



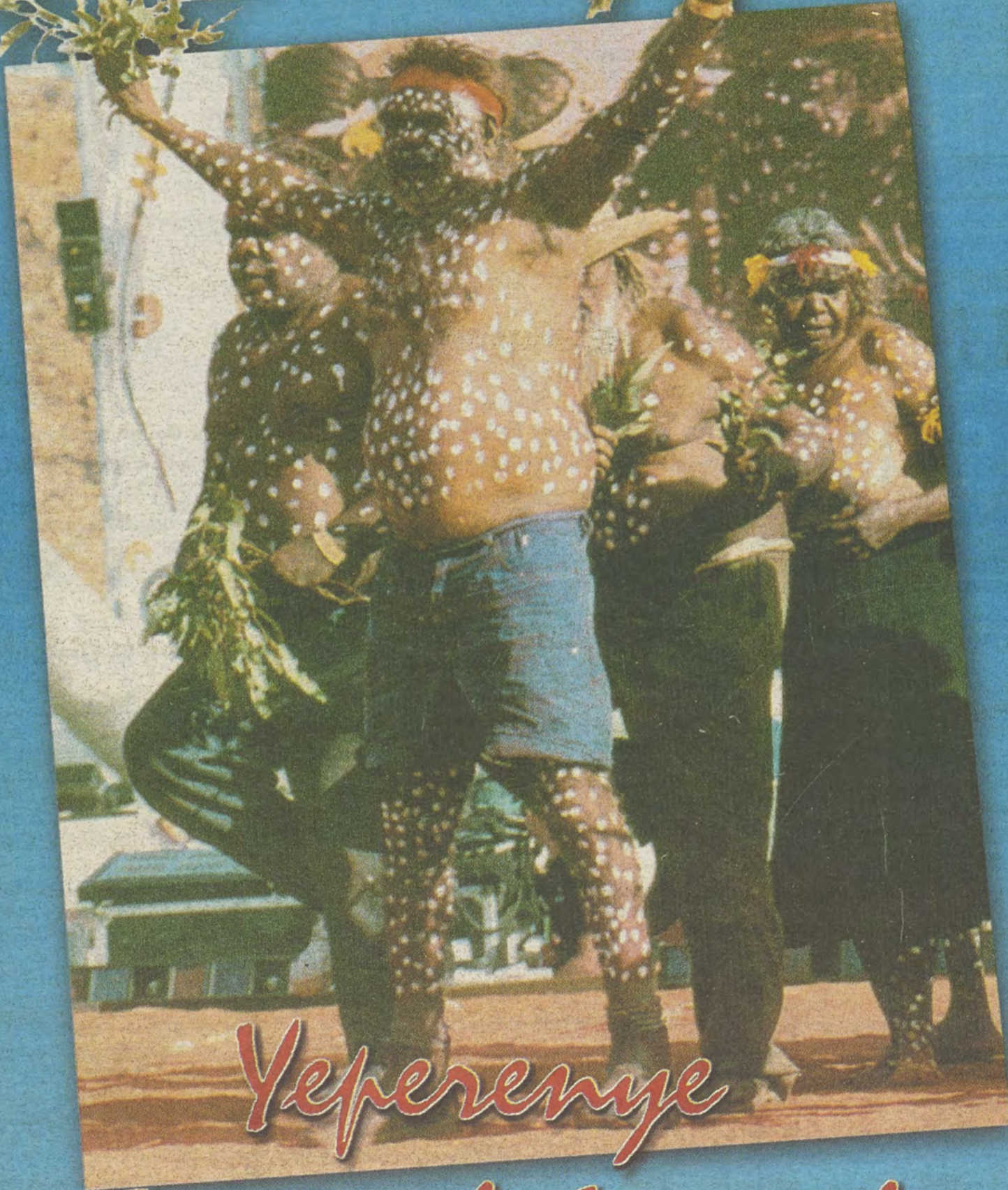
Land Rights

NEWS



One Mob, One Voice, One Land

Vol 3 No 7 October 2001



Yeperemye

Festival Special

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The Yeperenye Festival Former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam taking sand from Gurindji man Victor Vincent in a re-enactment of the historic handback of Gurindji land.

Land Rights NEWS

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Photograph courtesy Mike Gillan.

COVER PHOTO

Ernabella dancers at the Yeperenye Festival in Alice Springs in September this year.

I Fish and I Vote



Kevin Jawyugurr.



Peter Danadja (left) and Horace Walawala.



Traditional Owners watch the boats come in.

Kevin Jawyugurr has been watching the boats for weeks now.

“They come in all the Dry Season and they are taking too many barramundi. They are here all the time. I want them to go away. This is my country. They are stealing. They don’t even ask us Aboriginal mob. But the police. They do nothing.”

KEVIN JAWYUGURR

Looking out to the Arafura Sea from his remote outstation at Yilan in central Arnhem Land, Kevin points to two outboard-powered dingies scooting up and down the coast.

He acknowledges that in balanda (white man’s) law, these commercial barramundi fishing boats are legal: that the police and the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries cannot stop their activities. But under Aboriginal law, he has always known that what they are doing is wrong.

“In our law you must do certain things when you go into other people’s country. You speak with the owners. You show respect. You negotiate,” he said.

“These fishermen, they don’t ask for permission. People come from nowhere and fish here. If they came and asked...”

Apart from trespassing, traditional owners are angered by the pointless deaths of dugong and other marine life caught in the barramundi nets, and the total disregard for Aboriginal sacred sites at sea.

“There are sacred sites out there in the water,” Kevin said. “Once, we put a marker out there to show a special site where no-one can go.” He shook his head in dismay and disbelief. “That fish boat came and threw it away. Maybe they tied their boat to it. Then it was gone.”

The commercial activities are also hurting a local fishing tour operation in which the traditional owners have a financial stake, as the ‘trophy’ fish sought by the tourists are the ones the barramundi nets scoop up.

The traditional owners, including Kevin and his family, are not allowed to conduct any commercial fishing in the Blyth River and out to sea. Not unless they buy a

barramundi licence on the open market, currently valued between \$200,000 and \$250,000.

Under the Land Rights Act in the Northern Territory, traditional land owners have inalienable freehold title over Arnhem Land and the coastline. All commercial enterprises must get permission from the traditional owners to operate on their land. The question of sea rights has not yet been determined, either under this legislation or the Native Title Act, though “saltwater” Aboriginal people will explain that their interests do not stop at the waters’ edge. For Aboriginal people, the land and the sea are one, and the areas covered by water are just as relevant as dry land.

Through Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation, Kevin and other traditional owners round the Blyth River estuary have presented a few options. One proposal was for commercial fishing limits to be moved further out to sea, away from the mouths of the Blyth and the adjoining Liverpool rivers. Their request was ignored – and then they watched as the Government of the day shifted the boundaries for commercial fishing away from the mouths of other rivers in the Top End.

Kevin and other traditional owners say this is putting more stress on their sea country, as commercial fishing boats are forced out of the areas on either side and into central Arnhemland waters.

Another suggestion was for the NT Government to provide the Association with a special, regionalised, nontransferable licence, with a share arrangement of the profits with the NT government. This would provide much needed income for the traditional owners in the outstations. They would also respect sacred sites and not

waste good tucker. But there was no response to that suggestion either.

Peter Danadja, guardian of Yilan country, tells the story of a few years ago when family members brought their boat around from Milingimbi at night to visit Yilan. They didn’t see the nets and the boat’s propeller tore it.

“When the fish guys found out, they called the fish police,” Peter laughed incredulously. “They wanted us to be charged. Our family was visiting us, coming into shore. Can you believe it? I told those police people to go away. They did.”

“We are part of Coastwatch,” Peter said. “If we see a strange boat, we can let Coastwatch know. They are looking for illegal immigrants. This is a big coast and they need people like us to keep a watch. These (barramundi) boats are illegal in our eyes. But Coastwatch, no-one, will do anything about that.”

“The Government has been walking all over us. That has to change. We are not barbarians. We have our own law system. And other commercial fishing and government bodies should respect that.”

There were mixed messages about fishing during the recent election campaign. The CLP promised to stop all commercial barramundi operations in 10 years, later watering that down to say that no-one would be forced to sell their commercial licence. Something to do with turning the barramundi into an icon. The ALP welcomed the announcement, saying the gradual reduction of NT’s barramundi fishing licences would be done in a controlled manner. “Not sure about this new government. It remains to be seen how they service the Territory – and how they deal with this fish issue,” Peter said.



ALP wins power in NT at last

Labor leader Clare Martin has promised one of her first acts as the Territory's new Chief Minister will be to repeal mandatory sentencing, which automatically jails people for property offences.

While she has yet to detail the regime, the new laws would still require jail for property crimes, including home invasion and property damage, but would also require courts to take "extenuating circumstances" into account for minor offences. The new government will scrap minimum jail terms – currently 14 days for a first offence by an adult, three months for a second and a year for a third – leaving it up to the courts to determine the sentence.

They are also talking about introducing customary law into the criminal justice system. Ms Martin has signalled her administration may move towards using traditional Indigenous forms of justice and punishment in more Aboriginal communities.

Welcoming her comments, made at the Yothu Yindi Foundation's Garma festival, Northern Land Council chairman Galarrwuy Yunupingu said he was looking forward to promises being honoured.

"The Aboriginal population has overwhelmingly supported Labor during its two decades-plus in Opposition, as this was the party whose policies better reflected Aboriginal peoples' views and promised greater recognition of Aboriginal rights.

"We are now looking forward to long-awaited changes and hope to see a real change in relations between the new Government and Aboriginal Territorians."

But hopes are tempered with caution.

"I think their first few actions will be very cautious ones," ATSIC chair Geoff Clark said.

"And I wouldn't be reading in too much

change at this particular stage, given that, one, they're a new government who have not governed before, and, two, there's no doubt about the conservative nature of the electorate and they will be mindful of that.

"However I think there has been a little bit of a sea change in that the territory has finally woken up to the fact that it is a territory of the nation."

John Ah Kit, who became Australia's second ever Aboriginal Minister when he was given the correctional services portfolio, said it would have been difficult for him to be Aboriginal Affairs Minister because "the Aboriginal community would expect you to deliver on everything, which you're not going to be able to do."

He is, however, considering a number of options as Correctional Services Minister. He wants to examine the possibility of introducing "rehabilitation prison farms" in regional areas for Aboriginal offenders, more involvement in alcohol rehabilitation programs in the bush and he is also concerned about Aboriginal prisoners being jailed a long way from country.

Mr Ah Kit is joined by three new Aboriginal MLAs in the NT - Matthew Bonson (Millner) Marion Scrymgour (Arafura) and Elliot McAdam (Barkly) – the highest ever number of Aboriginal members in the NT.

Ms Scrymgour is the first Aboriginal woman elected in the Territory – and only the second in the nation. She is pictured above (right) with Australia's first woman Aboriginal State politician, Member for Kimberley, Carol Martin.

Money showered on communities in election lead-up

Hundreds of thousands of dollars were showered on bush communities by the CLP Government in the months leading up to the NT election.

The Government had been filling the election war chest for several years according to ALP MLA Sid Stirling.

"Poker machines in hotels are taxed higher than other venues with the additional revenues going into the so-called Community Benefit Fund," he told the media earlier this year.

"This Fund is accumulating at around \$1m a year, but the CLP have been stockpiling the funds instead of supporting community groups over the past two years."

Then Deputy Chief Minister Mike Reed assumed control of the fund even though he had no Ministerial authority under the *Gaming Machine Act* to control disbursements from the fund.

Communities were suddenly encouraged to fill in applications requiring a few lines on why they wanted the money.

"The application form was a joke," Mr Stirling said. He said there were no selection criteria, no maximum amount specified and no acquittal procedures required.

At the time he said: "The Deputy Chief Minister will now decide which organisations get funding... and we all know why.

"Labor will clean up this process, ensuring regular payments are made under clear and transparent guidelines."

In the weeks leading to the election, hundreds of notices – prominently displaying the CLP candidates picture with the amount of each grant in very large numbers – were distributed in the communities set to benefit.

In the final stages of the election, the

CLP were accused of pork barrelling on an unprecedented scale in the Centre, with allegations of vote-buying and outright intimidation.

