



# Land Rights

## NEWS



**One Mob, One Voice, One Land**

Vol 3 No 3 October 2000



**INSIDE:** Garma, Yuendumu,  
Native Title, Balbirinie, Santa Teresa



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Ladies from among the 350 women chosen from Central Australia wait to board their plane to the Sydney Olympics where they danced the Seven Sisters Dreaming in the opening ceremony with more than 1000 other Indigenous Australians.

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## COVER PHOTO

Rita Ngal from Laramba dances at the launch of Alherramp-areny Angkety Arelh-kenh.

# Land Rights NEWS

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# GURINDJI FREEDOM DAY

Every year Gurindji Freedom Day is celebrated by the community at Daguragu to commemorate the walk off Wave Hill station. This year, 34 years after the event, the Gurindji decided to do something special which would remain with the community as a tangible reminder of their remarkable history.



Ten stunning banners representing significant episodes in the Gurindji's famous walk to freedom were unveiled at a moving ceremony at this year's Gurindji Freedom Day in August.

As each banner was unveiled by the Gurindji, the stories were recounted by senior men Billy Bunter and Mick Rangiarri to the large crowd which Gurindji Freedom Day attracts every year.

The arts project took months of hard work and will be permanently kept at the community.

With the help of artist Joanna Barrkman and researcher Chips Mackinolty, community members revisited sites along the walk, stirring old memories and old stories which were brought alive in the 1.5 metre high applique banners.

The banners trace a journey — *Mumkurla-nginyi-ma Parrngalinyarla* — from the darkness to the light.

The darkness is depicted as the work and conditions of the Aboriginal workers and their families at the Old Wave Hill Station and the light is the end of the journey when they have their traditional country returned to them.

The celebration took place at Wattie Creek where the Gurindji set up their camp after walking off Wave Hill Station in August 1966 in protest at the poor conditions for stock workers. It was the beginning of the political struggle that led to the Aboriginal Land Rights Act. ●



Above: Senior Gurindji man Billy Bunter explains each banner to the large crowd at Wattie Creek on the day.

Left top: the local community enjoying the barbeque at Wattie Creek.

Left lower and right : two of the 10 banners.



## Fraser rocks Liberals

Former Liberal Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser, delivered an important series of messages and warnings to the current leadership of the party in the fifth Vincent Lingiari Memorial Lecture delivered at the Northern Territory University in August.

In choosing to use the annual address - previously delivered by Sir William Deane, Gough Whitlam, Galarrwuy Yunupingu and Patrick Dodson - to talk primarily to non-Indigenous Australians, Fraser demonstrated that the conservatism and paternalism of the Howard Government was not without powerful opponents from within Howard's own ranks.

Fraser offered strong support for the role of the United Nations and proposed a bill of rights to protect the rights of individuals.

"I now believe that our own system has so patently failed to protect the "rights" of Aboriginals that we should look once again at the establishment of a "bill of rights" in Australia.

The circumstances of Australia's indigenous population provides a powerful argument for such a change.

The need for an Australian "bill of rights" would be broadly based to guarantee basic rights to all individuals and minority groups," he said.

Fraser advocated self-government through the mechanism of regional agreements, arguing: "Self-determination very largely means being able to have charge of their own life the way the rest of us can take charge of ours. So let's forget about any fears or concerns about

that word and accept it as reasonable. Let us move to self-government."

Fraser reserved his most impassioned pleas for the Stolen Generation.

Pointing out that the actions of previous governments "rested on a racist foundation" and that the Commonwealth owed a duty of care that "should have extended not only to the act of taking the child away, but also to making sure that the conditions of the institution, the physical facilities, the teaching and the general management of the institution, were appropriate", he argued that the only course available to advance reconciliation and overcome the injustices of the past was to move outside the failed court process and adopt lasting political settlements.

Reflecting on the need for an apology, Fraser considered that "while the issue of an official Government apology has to be set aside for a while, it will re-emerge at a later point."

He returned to this theme in sending a clear warning to the Howard Government over its role in reconciliation: "The community and its actions are an important component but it is the Government that must be to the fore and persuade all Australians that we must act with greater expedition and with greater generosity. Government, if not this, another, will set the pace." ●



# NT Government swamps system in election ploy

**The NT Government's threat to flood the Central and Northern Land Councils with the release of 900 mineral exploration agreements is a deliberate move to create a race-based issue for the Territory's forthcoming election – but it spells disaster for both the industry and Aboriginal people.**

"The Government knows that this will stretch the land councils' and the National Native Title Tribunal's resources and that is exactly what they want to happen," CLC Director David Ross said.

"Denis Burke has been huffing and puffing for weeks about native title and in my experience that always means an election is upon us."

The backlog of agreements is a product of the NT Government's refusal for years to use the current Commonwealth native title legislation, despite demands from the land councils and miners that it be resolved.

"The NT Government is trying to create an impression that Aboriginal people are holding up development – but it is actually the other way around," NLC Chief Executive Officer Mr Norman Fry said.

"The Government's has cost Territory miners millions of dollars.

"It's a disaster for miners – and could also be a disaster for Aboriginal people, as this flood could mean that they will run out of time to register their native title interests.

"In reality, it is a backdoor attempt to remove Aboriginal people's right to negotiate over developments. And we all know that this was the objective of the NT Government's S43A legislation which was

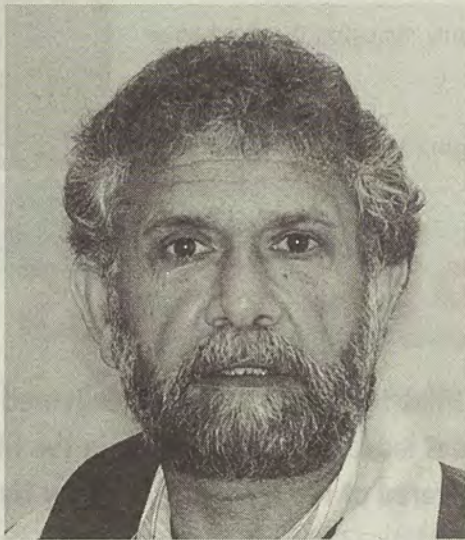


NLC CEO Norman Fry

rejected by the Senate."

"On one hand we have the Government complaining about Aboriginal interests holding up exploration and on the other hand trumpeting the success of the Territory as 'a world class producer' of gold," Mr Ross pointed out.

"That gold is mostly produced from Aboriginal land in the Tanami under the Land Rights Act but there's never any acknowledgment of that from the Government."



CLC Director David Ross

About 80% of mineral exploration in the NT is on Aboriginal land and, at 30 June last year, nearly half of Aboriginal land was subject to mining, exploration or negotiation.

Both the NLC and CLC consider Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUA's) – see story this page – are a sensible solution to dealing with native title interests and the backlog of agreements, but are having no success in discussing this option with the NT Government.

"As for the Northern Territory's own native title legislation, the land councils have heard nothing from the Government at all so we have absolutely no idea what is going on," Mr Ross said.

"I have heard Denis Burke on radio talking about 're-presenting' it to make it look better.

I assume that's cosmetic change he is talking about."

# Forget Politics — ILUA'S Way to Go

**The Central Land Council and a mining company in Tennant Creek have signed a native title agreement in September that allows for exploration on nearly 8000 square kilometres of pastoral lease land and deals with any 'future acts' for the next 25 years.**

Giants Reef Exploration Pty Limited have entered into an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) with native title holders of the Phillip Creek and Tennant Creek pastoral leases.

"We decided not to wait for the Territory Government to sort out its processes. Luckily for the people of the Northern Territory, the rest of us have been getting on with business as usual," Mr Ross said.

The ILUA will provide employment, training, sacred site protection and other benefits for the Aboriginal people and certainty for the company.

CLC Director David Ross congratulated Giants Reef on its foresight and said it would give the company a definite commercial advantage.

"Giants Reef has acknowledged native title rights and embraced a faster, workable alternative provided under the Native Title Act, allowing it to dispense with the

lengthy delays inherent in other processes," Mr Ross said.

Mr Ross also congratulated the native title holders who will sign the agreement.

"These people feel confident that we have done our work on their behalf properly," he said. "They know their sites will be protected and that they and their children stand to benefit from the economic development of the area with jobs and training. I congratulate them and wish them every success for the future," he said.

When an ILUA is signed between parties, it is registered with the National Native Title Tribunal which then advertises it to give notice to the native title holders.

More than 52 exploration licences applications and five mineral leases are covered by the agreement and the company will be able to get an unlimited number of tenements within the ILUA area readily granted in the future.

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# Local government... or self government?

Plans by the NT Government to amalgamate Aboriginal communities to form large shires have reignited and strengthened aspirations for self government for Central Australian Aboriginal communities.



Above left to right: Alison Anderson Nampijimpa, Harry Nelson Jackamarra, CANCA Coordinator Smithy Zimran and Pat Dodson

Below: Some of the several hundred people who attended the meeting

Bottom: Smithy Zimran and April Spencer with family at the meeting



Combined Aboriginal Nations of Central Australia Coordinator Smithy Zimran said it was up to the communities to make up their own minds about the NT Government's plans for reforming local government, but he saw significant problems with the current proposals.

"It's the same way that they did it in the sixties - put all the small communities into one big settlement, into one big yard," Mr Zimran said.

Several hundred Central Australian Aboriginal people at a meeting at Hamilton Downs to discuss local government in July agreed that the principles of the Kalkaringi Statement had been ignored by the NT and Commonwealth governments since the statement was made in August 1998.

But people at the meeting were enthusiastic about creating a model of government which would incorporate the Combined Aboriginal Nations of Central Australia (CANCA).

Kalkaringi man Billy Bunter said it was one of the best meetings he had ever been to.

"It was a good meeting and this came up really new and the issues talked about were really interesting," he said. "It's a new way including every community, using what they call a model which will include every Aboriginal organisation and services like police aides.

"I enjoy myself to talk about these things. Our models are different to some models set up in the northern areas.

"We did far more than the meetings we had years ago. We had a lot of the old people and the old women and this is the first time they have had interest. People travelled down in their own old cars to get something new.

"Myself, I didn't know about it before. It was really exciting and those things came really new for the year 2000.

"We had the statement from Kalkaringi and the NT Government didn't pick up any of it. We had a look at the model that they have in the north but our model has a different direction.

"When they give the money to the Territory, for every dollar that's used they take some and we want to get away from that idea, so that we can use our money in practice which is a bit different.

CANCA has begun a round of regional meetings to inform people about the local government reforms and to discuss other governance options.

## Democracy in the NT - we are 'missing out'

**The Northern Territory Government is unaccountable and undemocratic according to its Auditor-General Iain Summers.**

Mr Summers told the NT News in August that we were "missing out on a vigorous parliamentary democracy" in the Northern Territory and that the lack of Freedom of Information legislation, an estimates committee or Upper House, and the system of single member electorates helped reinforce the lack of accountability.

The NT News also reported Mr Summers as saying that he was unable to determine actual performance outcomes in his role of monitoring performance management systems within government departments and that this lack of transparency could jeopardise statehood for the NT.

He was critical of statistics on mandatory sentencing which didn't conclusively show that it was working and suggested that this would affect how other people in Australia viewed the Northern Territory's bid for statehood.

Mr Summers delivered the stinging comments after the release of his August 2000 Report but apparently regretted his statements several days later and wrote to the NT News denying that he had said the NT Government had no accountability.

However, the NT News stood by its report and said the interview tapes confirmed the earlier story. Its editorial on 30 August said Mr Summer's backflip "raises questions about his ability to work free from political interference" and that a climate of fear had been created in the NT designed to make criticism of the Government difficult.





From left: Roy "Junior" Kunorth, Nancy Kunorth, Sweeney Swanson, Senator John Herron and Adie Miller

# Carpentaria and Balbirini land handback "a new beginning"



From left: Karl Dank, Susie Hawson, Anthony Baker, Ty Baker, Rhia Dank and Teeka Dank



Kathleen Shadforth

**Traditional owners of Carpentaria Downs and Balbirini pastoral lands – descendants of Aboriginal people who survived the conflicts arising from the arrival of the pastoral industry in their region – have finally got their land back.**



"The type of future you have tomorrow is now in your hands: it is your new beginning and your new day," the Chief Executive Officer of the Northern Land Council, Mr Norman Fry, told the claimants at their land handover ceremony in August.

About 700 Aboriginal people in the Gulf region of the Northern Territory will benefit

from the official handover of the pastoral leases to the Mambaliya Rrumburriya Wuyaliya Aboriginal Land Trust, comprising traditional owners of the Ngarnji, Gurdanji and Binbingka language groups.

"For many people, this is a huge shift," Mr Fry said. "Aboriginal people have been landless in this region for a long, long time."

"Today represents the first day legally that those two pieces of land taken away are now handed back for ever."

Accepting the title deeds on behalf of

the claimants, Mr Sweeney Swanson said he was very pleased to see so many people, especially as many had travelled a long way for the handover.

"These three groups own the land through Dreamtime, by the ceremony," Sweeney said.

"I used to work here when I was about 14 or 15 years of age, mustering all this area, when there was no road here, nothing."

"Now, I would like to see the land used for work again, get everything moving."

"I am very happy to get the land today,

very happy. Took a long time, at last we get it."

