Infrastructure Planning and Environment (DIPE), the NLC's Caring for Country Unit and Aboriginal traditional owners.

Since February this year about 80 quolls – known as baraguma to Yolngu – have been captured in areas such as Darwin River Dam, Humpty Doo and Kakadu, then flown to remote islands in the English Company Island Group off the north-east tip of Arnhem Land for release.

It is hoped that the quolls will be able to establish viable breeding populations safe from cane toads so that when - or if - an effective cane toad control program is eventually developed, they will be able to be re-introduced to the mainland.

According to John Woinarski from DIPE's Biodiversity Unit, quolls are particularly at risk from cane toads because of their life cycles. Male quolls live for just one year, dying immediately after mating.

Combine this short lifestyle with evidence that quolls succumb almost instantly to the cane toad's poison and you have the potential for a very quick extinction of quolls from areas invaded by cane toads.

"There is strong and consistent...evidence from Queensland that quolls disappear within a few months of the arrival of cane toads," Dr Woinarski said. "As from late last year, we have strong scientific evidence of complete loss of quolls in parts of Kakadu where cane toads have invaded."

NLC CFCU consulted widely with traditional owners both in areas where quolls were captured and also on the islands where they have been released, ensuring that Aboriginal people would be involved in all stages of the project.

The first release of quolls took place on 1 March on Pobasso Island, followed by releases on Astell Island.

Yolngu rangers and scientists will continue to monitor the quolls after their release, with radio collars fitted to at least 10 quolls per island allowing them to be accurately tracked. Some trapping will also be done to see what effect the quolls might have on other animals living on the islands.

Dhirritjini Yumbulul, a senior traditional owner of the islands where quolls were released, said he was "happy to look after the baraguma until they can find a way of getting rid of the cane toads".

"The thought of Parks and Wildlife having to transfer these endangered animals to the islands to protect them is a powerful thought," he said. "Otherwise they could be killed by cane toads."

Support for the quoll release program has also been provided by the Tropical Savannas Cooperative Research Centre, Parks Australia North, The Threatened Species Network, the Territory Wildlife Park and Arafura Pearl Holdings.



Here Artepe Chairman Brian Stirling and Minister for Central Australia Peter Toyne shake on the agreement for Larapinta development

Alice Native Title Holders develop Larapinta

Arernte native title holders, who spent years going through the courts when the former NT Government refused to negotiate with them, have finally been rewarded for their patience.

In a first of its kind anywhere in Australia, the Lhere Artepe Aboriginal Corporation, which represents the Arernte native title holders in Alice Springs, and the Northern Territory Government have agreed to release at least 60 lots of land in the Larapinta subdivision

Chairperson Brian Stirling said they had waited a long time to see something real come out of native title after the Federal Court found in 1999 that they had native title over most of the land claimed in Alice Springs.

"All the members of Lhere Artepe are really pleased about this – it's been a lot of hard work," he said.

Interestingly it is the involvement of the Government and its willingness to acknowledge them which has made them so pleased with the result.

"It's the first opportunity we've ever had to work with the Government – I think this is what has made people really happy – that finally we've been acknowledged and the Government wants to work with us.

"It's a new way of development in Alice Springs – we get to protect our sacred sites because we can leave them out of the blocks to be sold so we avoid all the problems we've had around town with our sites getting damaged. This time we've got control over it.

"The Government has given us a development lease over half of the 20 hectares of land.

"All these years people around town have been blaming us for holding up development – what they don't realise is that it takes a long time to prove your native title and that we lost many of our old people along the way.

"It's been tough for us to keep reading in the papers and hearing the news that we are the ones holding it up when that hasn't really been the case. We're happy for people to buy blocks of land and build their houses.

"The old people kept telling us to 'keep going' otherwise we'd be left with nothing and we'd have to start again.

"So finally here we are. We look forward to working with other people like the Alice Springs Town Council and other organisations. It's a new thing for us."

NLC, TCA team up to boost Indigenous employment

In a major new initiative aimed at improving employment and training outcomes for Indigenous Territorians, two of the Territory's peak representative bodies have joined forces to enhance the creation of job opportunities for Aboriginal people by Top End employers.

On 18 December 2002 the Northern Land Council and the Territory Construction Association (TCA) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding aimed at maximising the participation of Indigenous people in new development projects throughout the Top End.

NLC Chief Executive Norman Fry said that by combining their expertise the NLC and the TCA were now in a position to pro-



Minister Paul Henderson, Norman Fry and TCA chief executive Michael Kilgariff at the launch

vide prospective employers with a "one-stop shop".

Both organisations are looking to enhance a relationship that has grown as a result of the Alice Springs to Darwin railway

project.

"Both parties have demonstrated their ability to work together to achieve a common result," Mr Fry said. "The outstanding results achieved on the railway

project speak for themselves."

"This agreement provides us with the opportunity to further enhance our reputation as an employment and training facilitator."

Both the NLC and TCA are recognised as being peak representative organisations in the Northern Territory.

Together they are well placed to provide many benefits to prospective employees and employers, including:

- Coordinated training appropriate for each project's requirements.
- One point of contact for all Indigenous training and employment needs.
- A proven track record.
- An independent and cost effective service.
- Expert staff in areas such as Human Resource Management and Training and Indigenous Employment.
- Extensive local knowledge.

"There are a number of major new projects due to start in the Top End over the next few years, and we look forward to capturing the training and employment opportunities they can provide to Aboriginal people," Mr Fry said.

NLC negotiates over Top End development

The Top End has inched closer to the much-heralded new era of major development, with two mine expansion plans announced and the passage of Timor Sea Treaty legislation through Federal Parliament set to underpin the Bayu-Undan gas project.

While all the projects have the potential to deliver significant benefits for Aboriginal people, much hard work and negotiation lies ahead.

Mining company MIM was first off the rank, announcing on 11 February that it would undertake a feasibility study into expanding its McArthur River zinc-lead mine near Borroloola.

An environmental impact study of the expansion has been announced. The NLC has told the Government and MIM that impacts on people, culture and sacred sites must be taken into consideration.

The NLC has written to MIM requesting detailed information about the McArthur River expansion plan but is yet to receive an answer.

According to material so far made public it appears MIM is seeking to reactivate its original mining model for McArthur River, which envisioned an open-cut mine and the diversion of the river itself.

The NLC will commence consultations with traditional owners as soon as information is available.

Meanwhile, Alcan has unveiled a pro-

posed expansion of its bauxite mine and alumina refinery on the Gove Peninsula near Nhulunbuy.

The project, which could cost up to \$1.5 billion, will almost double the alumina production capacity of Alcan Gove from 2 million tonnes to 3.5 million tonnes a year.

NLC Chief Executive Norman Fry said that the proposed expansion of Alcan Gove's operations promised to provide new opportunities for traditional Aboriginal land owners as well as other Aboriginal stakeholders in the Gove region.

"It is important to remember that the original struggle by Aboriginal landowners against the mine's development during the 1960s and early 1970s led directly to the *Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act 1976*," he said.

"It remains a fact that there has never been a formal agreement between the Gove mine's operators and the Aboriginal people on whose land the mine was built more than 30 years ago."

"I therefore welcome Alcan's promise to consult with traditional landowners and other Aboriginal stakeholders during the feasibility study process, with the understanding that this consultation will lead to the implementation of a formal agreement ahead of any mine expansion."

Finally, with the passage of the Timor Sea Treaty through Parliament on 5 March, the stalled multi-billion dollar Bayu-Undan gas project finally looks as if it will go ahead.

Located in the Timor Sea zone of Co-operation and managed by United States-

based oil giant ConocoPhillips, Bayu-Undan contains a massive resource of gas and condensate that will be piped to Darwin and processed at the yet-to-be-built Wickham Point LNG (liquefied natural gas) plant in Darwin.

It is estimated that it will cost more than \$1 billion to build the pipeline to Darwin with a further \$1.8 billion spent on the gas plant and associated developments.

More than 1,300 people would be employed during the construction phase.

The NLC's Employment and Training Unit and partner the Territory Construction Association are already in discussions with the developers of Wickham Point about Aboriginal employment, and it is hoped that at least 200 positions will be made available to Aboriginal people during the construction phase.

\$5000 University Scholarships for Indigenous students

Indigenous tertiary students from the NT can apply for new \$5000 scholarships being offered as a spinoff from the Alice to Darwin railway.

One \$5000 scholarship will go to a student from the Central Land Council area and one from the Northern Land Council region each year over the next ten years. The students should already be studying in the NT or interstate at a recognised tertiary institution. The scholarships are being offered by FreightLink, the company that will operate the railway, as a way of recognising the Indigenous contribution to the railway and of building skills and professional talent in the NT's Indigenous community.

Representatives of the Land Councils, FreightLink, the NT Chamber of Commerce and others will be on the panel awarding the scholarships.

The 2003 deadline for applications is April 15 so for more information on how to apply, contact FreightLink's Bob Cush on (08) 8922 4050

or email bob.cush@asiapactrans.com.au

Land Councils welcome ANAO finding

The NLC has welcomed the release of the Australian National Audit Office's long-awaited report into the operations of Northern Territory Land Councils and the Aboriginals Benefit Account.

NLC Chief Executive Norman Fry said the 128-page document highlighted the good work done by Land Councils in a complex and difficult environment and their compliance with the Land Rights Act.

"The report is exactly what we expected," Mr Fry said. "We were confident that the ANAO would find that the Land Councils do a lot of good work."

The audit did recommend that Land Councils improve their reporting systems to bring them in line with the Commonwealth's preferred 'Outcomes and Outputs Framework'. The report also found that Land Councils needed to improve their risk-management practices and their communication with stakeholders.

The Land Councils have largely agreed with the intent of the recommendations and are currently working on systematically addressing the issues raised, including implementing new reporting systems. However, this process will take time and resources, and the Land Councils have stressed that new performance management systems will need to be culturally appropriate and useful in the environment in which they operate.

"We are keen to explore ways to better explain how and why we do what we do," Mr Fry said. "However, such processes are costly and we will also be talking to Federal Indigenous Affairs Minister Philip Ruddock about resources to implement improved reporting systems."

A short selection of the ANAO's positive findings include:

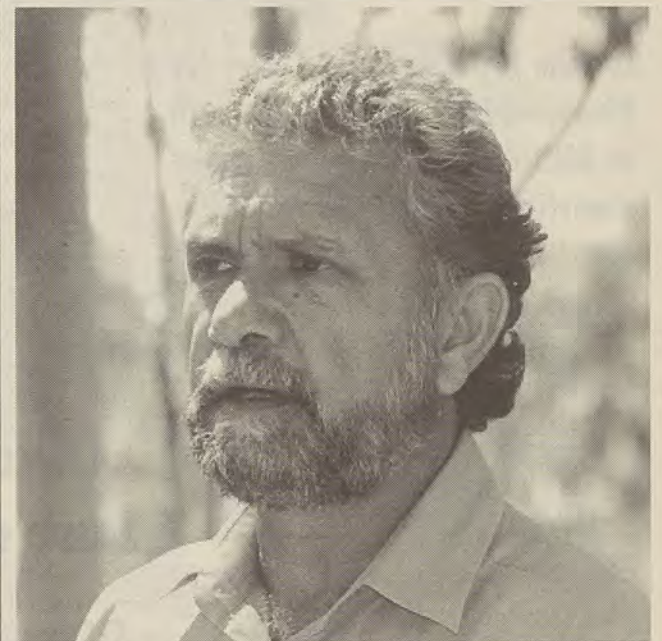
Ch. 4.5: "The ANAO found that the Land Councils consulted extensively with traditional owners to obtain their wishes and opinions and to make informed decisions regarding the use of their land. As well, traditional owners and other Aboriginals have a direct influence on the decision-making process within the Land Councils."

Ch. 5.6: "ANAO found that key business areas had adequate procedures in place to assist staff to comply with legislation, identify traditional owners' needs and manage individual projects."

Ch. 5.13: "The ANAO considers that the Land Councils are performing their advocacy and representation functions as required by the ALRA."

Ch. 5.42: "At the individual project level, the ANAO found that staff of the Land Council had good project management skills and developed policies and procedures to guide land management projects."

All Land Councils expressed their disappointment at Mr Ruddock's response to the report, which focused purely



CLC director David Ross: no skeletons in the closet

on the negative findings relating to reporting systems rather than the many positives concerning the Land Councils' work on behalf of their Indigenous constituents.

However, even Mr Ruddock was forced to admit that the report "did not indicate evidence of financial mismanagement".

Central Land Council Director David Ross said: "The Minister has made public statements which, in our view, misrepresent the findings of the audit."

"Anyone can play the game of 'selective quoting' – the fact is that the ANAO did not find any 'skeletons in the closet'."

Goodbye chips and battered savs

Ten dollar store opening fees, high prices and bad food with few choices are common on communities around Central Australia. But things are about to change on the Pitjantjatjara lands.