CLP member for Macdonnell was handing out kangaroo tails as he toured his electorate, with the ALP candidate Harold Furber saying this was making Aboriginal people feel obliged to vote for him.

At the same time, the CLP accused the ALP of push-polling.

ALP sources said that Denis Burke was confusing legitimate canvassing with anonymous push-polling in his criticisms of last-minute telephone polling conducted by the ALP in relation to the One Nation issue.

Push polling is where one party seeks to influence a voter's decision by making often incorrect claims under the guise of an independent opinion poll.

ALP sources said that people contacted in telephone canvassing on the eve of the election were told clearly that the calls were on behalf of the ALP.

Labor's success at the election, taking 13 of the 25 seats, finally ended 27 years of rule by the Country Liberal Party.

Having failed to win a single seat from a sitting CLP member in 20 years, this election saw Labor topple five sitting members, including two Ministers.

Denis Burke, the only CLP chief minister ever to lose a general election, later conceded the One Nation preference decision cost the CLP votes.

Retaining mandatory sentencing was also a strong focus in the closing days of his campaign.

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Bushfire 'terrorism' for native title not the case say police

The police and the two major Land Councils in the NT have strongly refuted recent claims that traditional Aboriginal landowners are lighting fires in a deliberate campaign to 'burn out' pastoralists.

And the president of the Cattlemen's Association, Mr Ross Peatling, distanced himself from the claims, called for people to "see some reason" and welcomed moves for joint discussions on responsible fire management among all parties involved.

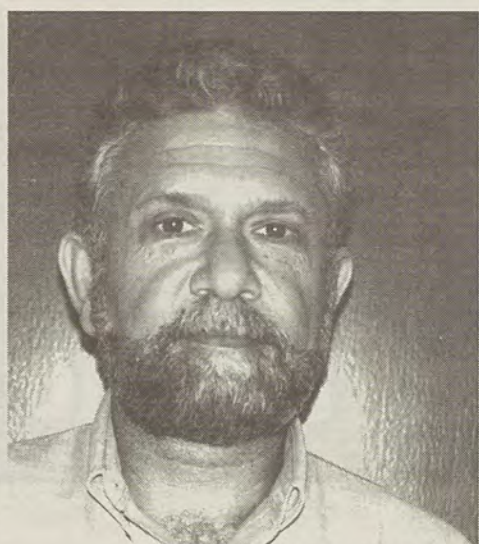
"The Bushfires Council, the Cattlemen's Association, CLC and NLC: get them all together around the table and see what we can do," Mr Peatling said.

"When you start saying publicly that people are deliberately lighting fires to force people off their land, you really need to step back, take a deep breath," NT Police Commander Gary Mannison said.

"I can say, from all the evidence before us, that this is not the case."

Mr Mannison pointed out that fires do start this time of year.

"Everything from pieces of glass to people throwing cigarette butts out of



CLC director David Ross.

this year is a little different and lives are at stake, as well as country.

"We are telling people to clear long grass from around their communities, make firebreaks if they can and wait until they get home before they cook.

"People are more interested in being part of the community than in malicious attacks, especially in the bush.

"Any suggestion that they would engage in a campaign to 'burn out' pastoralists is a twisted view of reality," he said.

"When you start saying publicly that people are deliberately lighting fires to force people off their land, you really need to step back, take a deep breath. I can say, from all the evidence before us, that this is not the case."

NT POLICE COMMANDER GARY MADDISON

windows, and fires just start."

He also refuted claims that homesteads had been burnt, pointing out that there was currently a climate of hearsay, vague reports and "a lot of emotive language."

Central Land Council director David Ross also stated that the claim that Aboriginal people lit fires to claim native title was "absolutely ridiculous."

He said pastoralists should consider the two good rainy seasons that had left stations with heavy fuel loads.

"Aboriginal people have been burning the country for many thousands of years.

"This year happens to be a particularly dangerous year and when Aboriginal people are made aware of this danger I am quite confident that they will do everything they can to help.

"The Central Land Council and the Bushfires Council are running a media campaign to let people out bush know that

Northern Land Council Chief Executive Officer Mr Norman Fry agreed this had been a difficult year for fire management, and Aboriginal land management groups and traditional owners generally have been trying hard to stay on top of it.

"We've seen Aboriginal groups using aerial control burning effectively for the first time and we've seen other groups putting in hundreds of kilometres of burned breaks," he said.

"But fire management is difficult without management resources and many Aboriginal properties are without resources to strictly control fire."

He also criticised the claims of "terrorist" activity.

"The only way fire can be managed is for people to talk to their neighbours, not talk about them in this way," he said.

"It's a problem for everybody and we need to get together on it." ●

Worst season for fires for 25 years



"These fires come ripping in. And they will be horrific. When you can't see anything for smoke and ash and a red glow, it's terrifying. The noise is awful. If a fire comes, stay in your community, stay in your house, stay in your car."

Neil Phillips, Senior Fire Control Officer with the Bushfires Council in the NT was speaking about the high level of danger from fires in Central Australia this year.

"This is the worst year for 25 years. We had a bad time in the mid-seventies and we're in for it again whether we like it or not.

"Lots of rain, different land use patterns

"I think this year Aboriginal people might have to listen to the Bushfires Council because it's different."

KUNMANARA BREADEN

and windy conditions have made very hot fires that take everything out," he said.

CLC Chairman Kunmanara Breaden said recent fires at his home at Wanmarra were very bad.

"I think this year Aboriginal people might have to listen to the Bushfires Council because it's different.

"We've used fire forever but it seems very dangerous right now so we need to really think before we light fires out bush.

"These fires aren't freshening up the country, they are knocking everything out."

Mr Phillips said that next year there

would be a co-ordinated approach with everybody – Aboriginal people, pastoralists and other people out bush to burn off properly.

"But this year we have to just take a lot of care and hope we don't have a disaster.

"I didn't think any more of this country could go up but even areas which were burnt recently have gone up again.

"Little grass fires can travel very, very quickly and they link up to areas with long grass and run away.

Bad fires at Kurundi and Elkedra devastated country, destroying native animals and plants, cattle, sheds and fences. Two people have been badly burnt in the last month.

"These fires travelled about 75 kilometres in 24 hours. They can travel faster than you can run – at about 15 kilometres an hour in some cases.

"I'd doubt that anyone could run that fast for an hour. One fire melted a galvanised shed on the Anurrete Land Trust it was so hot.

"The same fire jumped the Sandover Highway which is a very wide road."

Mr Phillips urged communities to clear long grass away, put in firebreaks and take care where they light fires. ●

The Yeperenye Festival



an event like no other....



“ I thank everyone from the bottom of my heart. People from around the world were watching and I was more than proud. The spirit is still dancing.”

Yeperenye Festival compere and former CLC Chairman Max Stuart was speaking about the two-day festival showcasing Indigenous culture, held in Alice Springs in September.

It became a Centenary of Federation event like no other.

Everyone, it seems got their five minutes of fame, especially bush communities who danced to open the festival on the Saturday and followed up with longer dances for Sunday afternoon. Most of them waited for hours in bitter cold to perform.



Rarely-seen Arrernte dances opened the festival on Saturday afternoon to a colourful commentary by Mr Stuart, who conducted the traditional dancing elements of the Festival all weekend.

Mr Stuart, who was the singer for the dancers, said he hadn't seen Arrernte dancing like that since he was about 18.

“Even though I spent 20 years in South Australia. I never forgot it. And we had more young fellas wanting to dance than we needed. It was really good,” he said.

Stunning green and blue lighting lit a massive stage as 2000 school children re-enacted the caterpillar dreaming of Alice Springs for the Yeperenye Spectacle early on Saturday evening.

Slim Dusty, Yothu Yindi, Troy Cassar-Daly, Paul Kelly, Archie and Ruby, Warren Williams, Kev Carmody, NoKTuRNL were just some of the stars at Saturday night's Road Ahead Concert.

The thousands of people gathered for the mega-concert welcomed members of



the Stolen Generation home after a moving ceremony conducted by Santa Teresa women, Cathy Abbott and Agnes Palmer.



Top: The stage erupts in a fabulous light show during the Yeperenye Spectacle

Left: Slim Dusty - more popular than ever...

**Above right: Arrernte men dance with Max Stuart singing
Right : Arrernte women helped open the show.**



Double spread pics... turn to pages 16-17 and 26

Will ALP keep its election promise to Arrernte people?



Western MacDonnells native title holders discuss the future of the Park at a meeting at Ellery Creek.



Western Arrernte native title holders of the Western MacDonnells National Park, west of Alice Springs, are waiting to see if the new Labor Government in the Northern Territory holds to its pre-election promise to not allow mining to go ahead there.

A native title claim was lodged in July over the park, which is one of Central Australia's most important tourist destinations, in a bid to prevent the CLP Government allowing exploration and mining.

In the lead up to the Northern Territory election, Stuart ALP MLA Peter Toyne assured voters that, should it win office, the ALP would not allow mining.

The native title holders are opposed to exploration and mining in the spectacular Park because they are worried about the detrimental effects on sacred sites, tourism and the conservation value of the environment.

The applications cover all of the Western MacDonnells National Park but exclude Ellery Creek, Simpsons Gap, Ormiston Gorge, Mt Sonder and Mt Zeil.

Central Land Council director David Ross said the native title holders had other agreements with mining companies elsewhere but were firmly

opposed to this type of activity in the National Park.

"The Western MacDonnells are rich in sacred sites, home to a number of endangered flora and fauna and – as a very popular tourist spot – extremely important to the economy of Central Australia," he said.

"This is a place which is special to the Aboriginal traditional owners and to the many thousands of people throughout the world who have enjoyed its magnificent landscape.

"Exploration or mining in this national park would be a terrible blight on the Territory's image as one of the few remaining unspoilt holiday destinations," Mr Ross said.

The native title holders are from seven estates throughout the Western MacDonnells.

The area containing the West MacDonnell Ranges (430 000 hectares) has been nominated for the Register of the National Estate and is currently under evaluation. ●



Pipeline meeting at King Valley, south of Katherine.

Traditional owners of Arnhemland consider major project



Aboriginal landowners from Mataranka up to the Gove Peninsula are discussing a proposal to put a 640 km underground gas pipeline through Arnhemland.

The plan is for the pipeline to reach the Nabalco mine at Gove, so it can change from using oil to gas to generate electricity for the mine and the towns of Nhulunbuy and Yirrkala.

This proposed project would be the biggest ever conducted in Arnhemland since the area came under Aboriginal control following the Land Rights Act in the 1970s. The proposed route would take the pipeline through different land estates owned by more than 30 different clan groups.

The meetings and discussions for the pipeline is an example of major developments that Aboriginal landowners in the Top End are increasingly being asked by governments and private businesses to consider.

Information meetings were held in July in Yirrkala, Gapuwiyak, Barrapunta, Bulman, Beswick, Manyallaluk, Barunga, Mataranka and Katherine to let people on their country know as much as possible about the pipeline: where it would go, how the construction would affect the environment and what the land would look like after the work is done.

At the information meetings along the pipeline route, the questions most asked were about protection of sacred sites, safety issues, and potential opportunities.

Traversing Arnhemland, the proposed

pipeline route would pass through some of the most sensitive Aboriginal land in Australia. The scale and location of the project presents a range of issues and problems never before confronted by traditional owners.

Under the Land Rights Act, Aboriginal people have a strong say about what can and cannot be done on their country, and the Northern Land Council is making sure that landowners know as much as possible about the proposal before they make up their minds whether or not they want to allow the pipeline to go ahead.

Anthropologists have been working in the region and discussions with landowners are continuing.

The Mataranka to Nhulunbuy pipeline, if it goes ahead, would be a branch from a larger underground gas pipeline being proposed by Epic Energy. This is planned to take gas from Darwin to Moomba in South Australia, where it would connect to existing pipelines feeding Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney.

The Darwin to Moomba pipeline would be longer than the railway corridor stretching from Alice Springs to Darwin. This proposal is being looked at under environmental impact legislation, and the NLC has had some preliminary talks with Epic Energy on behalf of potential native title holders. ●

Funding boost for NT businesses

Four Indigenous businesses in the Northern Territory will benefit from a \$1.3 million boost in Commonwealth funding for Indigenous small business initiatives.