Mr Fry said the handover was further proof of the strength of Aboriginal peoples' continuing connection with their law and their culture and their land rights on pastoral leases.

The traditional owners have a long association with this claim area, even though it has been a pastoral lease, and they recount those origins in songs and rituals associated with the travels and activities of ancestral beings.

"This is a great day for the traditional owners here who have now had recognised in European law what they know to be the reality in their own law," Mr Fry said.

"And recognition of land rights under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act gives them the strongest form of protection."

In the 1880s, vast tracts of country in the Gulf and Tablelands were turned into pastoral leases, including McArthur River Station.

The arrival of the pastoral industry in the region had a devastating effect on Aboriginal society and this period in history was one of conflict - the appropriation of traditional lands, cattle spearings, massacres and the dispersal of Aboriginal groups.

However, once conflict started to settle after 1910, those who survived worked on the new stations built on their traditional lands. They were able to visit and maintain country, continue their ritual life and pass on their knowledge. Their descendants are now senior traditional owners.

The Balbirini and Carpentaria Downs pastoral leases, covering 4450 square kilometres and comprising parts of the old McArthur River station, were purchased on behalf of the traditional owners in 1995.

In his Land Commissioner's report, Justice Gray stated that there was "abundant evidence of a powerful and continuing traditional connection between the claimants and the land claimed."

The traditional owners of the land are determined to continue to observe their customary laws and their rich ceremonial life.

He pointed out that the handover would give the traditional owners much more security over their land, give them greater control over its management and provide the intangible benefit of recognising the traditional rights of their forebears who were dispossessed.

He said: "Such a grant carries with it an affirmation of the value of traditional rights and of places of cultural significance. It enables the traditional Aboriginal owners of the land and others with traditional attachments to it to use the land as a focus for the further development of their community spirit and the maintenance and increase of their self-esteem. The importance of such as acknowledgment and such a focus for modern Aboriginal communities should not be underestimated."



# Land handover finally secures sacred site

**A corner of a pastoral property in the Northern Territory has been officially handed back to its traditional owners - finally securing the safety of a hugely significant sacred site for hundreds of Aboriginal people on the southern boundary of Arnhem Land.**

The desecration of the Kewulyi site along the Roper River in the early 1990s triggered the land claim process for the Ngalakan and Rembarrnga people, who have fought hard to protect it from damage since the early days of settlement in the region.

The power and significance of the Kewulyi site is tightly linked to the most significant traditional Aboriginal ritual of the Roper River region.

The Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Senator John Herron, formally handed back the title deed for the portion of land at a ceremony on nearby Hodgson Downs community in August.

The claimed land, measuring 18 kilometres by 12 kilometres, is off the Roper Highway, about halfway between Mataranka and Ngukurr.

Altogether 265 people have been identified as traditional owners of the claim area, and, additionally, several times that number of people have traditional attachments to the area.

Apart from those living on the land, most of the claimants live in Mataranka to the west and the Ngukurr community to the east, with others on nearby Hodgson Downs station and also at Bringung to the north.

Ever since the original Roper Valley homestead was built over the sacred site, family groups have continuously lived in camps nearby for fear it may be damaged, and they have constantly made efforts to obtain some form of title to the land.

Concerned for the site's safety, custodians of Kewulyi painted white stripes on a number of rock outcrops and trees to try to prevent unintentional damage to significant features within the area and they also turned to the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act for protection.

However, the site was desecrated during bulldozer work in the area in late 1992.

The decision was made to relocate the homestead and remove the corner of land containing the site from the pastoral station lease. This small area of land was purchased on behalf of the traditional owners enabling them to claim the land under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act.



Senator John Herron hands over the plaque to traditional owner Sammy Tsulabul.



Cleo Wilfred

"With the history of damage to the Kewulyi site, today marks a significant improvement in the traditional owners' ability to protect their sacred sites," Northern Land Council Chief Executive Officer, Mr Norman Fry, said.

"They have gone to great lengths over the years to protect Kewulyi against desecration - but not always successfully.

"The strength of their spiritual attachment to this country is well documented.

"It is perfectly clear that these claimants are not only sincere in their desire to protect the site itself from further damage, but they also are determined to observe traditional ceremonial activities in relation to the land.

"They want to continue to teach emerging generations about their traditions and spiritual beliefs.

"This handover today gives them that ability and security."







## Kids on the block

Thirteen teenagers at Atitjere now have the chance to continue their education at secondary level and remain on their community.



Atitjere Community President Mr Cleary said that the initiative benefited the whole community.

"It's a really good thing. They are more relaxed and not running

around causing trouble. They are starting to get around and have plenty of variety and they seem to get on pretty well with the teachers," he said.

The class of 13 appeared pretty pleased with the new opportunity.

Student Shantelle Kunoth, 14, said: "We want to be able to work in the clinic or the shop and we haven't had a secondary

teacher for a long time."

Teacher Morgan Flint said the program was literacy based and offered plenty of practical skills to the kids.

"Last week we made a model cattle grid which involved skills in measurement and scaling and finding appropriate materials to make it. The secondary kids will also take a leading role in the organisation of the Bonya Sports Day - measuring out the tracks and making sure things run smoothly."

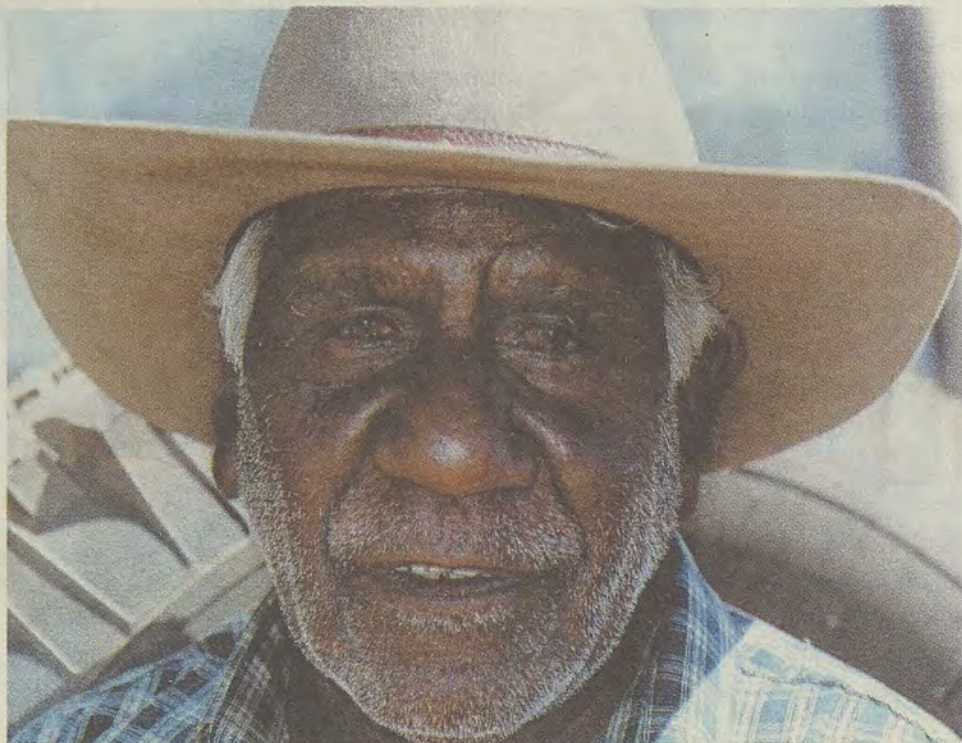
smoothly."

"Attendance has been excellent so the future looks bright," he said.

Several of the students said they would like to go to Kormilda College in Darwin to finish their education.

**“Attendance has been excellent so the future looks bright.”**

MORGAN FLINT, Teacher



## New Office for the CLC

The Central Land Council has opened a new regional office at Atitjere (Harts Range) 250 kilometres east of Alice Springs.

The purpose-built office has plenty of space for meetings and accommodation for Regional Coordinator Joe Clarke and his family.

At the opening, CLC Executive member Anthony Petrick urged everyone at Atitjere to support their new office.

CLC Director David Ross said it was

another important step in the regionalisation process.

"We have another office planned for the Anmatyerr region which will mean that all of our nine regions have their own offices. The role of regional offices is vital and we are continually looking for ways to improve them," he said.



Left top: The secondary class at Atitjere with teacher Morgan Flint

Far left: Lindsay Cavanagh

Above top: Atitjere community turn out for the office opening and a BBQ

Above left to right: Ian Bloomfield, CLC Regional Coordinator Joe Clark, Raymond Webb, Max Stuart, Graeme Smith.

Left: Yvonne Draper





# Ginger has the stories

**For Ginger Riley, it is all perfectly clear.**



He paints his mother's country and he knows the Dreamings that explain the creation of the undulating landscape, the billabongs, the river and the islands in minute detail.

He has the stories – so there is no doubt that he is a traditional owner of the land around his outstation at Maria Lagoon, on St Vidgeon Station some 220 kilometres from Borrooloola on the Gulf of Carpentaria.

"I wouldn't paint someone else's country," he says. "I'd get into trouble then. I can't do that."

Art dealers admire the artistic qualities of Ginger's paintings and his works hang in galleries throughout Australia and overseas, including the Australian embassy in Beijing, China and in the Seattle Art Museum, USA.

Their importance for Ginger, however, is that they are proof of land ownership and a way to keep the Dreaming stories alive.

But, for a long time, Ginger, who is about 63, has been under threat of eviction from the land he paints, because the NT Government refused to acknowledge his legal right to live there.

It has been a lengthy saga, as Northern Land Council Chairman Mr Galarrwuy Yunupingu explained.

"A land claim lodged in the 1980s under the Land Rights Act was unsuccessful because the NT Government handed St Vidgeon's Station over to the Northern Territory Land Corporation, making the land technically unavailable for claim as it was no longer Crown land," he said.

"The traditional owners then took an alternative route and lodged a native title claim in 1994."

The pastoral lease, covering about 7,500 square kilometres, has been lying vacant since it was purchased by the NT Land Corporation in the 1980s.

The native title claim was also opposed by the NT Government, which argued that native title had been totally extinguished over the entire property and that the outstation was illegal.

However, Ginger has now been told that he is legally acknowledged as a traditional owner and can stay on his land. The Federal Court decision is that substantial native title rights exist on the old St Vidgeon Station, and on the adjoining Roper, Cox and Limmen Bight

Rivers near the Gulf of Carpentaria. Traditional owners are now recognised to have non-exclusive rights of possession, occupation, use and enjoyment of the land and waters, including the right to make decisions about and reside on the land.

The importance of this case is that it makes it quite clear that native title holders have the right to reside on their land, and not just visit it for short periods.

Ginger's brother, Roy Hammer, who helped to establish the outstation at Maria Lagoon, is very happy with the decision.

"We can't go away from that country you know, because our song and ceremony come down there," he said.

"My mother, Topsy, grew Ginger up. When Ginger mother passed on, my mother grab hold of Ginger, and Paddy too, so Ginger is my close brother.

"It's my mother's land that Maria Lagoon and we are junggayi, me and Ginger. (Junggayi is the relationship people have with their mother's father's country, which is a very powerful position and roughly translates as 'manager' of the land.)

"We got house there now at Maria Lagoon. Built a house, got a generator. We got tank, we got TV.

"And I am satisfied. Me and Ginger are happy, we stay on that land. We just

worrying about the sacred sites around that country."

Mr Yunupingu said it was disappointing

and frustrating to continually find the NT Government trying to deny native title and holding up the processes.

"In 1995, the exploration and mining company Rio Tinto and the traditional owners signed the Walgundu agreement over St Vidgeon's, which provides for site protection and a percentage of exploration costs," he said.

"Under that agreement, the mining company accepted that Native Title existed in the area and negotiated on that basis. A speedy agreement was reached.

"However the NT Government, instead of recognising the obvious, yet again forced the matter through the expensive and time consuming legal process."

The outcome of this case could set a precedent for all native title claimants of land that has been shuffled into the NT Land Corporation control, which accounts for about 10 per cent of the Territory.

Traditional owners will consider their options in relation to a less favourable outcome which found that native title had been extinguished on the stock route that



Above: Ginger Riley. Below: Justice Olney at a bush hearing for St Vidgeons



runs through the north-west part of the claim.

It is also anticipated that the NT Government will appeal the decision and argue that native title does not exist on NT Land Corporation land.

But Ginger is resigned to this European way.

"I have told the stories many times. But I will tell them many times more," he says.

"Come down here quietly and talk quietly about my country and I will tell you. That is good, I appreciate that. Anyone can come here, I tell them my stories. They not crocodile or snake. Ask me questions. I will answer them all."

In the meantime, Ginger is taking a break from painting.

"I will wait until all the talking is over, then start a work again," he said.

"After a while, when finish the talking, I paint the same story."



Above: Roy Hammer



## Doing it for themselves



Above left to right: Jack Cavanagh, CAT Director Jenny Croker and Lena Cavanagh. The cake was to celebrate Jack and Lena's long marriage and the Memorandum of Understanding with CAT.

### A small community living at Pantharrpilhenhe, 120 kilometres east of Alice Springs, are doing it for themselves.

Pantharrpilhenhe is a small living area of 10 square kilometres excised from Ambilindum station.

John Cavanagh and Marylyn Davies will plant 500 trees grown by the Tangentyere Nursery to kickstart a bush foods

project funded for three years by the Rural Industries and Development Corporation.