Some store keepers, who may only open the store two hours a day, have at times betrayed the trust of the community which employs them and walked away with handsome personal profits. In fact it's hard to think of one good store you've ever been to out bush.

Of course there are exceptions. But for the most part, the state of stores has been a long-running cause of despair to Aboriginal people on communities.

It is the stores which dictate what people eat and what people wear for most of their lives. One store on the Pitjantjatjara lands, says consultant John Tregenza, had only 350 lines in its store – and that meant only 350 items in the lives of the people who lived on that community.

Tregenza has been working on *Mai Wiru*, the regional stores policy currently being implemented by Nganampa Health Council, NPY Womens Council, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Council and all community councils on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankuytjatjara Lands. The policy specifically targets weight gain.

And apparently, things are about to radically change.

"A bottle of coke and a packet of chips for lunch will be a thing of the past," Tregenza says.

Deep fried foods will go, high sugar soft drinks and sweets will no longer be on the shelves, prices will be cheaper and standardised all over the Pit lands, decent meat will replace the high fat cheap cuts bought to maximise profit and vegetables will be bought fresh, and in

bulk, with more variety.

Tregenza says that every community they consulted asked that bad foods be taken off the shelves.

"We did point out to them the pitfalls of prohibition but they were pretty sure about what they wanted to do," he said.

It is planned that store managers salaries will be raised but they will be paid by the council and they will be required to be professionally competent.

Nganampa Health's Stephan Rainow says the salary lines for the store managers have not yet been secured and the initial response from ATSIC has been negative but they are 'still pushing'.

"The work is difficult in that we are engaged in changing 'store culture'. We are moving from an enterprise profit driven base to one where the store operates as an essential health service," he said.

The stores will all be linked to a central computer which sets prices, monitors stock and orders new stock.

It might sound too good to be true, but it has taken years of hard work, thousands of kilometres and about 40 community meetings to get to the stage of implementation.

Stores have long occupied a problematic space in community life, Mr Tregenza said. "People have always wanted something done about the terrible prices and the terrible food that's been coming out of stores, particularly as people's diets have changed," he said.

"Back in the seventies, peoples diet was 90 per cent

from bush and 10 per cent from the store. Now it's reversed and less than 10 per cent is from bush so there's a huge change in people's source of food and the stores haven't really been proactive and supportive in this whole thing.

"As a result we've got terrible health problems in what's euphemistically called lifestyle diseases - people with diabetes, kidney problems, heart disease - a whole range of illnesses which are related to what you eat, drink and the way you live.

"All the other attempts at dealing with the stores have been looking at their financial and commercial infrastructure.

"The Anangu, and those of us who worked with them back in the nineties, following up work from NPY Women's Council, Nganampa Health and Anangu Pitjantjatjara Council, picked up that fiddling around the edges was going to do nothing and we had to do something to look at the intrinsic systemic problems of stores and delivery of food.

"Bearing in mind that all stores are a monopoly, they are the only source of nutrition for the community and community members and especially the poorer members.

"The wealthy, that is, the non-Aboriginal people who are employed and some of the Aboriginal people who get high incomes, can travel to town or have their food sent out on planes.

"But the general population shop out of the store and have these consequent health problems," he said.

Aboriginal Economic Forum

Dr John Taylor from the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research at ANU delivered some disturbing statistics at the first-ever Indigenous Economic Forum held in Alice Springs on 6-7 March.

His research reveals that the Aboriginal share of Territory income has declined and the overall gap between the rich and the poor has widened.

Aboriginal people in the Territory have only 11 per cent of total income even though they account for 25 per cent of the adult population. If CDEP is counted as welfare, welfare accounts for 66 per cent of Aboriginal income.

Aboriginal share of income from employment (excluding CDEP) is only 4 per cent.

The number of working-age Aboriginal people is increasing and 8,000 more will join the ranks by 2011. The current rate of job creation is insufficient to even maintain the low employment rate of 33 per cent (including CDEP) and 2,000 jobs a year will need to be created for the next decade to achieve an employment rate comparable to non Aboriginal Territorians.

Dr Taylor said that there were a number of challenges to Aboriginal economic development. People were not located near the jobs - most Aboriginal people lived on Aboriginal land and if they migrated to where the jobs were (presumably in urban areas) they would be competing against people with better literacy, numeracy and more qualifications. In addition Aborigi-

nal people suffered from poor health and had a shorter working life due to illness.

"The Northern Territory has a serious economic development problem - around one fifth of its resident adult population remains impoverished, structurally detached from the labour market and ill-equipped to engage in it," Dr Taylor said. ●

CLC concentrates on bush employment

CLC director David Ross said that the cycle of unemployment in the bush is deeply entrenched and getting more so which meant positive action now was essential.

He said that employment for people living on Aboriginal land was a major difficulty as many people had never had a job and very few had had an education.

Nonetheless he pointed to some of the CLC's recent successes with the mines in the Tanami region where there were 100 Aboriginal people out of a workforce of 500.

Of that number 11 were from bush communities and he was confident that more would follow. He said that having a dedicated mining employment unit at the CLC, a good relationship with the mining companies, pre-vocational courses on communities and a lot of commitment and hard work contributed to the success. ●

NLC urges 'partnership' in NT development

Aboriginal people are already making strong contributions to the economic development of the Northern Territory, with the potential to greatly expand their involvement in partnership with government.

That was the message delivered by three NLC speakers at the Indigenous Economic Forum.

In his opening address to the Forum, NLC Chairman Galarrwuy Yunupingu said that the NT was standing on the threshold of an era of major development - and that Aboriginal people expected to participate in the opportunities presented as full and equal partners.

"Getting land back was never just about preserving the past, but always about the future as well," he said. "That is now the job of the Land Councils - to help people do both these things."

Mr Yunupingu told the forum that Land Councils were already engaged in this task, having approved extensive mineral exploration on Aboriginal land, facilitated community-based land management projects and been party to the successful negotiations that led to the conclusion of the Alice Springs-Darwin railway link.

Railway Project Officer Sean Lange de-



Clare Martin at the conference

scribed the success of the NLC's training and employment model developed for the railway project, which had delivered over 150 job placements for Aboriginal people by the end of 2002.

Mr Lange told the Forum that this success had led to the formation of a permanent NLC Employment and Training Service (NETS) and the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Territory Construction Association, with the aim of securing further work and training opportunities on major NT projects.

The Forum also heard of the NLC's role in nurturing micro-scale land and sea management projects, with Caring for Country Unit Executive Officer Michael Storrs detailing the work of more than 30 community-based programs across the northern part of the NT.

He said these programs were already looking for ways to earn income through enterprise development to help fund their natural resource management activities. ●

Mereenie oil and gas for another 21 years

Traditional owners, the Central Land Council and Santos Ltd have renewed an agreement covering the Mereenie Oil and Gas Field on the Haasts Bluff Aboriginal Land Trust, west of Hermannsburg in Central Australia.

The agreement was signed at Kulpitjara, an outstation on the Land Trust.

The 21-year-old agreement for the area recently expired and the new agreement will incorporate sacred site protection and increased employment opportunities for the traditional owners.

It will run for a further 21 years and employment and enterprise development along the Mereenie Loop Road are key features.

The Mereenie Oil and Gas Field and Palm Valley, also Aboriginal land, have supplied all of the Northern Territory's gas requirements for many years.

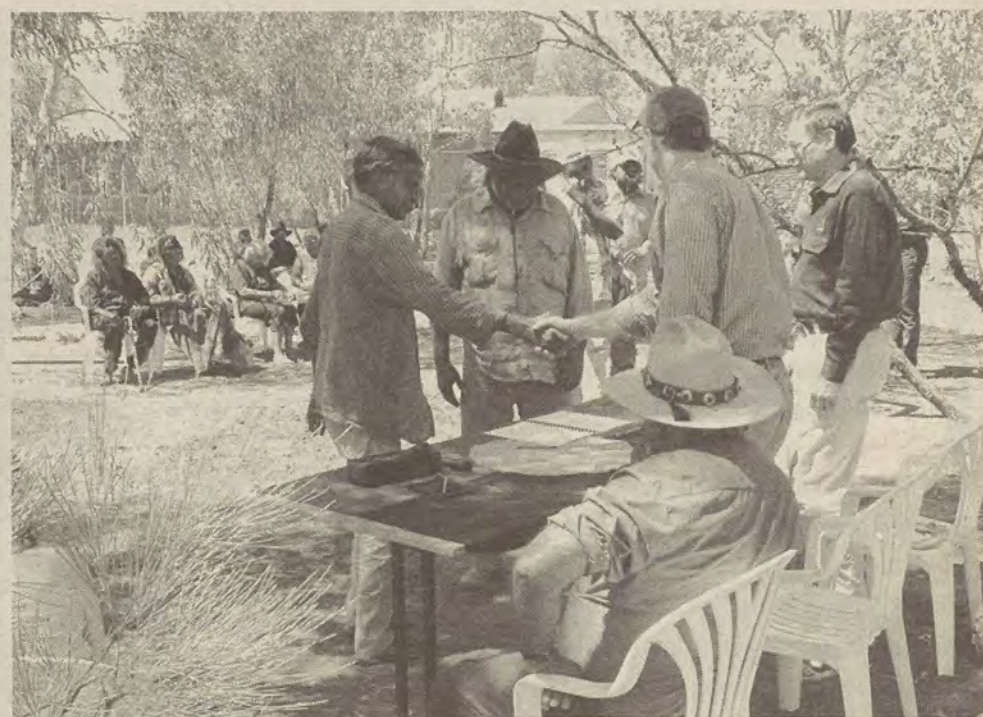
Central Land Council director David Ross said that it was yet another example

of the strengths of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act.

"For 21 years this agreement has been in place and the project has produced oil and supplied the Northern Territory with gas," he said.

"I don't think the people who criticise the Land Rights Act so much for holding up mining actually ever realised that their entire gas needs were supplied from Aboriginal land," Mr Ross said.

"However, while the gas flowed to industry and into homes all over the Northern Territory all these years, not one Aboriginal person has ever been employed for all that time. Hopefully this new agreement will herald a more socially responsible and



Traditional owners at the ceremony with Santos at the Kulpitjara outstation

equitable era for Santos.

"The traditional land owners see some opportunities for themselves in regard to employment and enterprise and an increased ability to maintain their outstations.

"We're very pleased to see resource de-

velopment on Aboriginal land in Central Australia continue to prosper.

"Mining and exploration on our land contributes more than a billion dollars to the Northern Territory economy every year." ●



The final weld goes in

It's early morning in the arid country near Dunmarra north-west of Tennant Creek. As the sun rises over the horizon, a crowd gathers to watch as a welding team puts the finishing touches to a seemingly obscure section of railway track

But this is no ordinary stretch of track. It is the first time a railway line has connected the two major Northern Territory regional centres of Tennant Creek and Katherine, covering a total distance of 645 kilometres.

It is also the major link in the railway between Alice Springs and Darwin which is due to be completed by the end of this year.

The 'weldit ceremony', which took place at Dunmarra on 13 December last year, was attended by traditional owners from the nearby Murrinji Aboriginal Land

Right: Raymond Dixon (left) and Jimmy Wave Hill aboard one of the new locomotives



Trust as well as Northern Land Council Chief Executive Norman Fry and a host of dignitaries including politicians and representatives of railway developer the Asia Pacific Transport Consortium.

Mr Fry described the occasion as one of "historic significance" for the Northern Territory and Australia.

"I am immensely proud as an Indigenous Australian to have been a party to the construction of this railway," he said.

"Aboriginal people have a long history with this railway line, and most of the land it is being built on is our land – either

through inalienable freehold or native title interests."

The traditional owners at the function – Pharlap Dixon, Jimmy Wavehill, Geoffrey Dixon, Shannon Dixon and Raymond Dixon – said they were pleased with the outcome of the negotiations between Land Councils and the NT Government which allowed the railway to be built across their land.

With help from the Community Development Fund set up by the NT Government to assist communities affected by the railway, the

Murrinji community has been able to start a fencing and cattle adjustment business.

Mr Fry said the Land Councils had worked hard to ensure Aboriginal stakeholders were involved in the \$1.3 billion railway project from a very early stage.

"The fruits of that co-operative approach are clear in the NLC's arrea, with over 150 Indigenous people employed on the Top End portion of the rail link since worked commenced in April 2001," he said.

Wadeye - building for the future

The sleek lines of the new houses rise up out of the green bush in the morning light, looking every inch like subjects fit for an architectural sales brochure. Sprinklers play on the fast-growing lawns, courtesy of a recently-installed town water supply. No, this isn't Fairway Waters or Bayview – welcome to Manthathpe, a new \$1.5 million subdivision on the outskirts of Wadeye that opened in February.

To community leader Leon Melpi, a former teacher and a member of the RakManinh clan, it is the fulfilment of a dream 10 years in the making.

"This is our own plan designed for our needs," Mr Melpi said. "This is all about land rights and self-determination in action. Long after I'm gone the benefits of this place for our children and their children will still be flowing through."