The Yothu Yindi Foundation will receive \$22,000 to develop a business

plan to expand its currently successful cultural activities and create employment opportunities consistent with Indigenous people's cultural obligations.

The Katherine Community Association will be given \$109,243 to further develop its farm operation which has a strong

horticultural focus including citrus and other fruit, vegetables, mangoes and a nursery.

In Central Australia, Desert will gain \$66,000 to assist with a project aimed at using the Internet for art product sales and the marketing of Aboriginal art.

The Julalikari Council Aboriginal Corporation will use their \$72,100 to pilot, analyse and refocus the proposed business activities of the Nyinkka Nyunyu Centre, which is under construction in Tennant Creek. ●

TRAVELLING THE SIMPSON DESERT



Collecting bush tucker and hunting for porcupines were among the highlights of a recent bush trip out into the Simpson Desert for more than 40 eastern Arrernte people.

The group, representing a number of estate groups from the north and south west areas of the Simpson Desert, gathered on Atnetye Aboriginal Land Trust, 650 kilometres east of Alice Springs to visit country and document sites and stories.

The traditional owners revisited many soakages and quarries once visited by them and their ancestors who travelled through the land to attend ceremonies and trade at Lake Caroline.

Day trips over sand hills along rough spinifex country and a helicopter flight were all part of a two week journey documenting stories and sites for the Simpson Desert area.

Traditional owners were given the opportunity to visit many sites of importance and travel to places rarely visited today due to remoteness and inaccessibility of the country.

Many family members spoke about their ancestors travelling through the Simpson Desert area using soakages along the way, usually to attend and participate in ceremonies or trade spears, axes, flint and pituri with other groups.

During the trips into the Simpson desert, many stone tools were discovered left by ancestors over many thousand of years.

Traditional owner, Juntu Bookie talked about the old days when they travelled the land and used a particular plant to make nets for trapping emus.

“Irrulpe (purple flowering plant), they make rope out of it - like the rope whitefellas make,” he said. “You soak it and roll it on your arm or leg and you know when you’re travelling you can’t catch it (emu), you tie around the tree and trap it.”

“Ancestors travelled through the Simpson Desert area using soakages along the way, usually to attend and participate in ceremonies or trade spears, axes, flint and pituri with other groups.”

Juntu’s son, Lindsay Bookie, also spoke about how they once carried water to travel through the Simpson Desert.

“They use a round coolamon, cut em put ‘em water and carry on their heads. They use arrantye (kangaroo skin), they cut his neck, rip the skin right back down and put water in it.

“They carry all sizes, one can carry about 10 or 15 gallons, and they carry it and they can go for miles with it,” Lindsay said.

The research and bush trips continue for the Simpson Desert as anthropologists work closely with traditional owners to document sites, stories and traditional owners’ connection with the area. ●

OCTOBER 2001 • Land Rights News



Mabel Smith holding some bush tucker.



Yellow Shirt (Allan Drover) and Brownie Doolan at a site.



Johnny Bookie, Mr Rankine, Lindsay Bookie and Juntu Bookie resting at camp.



Juntu Bookie with *Irrulpe* used to make rope.



Patrick Williams, Lindsay Cavanagh and Riley Williams ready to get in the helicopter.

Garma – gateway to knowledge



NLC Chairman Galarrwuy Yunupingu with NT Chief Minister Clare Martin.

The rhythmic crack of bilma (clapsticks) and the droning call of the yidaki (didgeridoo) heralded the opening of the 3rd annual Garma Festival at Gulkula by Yothu Yindi Foundation chairman Galarrwuy Yunupingu.

"This is a time to sit and look and see what is happening next," he said. "The exciting thing is that we are all meeting here, people from many different countries are gathered here to learn."

"Garma is the gateway to knowledge. All of us come here with that great expectation."

A two-day law forum "A Glimpse into Ngaarra" was the focus of this year's event, held in August. Ngaarra is a Yolngu word for a place where law is negotiated.

The Territory's new Chief Minister Clare Martin, accompanied by the four newly-elected Indigenous MLAs, addressed the opening of the forum for key Indigenous and non-Indigenous law men and women from across Australia. The forum included speakers from Canada and numerous people from various legal fields in Australia.

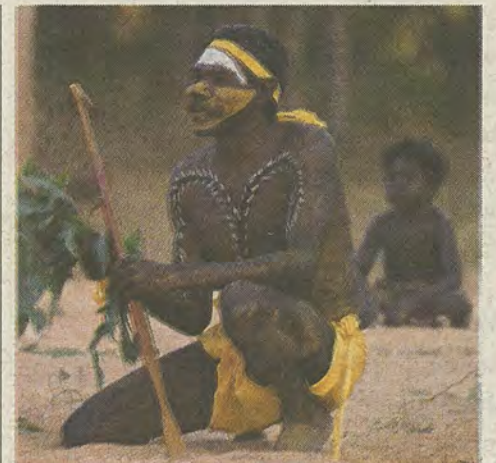
Topics ranged from sentencing and Aboriginal imprisonment rates, the impact of the recently-passed Public Order and Anti-Social Behaviour Act on Aboriginal people in the NT, victim-offending conferencing and community housing issues.

One outcome was support for a working party to the Shadow Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Bob McMullan, to look at ways Australian and Indigenous law could work together, responding to different circumstances and regions of Australia.

About 40 hollow logs, created and painted by local elders, had their first public display when they were placed



Gawarrin Gumana.



Mandawuy Yunupingu with the Yothu Yindi band.



among the stringybark trees on a high ridge overlooking Cape Arnhem for festival guests to visit, while the imposing totemic figure of the creator hero Ganbulabula watched over the area where, each day, Yolngu dancers performed ancient dances, with ceremonial elders interpreting their meanings to the gatherings.

Throughout the week, local bands enjoyed music workshops at the Yirrnga studio, students from around the world attended the yidaki masterclass sessions with Djal Gurruwiwi, and other activities included workshops on spearmaking and hunting for men and on bush tucker, bush medicine, traditional weaving and painting for women.

The final night's concert gave local bands an opportunity to perform on stage and Yothu Yindi closed the festival on a high note.

Town Campers on \$3000 a year

The average annual income of a town camper in Alice Springs is \$3,000. At a recent forum in Alice Springs, Tangentyere Executive Director, William Tilmouth highlighted this startling figure which was uncovered by the financial counsellor at Tangentyere Council while assisting with taxation returns.

Mr Tilmouth made the comment during his address to the Australian and Northern Territory Council of Social Services on social issues affecting Indigenous people in Central Australia.

He challenged the view that poverty among Aboriginal people was due to welfare dependency, arguing that a majority of Aboriginal people are unable to access many of the services and benefits available because of remoteness, limited services, lack of understanding and language barriers.

He said Aboriginal people continue to live in appalling conditions and receive inadequate benefits because of the constraining and culturally inappropriate policies of governments and their bureaucracies.

"Many Aboriginal people fail to access any income at all or experience difficulties in maintaining income support payments because of limited Centrelink services on remote communities," Mr Tilmouth said.

if we fail." "Because of low literacy and numeracy levels, another cause is the fact that services are delivered in English only, with no provision for an interpreter."

Mr Tilmouth pointed out that Centrelink needed to address the enormous deficiencies in their service delivery to remote communities.

"At present Centrelink only takes responsibility for welfare cheques, to the point that they are mailed out the door.

"Under a mutual obligation, Centrelink would need to change this policy and take responsibility for ensuring welfare payments reach actual recipients," Mr Tilmouth said.

"It is imperative that Governments and their agencies recognise the importance of giving responsibility back to Aboriginal people," he said.

"It is not good enough to continue to pay lip service to self-determination. This creates 'nothingness' and it is our future generations that will have to pay the price



Members of the Ingerreke Outstation Resource service at a press conference in Alice Springs.

Ingerreke pushes for change to living conditions

Arernte people living on outstations within a 200 kilometre radius of Alice Springs are calling for urgent action to address their housing, education, health and employment needs.

Members of the Ingerreke Resource Service say they have been living without the basic services the rest of the community take for granted for more than 17 years. Ingerreke Resource Service represents more than 2000 Arernte people.

"We still live in tin sheds with sub-standard water supplies and no adequate power supply. Our little kids have to get up really early and travel a long way to school. There is no delivery of health services - we need more than health workers with a couple of bandaids and a Panadol.

"Nobody is monitoring the health of our

people with serious illnesses," spokesperson Margie Lynch said.

"We've been ignored by the Northern Territory Government and other Aboriginal organisations for years and we've had enough," she said.

"The only employment opportunity is CDEP and this is not good enough. Some of our members have been on CDEP for about 10 years.

"Housing and health conditions are appalling and we are calling for an urgent and unified approach by the Northern Territory Government and Aboriginal organisations to help us address our concerns," Ms Lynch said.

Indigenous Rangers to work with quarantine body

In a historic first, the Northern Land Council (NLC) and the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) have announced an agreement to work together to provide quarantine surveillance on Aboriginal lands in the Territory - the first such partnership to be officially recognised by Indigenous Australians.

A resolution of the recent Indigenous Rangers Conference at Gulkula recognises the growing co-operation between the NLC's Caring for Country Unit and AQIS's Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy (NAQS).

The resolution welcomes approaches by AQIS to recognise and support the potential role of Indigenous resource managers in quarantine surveillance.

NAQS Darwin co-ordinator, veterinarian Andrew Moss, has been working with the NLC for the past 12 months to involve Indigenous ranger groups in quarantine surveillance.

"We've been working closely with

the Caring for Country Unit to link in with Indigenous resource groups and provide them with practical training," Andrew said.

"The Territory coastline is a highly vulnerable area for exotic pests, weeds and diseases, and Aboriginal resource managers have been quick to recognise this threat and keen to use scientific measures alongside traditional practices to protect their land," Andrew said.

NAQS has provided ranger groups with training in blood collection and post-mortem techniques over the past 12 months and hopes to extend the training to include plant diseases, weeds and exotic insects.



Ray Petherick, Aboriginal Liaison Officer for the Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy (right) with Murray Island quarantine officer James Bon.

"Ranger groups will now begin to collect samples on behalf of AQIS, and our next training session in October will introduce a training manual written by

NAQS Darwin veterinarian Emma Watkins," Andrew said.

(See Ranger conference story page 13)

It's a dog's life

Jenny Wells folds down the back flap of her Toyota truck and lays out the plastic mat. She makes sure the eskies full of medicine and the pressure cooker with the sterilised equipment are in place – her mobile veterinary surgery is now open for business.



Jenny Wells (left) and Jenny Youl at work in the community.

While the back-of-a-truck setting may be unorthodox, the techniques and treatments are the same as in a sparkling, urban vet hospital.

During this particular visit to Maningrida, in central Arnhem Land, Jenny and workmate vet Jenny Youl, parked their truck at more than 100 homes, and treated just about every dog in the community, generally for scabies and heartworm. A number of dogs were also desexed and a handful of terminally sick animals were put down.

Scabies, which spreads as easily as nits on children, along with heartworm, transmitted through the mosquito, are major parasites affecting community dogs and dealing with both is a constant battle.

An allergic reaction to the scabies parasite makes dogs scratch - and eventually rub their hair off, creating the look that is termed 'leatherback.'

Chris Fry's house was one of Jenny's first stops.

"We like Jenny coming here," Chris said. "Not like when I was a boy. In those days, I'd take those dogs and run off into the bush and sit down for a while. When we got warning that the whitefellas were on their way, we ran."

"They used to shoot them dogs down. Don't know why. Not just the 'cheeky' ones. Many good hunting dogs got killed too."

Pest control was the aim of those early 'dog programs' in Aboriginal

communities, common throughout the Northern Territory and elsewhere in Australia. Often it was 'shoot all camp dogs on sight'. No explanations. No consultations.

There was no recognition of the importance of camp dogs as protectors, hunters and companions. Even less acknowledgment of the cultural and

control dog numbers, to avoid the potential for dog population explosions, and Jenny sees a strong connection between dogs becoming more healthy - and owners becoming satisfied with fewer dogs in the family.

Chris Fry agrees. "I'd like to see more people get their dogs de-sexed," he said. "Nobody was doing that before and dogs

“About 25 per cent of our practice is working in remote communities,” Steve said. “The health of the dogs is certainly improving, there is a growing acceptance of the program and people are happier.”