Visitors from Alice Springs and Santa Teresa gathered at the excision for a barbeque and to wish the family luck with their new venture.

The Cavanagh family are full of enthusiasm for what can be achieved on their bit of country.

They have advanced plans for interpretive signs showing Aboriginal cultural perspectives for the many tourists who visit the historic town of Altunga and the Altunga Tourist Drive.

They have also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Centre for Appropriate Technology (CAT) in Alice Springs to support and assist each other whilst increasing skills to develop the community.

A number of people at Pantharrpilhenhe received statements of attainment towards completion of CAT certificates in applied design and technology.

The Masonic Foundation donated \$1000 to help get water to the new trees.●

## Timber Creek a realistic testing ground

### Traditional owners of the small community of Timber Creek, about 200 kilometres south west of Katherine, are seeking recognition of their native title rights and interests within the town boundary.

The Northern Land Council considers this native title application over vacant Crown land in Timber Creek, filed in the Federal Court in July, is an ideal opportunity for the NT Government to work on negotiating an agreement to suit both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal interests in the town.

"Timber Creek is a realistic testing ground for the NT Government to develop a negotiation based approach rather than the current practice of going down the costly and time consuming path of litigation," NLC Chief Executive Officer, Mr Norman Fry, said.

"The significance of this claim is that it presents an opportunity to get together and sort out an agreement over how native title can work in towns throughout the Top End.

"It would be a waste of time, money and good will if this claim is opposed and has to go to court. There are simply no grounds to oppose this claim – after all, in the 1980s the Land Commissioner upheld a land claim to large areas of land which adjoin the town," Mr Fry said.

The NLC has filed the native title

application over claimable areas in the town on behalf of the Ngaliwurru and Nungali peoples in the region.

Timber Creek, population of less than 600, is on the Victoria Highway, and is almost completely surrounded by Aboriginal land.

The ongoing traditional connection with the town and surrounding region is strong,

**“It makes sense to deal with native title issues and interests in the region as a whole, rather than each block of land one at a time.”**

NLC CEO NORMAN FRY

and the application is seeking recognition and protection of their native title rights and interests.

Mr Fry pointed out that there were already a number of proposed compulsory acquisitions for parcels of land in the town, with associated native title applications and objections.

A negotiated settlement over the region,

covering all the relevant parcels of land, would present a good opportunity to remove uncertainty for everyone and to simplify future developments in the township.

"It makes sense to deal with native title issues and interests in the region as a whole, rather than each block of land one at a time," Mr Fry said.

"We would like to negotiate an agreement that recognises, respects and enhances the rights and interests of everyone – the native title holders and the non-Aboriginal interests in the community.

"The claim is not about over-riding non-Aboriginal rights in the town; these rights are protected by law and are expressly excluded from the claim documents."

Mr Fry said that the contents of any negotiated agreement would follow comprehensive consultation.

Agreements can include factors such as involvement in local government and planning matters, procedures for dealing with future proposals for land use, employment, education and training opportunities, funding for projects etc. ●

## Court dismisses gill net charge

### Aboriginal traditional owner, Mr Shane Rivers, can fish with a gill net to feed his family without fear of being charged with not having a permit to do so.

A recent court case dismissed such a charge, laid against Mr Rivers in 1998, on the basis of native title.

"This is a common sense decision," said the Chief Executive Officer of the Northern Land Council (NLC), Mr Norman Fry.

"Any law which recognises traditional hunting practices sends a positive message to Aboriginal people about the strength of their law and culture.

"Traditional hunting and fishing practices offer health benefits for Aboriginal people on communities," said Mr Fry. "It's much better that Aboriginal people live off the land and sea rather than relying on take-away food from the community store."

Norman Fry welcomed the decision by Magistrate John Lowndes to dismiss charges of possessing a gill net (ie a large mesh fishing net) without a permit on the basis of native title.

During the hearing, Mr Rivers, who is a Wadjigan traditional owner of the Bul Gul area of the Wagait Aboriginal Land Trust, told the Court that he only used the net to feed his family, and that he had learnt to use large mesh nets from his grandmother when a child.

Mr Rivers said that use of the net ensured that he was always able to catch enough fish to feed his family, and that fish were never wasted.

The Magistrate found that "fishing with nets for the purposes of subsistence is a central and significant part of Aboriginal culture", and observed that Mr Rivers' conduct "was entirely consistent with those of his ancestors."

The Court dismissed the charges on the same basis as upheld by the High Court in 1999 in the Murradoo Yanner case.

In that matter the High Court held that the Commonwealth *Native Title Act* overrides State or Territory permit requirements regarding traditional hunting or fishing. ●



# One Cop: TWO LAWS



**Andrew Spencer Japaljarri is an Aboriginal policeman at the small community of Kintore, 350 kilometres west of Alice Springs. He talks to Land Rights News about his job.**

"I was born at Yuendumu when there was only a little tin shed — a mission.

I was brought up in the mission not the settlement. The settlement didn't come until the 70s.

We had strong law in the community then from older people and we always used to listen to them, but then the grog started coming in.

I became a policeman in 1993 and transferred to Kintore in 1997.

I really like working for the police but Kintore is still little bit...sometimes people they like policeman but sometimes they're not thinking properly what the policeman means with Aboriginal people. You know?

They know it's Pintupi country and it's a bit hard for me to work with it. Some people listen to me. Some can't.

you need to arrest them it might be brother-in-law, father-in-laws or mother-in-laws — you can't talk to the mother-in-laws when you arrest them — it's a bit hard but the Europeans can arrest anybody.

What I've got to do is Aboriginal law. The government can't understand the two laws.

When I work sometimes I sit back and think you know I've got to think first before I arrest that person. I've got to think how am I going to deal with them.

I've learnt both laws. I never went to school except for three or four years then I went to Aboriginal school for Aboriginal law and I learnt and I learnt a lot of things.

When the grog coming in a big problem, when the petrol sniffing come big problem.

I have been working with petrol sniffers and families and Aboriginal

**“You know...like when there's trouble and we need to ask them questions — drunks or something — it's a bit hard to talk to the family”**

ANDREW SPENCER JAPALJARRI

I'm a Warlpiri person but I'm still part of the Pintupi because of my grandfather.

I like to work in the community but sometimes people are not listening properly.

We've got a police vehicle but no station.

When I am there I'm worrying because it can be really hard to work with the family system, with Aboriginal law, not only white mans law we've got to go with, our law too.

When I used to work in town it was a bit different, I used to work with the government with the white man's law but when you're in the bush it's two laws see... you got to stick with Aboriginal law and stick with white man's law too.

But you've got a family — brother-in-laws, sister-in-laws, mother-in-laws, father-in-laws — we're not allowed to talk to them sometimes.

You know...like when there's trouble and we need to ask them questions — drunks or something — it's a bit hard to talk to the family but my family is OK. But when you get wife with other family its hard sometimes.

We talk to them all the time. The other police aides too.

Especially in an area like Kintore when

people think we can do everything but we can't because we are not experienced to do all those things for the families.

Even if I was a Pintupi man it would be hard. The policeman before was a Pintupi man and they didn't listen to him either.

We are community police officers but we really are police like the constables. We have the power to arrest people and take people to court.

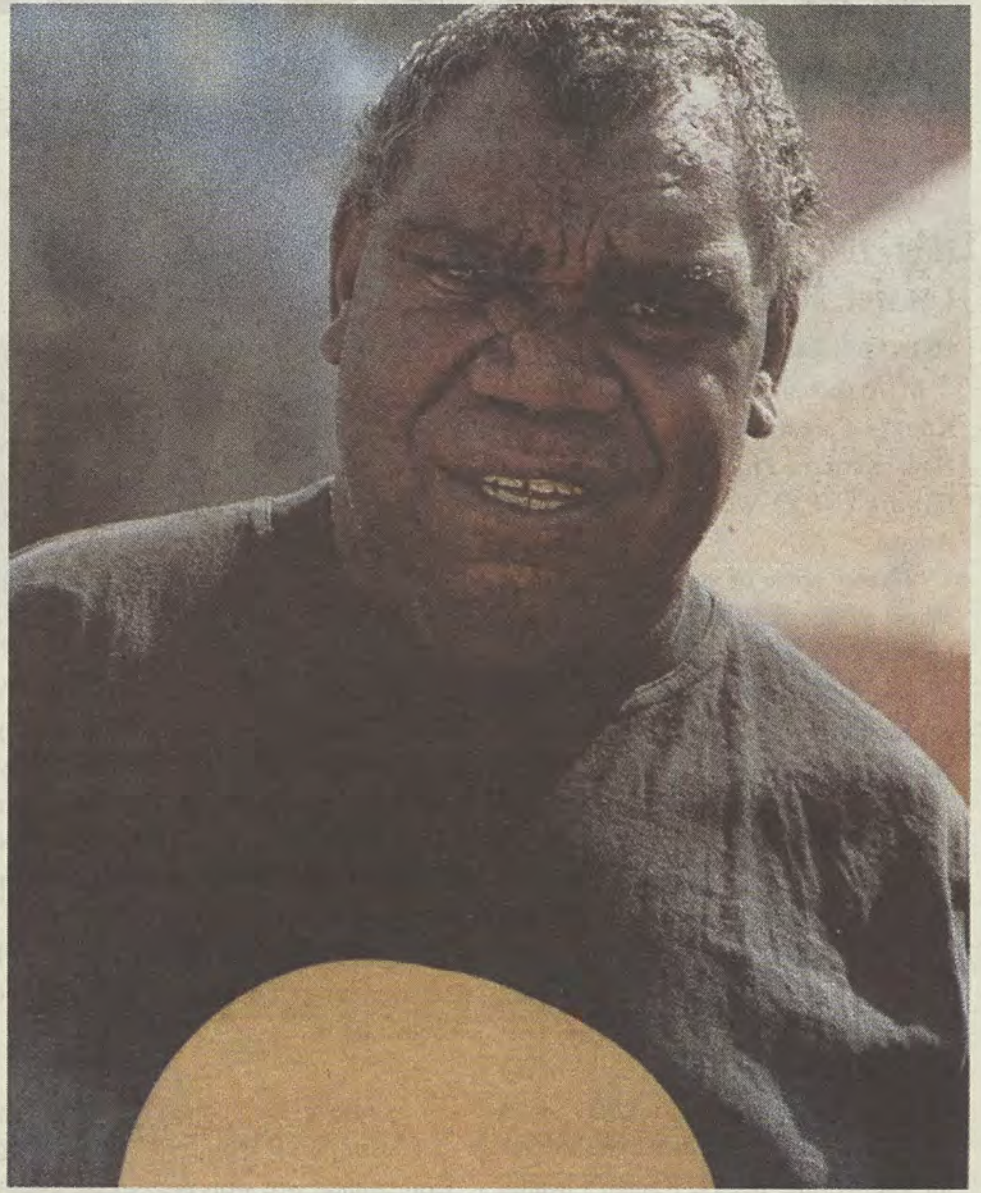
We have done courses and everything but we like to work together. I like to do the community work too - I work in health, in the schools and talk to other people.

I don't know about other police officers but I'm talking about myself and I'm looking at the council - I'm the president of the council.

We've got houses going in and a good administrator but we've still got a problem with sniffers.

The biggest problem is sniffing petrol and grog. The grog only comes for two months say but the petrol sniffing stays and never goes away.

But the people in Kintore are quiet people, really good people We've got the church and we have sing-a-long every night. They love singing and I sing too. I'm writing all these songs right now.”



The meeting at Katherine about diversionary programs

## Communities want a say in running diversionary programs

Senior leaders in Aboriginal communities in the Top End are calling for greater involvement in managing diversionary programs for juvenile offenders in the Territory.

At a recent meeting in Katherine, they told NT Police Commissioner Bates they want to participate in planning the programs, which they want to focus

strongly on serious offenders.

They are hoping that the Federal Government's decision to withhold the \$20 million for diversionary programs until the NT Government makes some progress on its plans will give them the opportunity to have a bigger say in how the money is spent.



# Its never too late to get an education

**"Education is your chance to a better life", NPY Women's Council member Mary Anderson told more than 200 young women from Central Australian Aboriginal communities.**

Ms Anderson was speaking at the fourth Kungka Career Conference run by the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Women's Council in August.

"I know some of you girls are not at school any more but believe me, it is never too late to get an education. We have a lot of problems in our communities with petrol sniffing and teenage girls having babies", she said.

The Conference is always a success and this year more than 200 young women aged between 12 and 20 were inspired by stories of success from 17 professional Aboriginal women from around Australia.

Singer Kerriane Cox, Julie Anderson, Imparja TV founder Freda Glynn and poet Romaine Moreton were just some of the attractions for the kungkas who enthusiastically participated in workshops on songwriting, poetry, women's health, basketball, leadership skills, and...surfing.

Details of the exact nature of this particular activity are unclear but the



world's first Uluru Classic 2000 Women's Open Surfing Competition was won by Danielle Paddy of Pipalyatjara community.

Ten young women from the Kiwirrkurra community performed their own song titled "Desert Girls" with Kerriane Cox on guitar.

The conference was funded by NT Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs.

Above: the finals of the first Uluru Classic 2000 Women's Open Surfing Competition was won by Danielle Paddy of Pipalyatjara community.