At present there are eight houses – four bungalows and four elevated – in the subdivision, with room for another 16. The development was jointly funded by the National Aboriginal Health Strategy, the Indigenous Housing Authority NT and the

Power and Water Authority, and is the third stage in a \$6 million program to upgrade township infrastructure in Wadeye.



Leon Melpi



Left: Community leader Leon Melpi; above: one of the houses at the Manthathpe subdivision

"We first started talking about this back in 1985," Mr Melpi said. "This was my grandfather's land. I used to come here with my wife and kids, just sit out here in a family group."

All the residents of Manthathpe come from either the RakManinh or Wentak-

Nganayi clans. Mr Melpi says members of both clans see the subdivision as a blueprint for a future, decentralised Wadeye.

"Here we have opportunities, like tourism," he said.

"We are taking the best of the past with us to the future."



Athel pines fell victim to the Weed Library machines at Jay creek. The Weed Library is available to Aboriginal landowners

Athel pine gets the chop at Jay Creek

There has been no stopping Aboriginal landowners clearing weeds from their country since the weeds library was first launched at Yuendumu in early 2002.

Recently Arrernte Council CDEP workers Colin Ansell, Patrick Perkins, Roger Wade and Gary Swan helped to remove Athel pines at Jay Creek with the assistance of John Gavin and Brian O'Hanlon from the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment (DIPE).

Athel pines are a noxious weed which have overgrown other native trees and shrubs at Jay Creek.

During the eradication of the athel pines the Power & Water Authority cut the power off to the area for four hours, allowing time for Arrernte CDEP Council workers to cut and load the Athel pine onto trucks and remove them.

The weeds library was used to help spray herbicide around the sawn-off trunks to prevent further infestations occurring.

This weeds management work was organised between Arrernte Council's CDEP Coordinators and the DIPE's Weeds Library after consultations and agreement with the Iwupataka Steering Committee and Arrernte Council.

The Weeds Library can be utilised on any Aboriginal land in Central Australia with appropriate training provided in how to use the equipment. The equipment consists of quad bikes and spray packs, however costs of the herbicide (Round-up) are at the landowner's or resource agency's expense.

To book the equipment for the removal of weeds contact DIPE weeds library coordinator, John Gavin, on 8951 8195 or CLC Land Management Officer, Brad Nott on 8950 5003.

The Weeds Library is a joint initiative funded by the Indigenous Land Corporation and coordinated by Central Land Council and DIPE, who will oversee the project over the next four years.

The CLC is currently working on educational materials for landowners to help them identify noxious weeds on their land.

Radio Larrakia 'locked out' of NT footy

A row has erupted in Darwin over the live Saturday broadcasting rights of the local Australian Football League Northern Territory (AFLNT) football matches.

Popular local Indigenous broadcaster Radio Larrakia has alleged that the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) locked it out of the finals series that took place at the end of March.

According to Radio Larrakia Station Manager Jurgen Mulzer, while Radio Larrakia has permission to broadcast live Sunday matches, an exclusivity deal between the ABC and the AFLNT means it can no longer cover games on Saturday.

And with all finals games played on a Saturday, the deal effectively excludes Radio Larrakia from covering the AFLNT final series for the next two years.

"We believe the ABC is stopping us from broadcasting to Top End fans for self-interested reasons," Mr Mulzer said. "That is in stark contrast to its role as a public broadcaster."

Mr Mulzer pointed out that the ABC's Operating Charter envisions the ABC's role as one "...that supports the development of Indigenous broadcasting associations..."

"It seems, though, that ABC Darwin does not support this idea, claiming exclusive rights to all Saturday games and the finals.

Such exclusivity is not only contrary to the spirit of the ABC's Charter, but is also not in the best interest of the game of football as a whole," Mr Mulzer said.

But the national broadcaster said it was not responsible for the present situation, and that the decision to allow Radio Larrakia access to Saturday matches rested largely with the AFLNT.

"The rights belong to the AFLNT," the ABC's NT Director, Tony Bowden, said. "We have simply negotiated a commercial deal for access to those rights."

"The thing is, Radio Larrakia needs to go back to the AFLNT with a proposal that is in the community's interest. If there's something that the community is missing out on, then we would review the situation."

With the ABC and the AFLNT locked into a deal until 2005, Mr Mulzer is keen for the issue to be resolved through further negotiations. While he conceded that Radio Larrakia had lost the opportunity to broadcast this season's final series (the grand final took place on 29 March), he said he was looking to the future.

"A large number of sports officials, players and fans are Indigenous, however they are denied the opportunity to listen to a community broadcaster with an Indigenous focus.

"In order to give community radio and its listeners a fair go, we are trusting that the ABC ... will be able to abandon its protectionism for a more communal approach to football broadcasting," Mr Mulzer said.

A meeting of all parties to resolve this matter is expected to take place in the near future.

CAAMA turmoil ends with new board

After some dramatic events which ended in a special general meeting, Alice Springs Aboriginal media group CAAMA now has a new board.

Former CAAMA Chief Executive Officer Owen Cole has returned to the helm as chairman after leaving four years ago, and long-term production manager Priscilla Collins is acting CEO until the position is filled.

Only one former member, Sharon Burns, retained a position on the board.

Mr Cole is upbeat about CAAMA's future.

"Thirty per cent of Aboriginal music played on the airwaves comes from CAAMA and 90 per cent of all music in language is produced by us.

"We have made the decision not to make those CAAMA Music staff redundant as it appeared was to happen late last year.

"We have two \$1.5 million film productions happening in town as we speak and we estimate that over the years CAAMA Productions has brought in around \$25 million to the Territory. It has been the mainstay of film-making in the Territory with the possible exception of Burundi," he said.

"CAAMA Radio is also going strong and broadcasting the CAFL just goes from strength to strength.

ATSIC has refused to continue to fund CAAMA Music which precipitated the crisis last year and Mr Cole acknowledged that funding is scarce and the future will be more challenging than life for CAAMA in the nineties.

"The funding situation has become very difficult and there is an expansion of other media so there is a greater competition for funds," he said.

"But the current financial state is OK and with the new board we will survive. We will have to increase our self-generated revenue but that is already pretty significant. We will maintain our current functions but we will also be tapping into different funding dollars.

"We have got a board with quite a bit of media experience between them so I think CAAMA will survive for a long time into the future," Mr Cole said.

The new CAAMA Board

Owen Cole (Chairman)
Michael Griffin (Treasurer)
Eileen Hoosan
Eileen Van Eysel
Graeme Smith
Peter Ross
Bessie Price
Meredy Satour
Sharon Burns

Forum talks petrol sniffing

We asked some youth workers what they thought about making sniffing illegal at a recent forum of youth workers near Alice Springs



Petrol sniffing has become even more of a problem on Central Australian communities and children are starting to sniff at a younger age according to the chairperson of the Central Australian Young Peoples Information Network, Dianne Linton, after a week-long forum of youth workers at Wallace Rockhole, west of Alice Springs.

"Petrol sniffing is the biggest problem to come out this week but we also talked about alcohol and marijuana related to homelessness, domestic violence and people are talking about a lot of programs that are happening but aren't reaching remote areas," she said.

"It would be more of a challenge for sniffers if it was illegal and it would make it easier because they can go around and take the grog off people and that helps. But we've got to look at the reasons why they are sniffing.

"The biggest thing to come out of the forum was more training and education - what do you do with a young person who's sniffing? How do you intervene when a young person has just started sniffing? These sorts of issues."

In Western Australia petrol sniffing was made illegal using by-laws on communities on the Ngaanyatjarra lands. Ngaanyatjarra youth workers Lachie Patterson and Tony Weir said changes in WA legislation had made it more difficult to enforce but overall it assisted in preventing sniffing.

"There was night patrol and the community had a means of going in there and enforcing that actual support from WA Police and things like that," Tony said.

"I think it is effective in that at least it is an established platform by which the communities can go in there. It's also about having police presence out there.

"The issue of substance abuse isn't as bad in the Ngaanyatjarra lands as it was 10 years ago, or as bad as



Diane Linton

the Pit lands or the NT, so we're quite fortunate in that sense. It's a cyclic thing which depends on who's coming out of jail, who brings petrol into the community and I guess large holiday breaks when kids are looking for something to do.

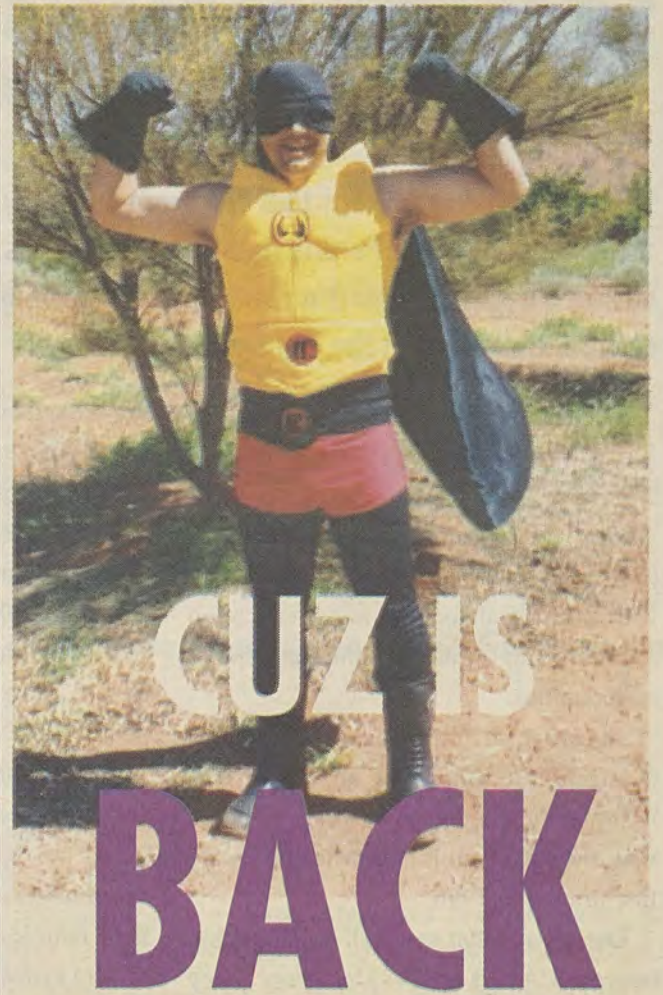
"I think any measure that allows the communities to deal with it is good.

"I think at the minute we are trying to take an individual community approach - trying to get the cooperation of elders and organisations," he said.

A long-term worker dealing with sniffers, Blair MacPharlane said he thought any measure that made it harder was good.

"Under the CLC at Yuendumu we tried to get by-laws through that made it possible for the community to compel kids to go to Mt Theo but the CLC refused to pass any by-laws relating to that and now they're pretty much on top of their petrol sniffing anyway so its not an issue. But at the time the community really wanted that and they weren't allowed to," he said.

However the CLC is unable to make by-laws and community governments have the by-law making capacity for their own areas.



Wearing your underpants on the outside isn't for everyone but for Cuz Congress, who has mysteriously appeared back on the scene in Central Australia, they are the essential fashion item.

"In my fight for Aboriginal health I must stand out. A lot of thought went into it and I'm a bit pressed for time being a superhero - not much for messing around with outfits so this is the best I could come up with," Cuz told us at the CAYPIN Forum at Wallace Rockhole.

"I'll go about stopping grog runners and trying to teach the kids that sniffing's not real good and you know - if people out there are having sex then they should really be protected," he said.

"You'll see me around whenever there's unsafe sex, grog running and general bad health practices - you'll see me around. Cuz is there for truth, justice and the Aboriginal way," Cuz said.

Yirara College celebrates 30 years

Yirara College in Alice Springs recently celebrated 30 years and 10 years since the Lutheran Church took it over. Yirara is a residential school for kids from the bush and on its birthday we caught up with former student Nathan Williams.

"I went to Yirara until 1994 and then to Emmanuel College in Adelaide and stayed there for three years and did Year 12. It was good there and I made a lot of friends.

"I went to Los Angeles for sprinting - athletics - and half way through the year I came back out to Hermannsburg and went to Hermannsburg school for a year and a bit. I was also running a sport and recreation program doing discos and keeping the kids occupied on weekends.

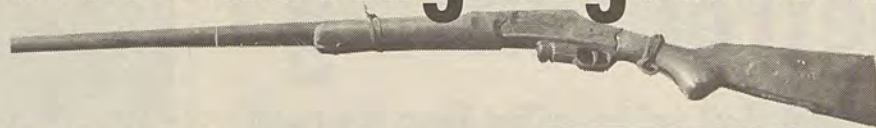
"I got a job at the Tanami mine through the CLC employment unit. At the moment I'm working in the lab which is bringing samples in from where they drill and then put some chemicals in there to see if there's gold and have a look on the computer.

"I've been for there about four months and now they've put me up to the gold room starting to pour gold. I'm glad I came here to Yirara - I probably wouldn't be where I am now if I hadn't," he said.