STEVE CUTTER

spiritual significance for those groups who have important Dog Dreaming connections.

"A lot of people love their dogs," Chris said. "Aboriginal people like dogs when they go out bush. They help them find bush tucker, they track people."

"Some people have Dog dreaming. Dogs have feelings too. These dogs have a special ceremony and there is a song for dogs."

Facing community distrust from those former aggressive programs, vet Jenny Wells has regularly driven to Maningrida over the past four years, offering a dog program based on communication and respect for community views.

The dog programs combine treatments to improve dog health with strategies to

were breeding like flies. It's better to have less dogs around."

An emerging problem is the introduction into the community of large dogs such as pit bull terriers. The combination is a dangerous one - with bigger and stronger dogs mating with out-of-control dogs with poor personalities.

Quick action - not reaction - is needed to deal with dog attacks, Jenny said.

"I see the answer as being able to pinpoint the trouble makers. Usually you will find that they can be identified - and often the owner realises the dog has to be desexed - or perhaps put down. Usually, if you get to the ring leader, the rest of the pack quiets down."

The dog program was started five years

ago by vet Steve Cutter, Jenny's partner in their veterinary practice at Palmerston.

"About 25 per cent of our practice is working in remote communities," Steve said. "The health of the dogs is certainly improving, there is a growing acceptance of the program and people are happier."

Now, Steve sees the need for a coordinated approach to spread the program further afield.

Steve and Jenny are among a handful of vets, community members and environmental health workers who have formed a group called the Big Lick. Their conference in Darwin last year attracted more than 100 delegates from around Australia to discuss how to progress dog programs, and the group has been invited to participate in a national conference next year in Alice Springs on urban animal management.

As well as Steve and Jenny's private practice, the army has a dog program attached to its community work in remote areas and another Aboriginal-run program in WA has spread to more than 100 Kimberley and Pilbara communities.

"We need a central focus, so communities, vets and other interested people can work together," Steve said.

"With a central focus, we can hold talks and attend conferences to let people know about the program, and it would be an access point for vets who are interested in working in this field, or who want to do some community work."

Go ahead for Telstra cable

Traditional owners of Mount Saunders at Gove, Telstra and Nabalco have reached agreement to construct an underground cable system to facilities on Mount Saunders.

Work will begin as soon as the Full Council of the NLC has endorsed the agreement in October.

The new cable will avoid the recent problem with mobile phone coverage, when the above-ground cable was damaged by fire.

The underground system will also safeguard the continuing operation, not only of the Telstra service, but also emergency services and communication services for ABC radio and local taxis.

The agreement follows 18 months of negotiations between the three parties, after Telstra and Nabalco rejected a compromise offer put forward then by the traditional owners.

Traditional owners have been concerned about the temporary nature of the cable system, because of the cultural importance of the Mount Saunders site, but in spite of five meetings over that period of time, the parties were unable to reach a mutually-agreeable arrangement.

Following the fire, traditional owners felt it was important to speed up the normal processes and hold a meeting, although they were busy at a very sorry time (a man had passed away at Yirkala the day before).

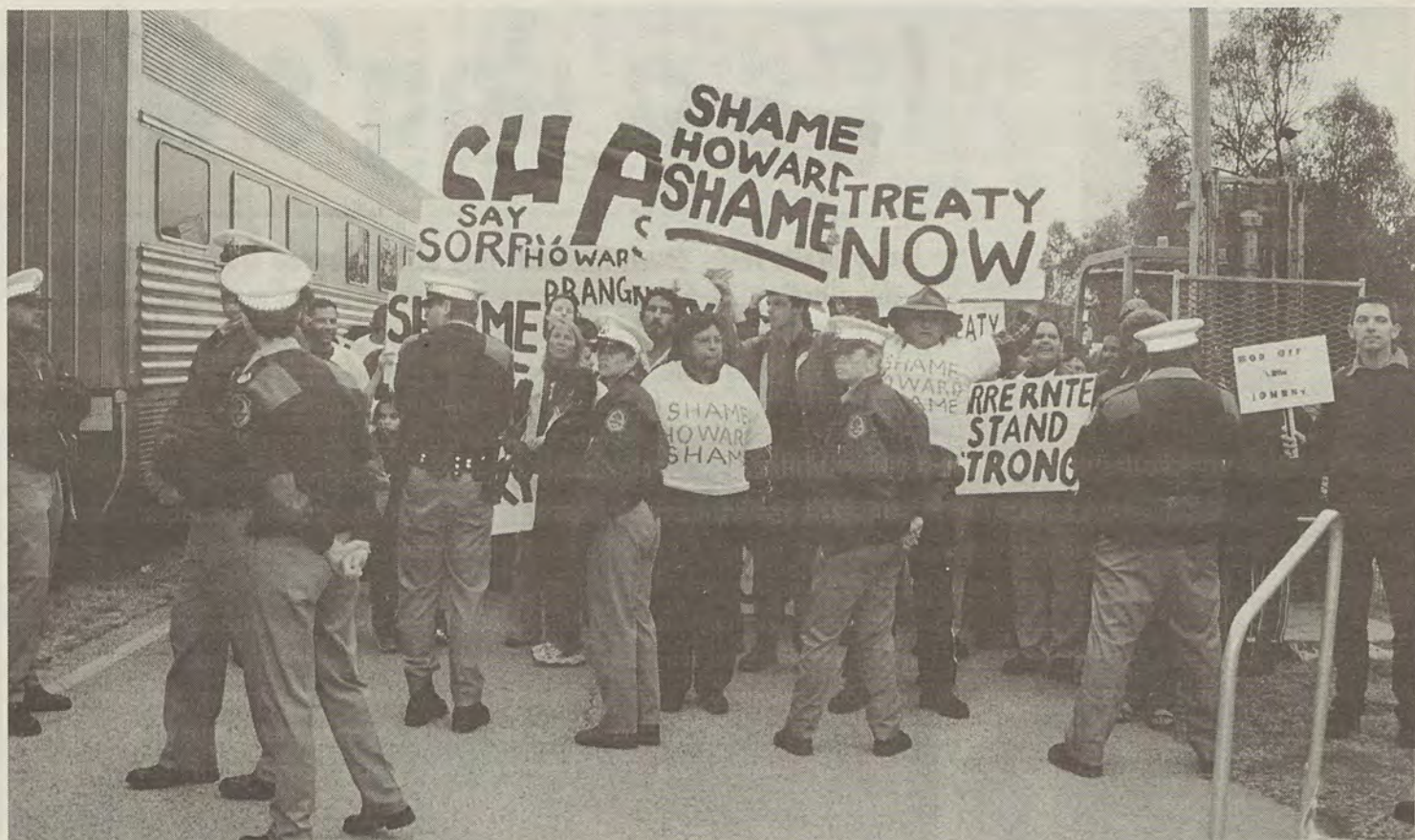
Mount Saunders is a particularly important site for local traditional owners and the new lease agreement with Telstra and Nabalco will ensure the project will be constructed sensitively.

It is always important that negotiations are dealt with in an atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation.

Traditional owners have always been keen to reach an agreement that formally recognises their legal ownership of the site and have been concerned about the above-ground cable for some time.

Nabalco and Telstra rejected a compromise offer made by the traditional owners 18 months ago.

Since then, they haven't been able to reach an agreement – until now. ●



The railway - Arrernte protesters greet the PM

Arrernte protesters waving placards and chanting "Shame Howard, Shame", 'welcomed' Prime Minister John Howard to Alice Springs in July when he arrived for the turning of the sod ceremony for the long-awaited railway corridor.

But the protesters were denied the chance to speak directly to him about their concerns, or to present him with a boomerang as a symbolic gesture to take back to Canberra demanding a treaty between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Although the Arrernte people support the Alice Springs to Darwin railway project, the protest group used the opening

ceremony to voice and demonstrate their concerns with the Howard government.

"How often do you get the Prime Minister of Australia coming to Alice Springs?" Arrernte spokeswoman Pat Dodds said, pointing out that many people were upset they did not get to voice their concerns directly to the Prime Minister.

"We wanted to raise concerns our

people have with his government and their policies especially concerning the Government not saying sorry to the stolen generation, continued funding cuts for Aboriginal programs and the little support if any support Howard's government have shown for Aboriginal issues."

She said many Arrernte people were dismayed at Howard's lack of support for the reconciliation process, his refusal to apologise to the stolen generation, the slashing of ATSIC and Aboriginal program fundings, and called for his support on a treaty. ●

These kungkas can cook

Two more enterprising Aboriginal people are joining the growing ranks of Indigenous businesses in the Northern Territory.

Gina Smith and Rayleen Brown are two Alice Springs based women who can cook – and they've set up their own catering business, Smith and Brown Outback Catering.

Thousands of people can attest to their skills in the kitchen after Gina and Raelene catered for more than 2000 people at the recent Yeperenye Festival.

And thousands more out bush over the years have been fed by Gina during her time working with the Central Land Council in the field kitchen.

These two are used to roughing it and

cooking for large numbers.

"We can set up a mobile camp anywhere. We'll meet anyone's dietary needs – vegetarians and diabetics included.

"We promote healthy eating and low fat food that tastes good," Rayleen said.

Smith and Brown intend to employ local people from communities to help them on their jobs out bush.

Bush favorites, puftaloonies and johnny cakes, which Gina and Rayleen say do not fall into the category of healthy eating, are on the menu by request. ●



Kungka cooks Gina Smith and Raelene Brown. ●

Malak Malak support tourism industry

In their continuing efforts to encourage and support sustainable tourism in the region, the Malak Malak traditional land owners are hoping to develop closer working relationships with the owners of private properties adjacent to Daly River.

Over the past five years, Malak Malak have developed a close working relationship with the Fisheries Division and the Transport and Works Department over public boat ramps in the area. Agreements cover access and camping arrangements and help to protect damage to the environment and also protect the fishing grounds.

Malak Malak are hoping that similar agreements with the proprietors along the

banks of the Daly River over the private boat ramps will achieve similar success.

The Malak Malak are concerned that the banks adjacent to these properties have been partly cleared to construct these ramps and boat mooring fixtures to service tourists.

They also recognise that the increasing number of fishing tournaments and visitation has disturbed other areas on the banks.

With one exception, no permission has

ever been sought from or given by the Aboriginal owners for the construction of the boat ramps.

The Malak Malak consider that formal arrangements will help control the situation and consider it appropriate to charge businesses who are using Aboriginal land to make money from the general public and visitors. They have no desire to charge locals or visitors to access the river.

In the meantime, Malak Malak have instituted their own formal land management program and they are core members of the local Wangamaty (Lower Daly) Landcare Group.

The program largely revolves around

weed management, particularly of the rampant floodplain weed *Mimosa pigra*.

But Malak Malak also want to revegetate and rehabilitate problem areas along the river bank and have requested that a survey be conducted by the NLC in conjunction with traditional owners and Landcare.

The Malak Malak have continuing concerns about speed limits on the river, and unmanaged access which they believe causes slumping and erosion of the banks and loss of vegetation.

They are also worried about the potential over-usage of irrigation water, and increasing weed invasions.

Dhimurru wins NT Landcare Award

Dhimurru Land Management, based at Nhulunbuy, has won further accolades for its environmental and visitor management activities.

The organisation won the Alcoa Community Group Award at the NT Landcare Awards in Alice Springs for its comprehensive approach to conservation planning and management on private land. This was the most strongly contested category of the Awards.

Dhimurru, which received a cheque for \$1,000, will now be a finalist in the National Landcare Awards, to be held in Canberra in 2002.

Nabalco Pty Limited is the major sponsor of the NT Landcare Awards and

this was the first time that Dhimurru had nominated.

The local area featured prominently in the Awards, with Yirrkala Landcare winning the Education category and Banduk Marika winning the Individual Landcarer category.

Dhimurru's Senior Ranger, Nanikiya Munungurritj, accepting the Award from Mr Bruce Lloyd, Chairman of the Australian Landcare Council.



Photo courtesy Greening Australia.

Ranger network in the Top End



Nipper Gumurdul, Randell Nalorman, Adrian Gunarradj, Josiah Namundja, Eddie Phillips, Raymond Goymala, Kevin Buliwana, Luke Nawirridj, Trevor Nagurrurrba, Vincent Managu.