Right: Ernabella girls take out the basketball prize.



## Concerns over kava

**The Department of Industries and Business met with the Northern Land Council in July to discuss issues related to the licensing of kava in large areas of Arnhem Land.**

The NLC has been told that the Minister has committed the NT Government to introducing a licensing scheme for kava by early next year.

The NLC has grave concerns that the process of community consultations for the proposed licence areas, which have so far not included adequate consultations with the community and traditional Aboriginal owners, and may not adequately recognise the serious community concerns about kava.

The Department also appears to have ignored the fact that the proposed licensing schemes will require agreements under the Land Rights Act for carrying on business on Aboriginal land.

The NLC shares Aboriginal communities' concerns over the health and social impacts of kava use in Aboriginal communities, and is not convinced that there is widespread support for the kava licensing scheme.

The proposed licensing arrangements cover vast tracts of land in Arnhem Land over which consultation has been inadequate or non-existent. Further study over the economic and social consequences of commercial licensing operations would be required to ensure adequate control mechanisms were in place prior to the implementation of any licensing scheme.

## NEW FACES



### New shadow Minister

Bob McMullan has been appointed the new Shadow Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs.

The leader of the opposition Kim Beazley, says Mr McMullan is one of Labor's most senior and experienced shadow ministers to take up the Aboriginal Affairs portfolio.

He believes McMullan's experience, including a key Ministerial role on the Cabinet Native Title Committee

which produced the 1993 Native Title Act, will assist him with his new portfolio as well as bring to it a blend of political advocacy, sensitivity and new ideas.



### Larrakia coordinator

Kelvin Costello, a former Northern Land Council employee, has been appointed the new coordinator of the Larrakia Nation office in Darwin.

Kelvin, a Larrakia man, who most recently worked for NT Health, brings a broad knowledge and experience of issues with him to the position.

The Larrakia Nation made a special farewell for outgoing co-ordinator Robert Laine, in recognition of the work he did to help establish the office.



### Registrar

The newly-appointed acting Registrar of Aboriginal Corporations, Colin Plowman, has met with the Northern and Central Land Councils to discuss problems facing Aboriginal Corporations in the NT.

The actions of the former Registrar Noredine Bouhafs had created a major furore amongst Aboriginal communities. His heavy handed and insensitive bureaucratic demands had earlier lead to a number of tiny, remote organisations facing liquidation for failing to comply with his requirements. The Land Councils are endeavouring to reverse the situation and get some common sense into the situation.

Discussions with Mr Plowman involved future reviews of the legislation,

the need for more support for Aboriginal Corporations and their members and the need for a commitment for improved consultation. But the most immediate issue on his agenda is to work with the Land Councils and the communities to ensure that the land holding communities do not lose their land.



### New ATSIC zone commissioner

Newly elected ATSIC Northern Zone Commissioner Kim Hill says his interests lie in land rights, human rights and regional autonomy.

Mr Hill, 33, the former Yilli Rreung Regional Council Chairman will take up the position of former ATSIC Chairman Mr Gatjil Djerrkura who resigned from the ATSIC Board on August 31.



# Success breeds success for Yipirinya



Left to right: Tristina Egan, Danielle Turner, Rhonda Inkamala Kevin Ferguson and Everard Martin.

**The Yipirinya School in Alice Springs has won the National Literacy Award for the non-government sector and will use the \$10,000 prize to buy books and upgrade the school library.**



The school won the prize for the vast improvement in its students reading and writing over the last 18 months.

Staff at the school say the success is due to the introduction of a scaffold literacy program which ensures kids understand the story and the words in it before they come to read it for themselves. It also provides support to children with difficulties rather than withdrawing them.

"Kids want to learn, they are taking risks, they have more confidence and their oral English has developed. The culture of the overall school is very supportive and we are working as a team to make this

work. Success breeds success," said school principle Fiona McLoughlin.

Rhonda Inkamala has worked at Yipirinya school for two years on the scaffolding program and says there has been a dramatic improvement in the students reading and writing skills.

"Before the program started the kids mainly read very simple books," she said.

"Now we are getting them to read books by Roald Dahl and Arnold Lobel – these books are rich in text and students gain more knowledge of language. That empowers the students."

Two teachers and four students travelled to Melbourne to receive the prize money. ●



From left to right: Billy Duncan, Steve Craig (Manager), Victor Vincent, Ray Duncan, Priscilla Nipper, Don Cameron, Desley Rogers, Jessie Cook. Front: Dick Wilson.

# Mistake Creek bulls blitz 'em

**Aboriginal-run Mistake Creek station cleaned up the prizes with its cattle at the Kununurra Agriculture Show.**



Mistake Creek took out the first prize with its Brahman bulls and other prizes with its heifers and steers.

The Mistake Creek property is known for its high quality live cattle for export, especially by buyers from the Middle East and Asian markets.

Desley Rogers, a director of the station, is justifiably proud of the success of their cattle station and says it's about time they

received recognition.

"All the directors are really happy about the progress of the cattle station and how it's running. We are really proud about the cattle winning prizes at Kununurra," she said.

"I am really proud because I've worked on cattle stations and grew up on stations and we saw the kadia (non- Aboriginal) mob always getting recognised. It's about time Aboriginal people got recognised in the cattle business." ●

# Barks get a benefactor



**A collection of 77 bark paintings from the Yolngu people of north-east Arnhem Land has been bought by the Australian National Maritime Museum, with assistance from benefactor, Steven Grant.**

The collection, on display at the Heide Museum of Modern Art in Melbourne until mid-October, is touring around Australia – with talk of an international tour to follow.

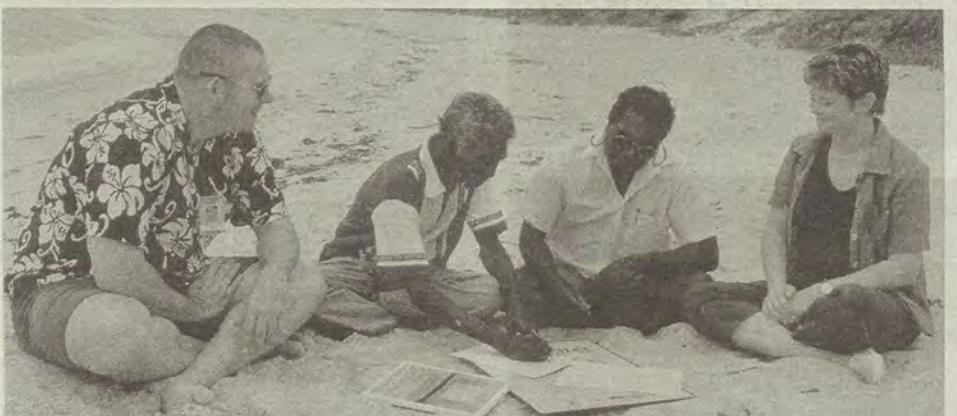
The bark paintings in the exhibition, titled *Saltwater – Yirrkala Bark Painting of Sea Country*, maps hundreds of kilometres of coastal land, showing the physical and social features of the region. They reveal sacred knowledge and explain the Yolngu's ties to these lands.

"The paintings are not only superb

works of art, they have an important place in Australian history, The Museum's Acting Director, Mary-Louise Williams said.

"They have been produced deliberately to help non-Aboriginal people understand Yolngu law, and through this, the Yolngu's claim to sea rights", Ms Williams said.

"There is enormous interest in bark paintings of this calibre overseas, and we are already talking to museums and galleries in North America and Europe about the possibilities of an international tour. ●



From left: Benefactor Steven Grant, Baluka Maymuru and Wanyubi Marika (Buku Larrngay Mulka) at Shady Beach, Yirrkala, with Sarah Slade.





# Ramingining Festival 2000



Ramingining Community in north-east Arnhem Land was host in July to a variety of bands who travelled from throughout the region to entertain

the crowds each evening of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ramingining Sports Music and Cultural Festival 2000, held from Thursday to Sunday, July 20-24.

As well as local bands, musicians came from communities such as Maningrida, Milingimbi, Galiwin'ku, Goulburn Island and Melville Island, playing on the fully completed Centenary of Federation sound stage.

Look out for the CD release including live tracks from the festival!





# Dollars made from Broken Spirits

**"It is time for this community to come out of denial and accept the truth. Alice Springs is awash with alcohol. Alcohol recovery services exist in a daily - and nightly - context of a warzone. Their workers including the police operate within the adrenalin of battle. Young people obtain alcohol freely; young women are especially endangered when they are drunk. Alcohol is in the workplace, is used to raise money for new school facilities, and to get fathers along to fundraising events. Kids don't get to school because of on-going chaos at home. Read the report. It's all there."**

Meredith Cambell from the Alice Alcohol Representative Committee in the Foreword to "Dollars made from Broken Spirits".

Controversy surrounds the findings of a hard-hitting report into alcohol issues in Alice Springs.

While the survey, which forms the basis of the report, clearly shows the community recognises that there is a very serious alcohol problem in Alice Springs and that there should be immediate action to address it, the report's recommendations are facing strong resistance.

The Hauritz Report, delivered in July outlines more than 90 recommendations, including tougher penalties for breaches of liquor licenses, alcohol-free workplaces, banning taxis from picking up alcohol without a bona fide passenger and restricting alcohol at public events to low-alcohol beers only. It suggests that service stations and convenience stores should not retain their licenses where it can be shown that a large proportion of their trading is in liquor. Alice Springs has nearly 80 liquor outlets, including restaurants.

The Report says close to \$30 million was spent on the consumption of a staggering 6.847 million litres of alcohol in 1998-1999. Some 3000 people were arrested for alcohol related offences and the Alice Springs Hospital Accident and Emergency Section dealt with 1341 admissions that were caused by alcohol.

Aboriginal, health and church organisations in Alice Springs have voted to re-establish the People's Alcohol Action Coalition as a community forum and to provide

another voice apart from the Alice Springs Town Council whose members are divided on the Report.

The Northern Territory Government is refusing to accept the recommendations of the report into alcohol usage in Alice Springs, saying they are unrepresentative and need to be reviewed. But the authors of the report surveyed more than 400 people of the town's 26,000 residents and strongly defend the integrity of their statistical methods.

The Minister for Central Australia Lorraine Braham says recommendations in the report to have "chill out" areas and the sale of light beer only at major events, banning new licenses and banning alcohol in the workplace as anti-development and draconian.

Labor MLA Peter Toyne says that all of the recommendations were voted on by each sample household.

"It shows clearly that while the CLP are trying to blame the alcohol issue on Aboriginal itinerants from the bush, the survey showed that people in Alice Springs see alcohol affecting the whole town - they resent the presence of excessive alcohol everywhere in their social lives and around their children," he said.

Mr Toyne said the report also highlighted the compromised role of the Liquor Commissioner.

"His job has been undercut by the CLP in a serious breach of the division of powers," he said. ●

## Dialysis unit for Kintore closer

**Sothebys will auction 20 high quality Aboriginal artworks including four enormous paintings by the men and women of Kintore and Kiwurkurra in November to benefit a kidney disease appeal.**

The proceeds will assist in the building of a remote kidney dialysis unit at Kintore and also promotion of a kidney program.

Six people from the area currently have chronic kidney failure and another 35 people have signs of impending failure within the next few years. In the past, patients suffering kidney disease have passed away because they didn't want to leave their country and families and relocate to Alice Springs for dialysis.

Labor MLA Peter Toyne said Sotheby's originally predicted the auction would raise \$500,000 but expectations are that it now will be over \$1 million.

Already \$20,000 has been donated to the appeal and 50000 appeal flyers have been distributed to the Olympic crowds.

Twenty five donated paintings will join the four large canvasses in the main auction. Another 25 will be sold by 'silent' auction whereby bids are put in sealed envelopes and the highest bid wins.

Mr Toyne said that while the Commonwealth had

prioritised the construction of a dialysis unit at Kintore, the Northern Territory Government has been reticent, and says it wants to evaluate the Katherine and Tiwi units first.

"We are losing people now," he said. "How many more are we going to sacrifice? Every day brings the further possibility of deaths from this disease.

"The Commonwealth can commit, the art market can commit, why can't the Northern Territory Government?

"It costs about \$50,000 for each patient annually and Territory Health Services should be relocating some of their expenditure to this area," Mr Toyne said.

The Combined Nations Of Central Australia has donated the 11 canvasses painted at the Kalkaringi Constitutional Conference in 1998, on the condition that they be kept as a complete collection. Sothebys will negotiate with museums and galleries to buy the collection for historical interest.

Smithy Zimran, a sufferer of chronic kidney disease, said he wanted to go home to Kintore as did everyone he knew on dialysis in Alice Springs. ●

## Male centre to prevent health problems

**"I have made it to 50 and so I say my grace for that. I believe 53 per cent of Aboriginal people will not reach that age. That is an appalling statistic."**

With that comment, elite athlete and former Carlton football club star Syd Jackson, officially opened the Male Clinic attached to the Danila Dilba Medical Service in Darwin.

Syd, a member of the Stolen Generation, and taken to a mission school hundreds of miles away from the community where he was born, is acutely concerned about the health of Aboriginal people in Australia.

With the average Aboriginal male likely to have a lifespan 20 years less than his non-Aboriginal counterpart, the Male Clinic at Danila Dilba is an effort to encourage more Aboriginal men to make use of medical services and facilities and to seek advice and assistance.