**Right: Nathan Williams
Below: Yirara in the seventies when it was a government school and right: as it is today - a Lutheran College**



Firearms controls having negative impact in Top End



There is growing concern that Northern Territory firearms legislation enacted following the Port Arthur massacre in Tasmania in 1996 could be having a negative impact on both food harvesting and feral animal control on Aboriginal land in the Top End.

The situation has prompted Professor Jon Altman, director of the Australian National University's Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR), to write to the NT Government with a proposal for a training, education and licensing strategy aimed at remote communities.

His proposal mirrors the NLC's call for the implementation of an "extensive information and education strategy" to go with the gun controls laws when they were first drafted in 1996.

During a recent research collaboration between CAEPR and NT University's Key Centre for Tropical Wildlife Management (KCTWM) to follow up research on customary food harvesting conducted more than 20 years ago in the Maningrida region, Professor Altman found clear evidence that Aboriginal access to firearms had declined over the intervening period.

"The causes for the decline in availability of firearms appear to be directly linked to far stricter gun licensing laws introduced by the NT Government...in the aftermath of the Port Arthur massacre," he says in his submission.

"Given the empirical evidence that wildlife harvesting remains a very important element of the customary economy at outstation communities in Arnhem Land and government concern about the socio-economic and health status of Aboriginal people, there seems to be a strong case for some action to be taken to address this issue..."

Wayne Champion, secretary of Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation at Maningrida, said he had seen "a lot of bad guns" during hunting trips around Maningrida.

"I actually do a lot of hunting myself - there are a lot of things that need fixing out here," he said. "I think one of the big problems is that remote communities misunderstand the licensing requirements."

KCTWM Principal Research Fellow David Bowman described the deteriorating gun stocks as "a huge building issue".

"There is no doubt it will affect people's diet and well being," he told *Land Rights News*. "Firearms are ageing so there is a real safety issue involved."

Tony Griffiths, a KCTWM lecturer, said

the importance of hunting in an economic sense was shown up in the joint CAEPR/KCTWM study.

"We spent two weeks in four locations around Maningrida last July, and in that period \$10,000 worth of meat was collected by hunters, much of this using firearms," he said. "The meat was enough to feed 200 people."

"If you don't have guns, you can see the sort of direct economic impact that is going to have on people living in communities that rely on hunting to feed their families."

Mr Griffiths said that with stringent new requirements for gun licensing - such as undertaking gun training courses and safe storage - Aboriginal people were simply not replacing guns.

To address the situation, Professor Altman proposes that the NT Government underwrite the employment of a professional 'gun man', whose job would be to travel to remote communities and assist Aboriginal adults with:

- gaining the necessary skills to obtain a gun licence;
- sitting the gun licence test;
- purchasing firearms;
- advice on occupational health and safety issues;
- advice on appropriate hardware and ammunition;

Professor Altman also suggests that the gun man could undertake a census of guns and be resourced to buy back unsafe firearms.

"...There is little doubt that considerable public benefit could derive from such an initiative," he says.

"There is ... a high probability that hunting of feral animals, particularly feral pigs and buffalo, would increase with concomitant decline in environmental degradation and loss of species diversity."

Mr Champion agreed it would be a good idea for more information and training on firearms to be made available in remote areas but said he supported the overall aim of tighter gun control.

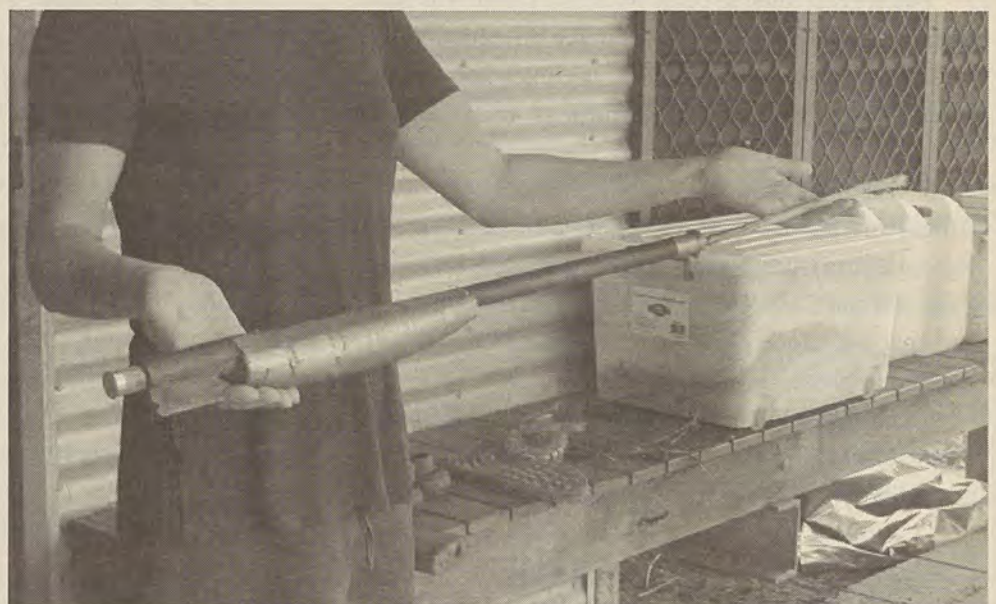
"I think it's not good for some people to have firearms," he said. "Everyone who has a gun must also be aware of safety - they must have a gun safe."

At time of going to press, there had been no government response to Professor Altman's proposal



Above: killing your own - in this case a buffalo - saves thousands of dollars on meat. Photo courtesy Tony Griffiths

Below: just one example of the types of firearms that people are hanging on to to avoid the gun licence test. Photo courtesy Jon Altman



THE CONISTON MASSACRE

This year will mark 75 years since the Coniston massacre in Central Australia which was part of a chain of events where more than 100 Aboriginal people were massacred by police.

CLC Executive member William Brown has requested that the Central Land Council assist people in commemorating the event this year.

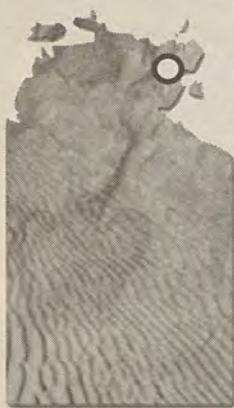
"There have been memorials for Port Arthur, September 11 and Bali. These are all recent events but we have never had one for Coniston," he said.

"It's time for Warlpiri, Anmatyerre and Kaytetye people to come together for this."

It's planned that the commemoration should take place later in the year after extensive consultations.

For more information contact Mr Brown through the Willowra School 8956 8408 or the CLC Media Unit 8951 6217

Little ant, big crazy problem



When the Australian military set up an army base at Mt Dundas near Yirrkala in eastern Arnhem Land during World War II, little did they

know that they had brought with them an unwanted fellow-traveller – the yellow crazy ant, one of the world's worst feral pest species.

Since then the crazy ants have been quietly proliferating, spreading their way into more than 80 separate sites covering some 350 hectares in a 90 kilometre radius around Nhulunbuy.

They were only discovered in Arnhem Land in 1990 during a fauna survey, but their potential to inflict enormous damage on ecosystems has since become clear with the devastation of the red crab population on Christmas Island.

The NLC has teamed up with Dhimurru Land Management Aboriginal Corporation and CSIRO researchers to eradicate the infestations before they turn into the worst of all

possible outcomes: a supercolony.

The ants are listed among the world's 100 worst invasive pest species by the Global Invasive Species Program because of their ability to totally take over landscapes and drive out all other living animal species, both vertebrate and invertebrate.

"This little yellow crazyant will destroy our culture, our land, our life," Dhimurru senior ranger Balupalu Yunupingu said.

CSIRO research fellow Dr Ben Hoffman said ants were a threat to human health as their acid spray could cause serious burns to skin and, if sprayed in the eye, had the potential to cause blindness.

NLC project officer Mark Ashley said the threat of yellow crazy ants should not be underestimated.

"These ants have the capacity to spread from Broome in Western Australia across to Queensland," he said. "We have an opportunity to do something about them while their distribution is limited. It will cost money but if we act quickly it will be far more cost-efficient than if we wait 10 years.

"Crazy ants already pose a threat to Aboriginal people living in the Nhulunbuy area, especially to young



Yellow crazy ants attack a native green ant

children, but also because they can drive out bush tucker and disrupt wildlife-based industries."

Dhimurru Senior Cultural Adviser, Nanikiya Munungurritj, said the main infestations had been found around human settlements, along creeks and in shaded areas of the Gove Peninsula.

"People should be aware of crazy ants. We need to track their locations and treat them before they get out of hand," he said.

During a seminar held at CSIRO's Darwin headquarters on February 28, Dr Hoffman said crazy ants only spread slowly because they were what is known as "tramp ants" – in other words, queen ants setting up new colonies walked rather than flew to their new location.

He said the reason crazy ants had been able to spread so far from the original infestation site was because of human help, for instance road builders taking contaminated equipment into the

bush.

"It turns out most infestations have been found at culverts, creek crossings, rubbish dumps and campsites – places where human activity is high," he said.

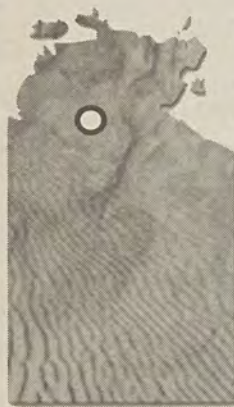
Mr Ashley said that following a \$100,000 scoping study completed last year in Arnhem Land, the project partners had decided on a two-phase strategy beginning this May that would rely on Aboriginal ranger groups to lead the fight against the ants.

Phase One will include raising public awareness of the problem, completing a crazy ant distribution survey and testing the feasibility of the eradication strategy at four key sites.

If Phase One is successful, Phase Two – which will run from July 2004 to June 2006 – will focus on the complete eradication of crazy ants.

"We want to keep the country as it is," Mr Munungurritj said. "The way it was always long before these crazy ants came." ●

Trouble in the Daly - development by stealth



Aboriginal landowners have not been consulted over agricultural developments in the Daly River region, where large areas of pastoral lease

and freehold land are currently being cleared of native vegetation.

Many Aboriginal people live nearby or downstream of these developments and stand to be affected by the clearing, which has already been approved by NT Minister for Lands and Planning Kon Vatskalis.

The Government had previously assured the NLC that there would be six months' consultation before further

development would proceed, but earlier this year Minister Vatskalis gave the go-ahead for 8,000 hectares to be cleared without consultation or, indeed, any public announcement.

The Daly River is an NT icon, and is of immense value culturally to Aboriginal landowners of the region as well as an important resource base.

It is the largest river in the NT and is a habitat rich in turtles and fish, including rare and threatened species.

Historically, similar developments have led to long-term and irreversible problems such as pollution, silt build-up, reduced water flows and loss of wildlife for arguably most river systems in southern Australia.

The NT Government is saying the Daly developments will occur in an environmentally sustainable way.

But they have not talked with Aboriginal stakeholders or the NLC to explain how they will do this.

The Government has also not undertaken any study into the cultural impacts which changes in river health and flow might have.

To date, the Minister has not responded to the NLC's request for the Government to publicly release important planning documents about development in the Daly region. Mr Vatskalis has also not responded to the NLC's request to meet with him privately and discuss this issue.

However, the secret agricultural developments are believed to include pastoralism and various crops, including crops requiring irrigation.

Such developments would involve not only broadscale vegetation clearance, but also pumping large amounts of water from the river and watertable, the use of pesticides and herbicides and increased greenhouse gas emissions.

The go-ahead for vegetation clearing in the Daly region is effectively a green light



The Daly River

for the Government's agricultural development proposals, the details of which continue to be kept secret from the public. ●



photo courtesy ATSIC

Electrifying Allstars light up Marrara

"You would have thought they'd been together for years."

Those were the words of ATSIC Allstars coach Michael McLean after he'd just witnessed his composite team complete a 73-point demolition of the Carlton Football Club on Saturday 8 February at Darwin's Marrara stadium.

In front of a record crowd of 17,500 enthusiastic fans, the Allstars were electrifying.

Led by Captain Andrew McLeod and the Fremantle Dockers duo of Des Headland and Troy Cook, the Allstars controlled the game from the outset. Their smaller, quicker forwards benefited from the hard work of their midfielders with multiple opportunities in front of goal.

Collingwood's "Neon Leon" Davis showed why his nickname is well deserved, and he was ably supported by the likes of Andrew Krakouer and Brisbane's Daryl White.

A quarter time lead of 16 points had stretched to 58 by half time, courtesy of an 11-goal second term. By then the door was well and truly slammed shut in Carlton's face.

With the game virtually out of Carlton's reach, coach Dennis Pagan opted to rest several of his star players in the second half, with Corey McKernan joining Koutifides, Ratten, McKay and Camporeale on the bench. This decision opened the door for rookies such as Jonathon McCormick to impress.

McLean on the other hand continued to rotate his players off the bench, giving his entire squad the opportunity to experience the moment.