The Adjumarllarl Community Rangers, a land management team based at Gunbalanya, is driven by the need to improve Bininj capacity to look after country and build on skills necessary for self-management.

The team of 10 has built on the program started in 1992 to control *Mimosa pigra* infestation on the Oenpelli flood plain and, for the past year, has been focussing on other land management problems facing the Arnhem region.

These include the need to use and manage fire to care for country, feral animal control, erosion control, sacred site protection and land based enterprise development.

Team member Kevin Buliwana explained: "Our job involves getting help and ideas from old people and traditional owners and combining science to look after and care for country. We are concerned about the country in the West

Arnhem Region, which includes our traditional homelands."

Work includes:

- The control of all weeds which can affect hunting areas, habitat and limit future land use.
- Activities to help prepare for the rehabilitation of the Old Nabarlek Mine Site
- Early dry season patch burning to prevent large late dry season fires.

The Adjumarllarl Community Rangers are part of a network of five ranger groups set up in the Top End over the last year to assist in the establishment of a formal land management structure on Aboriginal land.



The Yeperenye Festival



This page from top left: Stolen Generations step into the spotlight for the healing ceremony; One man from a large group of Pitjantjatjara people from Mutitjulu who danced; Gumantj girl; crowd at the Road Ahead Concert; April Spencer Napaljarri waiting to dance; One dancer whose name we didn't catch; dancers file in for the opening ceremony.

Middle: Eastern Arrernte and Alywarre men singing

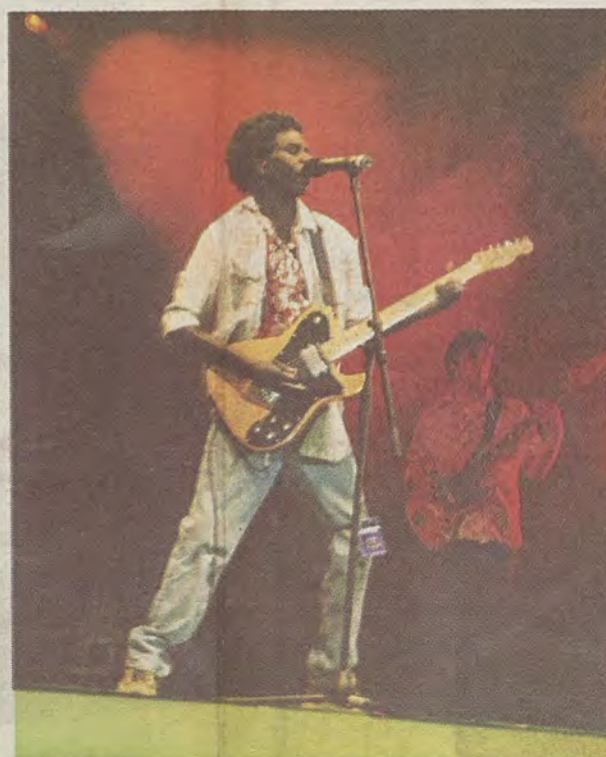
Facing page: Men from Yuendumu; a mixed group of dancers from as far away as Perth and Arnhem Land.

Next two: Crowds at the Road Ahead Concert.

Far right: Noongah dancers from Perth; CLC employee Mischa Cartwright with photographer Mervyn Bishop; Lajamanu Teenage Band lead singer.



Above: Warwick Thornton directs cameras for the big screen with sister Erica Glynn.





Letterstick Band go for it live at the CAAMA Studios in Alice Springs during the Yeperenye Festival. The Band had just arrived by bus from Darwin but their gig showed no signs of exhaustion.

CAAMA Fringe Festival livens up Alice Springs

The week-long CAAMA fringe festival leading up to the Yeperenye Festival show-cased the diversity of Aboriginal talent in Australia.

Aboriginal musicians, performers, writers, film-makers and artists all contributed to the excitement around Alice Springs in the lead up to the Festival.

The fringe festival featured first-time live to air broadcasts from the CAAMA music studios to CAAMA radio and to indigenous and community radio stations around Australia.

Lajamanu Teenage Band, Letterstick Band, Auriel Andrews, Warren H Williams and Frankie Yamma played to packed and very lively studio audiences.

The festival satisfied all tastes with film premieres of Rachel Perkins' film 'One Night The Moon' and the premiere of the new series 'Bush Mechanics', along with book launches, film, television and radio workshops, theatrical performance 'Ochre and Dust' and bands playing at venues throughout the week.

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THE TWIN HILL ABORIGINAL CORPORATION IS DOING BUSINESS BETTER THROUGH A COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT PACKAGE.

The Twin Hill Aboriginal Corporation of Batchelor, Northern Territory, is going well and providing employment and training for the local Aboriginal community. The corporation thought, however, it could improve its cattle agistment business through training.

The Commonwealth Government's **Agriculture - Advancing Australia (AAA)** package, through the **AAA FarmBis Program**, will cover most of the corporation's costs for career planning workshops as well as training to develop management and financial planning skills.

AAA FarmBis courses, like the one Twin Hill Aboriginal Corporation will do, make it easier for Aboriginal people to get better training to improve their primary industry businesses.

Sixty thousand producers in farming and fishing industries have already benefited from



education and training courses funded through **AAA FarmBis**. Commonwealth funding of \$120 million is being matched dollar for dollar by State and Northern Territory Governments.

AAA FarmBis is just one of the programs in the AAA package that can help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary producers with everything from training and innovation to business planning and risk management.

The AAA package is something all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people involved in farming, fishing and forestry should look into. To find out what's in the package for you, call **1800 686 175** or visit

www.affa.gov.au/aaa

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AUTHORISED BY THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT, CAPITAL HILL, CANBERRA.

You can achieve, youngsters told



Nadine Earnshaw.



Olga Havnen receives her award from Russell Hannigan, Paspaley Pearls.

'Be proud to achieve' is the message to young Indigenous people from two recipients of this year's Top End NAIDOC Awards.

Nadine Earnshaw, an administration officer with the Northern Land Council, who won the Indigenous Trainee of the Year Award, urged young people: "Don't stay in our conscious conditioning of being nowhere and getting nowhere. It is about achieving.

"Keep learning. You can do it and you can learn and get ahead."

Nadine previously was nominated in three categories in the NT Vocational Training Awards while studying for Business certificates in cutting and apparel at the NT University.

As a young mother of two, she had decided to return to study as a mature-age student, to build up confidence to get back into the workforce. She then undertook a traineeship with Troppi Kids, and is now being trained in mapping at the NLC.

While being nominated for awards was a recognition for hard work, Nadine finds the learning process itself a reward.

"I do enjoy learning," she said, "and the end result in that achievement. It is worth all the struggles. You get rewarded at the end of it."

"I work to learn, and love to learn new things."

Nadine, who is now considering a course in Indigenous leadership training, said her late father always encouraged her to "get out and do it.

"He was quite inspirational really," Nadine said. "He always encouraged me, because I was an Indigenous female, to grab opportunities with both hands and take them on."

Olga Havnen, Manager of Indigenous programmes with Fred Hollows Foundation in Darwin, was chosen as the Top End NAIDOC Indigenous Person for 2001.

She takes young Indigenous achievers, such as sprinter Patrick Johnson and swimmer Susie O'Neill to Indigenous communities to talk to the local youngsters.

"As role models, they say to kids it is okay to strive as



Norforce troops march into Darwin.

Norforce welcomed into Darwin



Hundreds of men and women of the North West Mobile Force (Norforce) marched through the streets of the city in July in a colourful ceremony marking their Freedom of Entry to Darwin.

Following a symbolic challenge and welcome by the Larrakia traditional owners of Darwin, the soldiers marched to the Cenotaph for the official inspection and salute to the citizens of Darwin.

Norforce, comprising 50 per cent Indigenous soldiers, was formed in 1981 and has a similar role to the guerilla-type 'Nackeroo' unit which patrolled the northern coastline of Australia during World War 2.

Many Indigenous people also served as Nackeroos, a highly specialised unit involved in establishing observation posts in remote areas and maintaining constant surveillance to report on enemy activities. The patrols, which often went into areas scarcely seen before by non-Indigenous people, also relied heavily on remote communities for assistance.

Today, Norforce operations support the national surveillance plan and Norforce soldiers, with the active support of their communities, conduct foot, vehicle and small boat patrols over an area covering about 1.8 million square kilometres across the top of Australia.

Norforce was granted the freedom of entry to the city of Darwin in 1982, exercising the right again in 1992.

an individual to achieve things," Olga said. "It doesn't mean loss of culture or identity or respect for family or the collective."

The 'tall poppy' syndrome of knocking achievers doesn't happen with sportspeople – and this attitude must be translated into other areas, she said.

"I like to see young people win awards. It's recognition."

Olga, originally from Tennant Creek, has a long association with work involving human rights. She has previously worked for Foreign Affairs in Canberra, for the National Indigenous Working Group (NIWG) during the period of the Wik native title debate, and was a senior policy officer with the Central Land Council.



Roy Hammer from Borroloola (centre left) and William Watirri (centre right) from



Kenbi dancers with Piper Sgt. Parkinson.

The principal guest at this year's occasion was the Chief of Army and 2001 Australian of the Year, Lieutenant General P Cosgrove.

The winners of the Top End NAIDOC awards were recognised at the Pearls dinner dance held during NAIDOC Week.

The other winners were:

Eddie Cubillo (Indigenous Scholar of the Year); Cherry McLennan (Indigenous Volunteer of the Year); Michael McLean (Indigenous Sportsman of the Year); Lenore Dembski (Indigenous Artist of the Year); and Mia Christopherson (Indigenous Youth of the Year).

MALAKMALAK - THE BOOK THAT HAD TO BE WRITTEN

For Bidy Yingguny Lindsay, a MalakMalak woman from the Daly River region in the Top End of the Northern Territory, this was a book that had to be written.

She knew that the ancient and valuable traditional knowledge of MalakMalak names and uses of plants and animals that had been passed on to her by her parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts, must be recorded to pass on to future generations.

Her work began in 1995, recording information on bush foods and fibre crafts made from plants, with the assistance of Glenn Wightman from the NT Parks and Wildlife Commission and Patricia Marrfurra, who had already, with her elders, published a similar book on Ngen'gikurunggurr and Ngen'giwumirri plant knowledge.

In time, Bidy's sisters, Frances Miljat, Rita Pirak, Helen Kuwarda and Kitty Waliwararra joined her in the task, with contributions from their brother Albert Muyung.

With the many similarities shared with the Matngala people, it was decided that a joint book was the answer, and Matngala elders Edwin Pambany and Jack Marruridj also joined the group.

The result is a book that tells the MalakMalak and Matngala story of 223 plants and 210 animals around the Daly River: where they are found and their uses in the past and today for food, medicine, tools and cultural purposes.

It is an excellent reference book, with the scientific, common English and MalakMalak and Matngala names listed for each specimen along with detailed descriptions and illustrations, followed by lists and tables of statistics and categories.

And it also succeeds in telling the fascinating story of the MalakMalak and Matngala people: the tools they fashioned, the hunting methods they used and still use, how they coped with floods and illness and



their surviving connections with the land and the flora and fauna within it.

Open any page at random to find yet another morsel of information.

Page 27 – the tree called Kunerre (scientific name: *Canarium australianum*) has special spiritual healing powers for MalakMalak people. If an adult or child is having problems with their spiritual well being, this tree can play an important role in healing or remedying their spiritual health.

Page 36 – the various eucalypts have many uses. For swelling on knees and legs, burn the bark of the white gum, wash and clean it, and then place on the swelling. The red sap of the bloodwood gives special powers to didgeridoos.

Page 78 – In the creation period or dreamtime, the black kite stole fire sticks from the dingo, so that he could cook the cheeky yam. The black kite is still attracted to fires and occasionally he can be seen carrying burning sticks from an existing fire to start more fires further away.

For anyone interested in the Daly River region, or Indigenous knowledge of plants and animals, this book, that had to be written, has to be read.

MalakMalak and Matngala Plants and Animals is available through Merrepen Arts Centre, PMB 28, Winnellie, NT 0821. ●

IT'S OUR HOME—SANTA TERESA



The desert sounds of Ltyentye Apurte Band

the Ltyentye Apurte Band come directly from Arrernte country in Central Australia.