"If you have an unhealthy male in the family, you have an unhealthy family. And if you have an unhealthy family you have an unhealthy community," manager of the Male Centre, Mr John Christopherson said.

"Most of the ailments we are treating are all preventable. They are lifestyle problems, smoking, substance abuse, cardio-vascular, sugar diabetes and kidney problems.

"The thing is to get people to come early enough to us. We are working on preventing, rather than curing."

The Male Centre at Danila Dilba is at 42 McLaughlin Street, Darwin: phone 8936 1818 or 89361717. ●



Above: former Carlton football club star Syd Jackson opens the Male Clinic



# The yidaki call opens



The ancient sound of the *yidaki* (didgeridu) – which calls all people to come together in unity – signalled the start of the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Garma Festival at the remote location of Gulkula, near Nhulunbuy in north east Arnhem Land in September. Guests throughout the week enjoyed nightly *bunggul* (ceremony), music, bark painting, bush medicine, weaving, spear making and hunting.

The gathering also featured land management workshops and major national summits on health and education, attracting health professionals, Indigenous leaders and academics from around the country.

“This is a 40,000 year old culture meeting the new technologies of the 21st century on the sacred ceremonial ground of our ancestors,” said Galarrwuy Yunupingu, chairman of the Northern Land Council and chairman of the Yothu Yindi Foundation, which organised Garma.

“Garma is about getting together to share in peace and harmony,” he told visitors. “You might come from a different world, a different culture, but no culture is better than another. We need to learn how to respect each other’s culture.”

Around 150 health professionals and health workers attended the AMSANT (Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance – Northern Territory) health summit, which focussed on youth issues, calling on government to introduce high schools to all communities of more than 200 people.

The education summit resulted in a declaration to the Australian Vice-Chancellors’ Committee (AVCC) listing a number of recommendations aimed at incorporating Indigenous knowledge and traditions “in an inclusive and equal relationship in the formal learning environment.”

Selected students of the yidaki, from countries including the US, Britain, Japan

and Germany spent the week with yidaki master Djalu Gurruwiwi, and a Yolngu Matha (language) tent provided an introduction to Yolngu language and culture.

Attending Garma for his second year, Kim Beazley, Leader of the Opposition, described the festival as the most important cultural event of its kind on the Australian calendar.

“These occasions provide an opportunity for us in national political life to make a statement by our presence about how Yolngu culture should be valued by the whole Australian community,” he said.

Beazley recognised the importance of Aboriginal law and culture to land rights by making a commitment not to support any changes to WA and NT native title regimes without the prior informed consent of Aboriginal people.

Yothu Yindi closed the week-long festival with a concert featuring songs from the group’s new album titled *Garma* and tracks from previous albums including *A Tribal Voice*, *Freedom* and *One Blood*.

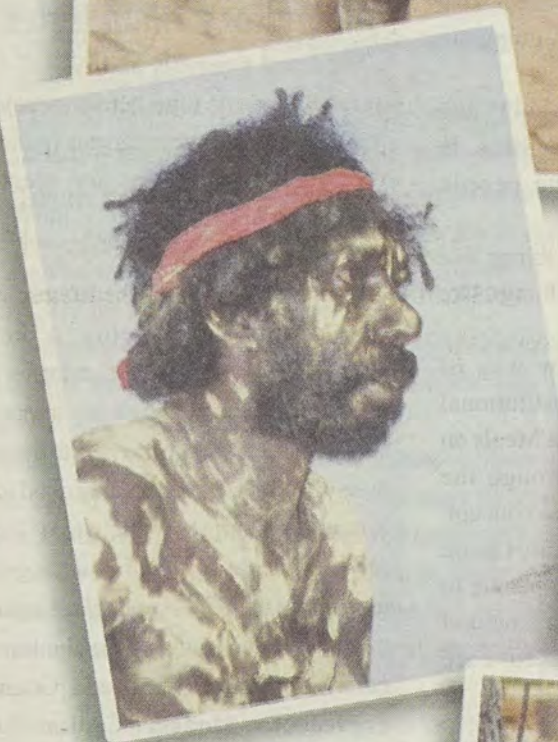
INXS guitarist Andrew Farriss joined Yothu Yindi on stage throughout the evening and Billy Thorpe, currently recording with Yothu Yindi, also joined the group for a powerful rendition of *A Tribal Voice*.

The Garma website address is: [www.garma.telstra.com](http://www.garma.telstra.com)





# Garma cultural festival







## Aged care centre



Top: Reggie Wuridjal, with his daughter Cheryl and Daisybell James  
Above: architects drawings of the new centre



**Maningrida is working on a plan to be the first remote community in the Top End to have its own aged care respite centre built.**

The design has been worked out following close consultation within the community and local labour and materials, such as red-mud bricks, will be used as much as possible in the construction.

"The old people want it tomorrow, the families want it tomorrow, but we still have a lot to do," said Cyril Oliver, coordinator of the Maningrida and Outstations Aged Care Board.

"People don't want to send their elderly into Darwin. Once you send your people away from their country, their well-being starts to be affected – spiritually and culturally."

At the moment, frail, elderly people in communities have to go to Darwin to be cared for in an aged care centre.

"When the old people feel sick, they want to go home for the salt air," said Daisybell James, a member of the Aged Care Board.

"They ache to be home. They want to be with families and sit with families, hear stories about the olden times, takeout fishing or go for some fresh air."

Daisybell is particularly keen on the bower shelters planned at either end of the centre.

"That means we can take the old people and put them in the shade could be sand

there and space for a fire for damper," she said.

"They can stay outside for a little while. Old people can sit down and get their memories back."

The land earmarked for the centre is on the foreshore near the barge landing, and the design includes four units containing two bedrooms each – enough for eight people – areas for rehabilitation, training and physiotherapy and plenty of open space.

There are also plans for bush tucker trees and medicine trees, like wild apple, red berries, green plum, pandanus nuts and cabbage palm, and a vegetable garden.

"We fought really hard, getting the funding for this," said Reggie Wuridjal, chairman of the Maningrida Health Board.

"The Health Board and Aged Care sub committee is made up of representatives from Maningrida and outstations. We have 12 different languages and 34 outstations within the region. It was done this way to make sure that everyone talks of what services are being asked to provide, but also to make sure that everyone's views are heard.

"Before planning this, we been asking about, talking to the old people, going out to the outstations"

"We ask 'how you want it built' and 'what is the set up and what facilities do you want.' Better to ask the people themselves who are living here.

"And they told us they want things like physio and they want traditional things, like sitting in the shade.

The centre is a whole new way of looking after the elderly in institutional care within the community and a Meals on Wheels service has begun through the Women's Centre to introduce the concept.

The intention with the Aged Care Centre is to start with daycare, inviting people to come and visit for the day, with a natural progression towards increased care services. ●

## BRIEFS

### Itinerant study

Indigenous community organisations and the Northern Territory Government have joined forces to develop a research project to investigate and report on issues related to Indigenous itinerants and "itinerant lifestyle" in the Darwin and Palmerston region.

A study will be commissioned to look at a range of concerns including alcohol use and the health, well-being and social behaviour of itinerants, and the effect of this behaviour on relatives and acquaintances that reside in Darwin.

The consultancy will be advertised for tender in September and is expected to commence towards the end of this year. The consultant or consultancy group will report to a management committee comprising the NTG, Larrakia Nation, ATSI, AMSANT, NAALAS and NLC.

A final report is expected by June 2000.

### Territory boundaries

The Land Councils and ATSI have agreed to work together to develop a joint approach to the current review of the ATSI boundaries and electoral system under section 141 of the ATSI Act.

Acknowledging that the review is an opportunity to develop a better alignment of regional boundaries at a time when there is a growing interest in increasing regional autonomy, consultations have commenced over boundary changes which may better reflect the cultural and linguistic groupings within the NT Aboriginal community.

In a joint submission to the review panel ATSI and the Land Councils expressed concern that NT representation on the ATSI Board had been reduced from 3 to 2 Commissioners as a result of amendments to the ATSI ACT in 1993.

The joint submission recommends more culturally appropriate representation and an increase in the number of NT Commissioners to a minimum of three.

The joint submission also recommends a two-day meeting between the Review Panel and NT Aboriginal representatives from ATSI and the Land Councils, but the Review Panel has not responded to the submission and has scheduled four separate one-day meetings in Alice Springs, Katherine, Darwin and Nhulunbuy from 25-28 September.

The Review Panel is required to make draft recommendations to the Minister by 6 December 2000, after which time there is a 90 day period to lodge written objections to any recommendations.



Djerk Rangers at Maningrida undertake a St John Ambulance first aid course



Terry Ngarnandara, who has been painting since he was 14 and uses traditional techniques such as ash for black and ochres mixed with water and glue for his paintings, has recently had an exhibition of his work in Sydney.



# Shipwrecks...



Popular Aboriginal fishing spots and old family stories retold around the campfire could hold the clues that Peter Danadja is looking for in his search for shipwrecks dating from the Macassan trading era more than 200 years ago.

Peter, an NLC Council member, is the cultural liaison officer and interpreter for a project run by the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT), to find and protect shipwrecks along the stretch of coastline from Maningrida to Crocodile Island.

A keen historian, Peter is hoping the project will fill a few more pieces in the historical jigsaw of the area.

"I am fascinated with old histories of my people and the first contacts we had with outsiders, and the creation of Maningrida too," he said.

"I am not trying to rewrite history, but trying to find out how it was in this part of the world back through the years.

"Traders used to come here from Sulawesi, looking for trepang. They came down around October at the beginning of the wet season and went back around March, so they were here for a few months at a time.

"When they came to these shores, they did bring tobacco and other things and there is much evidence they were here."

Peter is a former curator of the museum in Maningrida which holds extensive displays of Macassan traders, and he is hoping this latest project will add to the collection.

"When we find something, we want to leave it at the bottom of the sea. We will sketch him up and put him on a painting and it will be another piece of the jigsaw," he said.

Research so far suggests a very rich maritime history in the region, with references already listed for two or three Macassan shipwrecks, a Japanese lugger and a World War II wreck.

Project manager, David Steinberg, the Historic Shipwrecks Officer at MAGNT, said that Peter's role was the key to oral histories and oral information covering local knowledge and stories.

"As well as European sources, the local knowledge will be invaluable," David said.

"I think this may be the first time anyone will have used Aboriginal fishing locations to track shipwrecks, for instance. Sometimes certain metals on ships attract fish life.

"Also, We will be showing people examples of how shipwrecks can look on the shoreline – and hopefully local people will be able to point us towards something."

The project is expected to take a couple of years to complete, with Peter and David working for a couple of weeks each year to gather information and finally to conduct the diving expeditions once potential wrecks are pinpointed.

For further information on the project, you can contact David on 8999 8284 or his email address is david.steinberg@nt.gov.au.



Peter Danadja points to possible shipwreck sites



Terence Wilson from the Letterstick Band relaxes with a spot of fishing

# Turtle Harvest

Recycling bins with a difference are in Aboriginal outstations in the Maningrida region - filling up with discarded turtle shells from family meals.



Stuart Ankin with a long-necked turtle

It is all part of a research project, which is being conducted with the assistance of the Djelk rangers at Maningrida, into the potential commercial harvesting of the local freshwater, long-necked turtle for the pet trade.

The recycling is helping to gather information on turtle populations, while another component involves collecting turtle eggs and incubating and hatching them in laboratory conditions.

Results so far suggest long-necked turtles from the Maningrida region could soon be vying for attention alongside puppies and kittens in pet shops around the country.

Ranger Stuart Ankin, from Blyth River, sees the potential benefit for the region, with money going back to the communities.

"We will sell the baby turtles for pets. They are good pets. Not aggressive. So people might put them in their fish pond," he said.

"But we need to make sure we don't put too much pressure on those turtles, taking the eggs to sell," he said.

"They are good tucker. And also they get taken by crocodile and pig, and goanna and buffalo, eating them or standing on the eggs.

"The bins we hope will help us work out how many we taking, how many live back there in the billabongs, and how long they live for."

Preliminary figures suggest that, while the turtles can be heavily harvested in some areas and also face numerous predators in the bush, their numbers are still prolific and a sustainable commercial harvest for the pet trade could be viable.

Damian Fordham, who is conducting the research with Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation, said the rangers were heavily involved in all aspects of the project.

He said the plan was to collect about 500 eggs, with hopefully about 400 hatching. They will be grown for about six months before being sold, with the possibility of a booklet with every turtle, explaining the research program, the involvement of Aboriginal people and care instructions for the pet.

The research involves various components to develop a management plan for the turtles.



# Native title holders want more say in Ord project

The Miriuwung and Gajerrong people, whose country spans the WA and NT borders around Kununurra, are facing massive impacts from a potential sugar-cane development on their country.



Blanche Flying Fox talking about the proposed sugar cane farms on her country

And they fear the fact that their native title rights are being dragged through the court system is hampering their attempts to have a greater say in what happens.

Appeals are currently going to the High Court over the Full Bench of the Federal Court's decision that native title had been totally extinguished regarding the Ord River scheme, the Argyle diamond mine, and crown land in the town of Kununurra.

The traditional owners of the country are concerned about the impact on their country from the plan to plant 35,000 hectares of sugar cane plus create a 40,000 hectare buffer zone in the proposed Ord River Stage II project.