The sight of a leaner and fitter Des Headland in full flight would have stirred the anticipation of the Dockers hierarchy and their supporters for the season ahead.

"Dessie won a lot of hard ball for us, he threw his

body on the line. He's got a lot fitter and he's lean and mean at the moment," McLean said.

NLC-sponsored players Stephen Koops and Richard Cole, both from the Territory, had mixed fortunes for the game.

While Cole kicked two valuable goals for the All-stars, Koops spent most of the night on the bench nursing a shoulder injury sustained in the first quarter.

Though disappointed with the result, Pagan offered no excuses for his team's loss.

"They were red hot," Pagan said. "We were disappointing."

"I tell you one thing, we don't have to play this side again this year."

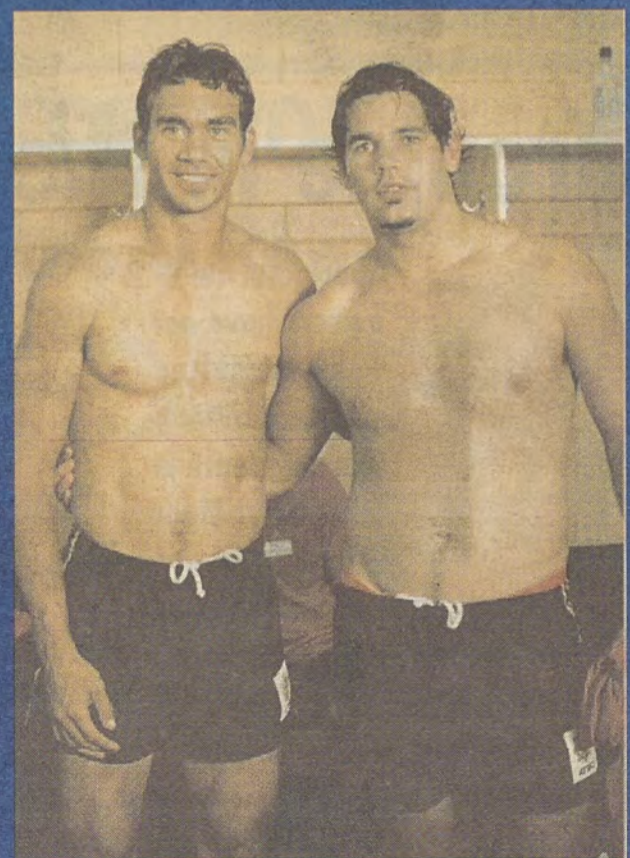
McLean revealed after the match that a pre-game team meeting held earlier in the day was the foundation for the win.

"It was one of the most emotional meetings I've ever attended," McLean said. "A few tears were shed, and this was really special to them."

It was the second time an Allstars team had lined up against an AFL club, the first being in 1994 against Collingwood. Support for the game is growing, with speculation that it could be held every three to four years with the approval of AFL clubs.

However, Top End fans would be less than impressed with calls by ATSIC Chair Geoff Clark to move the venue away from Darwin.

Final scores: Allstars 19.16 (130) to Carlton's 8.9 (57).



Top: Captain Andrew McLeod leads his Allstars out onto the ground
Above: NLC -sponsored Allstars, Stephen Koops from the Fremantle Dockers (left), and Collingwood's Richard Cole before the match

IMPARJA CUP



photo courtesy ATSIIC



photo courtesy ATSIIC



photo courtesy ATSIIC



photo courtesy ATSIIC



Cup winners NSW celebrate the big win
Photo courtesy ACB

New South Wales has been crowned the best Indigenous cricketing team in Australia after they defeated a gallant South Australian combination to win the Imparja Cup in Alice Springs.

Thanks to a commanding knock of 82 by batsman Michael Parkins, the Blues established what was to be a winning total of 229 from their allotted 40 overs.

In reply, the South Australians could only manage 178 off 34 overs, falling 51 runs short of victory.

Blues captain Craig Trindall inflicted the bulk of the damage with the ball, taking 3 wickets for 21 runs off just six overs.

The Australian Cricket Board and the NT Cricket Association jointly host the annual three-day tournament, which once again attracted teams from all States and Territories.

The format for the tournament is unique, with competition split into two divisions. Interstate teams compete in the Imparja Cup, while NT towns such as Darwin and Katherine battle it out in the Imparja Shield competition.

Each match in the Cup competition is restricted to 40 overs, while games are reduced to just 14 overs in the Shield division. The restrictions provide some exciting action with big hitting and quick running between wickets a common sight.

In a hard-fought Shield final, Darwin retained its mantle as the best Territory team, defeating Katherine by just two runs.

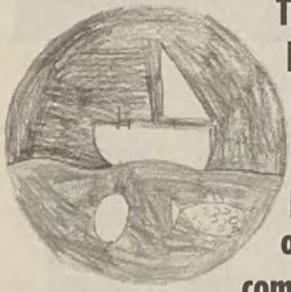
The concept of the tournament has attracted interest from the right people in the right positions.

ACB Chairman Bob Merriman delayed his departure to the ICC World Cup in South Africa to attend. It's a positive sign that the profile of the tournament is attracting the right kind of interest.

Coupled with this are the calls for the Imparja Cup tournament to be used as a selection ground for players competing in the annual ATSIIC Chairman's XI versus Prime Minister's XI fixture.

Player of the Series, the ACT's Glen Martin, has been a member of an ATSIIC XI, and is one who supports the idea. Glen, along with 15 others, was named in a squad that will be on call to compete in any possible matches with visiting international teams such as Bangladesh and Zimbabwe.

Saltwater Logo Competition



The NLC would like to thank all the school students who participated in our competition to design a logo for the Saltwater Working Group, as advertised in the December 2002 edition of Land Rights News.

The winner is Nikita Baker from the Borroloola Community Education Centre, who came up with a striking design (above) featuring sea creatures and a sailing boat superimposed on the colours of the Aboriginal flag.

Nikita has won \$100 worth of art supplies and her school will also receive \$200 of art supplies to help students continue their art education. Nikita's design will be used as the basis to create a logo for the Working Group's newsletter and letterhead.

The standard of entries was very high – congratulations to you all! ●

Rail safety - take care on the track

The Northern Territory is gearing up for the arrival of the first train north from Adelaide to Darwin late this year – and with it will come a host of new safety issues for Aboriginal people living along the railway corridor.

With construction on the Alice Springs to Darwin Rail link very much in motion, NT authorities have now turned their thoughts towards an awareness and safety campaign aimed at informing and educating on the "do's and don'ts" of rail safety.

For the people in the Alice Springs region, the practice of rail safety and awareness has been an everyday event for many years.

However, this is not the case for those Territory residents living north of Alice Springs.

It is proposed that a variety of signage will be erected at appropriate locations along the rail link's path.

Knowing and being able to identify them will form a vital component of the safety and awareness campaign.

Other specific aspects of the campaign will also target Indigenous Territorians, especially those in remote locations.

Key messages of the safety program

will include:

- The speed that trains will be travelling on the track, combined with their size, means that they can't stop for anyone or anything on the track.

- When you see a stop sign at a rail crossing, it means you must definitely STOP your vehicle, wait until the track is clear and then cross where it is safe to do so.

- Safety is YOUR responsibility. Act responsibly and obey all signage and instructions.

- Driving or sleeping alongside rail tracks is both extremely unsafe and illegal.

The rail safety message will be relayed via full colour posters displayed in remote communities, via radio advertisements, via print media advertisements and via television advertisements.

Brochures detailing the rail safety campaign will also be distributed throughout the general community. ●



CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL CONGRESS Education and Training Branch

ENROLMENTS FOR AHW CERTIFICATE 111 (CLINICAL)

Central Australian Aboriginal Congress is accepting enrolments for Certificate III in Aboriginal Health Work (Clinical). Students spend time in the clinic under supervision, and in the classroom. The course is due to commence on 22 April 2003. There are no formal entry requirements. At the completion of the 12-month course the student becomes eligible for registration as an Aboriginal Health Worker in the Northern Territory. Numbers are limited, enrolment as soon as possible is encouraged. Information about the course is available from Congress Education & Training Branch on 8951 4457 OR 8951 4445.

Please note enrolments for the course close on the 7th of April 2003.

FEEDBACK NEEDED - GROG TRIAL EXTENDED

The Alice Springs alcohol restriction trials will be extended until the Evaluation Reference Group submits its report to the Licensing Commission in June 2003.

The Evaluation Reference Group is now seeking community feedback on the restrictions which have been in place since April 1 2002

"It is important that we, Aboriginal people have our say about the grog trials. This issue affects so many of us because of the impact of grog on our families," Phillip Watkins, the Central Land Council's representative on the Evaluation Group said.

"It's important when we evaluate the trials, that views of communities near Alice Springs are included," he said.

The trial restrictions apply to the sale of alcohol are:

- Take away sales between 2.00pm and 9.00pm on weekdays
- No takeaway sales in containers larger than 2 litres
- Only light beer to be sold on premises before 11.30am weekdays

What do you think about the effectiveness of the trial?

If you want to have your say about whether the grog trials been working or not working contact Philip Watkins at the Central Land Council on 89516210 or contact the Chair of the Evaluation Reference Group Ian Crundell on 89515157

Feedback can only be taken until the end of April 2003.

NLC launches new website

The NLC has upgraded its presence on the internet with a redesigned website, www.nlc.org.au, which was launched at the end of February.

The website features an attractive graphics-enhanced 'look' as well as more comprehensive information about the Land Council, its members and its role as the peak representative body for Aboriginal people living in the Top End.

Visitors will find a comprehensive listing of all NLC members by region and biographies of the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Chief Executive, as well as a more detailed explanation of the permits system accompanied by redesigned – and downloadable – permit forms.

The Media/Publications section now contains a four-year archive of NLC press releases, protocols relating to media workers on Aboriginal land, top stories from each edition of *Land Rights News* and an on-line version of the NLC's annual report. Over time this section will expand to include a range of material such as speeches, Parliamentary submissions and discussion papers.

Other new features include picture galleries, a revamped and enhanced employment section and links through to relevant websites.

Material from the old website, including a chronology of the land rights movement, a detailed explanation of the legislative framework under which the NLC operates and a guide to doing business on



Aboriginal land, has been updated.

NLC Chief Executive Norman Fry said: "A lot of time and effort has gone into the website's redesign over the past year and I am very happy with the result."

"An organisation's website is effectively its global shopfront and as such it forms a central part of our communication strategy in the wider community, not just here in Australia but overseas as well."

"It is important that people understand how the Northern Land Council came into existence, its historical struggle to win land rights for its Aboriginal constituents and its changing role as we move into the 21st century." ●

Latest *Land Rights Views* set for release

A new edition of the NLC's popular video magazine *Land Rights Views*, the first for 2003, has been finished and will shortly be distributed to NLC offices and communities throughout the Top End.

The video features such stories as: the latest developments on the Darwin to Alice Springs Railway; a traditional Yolngu ceremony that hasn't taken place for 15 years; the hand-back of land to Pine Creek's Wagiman people; and plans to eradicate one of the world's worst pests, the yellow crazy ant, from the Gove region.

The video magazine follows on from the successful release of *Land Rights Views*



2002 last October. The NLC also plans to release another *Land Rights Views* later this year.

So, if you want to know what's been going on in and around the Top End of the Territory, give the NLC's Media Unit a call on (08) 8920 5100 or email them at media@nlc.org.au and get your hands on a copy of *Land Rights Views* ●

CLC Cadets graduate



Tamika Williams (left) and Shaneen Tilmouth - CLC cadetship program successes

The Central Land Council's Aboriginal employment and training programs continue to deliver success with two cadets finishing their tertiary studies at the Northern Territory University (NTU).

Tamika Williams and Shaneen Tilmouth began a cadetship at the CLC in 2000, where they participated in work placement during semester breaks while studying full time at the NTU.

CLC legal cadet Tamika has completed a double degree, studying a Bachelor of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Studies and Law (BATSISL).

Tamika is a Darwin girl whose grandfather is Gummulkbun/ Madjambalmi from North West Arnhem Land and the Cobourg Peninsula.

Her grandmother is Larrakia and Tiwi.

Tamika began her degree in 1998 after finishing her secondary education at a Darwin High school.

Strong family support and studying in her local town of Darwin made full-time studying easy.

"My mum has been the backbone through my five years of study.

She's continued to encourage me and support me through the hard times when I didn't think I could make it.

The positive and encouraging support I received from all my family really helped me through it and I thank all of them, especially my mum," Tamika said.

Tamika said her cadetship with the CLC was instrumental during her studies and the support she received from CLC staff during work placements made her feel really welcome. ●

"Having the cadetship with CLC helped me put into practice what I had been studying.

During work placements I was able to identify legal issues and put what I'd been learning in the classroom into practice," Tamika said.

After finishing her final placement at CLC, Tamika has started her articles at the Department of Justice in Darwin and hopes to focus on intellectual property law in the future.