Their new debut album *'It's Our Home'* contains original songs in both English and Eastern Arrernte language.

This young Aboriginal band live, work and play at Ltyentye Apurte (Santa Teresa), 80 kilometres south east of Alice Springs.

Their music displays their very strong sense of place, writing about their homeland, the importance of family and self worth – strongly influenced by the mission days of old.

The band has gained a huge local following through live shows



resulting in this debut album being released.

Look out for the album at the CAAMA Shop in Gap Road, Alice Springs. ●



NARDIKA LEARNS TO MAKE A SPEAR

Chris Fry
Magabala Books

This gentle but compelling story tells the tale of a young boy learning from his father the complicated and exacting process of making a spear.

Both the story and illustrations are by Chris Fry, an Anbarra-Burrarra language speaker from Maningrida.

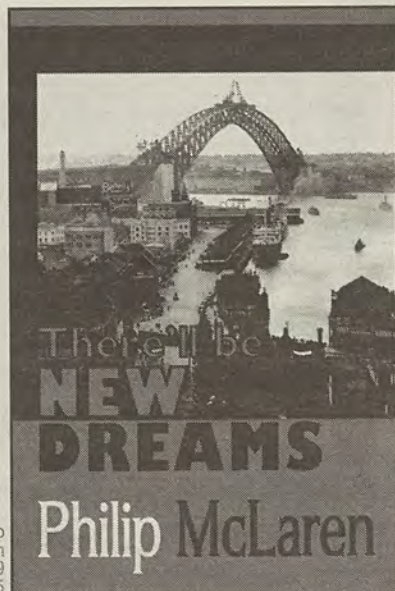
The spear making process is described accurately and in detail, but the overall feeling of the book is as much about a sense of belonging - to family, to country and to the age old knowledge and rituals handed down from generation to generation - as it is about making a spear.

The text, primarily in English, is interspersed with the Anbarra-Burrarra words for many of the materials, implements and fish species that appear in the story. This is a very effective technique for demonstrating the importance of language in the knowledge processes at work in Maningrida without being too heavy handed.

The illustrations are clear and uncomplicated. They resonate with the warmth and affection of this story for its subject matter - a young boy going through one of the learning processes of his life with his father.

Highly recommended. ●

...stories that will Warumpi a chord in your heart...



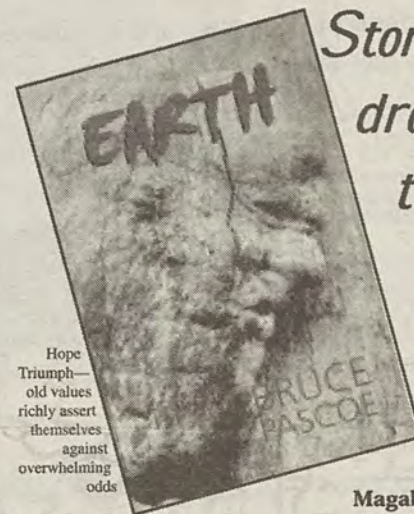
...characters so real you'll miss them long after you've turned the last page...

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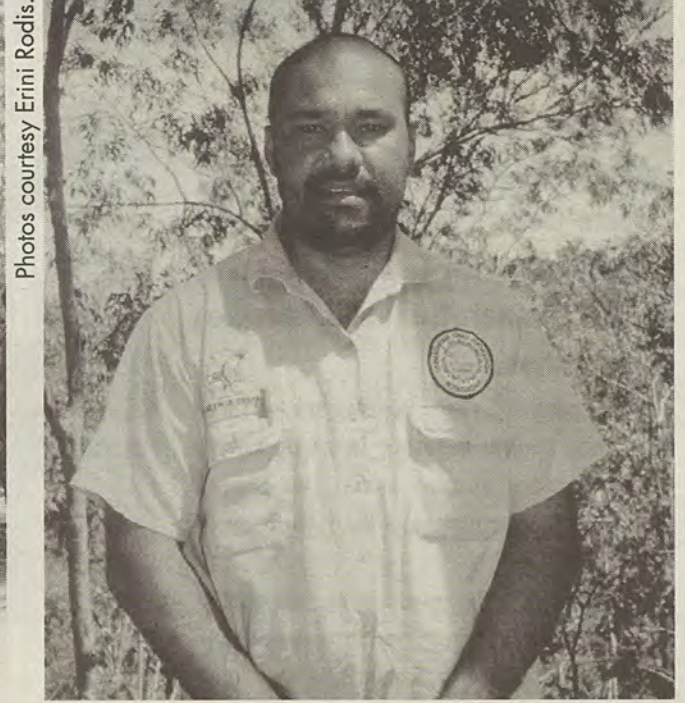
Caring for Country going international



Yolngu Dancers closed the conference at the Garma festival grounds at Gulkula.



Gulumbu Yunupingu passed this didgeridoo to Phillip Alderson to confirm that Kakadu landowners and indigenous rangers will be hosts for the fourth Indigenous Rangers Conference in 2002.



Photos courtesy Erini Rodis.

Joe Morrison, Top End Indigenous Land Management Facilitator.

Indigenous land and sea managers from North Australia, Torres Straits, Papua New Guinea and West Papua strengthened ancient links between their peoples at the third Indigenous Rangers Conference held at Gulkula on the Gove Peninsular in August.

More than 250 representatives of Indigenous groups from the three countries involved with Caring for Country shared experiences in dealing with emerging land and sea management issues that are threatening their traditional and commercial economies.

People came from as far as Broome and Warburton in the west, Uluru and Victoria in the south and Mer (Murray Island) in the Torres Straits, Wasur and Tonda National Parks in PNG and West Papua, as well as four Cape York communities.

Visitors from Mer recalled that their ancestors had probably travelled as far as Arnhem Land in ancient trading times. And until about 11,000 years ago there was no sea separating people in north-east Arnhem Land from countrymen in what is now southern New Guinea and West Papua.

Despite the changes in sea levels since then, there are still shared interests in land and sea management. For example magpie geese travel across the Arafura Sea and are important traditional foods for both Aboriginal people and our Melanesian neighbours around the mouth of the Fly River. People from the Fly area reported that in hunting geese with bows and arrows they sometimes capture birds with metal bands on their legs, tagged by Australian scientists to research more about the travels of geese.

So people from both sides of the Arafura Sea are committed to keeping healthy populations of geese for future generations in both countries.

Nanikiya Munungurritj, senior ranger with conference hosts Dhimurru Aboriginal Land Management Corporation, also pointed out that drift nets and other marine debris from Indonesia, as well as feral nets from the Australian Northern Prawn Fishery are killing off important traditional food sources.

"It is important for us as indigenous people to be able to go on harvesting our traditional foods from the sea, like turtle and dugong," Nanikiya said. "But as people saw here when we took them down to Nanydjaka (Cape

Arnhem) the marine debris coming in and causing damage to marine ecosystems is increasing and more and more animals are being killed."

A video which Dhimurru made to create awareness of the issue and their program of trying save turtles tangled in nets will now help convey a message to Indonesia, thanks to Environment Australia's help in having the video translated into Indonesian.

"The opportunity to see what Yolngu land management groups are doing was fantastic. It was a great opportunity to get together and talk across state and territory borders about common issues. The resolutions that came out this year show a steady evolution of the land management issues emerging... it's not just the same old issues."

JOE MORRISON

People from West Papua also said they would do what they could to let their government know the problems that feral nets and other debris were causing in Australian waters.

Marine issues and lack of Indigenous management in fisheries in the region was perhaps the "hottest" issue under discussion.

Doug Passi from Mer said that in the Torres Straits non-Indigenous fishermen licensed to catch coral trout and mackerel were throwing away fish like cod or trevally and turrum.

"When our local fishermen wake up early in the morning and go fishing they find trevally, cod and other fish floating in the sea or lying dead on the beaches," he said.

"One problem is that fisheries management people from the government are mainly centred on Thursday

Island and if we have a problem it takes three or four days for them to respond and by that time the culprits have probably gone.

"That is why we are here looking at things that our brothers and sisters on the mainland are doing with land and sea management. We want to observe and learn from what's happening here and then go back and set up our own structures of community based rangers on Mer. We want to involve our young school leavers and we hope when we come back for the next conference, we will have some of our young rangers with us."

Participants at the conference called on the Commonwealth, State and Territory agencies to help Indigenous communities have greater power over land and sea management in their areas. They called for indigenous communities to be given bigger roles in monitoring and enforcement of fisheries regulations and for that to be supported by appropriate training and locally based jobs.

The conference pointed out a critical need to involve people along the northern coast in fisheries monitoring and enforcement and customs, quarantine and immigration controls, for the benefit of all Australians.

Helping to look after the caring for country knowledge of old people was identified as another major issue right across the region. A statement from the conference said that Indigenous knowledge is under threat right across north Australia and that future generations of Indigenous land managers would need that knowledge.

Participants called on Federal, State and Territory Governments to honour their commitments to support conservation of Indigenous knowledge made in the Australian National Strategy for Conservation of Biological Diversity and the International Convention on the Conservation of Biological Diversity.

Next year the fourth Indigenous Rangers Conference will be hosted by Indigenous Rangers and the traditional owners of Kakadu National Park. ●

Central Australian healing summit

Members of the Stolen Generation gathered in Alice Springs for the first Stolen Generation Healing Summit organised by the Central Australian Stolen Generation and Families Corporation.

The purpose of the healing summit was to bring people together in a supportive environment and to assist the Stolen Generation members in their journey of healing.

The weeklong summit began with a spiritual smoking ceremony at the Telegraph Station, once known as the Bungalow, a place where children of mixed descent were taken when they were removed from their families in the early 1930s and 40s.

The healing summit included spiritual healing ceremonies, workshops and discussions on strategies for the future.

Chairman of the Central Australian Stolen Generation and Families Corporation, Mr Harold Furber, said the summit was important because it gave members a chance to discuss issues and talk about strategies for the future.

"There are concerns over the \$63 million – what's happened to that?" he asked

"Because it isn't reaching its target group and people want to know .

"Members discussed the way forward and talked about other processes such as



The smoking ceremony at the Telegraph Station.

reparation which means going through a tribunal rather than court which is a less confrontational process.

"One of the highlights of the summit was the public healing process which was part of the Yeperenye Festival," Mr Furber said.

"During the summit a lot of preparation took place for people to feel they could take part in this very public display of emotions which is all part of our healing journey."

Other concerns raised by members included the outcomes of the Cubillo and Gunner test case appeal, which was rejected by the lower courts in early September.

The two members of the Northern Territory Stolen Generation are considering a High Court appeal after their compensation case was rejected. ●



Warlpiri take a look at literacy

Eight Warlpiri people with tape recorders have been out and about in their communities interviewing family and friends of all ages in an effort to determine the factors that lead to better educational outcomes for their people.

One of the Warlpiri researchers, Fiona Gibson, said that the work also helped to keep language strong.

"We are pleased that so many Warlpiri people are involved in the project as interviewers and as people who are being interviewed," she said. "We are writing it in Warlpiri and English and I'm glad that so many of our people are literate enough in two languages to do it. This sort of work was usually only done by white people."

Fiona said that some very important oral histories had been recorded. The researchers decided upon the questions to be asked and have produced about 15 tapes that are being transcribed and translated, and they hope to get some support to publish a report.

The report will be the first document of its kind where a broad range of Warlpiri people tell their own educational histories and offer their vision for the cultural and language development of future generations.

The project was initiated with a grant from the United Nations. It was begun in response to the cuts by the NT CLP Government to bilingual education, to provide an Aboriginal perspective on education in bush schools. It is being facilitated by the IAD Dictionaries Program. ●

Above: Wirliyajarrayi Band members at Willowra. Preston, Newton and Clayton talk literacy.



Above: Brendan, Katrina, Justin, Naptali, Francis, and Bradley at Willowra



Native Title Holders Myra Hayes, Stephen Ross, Lena Turner, Teresa Webb, Margaret Mary Turner, Jenny Lake and Patricia Dodds met with Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger, Archbishop of Paris during his visit to Alice Springs recently.

NOTICE OF PROHIBITION OF ACCESS

Kakadu National Park



Aboriginal people visiting and from Kakadu National Park are informed that at the request of the Northern Land Council in consultation with traditional owners, the area of Kakadu National Park indicated in the map below is closed to all persons as a mark of respect to Murumburr members who passed away last year. The closure is for the following period.