They are already unhappy about the impact that has happened in Stage I, including weed infestation, lack of

availability of bush tucker, loss of access to the Ord River, and the flooding of Lake Argyle which put a large part of Miriuwung country underwater and are worried that Stage II will result in much larger scale degradation of their country and lifestyle.

The Northern Land Council and Kimberley Land Council made substantial submissions on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project, but the report from the WA Environment Protection Authority on the EIS has recommended to the WA government that the project can go ahead.

Native title holders want the WA and NT governments to recognise their native title, recognise their concerns about environmental and social impacts, and sit down and negotiate over the project.

# Indigenous Territory defenders honoured

A program designed to recognise living indigenous Territorians who contributed to war efforts in their communities and amongst their peers is seeking community involvement.

The Territory Defenders program is part of the Federation Frontline, the Centenary of Federation Northern Territory's National Centrepiece Event, to be held in February 2001.

It's aim is to commemorate the bombing of Darwin and recognise those who contributed to the defence of the federation during World War II.

The program aims to recognise indigenous war defenders as part of the build up to the Centenary of Federation Northern Territory.

Two Territory Defenders have already been recognised at a ceremony in Port Keats.

Johnny Chula and Gabriel Kungal who are both traditional owners of coastal land north of Port Keats were presented with certificates for their service during World War II with the Royal Australian Air Force Aboriginal Labour Unit.

Johnny was also presented with a special plaque in recognition of his special rescue efforts in the Port Keats area during World War II.

Johnny is a senior traditional land owner of Yederr and is the oldest living person in the area who led search parties to crew who crash-landed in the Port Keats area during the war.

Gabriel a senior traditional land owner of Kuy helped establish a base camp at Air



Top: Gabriel Kungal  
Bottom: Johnny Chula and daughter

Force Hill where he also worked as a cook and breadmaker with the Royal Australian Air Force Aboriginal Labour Unit from 1942 to 1945.

It is envisaged that more presentations will occur throughout communities who advise the Centenary of Federation NT of their 'Territory Defenders'.

For more information contact Susan Wallace on 89244203 or check out the website on [www.federation.nt.gov.au](http://www.federation.nt.gov.au).

# Legal system fails Stolen Generation

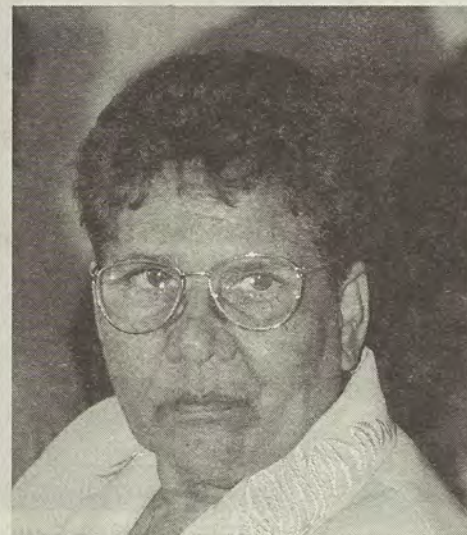
The legal system has not been able to address the injustice suffered by the Stolen Generations. It is now up to the Federal Government to address it."

This comment from the North Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service (NAALAS) on the recent Federal Court decision in the case of Cubillo and Gunner echoed the disappointment of many individuals and organisations throughout the country.

The decision was that there was insufficient evidence to show that Lorna

Cubillo was unlawfully removed, and that Peter Gunner was removed with his mother's consent.

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission immediately called for a reparations scheme for Indigenous children forcibly removed from their parents under past government policies.



Above: Lorna Cubillo and right: Peter Gunner



# Blend of local knowledge and technology is recipe for success

## Numerous success stories are coming out of the Aboriginal Landcare Education Program (ALEP).

They include communities winning environmental awards; local people proud of their achievements on their outstations; and former prisoners at Berrimah jail who have been inspired to return to their communities and become involved in tree planting projects.

ALEP's major function is to empower communities to manage their country their way, providing advice in using European technologies and blending it with local knowledge to achieve results.

Six years after the formation of ALEP, which is a partnership between Greening Australia and the Northern Land Council, resources are stretched to the limit, as more and more communities and Aboriginal organisations call on the officers to help plan and develop projects to help them care for their country.

These projects cover a huge range of issues, such as rehabilitating land returned to Aboriginal people which has previously been neglected or misused. Other programs that make community living safer, healthier and more attractive, include tree planting to provide shade and establishing nurseries for bush tucker and medicines.

ALEP, which also conducts education and awareness programs in communities,

institutions and schools, has five staff: Don Duggan, Ali Garling, Rita Tingey, Richard Bauer and coordinator Leslie Alford.

"Our work is all about empowering people to do things themselves," ALEP officer Don Duggan said.

"It takes time to build trust and rapport with the people, but it's worth it, because, while we provide European knowledge, the local people teach us about the land, and it becomes a two-way thing."

ALEP officer Ali Garling said it was important to get the local, younger people involved in the program.

"It is all about building people's ability and confidence, so that they can make well-informed decisions that relate to caring for country and caring for culture," he said.

While projects in areas such as the Victoria River District and Timber Creek are fairly new, with ALEP playing a key role in providing advice, assistance and support, Kulaluk within Darwin is an excellent example of a community where ALEP now has minimal involvement.

Another achievement in which ALEP played a role was the National Landcare Award won by the Yugul Mangi Council at Ngukurr for their dust mitigation project, which was carried out using CDEP participants and involved revegetating a number of bare, degraded areas which were causing environmental health problems in the dry season. ●



Top (from left): Rita Tingey, Don Duggan, Richard Banner and Ali Garling.  
Below: Peter Chubb working on a ALEP project.



# National Plan must not overlook cultural issues

## Aboriginal cultural heritage issues and sites of significance must not be overlooked in the national plan to combat marine pollution such as oil spills around Australia's coastline.

Northern Land Council Regional Development Manager Ms Edna Barolits told the Spillcon 2000 international conference in Darwin in August that Aboriginal interests must be recognised in the coastal resource atlas in the national plan.

The NT coastline contains up to 200 indigenous estates and more than 10,000 Aboriginal people depend, both economically and spiritually, on it for their existence.

"If hydrocarbons or other hazardous chemical spills threaten the coastal environment, the threat is not to unoccupied country, but to someone's "country" and

sites of significance," Ms Barolits pointed out.

She explained to the conference the spiritual significance of the coastline for Aboriginal "saltwater" people and the economic importance attached to coastal areas as food sources and also the location

for ventures such as tourism, aquaculture and pearl farming.

"These people are the guardians of this pristine environment and are the ones most likely to be affected by any disaster resulting from marine spillage," she said.

"While Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory are indisputably a major

stakeholder in considerations on marine pollution, this forum is the first in which they have been asked to contribute their views," she pointed out.

"Please heed them and give them due weight in your future deliberations."

Ms Barolits called for the coastal

to have been overlooked," she said.

It is this cultural heritage aspect which is considered most important by Aboriginal people.

Ms Barolits suggested the development of a constructive relationship between the Northern Land Council and Australian Marine Safety Authority (AMSA) to ensure responses to efficiently contain marine pollution were handled with cultural sensitivity.

It could be modelled on the successful relationship that has been developed in the area of risk management between the NLC and the Bushfires Council.

Aboriginal people "do not wish to impede development but wish to have their voice heard," Ms Barolits said.

"Foremost in their minds is the concept that they wish to preserve their culture and heritage while participating in the modern world." ●

**“These people are the guardians of this pristine environment and are the ones most likely to be affected by any disaster resulting from marine spillage”**

EDNA BAROLITS



# The tracks of our ancestors



At the start of the pilgrimage left to right Pauline Conway, Margaret Heffernan and Paula Turner

**The establishment of the community of Santa Teresa was celebrated with an unusual weekend pilgrimage to honour the history of the Eastern Arrernte people in September.**



The pilgrimage began at Charles Creek Town Camp in Alice Springs, followed by a camp overnight at an old Catholic mission at Altunga and finally to Santa Teresa.

One of the organisers, Agnes Palmer said it was important to make it a special occasion.

"I wanted to make it special because of the untold stories and the hurt and the pain, and because the Catholic Church has finally realised that the history has never been told about Eastern Arrernte people.

"I wanted to put it in a way so that the stories would never be forgotten. The stories of the Stolen Generation have surfaced and it's time to go back and heal those ones who were taken from Altunga.

"And we want to go away experiencing what it was like for those old people and the children and remember them."

In 1942, 130 people were shifted from the Charles Creek Mission and taken to Little Flowers Mission at Altunga 100 kilometres away to the east.

Life at Little Flowers was tough and lack of water prompted the Catholic Bishop to buy the lease to Santa Teresa in 1952 and move the Little Flowers community there in 1953.

Santa Teresa woman Pauline Conway remembers her first experience of Santa Teresa vividly.

"We were born at Altunga and then moved to Santa Teresa when we were little.

"I remember we came through Alice



Agnes Palmer

Springs and then we got to Santa Teresa and there were just four lonely houses there.

"There was the convent, the presbytery, the church and the dormitory. It was a bit hard," She said.

Agnes Palmer said the impetus for the pilgrimage came from the Catholic Church.

"The biggest thing was that the Catholic Church looked around Australia to do a special thing for the year 2000 and other people had told their stories but the Eastern Arrernte hadn't and when we were chosen we wanted to make it very special.

"It wasn't all good then and it's been hard for a lot of people having traditional values and the church. But at the end of it we have an established community with a church at the centre of it.

"And now with this, we are welcoming the church into our set of values. Now we are giving to them.

"There was a struggle to keep traditional values and Christianity but that inner struggle was never known.

"The spirits work is to be free for oneself and to see freedom for others."

## On the go with Santa Teresa Womens Centre

Santa Teresa is a community on the go. Everyone seems to be busy — it might be playing in a band, painting banners in the spirituality centre, producing intricate artwork at Keringke Arts, broadcasting from BRACS or any number of things. The activity is endless.



Above: Claire Young

Santa Teresa Women's Centre is an excellent example.

The president of the Women's Centre, Claire Young, said the centre was involved in all levels of the community and employed 11 people on CDEP.

"We have aged care, meals on wheels for the aged, about 17 every day," she said.

"We got our own cook and our vehicle to take them meals out each day and do the laundry when it needs to be done. We have got a sewing room with a sewing lady, child care and playgroups.

"We have got an old lady who does landcare. She comes in twice a week — she takes care of the yard outside and does the plants when we get them," she said.

"We have young girls programs for early school leavers — we take them to look around town, modern dancing classes in town, sometimes bush trips for bush tucker which is run by two older ladies."

Below: Farrah Flowers cutting hair with Josh Lechleitner, Phillina Meneri, Clare Young and Sylvia Heffernan

Bottom: marbling fabric at the Womens Centre (from left to right): Jennifer Oliver, Joanne Young and MK





# Annie gives Shellie another piece in her family jigsaw

**Singer-songwriter Shellie Morris was filling out registration cards for people arriving at the Garma festival in north-east Arnhem Land - and came face to face with a grandmother she had never met.**

Shellie began chatting to Annie Isaac when she saw she was from Borrooloola, hoping she might help in her search for members of her Aboriginal family.

"I said 'my family is from Borrooloola and my nanna is Auntie Hilda' and she started to cry," Shellie said.

"She was instantly moved.

"Then she told me she was my grandmother also."

Shellie, who was adopted as a baby and grew up in Sydney, came to Darwin four years ago - and says she has been on "an amazing journey" ever since.

"I never met my father. He searched for me all his life, but he passed away 12 months before I came home," Shellie said.

"I have discovered sisters I never knew and countless other relatives.

"And they are so accepting of me, just so loving.

"Everywhere I go, it is the same. It has been never-ending."

Shellie spent some time with Annie during the festival.

"Annie told me little stories about things from home. It was lovely to meet her," she said.

"I had heard of relatives in Borrooloola, other grandmothers and aunts, but hadn't had the opportunity to go over to meet them

"Auntie Hilda is my dad's mum. She was taken away when she was a child. Annie is Hilda's sister - in Aboriginal terms, Annie is also my grandmother."

Shellie, who is enjoying a blossoming career as a singer-songwriter, says much of it is thanks to her new-found family.

"In Sydney, I started singing in gospel choirs and was opera trained - but I was always very frightened, so I didn't do much performing until I came to Darwin," she said.

"Finding who I was helped me to be a little bit more



Shellie Morris

confident, and so I started busking in the Mall."

From there, Shellie completed a contemporary music course at the NT University - and has recently been nominated for the Australian Live Music Awards.

She is currently working on a CD and is constantly in demand at Darwin venues.

"I sang for Annie. I got out my guitar and I sang a song I wrote about Auntie Hilda being taken away when she was a little girl. It is all about being taken away from your family and going home and finding them.

"Then I sang another song about meeting brothers and sisters I never grew up with.

"They are simply called *Nanna's Song* and *Sister*." ●

Below: Shellie's grandmother Annie Isaac



# Petrol sniffing a human rights issue

**Petrol sniffing in Aboriginal communities has been in the media spotlight over the last several months - to the benefit of the programs which attempt to prevent it.**

Now World Vision and the Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal and Tropical Health have both become heavily involved in the campaign to highlight the urgency to prevent petrol sniffing in Aboriginal communities.