"University's a challenge but worthwhile because you come out of it with a degree and recognition for all your hard work," Tamika said.

CLC policy cadet Shaneen Tilmouth completed a Bachelor of Arts majoring in political science and history.

"It was hard at first but it got easier and Land Council was a great help with offering the opportunity of a cadetship.

CLC offered a lot of support and during work placement in Alice Springs I was able to attend council meetings and work on projects which gave me an insight into Land Council and Aboriginal issues," Shaneen said.

Shaneen hopes to enter into further studies and travel overseas this year.

CLC director David Ross congratulated Shaneen and Tamika and wished them all the best with their careers. "They've been a credit to us," he said. ●

Croc eggs a boon for Bawinanga



Harvesting crocodile eggs from the wild is as dangerous as it sounds. But for the Djelk Rangers of the Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation in the Top End community of Maningrida, it's all being done in the name of business.

They've been tip-toeing around crocodiles for over a decade now. Proudly independent, Bawinanga also

claim the unique aspect of being the only crocodile management operation fully owned and operated by Aboriginal people.

"There's no other group doing this by themselves," says the corporation's logistics man, Ray Hall. "There are other groups earning from it, but not doing it."

Mr Hall's role is "to organise permits and sales." The egg collecting, incubation, hatching and distribution of hatchlings are duties completed by the rangers themselves.

With the assistance of Crocodylus Park in Darwin and others, Bawinanga commenced its management program over 10 years ago, but for the past four years its been operating solo.

Making the transition was never a prob-

lem says Ray Hall, with workers on the program today combining modern technology with traditional management practices.

"I think given that crocodiles are a traditional animal, and something they know about, gives them the confidence to operate such things as an incubator," Mr Hall said.

It is not only egg collection that allows Bawinanga the opportunity to raise revenue. It is also permitted to harvest wild adult crocs for skins separate to the egg collection process.

"We've got a permit to harvest adult croc skins that's separate to the egg collection," Mr Hall said.

The program also offers other benefits to the local community. At full capacity up to 12 jobs are created for local community members during the six months of the season.

"The crocodiles are a good income earner and also help fund other land management programs in the region," Mr Hall said.

With the market currently valuing



hatchlings at between \$35 to \$40 each, a good year brings significant financial rewards with up to 2000 eggs allowed to be harvested during the six-month season.●

Top: Djelk rangers harvesting eggs
Above: Washing the eggs prior to incubation

NLC backs Aboriginal Landcare Education program

The Northern Land Council has given its formal backing to a partnership with Greening Australia NT on the Aboriginal Landcare Education Program (ALEP), which aims to give Aboriginal communities and people the skills and training needed to undertake natural and cultural resource management, with a particular focus on vegetation management.

ALEP's objective is to complement the activities of the NLC's Caring for Country Unit, and other Aboriginal community initiatives, by providing 'on-ground' vegetation-oriented services within community areas, including outstations.

NLC Chairman Galarrwuy Yunupingu signed the ALEP partnership statement on 26 February, following a presentation by ALEP staff to the Executive Council. The statement, which has also been signed by Greening Australia NT chairman Iain Smith, will ensure both organisations con-

tinue to give high-level endorsement to what has already been a very successful on-ground program.

"It is very important that Aboriginal people maintain our vast reservoir of cultural and ecological knowledge," Mr Yunupingu said. "This is what makes us what we are, and this is what will give us the strength to grow and prosper as independent communities into the future."

The Northern Land Council provides strategic direction and some operational support to ALEP through the Caring for Country Unit.

ALEP is currently working with a number of Top End communities including Minjilang, Nauiyu, Ngukurr, Minyerri, Ramingining and Amanbidji. The program directly supports six staff members, five of whom are Aboriginal, with most of its funding coming from the Commonwealth's Natural Heritage Trust.

ALEP's role is to build Aboriginal communities and peoples' capacity to undertake natural and cultural resource manage-



Galarrwuy Yunupingu with ALEP staff and NLC Executive member Andy Andrews after the signing

ment through two-way education and training; facilitate access to resources; and develop sustainable vegetation-related businesses. ALEP projects include fixing up dusty areas and creating shade with trees; growing bush tucker and bush medicinal plants; looking after natural bush ar-

eas; getting rid of weeds and replacing with native plants; and fixing up eroded areas

For further information about the program, please call the ALEP team on (08) 8981 1344 or contact Michael Storrs at NLC Caring for Country on (08) 8920 5186. ●

Barunga locks in toddlers' road safety program



The Barunga Manyallaluk Community Government Council's persistence in seeking assistance for its child road safety scheme has paid off. It recently took possession of 15 new child restraints as part of a hire scheme funded through a Road Safety Council and TIO-funded community grant.

The restraints, suitable for infants up to four years of age, should go a

long way towards easing community concerns "that many babies and young children are being transported unrestrained". Barunga has at least 40 children aged under five out of a total population of approximately 1000 people.

Staff from the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment's Road

Safety Branch travelled to Barunga to provide a demonstration on how to fit the restraints correctly. Community mechanic, Lee Hogan, and assistant mechanic, Lee Jumbulili, were also on hand to familiarise themselves with the procedure.

They will be involved in educating others in the community on how to fit the restraints correctly.

The Barunga community's road safety initiative is just one of many that have been successful in their funding applications



A Barunga mother with a safe and sound child

through the Grant program. Other communities have applied for funding for such things as safety vests for school crossing officers, safe bike riding programs, bike helmet rental schemes and seatbelts for school buses.

Most funding applications involve

grants of about \$2,000.

Further information on the Road Safety Community Grant program is available from the Department of Infrastructure, Planning & Environment on telephone 8924 7369 in Darwin or 8951 5560 in Alice Springs

Anti-Discrimination Commission hits the streets

The Northern Territory Anti-Discrimination Commission has signalled a fresh approach to the way it conducts its activities, with more shopfront offices around the Territory and a comprehensive program of visits to remote Aboriginal communities.

In an interview with *Land Rights News* at the Commission's Darwin headquarters, recently-appointed Commissioner Tony Fitzgerald said the Commission had to raise its profile and make itself more accessible to the community.

"When I started at the Commission back in October last year, the anecdotal evidence was that we had low visibility, not a great reputation for quick resolutions to disputes and we were inaccessible," he said.

"Since then our turnaround time for the resolution of complaints has come down to an average of three months per complaint, and we are now in the process of making ourselves more available to people on the street."

In early March the Commission's approach bore fruit with the opening of an Alice Springs office.

It is currently looking at other opportunities for shopfronts in suburban Darwin and in regional centres such as Katherine, Tennant Creek and Nhulunbuy.

"From its inception 10 years ago the Commission has been located on the 7th floor of a building in Cavenagh Street, Darwin - few people visit us," Mr Fitzgerald said.

"I would hope that within my term we will have expanded our presence outside Darwin and Alice Springs - Katherine would be the next logical destination."

The Commission is an independent

statutory authority whose legislated role is to eliminate discrimination and to promote equal opportunity and human rights.

It does this by investigating complaints, by helping to settle complaints through conciliation and by educating the community about its rights and responsibilities.

Mr Fitzgerald said discrimination came in many forms, with the most common varieties being discrimination on the basis of race, religion, sex and disability.

"We try to resolve all disputes by conciliation, which is a very powerful process where people resolve their own differences," he said.

"If that doesn't work, I have the power as Commissioner to hold hearings in my own courtroom. I can make orders and award damages up to \$60,000."

"We estimate that Aboriginal people make up about 15% of all users of the Commission, but this may be an unreliable gauge of the amount of discrimination suffered by Aboriginal people."

"We suspect that there is a level of unmet need in the community and that people are failing to access us because of our low profile. We need to ensure that community members are aware of their basic human rights."

Mr Fitzgerald said the Commission had already mapped out a year-long program of two-day visits to remote communities

ADC Regional Visits Program

Katherine	15-16 April
Nguiu	8-9 May
Groote Eylandt	14-15 May
Galiwinku	21-22 May
Maningrida	28-29 May
Alice Springs	2-6 June
Beswick and	
Barunga:	11-12 June

The ADC will advertise its regional visits program for the second half of 2003 in the June edition of *Land Rights News*

already mapped out for 2003.

"This is the first time ever that the Commission has travelled to as many remote regions outside the regional centres," he said.



Anti Discrimination Commissioner Tony Fitzgerald

"Every visiting party will include trained interpreters from all areas, as well as our trainer and either myself or a conciliator."

Mr Fitzgerald said that direct discrimination against Aboriginal people, such as unjustified refusals to provide accommodation, was usually easier to investigate than other indirect forms of institutional discrimination such as lack of transport, communication, health and education services in remote communities.

"The unequal distribution of resources between urban and remote areas of the NT is a major problem, and depending on the approach of government and business to this issue, may warrant the attention of the Commission in the future," he said.

Tanami Rangers on the up



Aboriginal Ranger groups in the Tanami Desert are going from strength to strength now that work contracts have been secured with Newmont Mining for environmental work such as exploration site rehabilitation on its mining leases in the Tanami.

Traditional owners at Lajamanu and Yuendumu have recently become beneficiaries of a mining royalty trust known as the Tanami Mines Affected Areas Aboriginal Corporation.

Both these communities have opted to make considerable financial contributions to the programs.

The Lajamanu Rangers will soon finish a burning project in the northern part of the Tanami and will start plant and animal surveys of the northern Tanami with the Australian Heritage Commission in July.

The newly formed Warlpiri (Yuendumu and Nyrripi based) Rangers will perform the environmental work at the Granites

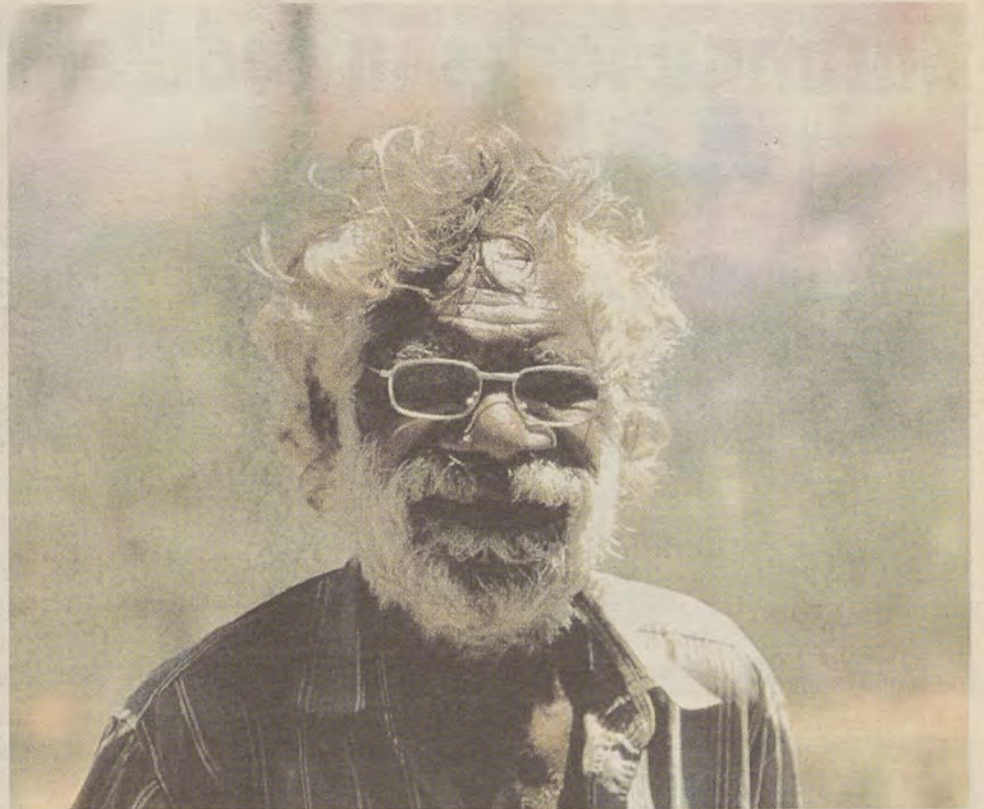
mine while the Lajamanu Rangers will take the contracts on the Tanami and Groundrush leases.

With the amount of work available it has been necessary for these programs to take on more young men as rangers.

Environmental work on mining and exploration leases can involve weed control, cutting and capping drill holes, fencing sites, seed collection for rehabilitation and general landscaping.

Commercial work with the regional mining industry is a big step for these groups.

It will help them grow and offer increasingly better land management support to other traditional owners. ●



Mr Benny McDonald, one of the key supporters of the Lajamanu Ranger Program, takes part in an early dry season burning project funded by the Natural Heritage Trust



Curtis Fry on the Newhaven Fauna survey



Above left: the camp at Newhaven; above right: bush banana – good bush tucker and a sign of healthy country

Below: Biological consultant Steve McAlpin and the Warlpiri Rangers jointly completed a fauna survey of Birds Australia's Newhaven Reserve late in 2002. This work was a good example of how native title holders can collaborate in management of the Newhaven Reserve



The Lajamanu Fire Project aims to reduce the risk and impact of wildfires that occur later in the year. The northern Tanami Desert has been badly affected by uncontrolled fire in recent years. Hot wildfires harm the health of the country and deplete the wildlife traditional owners rely on

Land Councils workshop builds Parks momentum

Key staff from the Northern and Central Land Councils, Aboriginal people involved in park management, and interstate experts held a one-day workshop in February to discuss future joint management of Northern Territory parks and reserves.