15 January 2001 to 15 June 2002.

All areas normally open to the public remain unaffected by the closure.

The closed area does not include normal public access roads, visitor sites and camping areas. All vehicles and pedestrians should not leave the official roads, tracks and car parks in this area. **Aboriginal people are reminded that the closure includes all hunting and fishing locations within the shaded area.**

Inquiries should be directed to the Northern Land Council or Kakadu National Park Headquarters.

CLOSED AREA IS SHADED ON MAP



Thank you for your cooperation.

00001

New NLC Full Council

A record number of women are on the new NLC Full Council.

Following nominations and elections over the past couple of months in each of the seven regions covering the Top End, 14 of the 78 positions have been secured by women.

This compares to eight in the 1998-2001 Full Council.

In addition, there are five co-opted women's positions on the Council, which means that almost 25 per cent of positions are now held by women.

The new Council, which has a three-year term, will hold its first meeting in October when elections will be held for the positions of chairman and deputy chairman, plus members of the Executive Council, comprising one person from each region.

Charlie Perkins National Indigenous Football/Netball Carnival

Alice Springs

3 days commencing on Friday 19th to Sunday 21st October 2001 in Alice Springs.

Aboriginal people from all over the country.

Last year the event attracted 3,500 Aboriginal people to the carnival which was held in Adelaide.

- Exhibition Soccer Match
- Exhibition community football match
- Promotional and arts and crafts stalls.

For further information please contact Jennifer Nixon on 08 89523531.

Caring for Sea Country

The NLC has started to develop a new Caring for Country program for sea country.

Paul Josef, formerly at Uluru, has been employed for several months to talk to 'saltwater' people about their land and seas and what they want for the future.

A major part of his work will be developing ideas on how Aboriginal people can use their traditional knowledge and links to the sea to create an economic base.

Recognition of sea rights has always lagged behind the land, as non-Aboriginal people seem to find it hard to understand the attachment Aboriginal people have to the sea.

Like the land, the sea is full of sacred sites, and sea country owner have totemic relationships with sea creatures. For coastal peoples, the sea was the main source of sustenance and sea resources formed the basis of trade and economic relations.

The trepang industry is an example of a traditional economic activity which used sea resources.

For 500 years, Macassans visited the coastline of the Top End to collect the delicacy, and developed complex trading relationships with the Aboriginal landowners.

Now, the right to collect trepang is controlled by the NT Government and no Aboriginal people have been able to obtain a licence.

Government policy, at both a Territory and a Federal level, is starting to recognise the importance of good management of the sea and its resources.

Paul Josef will be talking to both governments about providing funding to Aboriginal people to carry out their traditional role of managing their sea estates.

Over-fishing of certain areas, and the impact of certain commercial techniques have caused problems for the balance of biodiversity in the seas.

Good sea management helps protect the resources of the sea for all users.

Paul will be travelling around the coastline talking to 'saltwater' people over the next three months.

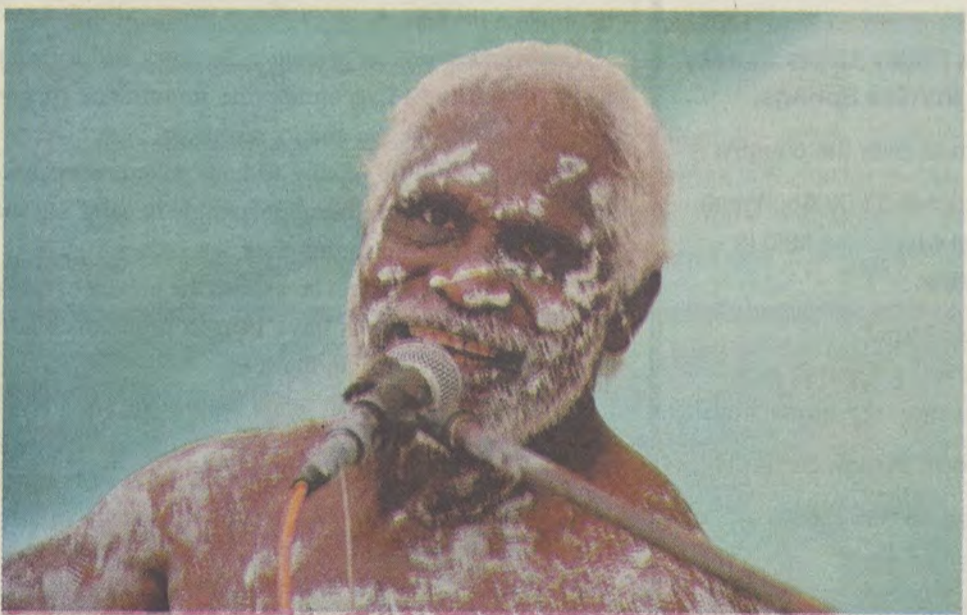
Look out for him in your community or contact the NLC's Caring for Country Unit to give your ideas about caring for sea country.



DISCRIMINATION IS UNLAWFUL. IF THIS HAPPENS TO YOU, CALL THE HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION COMPLAINTS INFOLINE 1300 656 419 OR GO TO YOUR COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE FOR ADVICE.



Big Bill Neidjie.



Tiwi dancer.



Some of Big Bill's family.

Big Bill and friends celebrate his life

It was the party that Big Bill envisaged when, after the funeral service for another important Kakadu man last year, he said he'd like such a gathering before he passed on.



It was a special party – but then this gathering was for a special man.

Big Bill Neidjie is Kakadu Man: senior traditional elder with boundless knowledge of the physical, cultural and spiritual aspects of this spectacular land.

And this party in July was to celebrate and talk about the kind of life that Big Bill has led, the achievements he has notched up and the contributions he has made over the years.

It was also a time to remember the past, the history of the people in Kakadu and the rocks that bear paintings from as far back as 60,000 years – and to think about what will be taken forward for the next 60,000 years.

Vehicles brought family members and friends from far and wide, with high-flying red, yellow, orange and purple flags marking out the spot chosen for the party at the end of a dirt track at Cannon Hill within Kakadu National Park.

Against a backdrop of the Namarrgana escarpment, speaker after speaker spoke to the crowd of about 500 about Big Bill's massive contributions in the region, particularly the development of the joint management arrangements for Kakadu National Park and the worldwide recognition of the region's cultural value as well as its natural beauty.

Big Bill sat in the front row and watched as old friends recounted tales of land rights

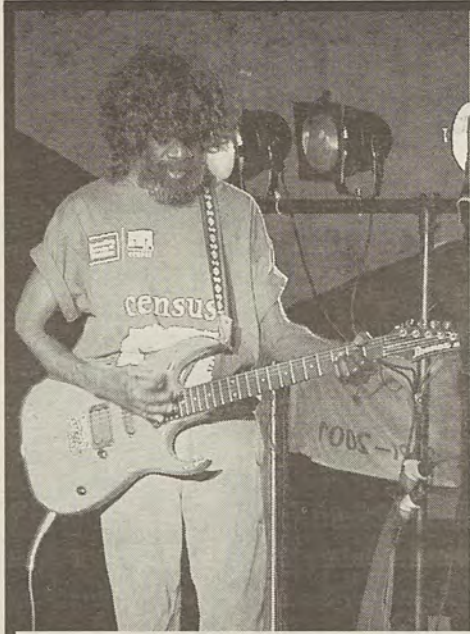
and legal challenges, reconciliation and mutual respect - including Sir Edward Woodward, former Land Commissioner who was instrumental in the development of the Land Rights Act; Clyde Holding, former Federal Aboriginal Affairs Minister; archaeologist George Chaloupka and Minister for Environment and Heritage Senator Robert Hill.

Scores of family members and friends also spoke of the leadership skills and the teachings of the Bunitj clansman whose life spans about 80 years of massive personal and social changes, from his young days learning to hunt and 'read' his country, work in the buffalo camps, service during World War 11 and the creation of Kakadu National Park.

Dancers came from as far as Croker and Goulbourn Island, local bands played, and the feast included tucker like barramundi and turtle.

Surrounded by about 40 of his Indigenous and non-Indigenous relatives, Big Bill's nephew John Christopherson said: "This is something special. It doesn't happen often enough.

"We have to change that. We have to celebrate our lives – and that is what we're doing here today – celebrating the life of a man who has touched the lives of many."



TOP END FESTIVALS



The Centenary of Federation Sound Stage was officially opened at this year's Ramingining Music and Cultural Festival in August.

The launch was accompanied by a small *bungul* by dancers backed by Ramingining's internationally famous *Waak Waak Jungi* group. The dancers included David Gulpulil and Judy Ganinydja, the traditional owner of Ramingining.

The *Yalibar'ki 2000* cassette and the *Live Across the Top* CD were also launched during the festival. *Yalibar'ki* was recorded at last year's Ramingining Music Festival and the *Live Across the Top* CD is a compilation of songs from Top End groups including two from Ramingining.

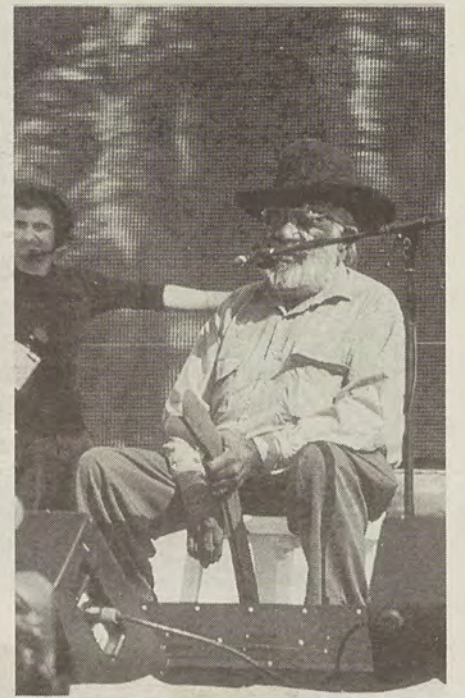
Visitors to the Gunbalanya Open Day in August enjoyed a weekend of dancing, sports events and stalls.



THE CENTRE

Top left: Pamela Samson on a recent trip to hunt porcupine.

Left: Cassie Williams singing with her family's band at the Yeperenye Festival.



Top right: The Arrernte dancers and Max Stuart
Right: l-r Lindsay Cavanagh, Riley Williams, Priscilla Williams, Patrick Williams and Priscilla's daughter Marissa in the Simpson Desert.



Batchelor College Graduations

The sense of tradition and culture continues



Family, friends and work colleagues gathered at this year's Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education graduation ceremony in Alice Springs.

The opening ceremony began with Arrernte women leading the procession of academics, counsellors and students whilst elders sung in Arrernte giving the opening an overwhelming sense of tradition and culture for the whole community.

About 60 Aboriginal students graduated at the ceremony from communities such as Yuendumu, Alpara, Alice Springs, Tara, Tennant Creek, Alpurrulam, Mutitjulu, Areyonga, Atitjere, Nyirripi, and Ceduna.

It was a day of celebration not only for the students but their families, communities and workmates who smiled with admiration and pride as students accepted their awards.

During the ceremony many students were honoured for their outstanding

achievements in a variety of fields such as health, education and community management

Two Kaytetye women were recognised for their outstanding achievements in their field of study.

Alison Ross received the Advance Diploma in Teaching (Primary) and was awarded a Department of Education award for the most outstanding final year student in the school of education.

Thea Nungala completed the Advance Diploma of Indigenous Primary Health Care (General Health) and was awarded the Qantas Award for outstanding achievement.

Many students who could not attend the graduation day in Alice Springs are to receive their awards at ceremonies in their communities or will graduate at the next set graduation date.



Top left : Arrernte women leading procession.

Top right: Thea Nanagla and Alison Ross.

Above left: Pricilla Williams and daughter.

Above right: Janet Turner welcoming the people to Arrernte Coutry.

dEadly mOb

A new program designed to encourage young people to stay at school and look at potential career paths has begun in Alice Springs.

The dEadly mOb career mentor program is a voluntary program which matches up Aboriginal students at risk of dropping out of school with a mentor or more experienced Aboriginal person.