World Vision strongly believes petrol sniffing is an urgent human rights issue which governments and the community have failed to understand and deal with appropriately.

World Vision's manager for Indigenous Programs, Ray Minniecon who oversees the strategic preventative health work underway at the Papunya community, believes it's a growing problem that needs to be addressed by the whole community.

"We know from our partnership with Papunya that there are many factors at work and no easy solution. But it's vital that all governments and the wider community recognise the problem and resolve to deal with it," said Mr Minniecon.

World Vision endorses the recent call by Senator Aden Ridgeway to empower indigenous elders to exercise traditional laws on petrol sniffing youths.

Mr Ridgeway said it should be up to each and every community to decide how to implement such laws and that it was not merely an issue of cutting the supply of petrol, but included breaking the cycle of poverty and low self-esteem experienced by Aboriginal people in their communities.

World Vision Australia's chief executive, Lynn Arnold believes the problems affecting indigenous communities in relation to petrol sniffing are the unresolved issues of alienation from cultural and spiritual values, diminishing attachment to the land, the undermining of traditional authority and loss of hope for the future.

The Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal and Tropical Health (CRCATH) have just released an updated publication aimed to help literate non-specialists who work and live in Aboriginal communities and members of non-government and government organisations dealing with petrol sniffing.

*Petrol Sniffing in Aboriginal Communities: A Review of Interventions* by Peter d'Abbs and Sarah MacLean has been an ongoing project at CRCATH since it was first established in 1997.

The book is divided into two parts.

The first part focuses on 'Petrol sniffing as a problem' and includes chapters on prevalence, patterns, causes of petrol sniffing and discusses problems associated with petrol sniffing.

The second part focuses on interventions and is divided into primary, secondary and tertiary petrol sniffing interventions. ●





# Batchelor graduates celebrate

**Family and friends turned out in force to celebrate the success of some 70 students graduating at the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education in Alice Springs.**

The students represented the largest group graduating from the Alice Springs Institute since it first opened in 1990.

Batchelor director Veronica Arbon congratulated the students on their success and welcomed the growing number of younger people graduating at the ceremony.

Graduate Mona Kantawarra said that others in the community should be encouraged to study.

*"We have to encourage others in the community, to study we have to do this together, it is too hard to stand alone."*

Mona's community was so impressed with her achievements that she was recalled to the stage so the Hermannsburg choir could sing to celebrate her graduation.

Ms Arbon congratulated the students on two books produced by them and launched as part of the graduation ceremony.

"For me as a reader, and I'm sure the authors, the writing has been a journey, a journey into themselves as people, a journey into their families, a journey into their culture and their country because that's where this writing comes from," she said.

Author Kenny Laughton also urged the students to express themselves freely through writing.

"There are wonderful stories inside of us and believe me there's a big wide world out there and they are really keen to know about us mob.

"There isn't a formula for writing I didn't know a thing about writing when I wrote my book. That's what I said to people write your story first.

"I thought about it for 25 years because I had that same problem. I thought I couldn't write but when I sat to write it just poured out.



Above: Cutting the cake at the launch of *Alherramp-areny Angkety Arelh-kenh*  
Below: the dancers and below right the singers

## Alherramp-areny Angkety Arelh-kenh Women's Stories from Laramba

**The first book written in the Anmatyerr language was launched at Laramba, 200 kilometres north-west of Alice Springs in August.**

The 12 Laramba women, many of them born in the 1920s, tell their stories of the days before cars, white-fella tools and any permanent shelters.

The Laramba women are renowned for their singing and dancing and at the launch danced and sang the *arkarte* (acacia seed) dreaming – gathering the *arkarte* red and yellow seed tips which the women of

Laramba have fed their families with for generations.

The Central Australian Dictionaries Program at IAD, who compiled the book for the women, are working on dictionaries of Western and Eastern Anmatyerr.

*Alherramp-areny Angkety Arelh-kenh* is published by IAD Press in Alice Springs.



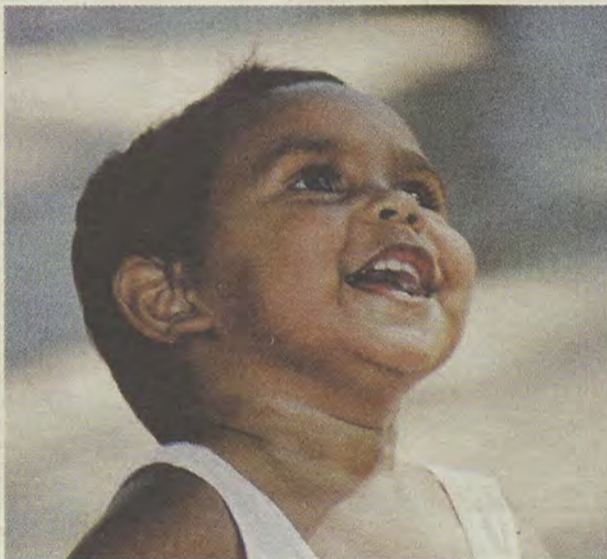


Below: Dhimurru ranger Djawa Yunupingu collects turtle eggs at Cape Arnhem.



Above: members of the Mills family at the Vincent Lingiari Memorial Lecture.

Below: traditional owners of Keep River National Park who came to Darwin for a Liquor Commission hearing about a proposed roadhouse at the entrance to the park, which they are objecting to.



# NAIDOC

The Larrakia people led the march in Darwin during NAIDOC Week, which involved numerous family activities, plus a Garden Island reunion.



Below: the Land Rights News is avidly read at the opening of the new men's clinic attached to Danila Dilba Medical Service.







Top row, left to right: Danny Riley; Dorito Djorlom; kids waiting to start the pilgrimage to celebrate the establishment of Santa Teresa

2nd row: Jamie Buzzacott at Pantharrpilenhe; Darwin NAIDOC march in July this year; Health executives Pat Anderson from Danila Dilba and Johnny Liddle from Central Australian Aboriginal Congress

3rd row: Darwin NAIDOC March; Atitjere Council President Mr Cleary; Hermansburg Childrens Choir at the Batchelor Institute graduation

Right: long-term Santa Teresa BRACS operator Yuma Cavanagh.





# YUENDUMU

## Sports and Video Festival



Videos on just about everything poured in from all over Australia to the Yapa Kurlangu video festival organised by Warlpiri Media at Yuendumu in August. Held in conjunction with the Yuendumu Sports Weekend, the video festival played alongside gripping football matches and rocking Aboriginal bands from all over the Territory.

While the focus was on work produced in remote communities, entries also came from urban Aboriginal filmmakers included leading lights Darlene Johnson and Rachel Perkins.

Next year the festival will be hosted by PY Media on the Pitjantjatjara lands. Start making those videos now.

Five big winners walked away from the festival weekend.

Willowra BRACS for 'Fish' and Gulin Gulin and Weemol communities for 'Borrooloola Rodeo' split the \$1000 Best Cinematography Prize

'Shoveller' from Pakam BRACS won Best Sound

Bulman BRACS took out the Best BRACS Production for 'How to Make a Bush Lure'

Tubby from PY Media won Best BRACS Operator of the year.

Maryanne Fisher and Donovan Price split the CLC/Murry Neck Best Children's Production.





# Past policies spanned generations



Harold Furber, third from right, with his Arrernte relatives at the premiere of *Remembering Country*

**The premiere of a new film about the life of a Central Australian Aboriginal man was applauded by an enthusiastic crowd who squeezed in to the tiny Totem Theatre in Alice Springs recently.**

Arrernte relatives of Harold Furber turned out in force to view the film he co-produced and appeared in about the beginning of his life as a member of the Stolen Generation when he was taken away to Croker Island.

Many of the movie-goers also appeared in the film, including a number of children who played the parts of Harold and former CLC Director Tracker Tilmouth as small children at Croker Island.

In the foyer of the theatre was a copy of a letter written by Harold's grandfather to the authorities protesting about the assimilation policies and removal of children from Central Australia.

Harold said the existence of the letter highlighted that there were stolen generations despite the Coalition's refusal to acknowledge it.

"That letter is proof that our families fought against the removals and that those removals spanned a number of generations," he said.

The film was co-produced by Charlotte Seymour and Harold Furber and directed by Kate Gillick. Alice Springs cameraman Alan Collins was the cinematographer.

*Remembering Country* will screen on SBS TV on Tuesday 7 November at 7.30pm.

# The stories live on



**Richard Birrinbirrin has taken on a huge responsibility in his community of Ramingining in Central Arnhem Land since his father, one of Australia's foremost artists, Dr David Daymirringu, passed away last year.**

He has started painting the stories now, he is teaching the young ones, and has accepted the position of chairman of Bulabula Art Centre, which also has a focus on encouraging up-and-coming artists in the community.

"I am painting for my father," said Richard, who recently returned from an exhibition of his work in Melbourne.

"I am following his step, for the future of my people.

"I used to watch and he used to tell me stories and they are still here today. He didn't take with him - he left everything with me. I am painting now.

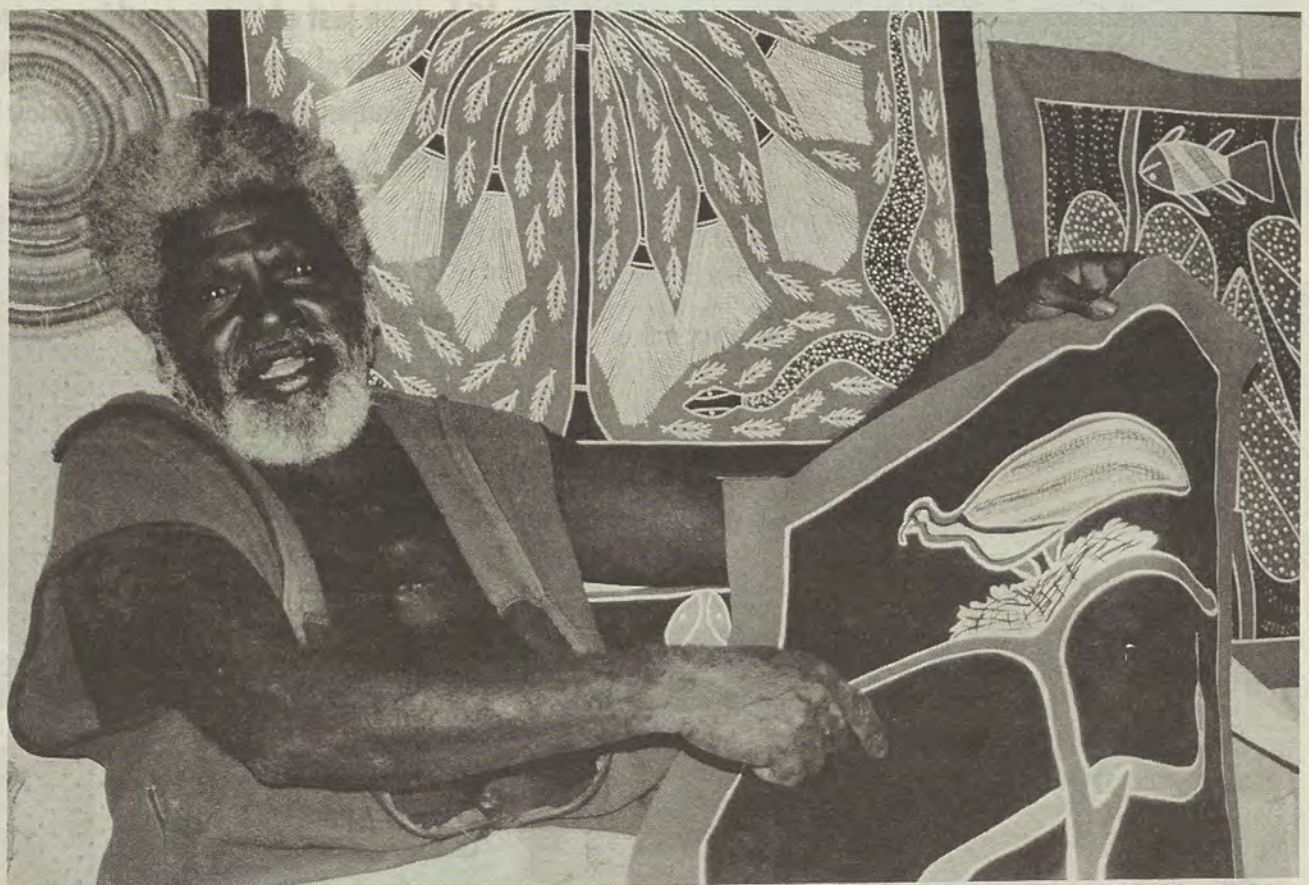
"My father used to be wise and lead his people, and then he passed that on to me. I am following his step, trying to lift their spirit up," he said.

Dr Daymirringu, whose art work was incorporated in the design of the one dollar note, was a founding member of Bulabula art centre, and Richard fully supports the art centre's current efforts to encourage new, young artists to develop their skills.

Kieran Rayner, Bulabula's sales and marketing manager, said encouragement was generally in the form of offering space to work, assistance to gather materials and opportunities to enter exhibitions and apply for grants.

"Sometimes it is not easy for people to find space to do their work, and people are welcome to come into the gallery here and sit down and weave and paint," he said.