The workshop follows the NT Government's recognition late last year that previous governments had ignored native title rights when they declared land as na-

tional parks and reserves between 1978 and 1998.

This means that land claims already lodged over 11 parks could automatically proceed, with the issue of native title remaining for a further 39 parks.

Chief Minister Clare Martin moved swiftly to seek a resolution to the problem, proposing a negotiated settlement based on principles such as continued right of public access and including traditional owners in all decision-making processes affecting each park. ●



The workshop on joint management of parks

Call for improved saltwater policy coordination

Recent events have reinforced the NLC's belief that the Northern Territory Government must put more effort into coordinating its approach to Aboriginal saltwater issues

The NLC was surprised and frustrated when Fisheries Minister Chris Burns announced that NLC representatives would be sitting on a new committee established to improve recreational fishers' access to Aboriginal land.

No consultation had taken place with the NLC before the announcement, which was made to the annual meeting of the Amateur Fishermen's Association NT.

The Minister subsequently apologised but the issue highlights the lack of coordination by the NT Government in its dealings with Aboriginal people over saltwater policy generally.

Increased fishing access can pose many problems for Aboriginal people, such as more pressure on sacred sites, more humbug for traditional owners and more pressure on local fish stocks and sensitive coastal areas.

A more balanced approach to marine and coastal management must be taken which supports traditional owners as the owners and managers of coastal areas.

In the Darwin area the Government is claiming that it would like a new approach to coastal management although it is not clear yet whether this is a serious commitment that will see real management reform.

The NLC along with Larrakia Nation and other groups sit on the recently formed

Darwin Harbour Committee and is already meeting with Aboriginal people in the Darwin Harbour area to assist them with thinking about their own land and sea use planning priorities.

A draft management plan will be available for public comment in August this year. More information can be found on the internet at www.ipe.nt.gov.au.

Meanwhile, the Government Marine and Coastal Policy reference group – which includes NLC, Tiwi Land Council, Dhimurru Land Management and Larrakia Nation representatives with other interest groups – is due to report to the Minister for Infrastructure Planning and Environment, Kon Vatskalis, by the end of the year.

In addition, the NLC will also shortly begin organising consultations in a number of areas around the NT coast as part of the Federal Government's development of a Regional Marine Plan for the NT and Queensland, which is being coordinated by the National Oceans Office.

The plan will take in an area from Goulburn Island (Warruwi) to the NT's border with Queensland.

If you are a saltwater person living in this area and would like to find out more, call Patrick O'Leary on 8920 5170. ●

Gulpilil scoops another award

Internationally-acclaimed actor David Gulpilil has continued on his award-winning ways, picking up the inaugural Don Dunstan Award for his outstanding contribution to the Australian film industry.

The award follows on from his Best Actor at the 2002 Australian Film Institute Awards and his Best Actor and Living Legend wins at the 2002 Lexus Inside Film Awards.

It caps a remarkable 12 months for the Ramingining-based performer, whose roles in *The Tracker* and *Rabbit Proof Fence* met with critical acclaim both here and abroad.

Gulpilil, whose career spans 30 years and more than 10 films, had a simple message for the audience gathered at the awards ceremony in Adelaide during last month's Adelaide International Film Festival.

"I deserve it," he said. "It is good to be recognised by my peers and that my work is also respected by the people of

Australia."

The Don Dunstan Award was created in honour of the former South Australian premier Don Dunstan, who died in 2001 and who was a pivotal figure in the emergence of a viable Australian film industry in the 1970s via the South Australian Film Corporation.

Gulpilil said the award meant more to him than others he had received because he had known Don Dunstan personally and admired the efforts he had made to advance the rights of Aboriginal people.

"He did a lot of good things for Aboriginal people and for the arts," Gulpilil said. "I used to live next to him in Adelaide when I was studying acting. That is why this is so special." ●



Museum & Art Gallery of the Northern Territory
invites entries

20th Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award

Telstra First Prize \$40,000

Plus \$16,000 worth of category prizes

Entries are invited from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists



Submissions for Preselection close - 17 April 2003

For Preselection forms and information contact:

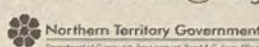
Award Coordinator

Museum & Art Gallery of the NT

GPO Box 4646 • Darwin NT 0801

Tel: (08) 8999 8201 • Fax: (08) 8999 8148

email: natsiaa@nt.gov.au



NLC's year gets off to a busy start

The months of February and March were a busy time for NLC council members and regional offices, with the first Executive Council meeting for the year taking place in Darwin and most NLC regions holding their first Regional Council meetings for the year.

The Executive Council met on February 26 to discuss important issues – including the future of the section 64(4) grants scheme – ahead of a meeting of the Aboriginal Benefits Account Advisory Committee with Federal Indigenous Affairs Minister Philip Ruddock the following day.

Meanwhile, the Regional Council meetings kicked off with the Katherine RCM on 4-5 February. East Arnhem RCM took

place on 4-5 March in Milingimbi while the West Arnhem RCM was held at BP Palms Palmerston on 11 March.

Finishing up the month were the Borroloola RCM, held in Elliot on 19-20 March, and the Darwin Daly Wagait RCM held on 25-27 March in Darwin.

As well as issues of local concern, all RCMs were briefed on the progress of negotiations between the NLC and NT Government over future management arrangements for parks and reserves; the outcome of the Australian National Audit Office review of Land Council operations; and the current impasse between the Land Councils and the Commonwealth over distribution of ABA monies. ●

Right: East Arnhem members at Milingimbi



Daniel finishes top of the class for 2002

When Daniel Hill finished his final year exams at the end of last year, all he wanted to do was go home to bed. But when the TER scores came in Daniel found himself at the top end of the scores and now he's off to Melbourne University to do chemical engineering.

Despite doing well academically throughout the year, the young Aboriginal man of Wadijan and Larrakia descent (his mother, Penny, is part of the well-known Cubillo family) had come down with a combined dose of bronchitis and tonsillitis at the crucial time. The day before exams were due to begin, his teachers at Darwin's Sanderson High had to drive him home because he was so sick.

In the end he battled through on painkillers and willpower, completing his English, Physics, Maths 1 and Maths 2 exams and missing only Chemistry, but good marks seemed a distant possibility.

So Daniel got the shock of his life when the TER scores were made public in early January – with a score of 93.8, not only was he the top student from Sanderson High, he was also the top Indigenous student for the whole of the NT.

"I'd had a pretty high level of results throughout the year so I thought I could do well, but being as sick as I was I guess I was prepared for the worst," Daniel said.

Now the hard work has paid dividends. Major mining company Rio Tinto has given Daniel a cadetship as part of its National Indigenous Cadetship Program, which will pay for his four-year Chemical Engineering degree course at Melbourne University as well as providing a living allowance.

As part of the cadetship Rio will also provide Daniel with up to 12 weeks work experience every year of his degree – says Daniel, "all good experience".

While the move down south could be intimidating for one so young, Daniel has



Daniel Hill with his 2002 academic awards

already travelled widely around Australia as an NT representative in the Under 18 and Under 21 hockey sides.

"I've been to Sydney, Brisbane and Victoria as part of rep sides so I'm not too worried about my ability to cope with the big smoke," he said. "I've got no immediate family in Melbourne but there are a couple of cousins there, plus I know a few NT footballers, so I should be right."

"I'll keep up my sport when I get to Melbourne but my priority will be my studies. Long term, I'd like to get some work experience overseas then maybe come back to Darwin. With the way things are going with gas projects there should be a fair bit of work up there in the future.

"I'm the first member of my family to go through Year 12, so for me this is all uncharted territory," he said. "I'm looking forward to the challenge." ●



Justice of the Peace

Are you interested in becoming a Justice of the Peace?

The Attorney-General, the Hon Peter Toyne MLA would like to encourage persons from an Indigenous background to consider becoming a Justice of the Peace of the Northern Territory.

Who is a Justice of the Peace?

They are respected citizens who are entrusted by the community to take on special responsibilities. A Justice of the Peace must have the ability to act fairly and impartially, to make important independent decisions and uphold the principles of justice. Not surprisingly, it is a position that requires considerable trust.

What are their responsibilities?

A Justice of the Peace performs a wide range of services including:

- administering an oath or affirmation;
- attesting to the execution of a document;
- the power to issue search warrants; and
- the power to sign a summons.

In addition, a Justice of the Peace has the ability to hear minor offences in court, after undergoing appropriate training.

Is it a paid position?

The position is an honorary appointment with no remuneration.

Who can become a Justice of the Peace?

An applicant needs to be:

- an Australian citizen by birth, descent or grant;
- at least 18 years of age;
- of good character; and
- registered on the electoral role.

If you are interested in becoming a Justice of the Peace, please contact the Statutory Appointments Officer at Department of Justice on (08) 8999 7011 to receive further information. When you call, please advise that you have seen this advertisement in the Land Rights News.

When I Was Little, Like You

By Mary Malbunka

Published by Allen and Unwin

***When I Was Little, Like You* is a beautifully illustrated children's book that tells the story of Mary Malbunka's childhood at Papunya, 240 km north-west of Alice Springs.**

Mary cleverly works in both traditional and European styles of art and her text also reflects her bi-cultural world where she uses both Luritja and English to weave her childhood story.

She begins with her birth and the move from the Mission Settlement at Haasts Bluff to Papunya where her family set-

ties first at the North Camp and then after Sorry Business moves to the West Camp. She tells of the alien experience of going to school to be taught only in English, with bible readings in the afternoon. School was a place where Luritja seemed to have no place.

This experience is subtly juxtaposed with the real lesson from the book.

"When we were children we went out bush and we learned about plants and animals and about country. We learned from our grandmothers and grandfathers, from our mothers and fathers, and from our uncles and aunts. That was where we learned things, in the bush, outside school."

Mary's story and illustrations demonstrate just how much was learnt in the 'bush school' - what animals to hunt and when,

how to look for them and to know in what habitat to look. Mary tells what plants to harvest for food and medicine and how to use them. Mary tells us that this is how one learns about "country" and about life.

Each time you read *When I Was Little, Like You* and look at the colourful illustrations you see something new, especially with Mary's use of traditional symbols with more figurative representations of bush tucker and land forms. Mary Malbunka was born in the Mission Settlement at Haasts Bluff in



1959 and this is her first solo book.

Mary is a talented artist and story teller and her books will ensure that Aboriginal children who go to school today don't miss out on the knowledge of their elders. We look forward to Mary's next work. ●

LOOKING FOR BLACKFELLAS' POINT



By Mark McKenna

Published by University of NSW Press

There's been a lot of controversy within the ranks of Australian historians over the past few months, with supporters of revisionist historian Keith Windschuttle engaged in an unseemly spat with the likes of Henry Reynolds, Lyndall Ryan and Robert Manne over the numbers of Aborigines killed on the colonial frontier and - indeed - whether any massacres took place at all.

It's an important debate, not least be-

cause of the ramifications it has for current government policy towards Australia's Indigenous people and the topic of reconciliation. It also serves as a reminder that, for all the hard-won recognition of Aboriginal rights achieved over the past decade beginning with Mabo, there remain powerful forces in Australia implacably opposed to any criticism of the settler version of history.

Which is why Mark McKenna's book comes as such a welcome break from this prevailing, highly polarised discourse.

McKenna begins his tale with an account of his purchase of a block of land on the banks of the Towamba River on the far south coast of New South Wales, which he subsequently discovers looks across to a spot on the other side of the river known locally as Blackfellas' Point. From there he begins a lengthy examination of what happened to the local Aboriginal people after European settlers arrived, before broadening it out to a more wide-ranging discussion of black-white relations in present-day Australia.

What emerges is a truth repeated in virtually every other part of Australia - the expunging of Aboriginal people from the historical record and their replacement by settler 'creation myths'.

It was as if Aboriginal people had just vanished.

"Local historians relied frequently on stories of natural disasters to explain the decline of the Aboriginal population," McKenna writes.

"This belief created yet another escape hatch in explaining how the land was won. If there were few Aboriginal people remaining on the far south coast by the 1830s, how could there have been a frontier war?"

And yet the Aboriginal people hadn't disappeared. They had remained there, on the fringes of settler society, pushed around by bureaucrats and town councils, surviving in a variety of itinerant

occupations such as fruit-picking and labouring, until their 'rediscovery' in the 1960s. McKenna's description of the land rights struggle around Bega in the 1970s and 1980s is particularly powerful as he explores the reaction from white society to the unfolding disintegration of the settler myth.