"We also go on field collecting trips about once a week,



Richard Birrinbirrin explains the story of his painting

and the ladies get pandanus and we get bark for log coffins, didjeridus, whatever.

"With the exhibitions, we encourage adults to go to the exhibitions. In the past, people have had exhibitions and known really nothing about them. This way, people go down south and find out exactly what happens to their work."

Two Bulabula artists are in the 5<sup>th</sup> National Indigenous Heritage Awards, Djardie Ashley and Charlie Djurrutjini,

with May Yamangarra, daughter of the late Dr David Daymirringu, pre-selected for this year's Telstra Awards.

In addition, Robyn Djungimy makes woven bottles and has received grant money to exhibit in two galleries, and Keiman is trying to organise an exhibition of work from Richard Birrinbirrin's country, Yathalamarra, to display art work that is developing amongst the family of the late Dr Daymirringu.



# Smithy best and fairest yet again!

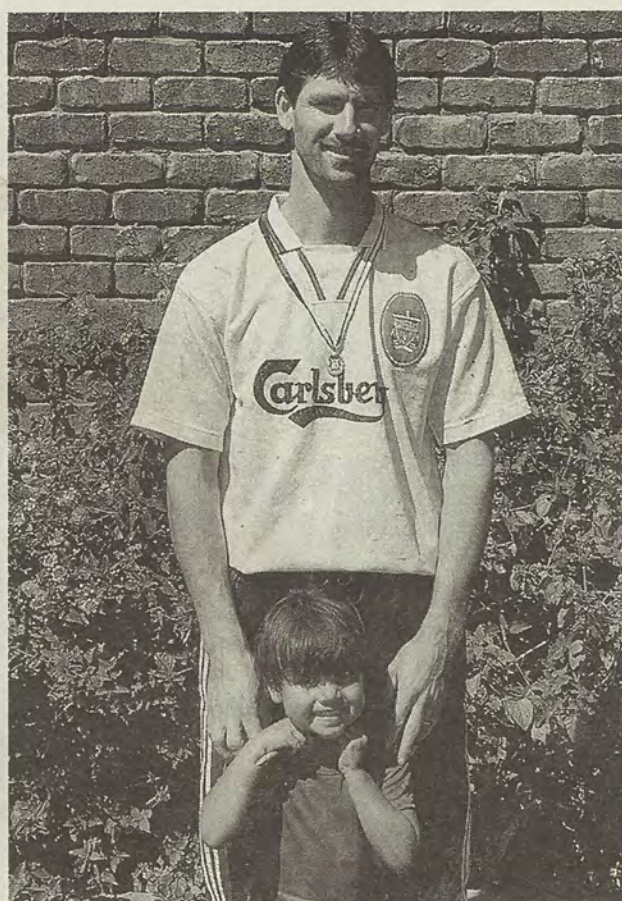
**Pioneers captain Graeme Smith made history by winning his second Minahan Medal.**

Smith first claimed the best and fairest award in 1995 and is only the fourth player to win two medals since 1947.

Smith said he was thrilled to receive his second Minahan Medal.

"I'm thrilled to be part of the four people who have ever won two Mmedals since footy started in Alice Springs in 1947.

There's so many great footballers in Alice Springs today. The overall standard of footballers these days is



Graeme Smith wearing the Minahan Medal with daughter Kia.

better than in 1995 when I first won it, especially within my team the pioneers." Graeme said.

Graeme was officially presented with his medal at the CAFL Grand Final ceremony at Traeger Park on 24 September.

# Lazy Late Boys rock with attitude



**The Lazy Late Boys recently released their album "Freedom Day" which is a mixture of rock and pop style music.**

The boys acquired their name by their reputation of always being the late mob for school. However they were inspired by a visiting band.

Aslum put on a concert for the kids and also gave some music lessons which the boys attended on time and so began their move towards playing serious music.

The boys grew up on the Daguragu and Kalkaringi communities, 460km south west of Katherine.

Growing up on these communities has inspired the boys and heavily influenced their music which they write and sing about their mob.



Barbara, Alison, June and Cath Mills close the Vincent Lingiari Memorial lecture.

## BRIEFS



### Black gold

A new book titled, *Black Gold: The Aboriginal and Islander Sports Hall of Fame* documents Aboriginal sporting achievement.

New members of the book include Michael Long, Wendall Sailor, Laurie Daley and Gordon Tallis who are just some of the athletes who join the likes of Cathy Freeman, Evonne Goolagong-Cawley and the Ella brothers.

The Hall of Fame is documented by Colin Tatz and

Paul Tatz who conceived the idea in the mid-1990's to honour people who had achieved at the highest level in their chosen sports.

*Black Gold* is published by Aboriginal Studies Press and is available in bookstores nationally.

### Bequest to Aboriginal Libraries

Remote Aboriginal communities will receive \$250,000 to further develop and upgrade their school libraries.

The Northern Territory Library and Information Service received the bequest by the late Mrs Gold, a Canberra resident and Friend of the National Library to help school libraries in remote Aboriginal communities.

In addition a Joan Gold Scholarship will be established to further encourage the development of library and information technology skills for Aboriginal people in these remote communities.

## Wicked and wise

**George Rrurrambu (Warumpi Band) and Bomba have been renewing old acquaintances and making new friends in a recent tour of the Northern Territory.**

New Melbourne-based record label, Transmitter Records is supporting the tour and has released CDs by both artists to mark their commitment to new releases featuring reggae music and its various hybrid forms.

George's solo album *Nerbu message* taps into the origins of rock-steady and Studio One Jamaican rhythms to reproduce an original roots reggae sound to which George's inimitable vocals have long been gravitating.

Bomba is a six piece reggae/funk/jungle outfit fronted by well known Melbourne reggae artist, Nicky Bomba. Bomba co-founded the Transmitter label with Joe Camilleri and Camilleri's influence is clear. This is fine quality musicianship in the guise of infectious danceable and up-beat grooves.

If you've missed the August/September tour, check out the CDs at [www.transmitter.com.au/](http://www.transmitter.com.au/). Wicked and wise - Australian style!





## Bush tucker woman

**Keeping an eye out for crocodiles, warding off opportunistic eagles and swatting the mossies and sandflies while wading through rivers, climbing over mangroves and sinking in the mud....**

It's all in a day's work for Pat Gamanangga, who works in the dietician department at the Royal Darwin Hospital.

For Pat is the 'bush tucker lady', and each week she spends a day collecting delicacies like mangrove worms, mudcrabs, periwinkles, fish and yams to give Aboriginal patients at the hospital a nutritious and cultural treat.

"The seafood, it gives them a taste of home, and helps their healing too. Some things are good for breathing, others for infections," Pat said.

"Usually, I gather for about 50 people, so they just get a taste really, a snack. But it is very good for them, good for their health and good for their spirit."

Pat has a long association with healthy eating. "My mother, she ate strong bush food right through the nine months of pregnancy and breastfed me until I was six months old," Pat said.

Pat's family, who had left their remote outstation near Milingimbi and walked overland to Darwin during World War 11, returned to Maningrida in Arnhem Land when Pat was a toddler, travelling on foot, by barge and by canoe.

"We had a lot of energy in those days," Pat said. "There was plenty of bush tucker along the way: yams, geese, grass nuts, pandanus, turtle, fish, crabs, oyster – and cheaper than the supermarket!

"I started eating bush foods from about three years of age. My family chewed the food and gave it to me to try.

"We had lots of bush tucker. I remember my grandmother, mother and auntie filling us kids' dilly bags with foods to eat as we walked along."

Pat has been working in the health area for about 35 years, at Maningrida, Bagot Community in Darwin and now at the hospital.

"I talk to the young mothers in the hospital about proper nutrition, hygiene and so on," she said.

"I have seen how many Aboriginal people have had problems: there are alcohol problems, family problems, outsiders causing problems.

"Many people have left their traditions behind and forgotten their culture. Often they are not living in good conditions: they have sores, problems with drugs, don't eat proper foods and so get fat and kids get malnourished.

"So this is why I want to back my people up. I would like to see people living more the way they used to and to have hope for the future. It is our young people that will grow up to take the responsibility for our land and culture."

Pat also enjoys the educational side of her work, taking hospital staff with her on her weekly cultural "adventures" to help collect the tucker - though it takes an experienced eye to spot the mud crabs tucked under the muddy mangrove roots.

Pat then prepares the tucker in the hospital kitchen, steaming the seafood, cracking open the crab shells and chopping up the periwinkles for the patients who cannot chew – just like Pat's family did for her all those years ago.

"It's a hard day's work to gather the tucker and it takes time to prepare it – much longer and harder than opening a packet," Pat said.

"But it is worth it."

## Indigenous doctors lead the way

A new indigenous doctors association aims to encourage and support indigenous people in the medical area.

The Governor General, Sir William Deane has officially launched the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association (AIDA) in Sydney.

The AIDA President, Dr Louis Peachy says it is time for indigenous role models to help and encourage youth

to pursue their dreams.

"As a child, it was my privilege to be inspired by the exploits of my forebears, which taught me that I can reach my potential regardless of adversity. It is now my responsibility to pass this message of hope to young indigenous Australians, so they may be encouraged to become all that they can become," Dr Louis Peachy said.

AIDA aims to address issues relating to the medical workforce and the delivery of medical care to rural, remote and indigenous communities.

The association aims to increase educational opportunities for indigenous people and to act as a support service for these people wishing to further their education.

AIDA will provide role models to young children to encourage them to further their education in primary and secondary school.

AIDA also hopes to work closely with the existing organisations such as NACCHO and all Aboriginal health workers to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



## Fisherman stands up for Land Rights Act

The Land Rights Act does not need to be amended, former Director of the NT's Amateur Fisherman's Association, Trevor Simmonds said recently.

"Mr Burke in this situation should be sitting down with the Aboriginal people and the Amateur Fisherman's Association and coming down with a real resolution," said Mr Simmonds.

Mr Simmonds' comments came as the commercial fishing industry has been creating fear and uncertainty over rights to seas and waterways.

Seafood Industry Council President Nigel Scullion has called on Chief Minister Denis Burke to seek amendments to the Land Rights Act.

"The commercial fishermen have been making outlandish and unsubstantiated claims about the potential outcome of our litigation over the inter-tidal zone," said NLC Chief Executive Norman Fry.

"We have made it clear all along that neither amateur nor commercial fishers need have anything to fear. There is nothing that can't be solved through good faith negotiations.

"I think the commercial fishing industry is being used by the NT Government to kick start their election campaign. They would be much better off talking to us rather than making expensive trips down to Canberra."

The NLC and AFANT have already begun negotiations over access to a number of fishing areas on Aboriginal land.

"Negotiating access agreements can give fishing enthusiasts access to pristine areas which can be managed to avoid over-fishing and over-crowding," said Mr Fry.

The former AFANT Director echoed Mr Fry's view.

"You're going to fish some of the most untouched and natural beauties of the whole of Australia and certainly some of the most unfished waters of Australia," said Mr Simmonds. "I don't mind paying a few dollars to go and fish that country."

## NLC regional council meetings

The NLC Full Council elections scheduled for next year, the processes of ATSIC'S review of regional boundaries, and the developments in local government reform were issues discussed by each of the Ngukurr, Borroloola, Katherine and East Arnhem regional Councils at their recent meetings.

The Land Councils and ATSIC are working together to develop a joint position on changes to ATSIC boundaries to take into account the cultural, geographic and demographic relationships between existing Land Council boundaries, ATSIC boundaries and other NT and Federal administrative boundaries which impact on the social, cultural, economic and political lives of Aboriginal people in the NT.

Each meeting also discussed regional specific issues.

In East Arnhem, an important issue relates to the head lease for Dhimurru Land Management and Aboriginal Corporation, which will be responsible for such issues as permits for tourism operations and recreational activities, mainly in the Nhulunbuy area.

Regional Council Members in the East Arnhem region also raised concerns about the number of people on Aboriginal land without permits.

They found that many people were going off the Central Arnhem Road and travelling through to the Outstation sites.

People requesting permits to travel on the Central Arnhem Road must be reminded that the permits are only TRANSIT permits and do not allow for any access to land off the road.

In Borroloola, land use agreements were a focus of discussion, the Katherine meeting discussed a tourism proposal at Jilkminggan, a community on Eusey Station; and Ngukurr was concerned with activities of the Registrar of Aboriginal Corporations.



From top: Borroloola Regional Council with NLC staff  
Middle: Ngukurr Regional Council and NLC staff  
Bottom: Katherine Regional Council with NLC staff

## Roadhouse proposal faces opposition

Numerous objections are expected to be lodged opposing a proposed roadhouse on the edge of the Keep River National Park.

Kununurra police are concerned with policing incidents at the roadhouse. While the planned location is just inside the NT border, Kununurra in WA is the nearest town. The negative impact will be felt by communities, and government and community agencies from Timber Creek to Kununurra.

Traditional owners for the country state that the applicant has not consulted with them over their native title rights, despite the applicant's submissions to the contrary.

They also object to the introduction of grog in the Keep River area, pointing out that people go there specifically to get away from grog.

The Liquor Commission hearing on the application is due to reconvene before the end of the year.



# USE THE POWER



## ABORIGINAL SELF GOVERNMENT

COMBINED ABORIGINAL  
NATIONS OF  
CENTRAL AUSTRALIA