Suddenly, with the emergence of Aboriginal champions from reserves and squatter camps, non-Aboriginal people were finally confronted with the truth about their so-called egalitarian society. It was a truth many didn't wish to know about, and which all found unsettling. As McKenna says:

"As for my personal relationship with the land at Blackfellas' Point, my knowledge of the history of the frontier, and the way in which Aboriginal people were dispossessed of their land, leaves me feeling ambivalent about the land I own, and any attempt we might make to 'celebrate the nation'."

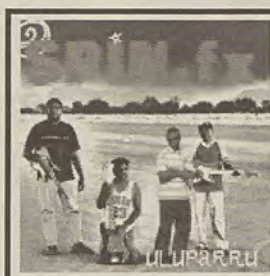
This is a great book, written in a non-academic style sympathetic to the underlying tragedy of Australian history for all Australians - while at the same time holding out hope for a future free of duplicity and shame. ●

Lyndon Reid - Make a start

After years of playing on other musicians' recordings, well-known Alice Springs musician Lyndon Reid has finally completed his debut album 'Make a Start'.

A familiar performer at Country music events in Alice Springs, Lyndon is also a regular performer at the Tamworth country music festival as lead guitarist for Warren H Williams and his father Gus Williams.

Lyndon's interest in music began at the age of 8 when he first started playing guitar and ever since then he has been trying to find his own musical niche. ●



This debut album from Papunya band Spin.fx is well worth

the wait with elements of reggae, country, rock and traditional sounds perfecting the album.

The young Papunya band consists of four members: Stanley Roberts (Vocals, Guitar), Amos Egan (Vocals, Lead Guitar), Jason Butcher (Drums) and Abraham Phillipus (Bass).

The band's name was inspired by their country where spinifex grows in abundance and was thought up while sitting around the campfire cooking up kangaroo after an evening out hunting.

The band members speak a range of languages including Luritja, Warlpiri, Pintupi and sometimes Arrernte which are echoed throughout the album as the band sings songs depicting life in the bush and focuses on social issues like preventing alcohol and petrol sniffing in the community. ●



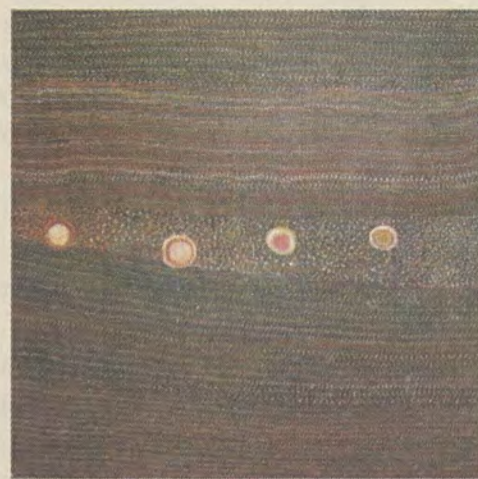
Over the years family, friends and fans have been awaiting Lyndon's debut album which is influenced by elements of bluegrass music and musicians like Ricky Skaggs who have left an imprint in his style. Lyndon is a sole father of three and his sons have been the inspiration for him in pursuing his career and completing this first album. ●

Peppimenarti artists come of age



Above: Artists Theresa Lemon, Regina Wilson, Margaret Kundu, Linda Gilbert and Patsy Marfurra

Above right: Patsy Marfurra's *The Wild Bush Potato*



Artists from the Peppimenarti community have come a long way since they started exhibiting their works in 2001.

It's a testament to their creative talents that at the 7 March launch of their 15 most recent works at Karen Brown Gallery in Darwin, it was standing room only.

Women artists Theresa Lemon, Linda Gilbert, Regina Wilson and Patsy Marfurra were on hand to discuss the significance of their work, although unfortunately neither Dianne Hodgson nor Pincher Talunga – an elder and ceremonial leader in the Peppimenarti community, and the only male artist with works in the exhibition – could attend.

Regina Wilson said the women artists based their works on traditional weaving designs, in her case fish nets.

"I've been weaving since I was 12 years old, picking up knowledge from my mother and grandmother," she said.

"All the young girls learn it – they get

weekly lessons from the age of 10."

Linda said she based her designs on traditional basket-weaving patterns, while Theresa said her works drew inspiration from the different berries traditionally collected by women from the bush.

On the other hand, Pincher's work is a direct representation of the ceremonial designs painted on shields, spears and other objects used by men.

His work at the exhibition, 'Yuwul – Spear Design', is a design he learned from his father.

The artistic talents of the Peppimenarti community have been helped along by the art program established by the Peppimenarti Community Council in late 2000.

Karen Brown was enlisted initially to conduct a series of workshops to explore elements of colour and design, and has been helping facilitate the Peppimenarti art program ever since.

"My purpose is building the confidence of artists to explore new mediums and to provide the opportunity for them to enter the fine art arena," Karen said.

"The artists have met these challenges and the core focus of great art is blossoming."

All the artists work together and draw inspiration from each other, a practice which has helped their individual development as artists. The idea now is that the artists' collective endeavours will yield a significant source of new income for the Peppimenarti community, as well as providing a role model and career path for the younger generation.

Alice library moves with the times

The Alice Springs Town Library has shown itself to be one of the most modern and forward-thinking libraries in Australia with its Indigenous Access Community Development Project.

Aboriginal people in Alice Springs have always enjoyed the chance to sit in the cool and read a book at the library, but now more than 120 people a day come into the library specifically to read Aboriginal language publications, browse Indigenous sites on the web and to use Ara Winki, the web-based database of material from the Pitjantjatjara lands.

Coordinator Jude Pritchard said the project went to the community to get books which have been put together about community life for people who may not have a lot of literacy, and to get some bilingual material on the shelves.

She said the traditional notion of libraries is under challenge and the Alice Springs Library is no exception.

While the library is still a quiet place it is not the deathly silence that traditional libraries enforced. These days talking is most definitely allowed and to make the Dewey system of classification easier for people, books containing Aboriginal material are marked with the Aboriginal flag.

"Over summer the response has been massive," Jude said. "It's a time when the non-Aboriginal people who haven't grown up here all leave and go off to see family, which means it's also a time



when we have less staff.

"Compared to the same time last year, the Indigenous population using the library has doubled.

"On just one day we had 240 Aboriginal people come through the door," Jude said.

Ara Winki, the web-based database of material from the Pitjantjatjara lands, is always in use at the library



Larrakia Artist mourned

1938 – 27/12/2002

He was born with the name 'Mitbul' at the community of Belyuen on the Cox Peninsula west of Darwin sometime in 1938. He was a senior man of the Larrakia people, who, in the space of six years, rose to become one of the most significant Aboriginal artists painting in the Northern Territory's Top End.

For the Larrakia nation of Darwin, and the art world in general, the passing of the senior man and artist known as "Prince of Wales" not only means the loss of a prominent elder and cultural figure, but also a fine artist and ambassador for his people.

Some say that Mitbul acquired his contemporary name after dancing for Queen Elizabeth during a royal tour to Australia in the 1960s. He was an elder of the Dangalaaba tribe, part of the Larrakia nation, traditional owners of the land and salt-water region known today as Darwin.

He was a custodian of the dances and songs taught by the Darlibahs – the grey haired Larrakia elders. As well as being a crucial source of knowledge on sacred sites and customary lore for his people, Mitbul was also leader of ceremonies and a ceremonial body painter for much of his life.

It was this intricate knowledge of body art that provided the inspiration for his artistic works which gained him increasing recognition from the mid-1990s onwards.

This recognition was cemented when he

was awarded the prestigious Telstra General Painting Award at the 18th National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards in 2001 for his painting *Body Marks*.

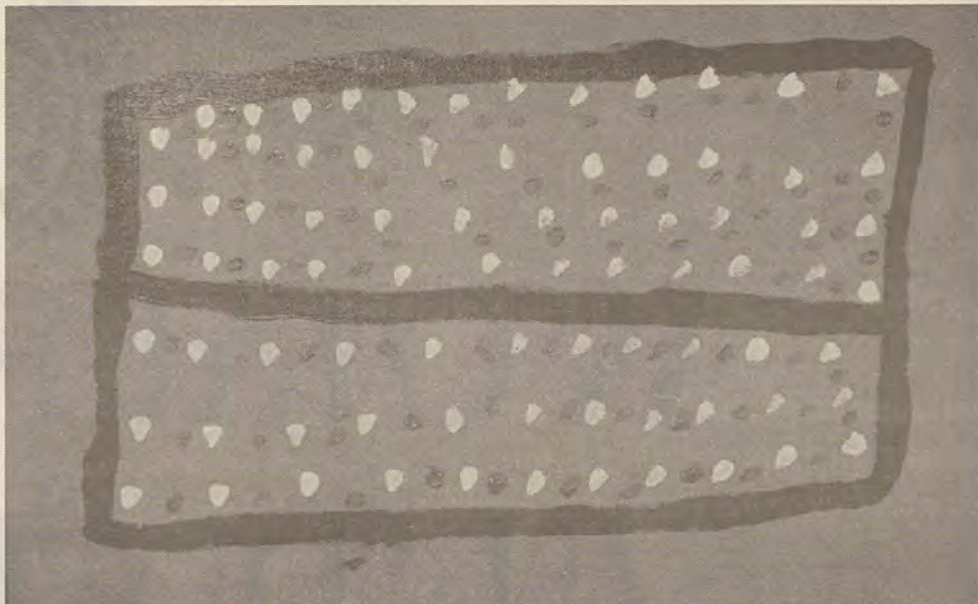
"Prince will be remembered for his outstanding contribution to the art world through his paintings of Larrakia culture and ceremony," art dealer Karen Brown said.

Despite suffering a stroke, he continued his lifelong practice and passion for painting to the end, as always drawing much of his inspiration from the traditional ceremonies of his youth.

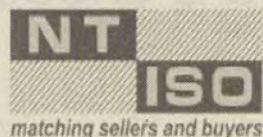
"Prince delighted in the whole process of painting, creating modern minimalist art works," Ms Brown said.

The old man passed away in Darwin in December last year after a long fight with illness, but his legacy will remain for many years to come according to Karen Brown.

"Prince of Wales has laid the foundations for the emergence of a contemporary Larrakia art movement," Ms Brown said.



Top: one of the artist's works
Above: Belyuen dancers at the funeral



Listing service for Aboriginal-owned business

The Northern Territory Industry Search & Opportunities Office (NTISO) has a proven track record of bringing business to NT companies and our goal for the future is to ensure that no opportunity for growth is missed.

NTISO manages a comprehensive database containing the details of more than 5,000 NT businesses, and every year we publish a *Services, Suppliers and Manufacturers' Directory* which lists the capabilities of many of these businesses.

The *Directory*, which is produced in association with the NT Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the NT Manufacturer's Council, has become an essential tool for all those wishing to do business in northern Australia.

It is important that Aboriginal-owned and managed businesses are involved in the Territory's exciting growth prospects and NTISO strongly encourages all such businesses to register their details with us. Listing on our database is free, while there is a nominal fee for appearing in the *Directory*.

To obtain a Capability Profile form or to make further inquiries, contact:

Michelle Chandler (08) 8922 9422 or michelle.chandler@ntiso.com.au

NORTHERN TERRITORY LAW REFORM COMMITTEE

An Inquiry into the Recognition of Aboriginal Customary Law in the Northern Territory

The Honourable Peter Toyne MLA, Minister for Justice and Attorney-General has requested the sub-committee of the Northern Territory Law Reform Committee ("NTLRC") to investigate and make recommendations as to what extent Aboriginal Customary Law might achieve formal or informal recognition within the Northern Territory.

The Committee of the NTLRC invites public participation in this Inquiry. Public and other submissions are to be received by **no later than 30 April 2003**. In accordance with its terms of reference the Committee is keen to hear from Aboriginal people and other organisations particularly those who are custodians of Aboriginal Customary Law.

Submissions should concentrate on practical initiatives which would be welcomed by the Indigenous and wider Territory community in achieving recognition of Aboriginal customs and laws.

Those who would like to obtain a copy of the terms of reference and a brief issues paper or who wish to make oral submissions should contact:

Faith Woodford
Executive Officer
NT Law Reform Committee
Mail GPO Box 1535
DARWIN NT 0801

Phone (08) 8999 6243
Fax (08) 8999 7095
E mail lawreformcommittee.ntag@nt.gov.au
Website <http://www.nt.gov.au/justice/>
Click on: Law Making and Law Reform
Then: Law Reform Committee



WOMEN'S LAW AND CULTURE MEEETING

**Hosted by
Papunya women
7th to 12th April 2003**

Please make sure you arrive by Sunday 6th April 2003
There is limited transport available so everyone is encouraged
to use their own community transport

Please bring:

swag

medication

cooking utensils, pots and billy cans

tarps for shade

water containers

FOOD WILL BE PROVIDED

For more information
please contact
Barb Cox, Amelia Forrester,
Kathy Booth or Gina Bennet on
89529855