Student Troy Liddle, a student from the Alice Outcomes at the Gap Youth Centre believes the program is important because it helps young people decide on possible career paths.

"Since having a mentor I've worked out where I'm going to go with my education and what career I'm going to follow up," Troy said. "I've learnt that you've got to do what you want to do and be what you want to be and not let anybody cast any judgement on you."

Troy's mentor is Aaron Campbell, a Legal Trainee with Central Australian

Aboriginal Legal Service.

Aaron has been visiting Troy regularly and assisted him at the recent Yeperenye Festival, where Troy interviewed a number of celebrities visiting Alice Springs at the dEadly mOb media tent.

Coordinator of dEadly mOb, Linda Chellew says the program is receiving enormous success with many local organisations participating.

"Support for the program from Aboriginal organisations approached has been phenomenal with nearly every organisation putting forward staff to participate," she said.

The mentor program is a result of growing concerns by the community about school retention rates, literacy levels and youth unemployment issues.



NT Chief Minister Clare Martin at the dEadly mOb's media tent at the Yeperenye Festival.

NAIDOC celebrates rich culture



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Northern Territory took full advantage of NAIDOC celebrations this year to display the richness of their culture and heritage to the rest of the Australian community.

The national theme for this year was "Treaty – Let's get it right", which was about putting into practice some of the ideals of reconciliation. It challenges all Australians to acknowledge a very important aspect of our shared contemporary culture. The local theme was "Larrakia Country: Treat it with respect".

Designer of the Aboriginal flag, Luritja man Harold Thomas is pictured (left) at the NAIDOC rally. A number of people in the procession beforehand showed creative ways to display the flag colours.

Other events during the week included family activities, the Pearls dinner dance and the Seniors night.



The Yeperemye Festival



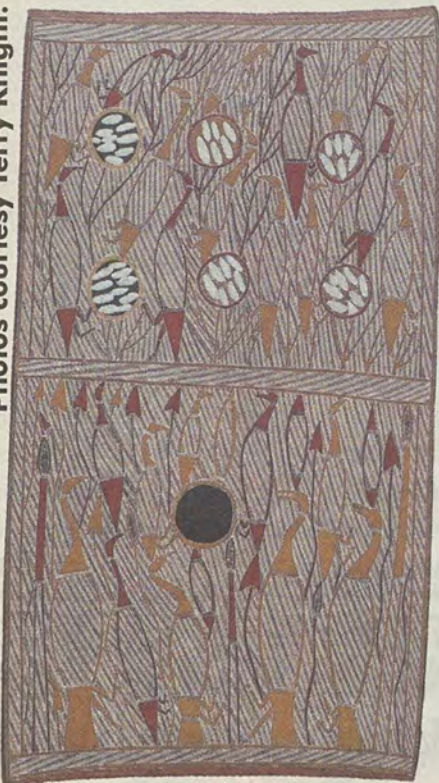
Top left and right: Luritja and Warlpiri ladies
Next row : Tjikalyi Collins; behind the scenes – Steve Ellis helps cook for 2000 people; Gumatj men from east Arnhem Land;
Next row, far right: Gurindji mob
Bottom : Freda Jurra, Bess Price and Jeannie Herbert watch the Warlpiri dancers; the stage and giant projection screen showing Max Stuart compering.





Four panels from 'Yuendumu Doors Etchings'.

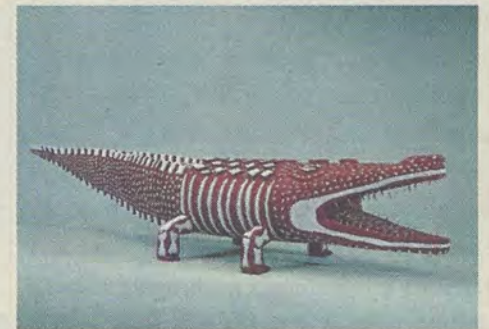
Photos courtesy Terry Knight.



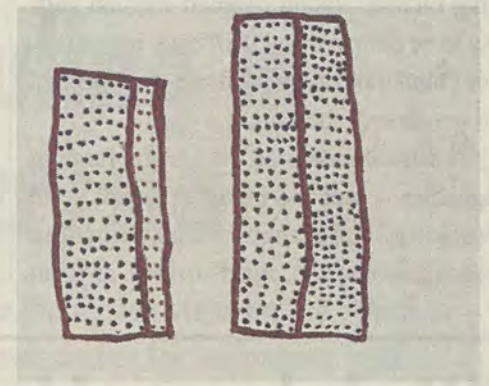
'Magpie Geese' by John Bulunbulun.



Dorothy Napangardi.



Craig Koomeeta's carving.



'Body Marks' by Prince of Wales.

Telstra art award winners

Northern Territory artists featured strongly in this year's annual National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Art Awards, announced in Darwin in September.

Dorothy Napangardi, a Warlpiri woman from Mina Mina, a highly significant sacred site in the remote area of Central Australia, is the overall winner of the Telstra First Prize Award worth \$40,000.

Dorothy's winning artwork titled "Salt on Mina Mina" is about her father's country around Lake Mackay in the Tanami region.

Dorothy is an experienced artist who lives in Alice Springs where she paints full time in her own studio.

Her work has been exhibited throughout Australia, the US and Europe where she is regarded as one of the leading artists of the contemporary Aboriginal art movement.

Paddy Japaljarri Stewart and Paddy Japaljarri Sims from Yuendumu walked away with the Telstra Work on Paper

Award for their artwork "Yuendumu Doors Etchings".

These small etching plates were inspired by the original Yuendumu School Doors project which were painted in 1983 by five artists including Paddy Japaljarri Stewart and Paddy Japaljarri Sims, Roy Jupurrurla and two other artists now deceased.

The original work represented 27 Jukurrpa (Dreaming) stories referring to more than 200 sites in Warlpiri and Anmatjere area.

John Bulunbulun from Wurdeja, a senior member of the Ganalbingu group, was awarded the Telstra Bark Painting Award for his piece titled 'Magpie Geese'.

His prize winning painting deals with dreamings related to a waterhole called

Djulubunyamurr near Ngaliyindi outstation. Magpie geese are the artist's totem and are spiritually significant to Bulunbulun's country in the NT.

The artist divided his painting into two panels, representing two different seasons.

Senior Larrakia elder Prince of Wales was awarded the Telstra general painting Award for his piece 'Body Marks.'

Since his stroke several years ago, Prince of Wales now suffers some difficulties in movement and speech. He now spends his energy and his artistic ability in painting the ceremonial body decorations of his dance and song onto canvas.

Prince uses his good arm to create intricate yet minimal patterns of dots and lines in an array of colours.

Craig Koomeeta from Aurukun in Queensland was awarded the Telstra Wandjuk Marika 3D memorial award.

Craig, 24, started carving when he was fourteen years old with his Uncle Roland Toikalkin.

He says he likes the physical aspect of carving and the feel of the wood, which is a way of telling stories about his region.

The Museum and Art Gallery in Darwin will exhibit 128 artworks submitted for the awards until January.

Winners of these prestige art awards will tour nationally as part of the 20th Telstra Awards anniversary in the year 2003.

In the mean time a colour catalogue of all the works exhibited will be available at the end of next month.

NGOs need to have a strong say

Olga Havnen, Manager of Indigenous programmes with the Fred Hollows Foundation sees a strong leadership role for Non Government Organisations (NGOs) in a national campaign to address "the third world squalid living conditions that Indigenous people are facing."

Commenting on the final report of the Commonwealth Grants Commission Indigenous Funding Inquiry, Ms Havnen, said there was "an inextricable link between health and education – and with the quality and quantity of services available.

"The way the Grants Commission currently operates is systemic discrimination," she said.

"The way they allocate money is based on meeting the needs of existing infrastructure.

"It doesn't address unmet needs – communities that don't have the infrastructure in the first place."

Ms Havnen said: "Since ATSIC was formed about 10 years ago, it's been an excuse for Commonwealth and State and Territory governments to abrogate responsibility.

"What we must all have is a long term 'big picture' vision coupled with an ability to be able to bring it all back into tangible chunks and a plan with the steps needed to get there," she said.

"I see communities, NGOs and funding agencies – and the business sector – all working together. Philanthropic organisations, too, need to look at what

they are doing for the least advantaged areas.

"NGOs should be on the ground, getting involved in community development work," she said.

Ms Havnen is shocked by the health statistics in Indigenous communities. And she wants everyone to be shocked – into action.

"Everyone has heard the statistic that Aboriginal people die on average 20 years earlier than non-Indigenous people," she said. "That no longer makes a mark. It is part of the landscape. But people have to pay attention."

"What is going on here?" she asked. "You look at life expectancy 30 years ago, compared to now, and you see that countries like India, Nepal, Pakistan, Thailand, Vietnam, all had lower rates of life expectancy compared to Indigenous men – now they are all higher.

"Look at the statistics showing the percentage of people not expected to live beyond 60 – and the figure for Indigenous Australians, compared to these countries, is criminal.

"It's a huge problem. But this problem is solvable. People can fix it."

NT Aboriginal People the Poorest of the Poor - CGC Report

The long-awaited final report of the Commonwealth Grants Commission's Indigenous Funding Inquiry has identified Aboriginal people in remote Australia as the poorest in Australia, and the ATSIC Papunya region in the NT is the most disadvantaged of all.

The report confirms the arguments put by NT Indigenous groups for many years about the misappropriation of Commonwealth payments by the former NT Government.

The report has recommended major changes to the way Indigenous funding is structured, resourced and managed and the way the services are delivered.

In a thinly veiled attack on how state/territory governments have used Commonwealth specific purpose payments (SPPs) for their own purposes, the CGC report has called for Indigenous involvement in how the funds are allocated and greater accountability for funds.

The report was released in late September after sitting with the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs for five months. Speculation in the media has suggested that the Minister was reluctant to release the Report as it highlights the high level of

poverty and disadvantage among Indigenous people.

It has been suggested that the report was only released now because Indigenous issues have been overshadowed by the issue of asylum seekers and international terrorism.

The recommendations put forward by the CGC for a better model for structuring and delivering services to Indigenous people – including transparency, accountability and ensuring Indigenous participation in decision-making – provide a blueprint for reform for the incoming NT ALP Government led by Clare Martin.

As the auditors report a major budgetary shortfall and the new Government hints at the need for a judicial inquiry into the CLP Government, the CGC Report provides further impetus for a radical rethink of mainstream and specialist Indigenous services in the NT.

Workshop tackles dugong deaths

Following a spate of dugong deaths in the south west gulf region, traditional owners and representatives from environment, government and commercial and recreational fishing interests held a workshop in Borroloola in September to tackle problems threatening the mammal.

The two-day workshop, chaired by Samuel Evans, chairman of Mabunji Aboriginal Resource Association, looked at many issues, ranging from commercial fishing nets, boat strikes and noise and Indigenous harvesting to damage to seagrass beds, the impact of land use and mining and diseases.

Many of the recommendations revolve around the enforcement of fisheries law and providing information and educational materials to all river users.

The workshop considered that Fisheries Officers permanently based in the Borroloola region would go some way to addressing issues regarding law enforcement, and also called for training in fisheries law enforcement for Indigenous Rangers.

The workshop also wants an

Aboriginal Ranger Unit to be formed to look after country and sea, taking a lead role in monitoring, protecting and educating users on dugong, fisheries and coastal management issues.

The workshop wants to see a booklet containing information about dugong conservation and sacred sites available for users and for this information to be printed in publications targeting recreational fishers and other river users.

Boat speed limits, a changeover from propeller-driven engines to jet-propulsion engines and better defined transit areas and channel markings also need to be investigated. It was also suggested by some attendees that a body be established to include all stakeholders in the region, with responsibility for a wide range of coastal management issues.

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Message of hope from Nunavut for Indigenous people

The Premier of the new Inuit territory of Nunavut in Canada, Paul Okalik, was in Australia recently to give a powerful message of hope to Indigenous people seeking to regain control of their world.

Nunavut, officially created in April 1999, stretches across nearly two million square kilometres of land, water and ice – one-fifth the size of Canada and about one quarter the size of Australia.

The population of about 27,000 live in 26 small communities scattered throughout the area.

The new Nunavut Legislative Assembly has 19 elected members and the public sector reflects the population it serves.

They are changing the *Education Act* to reflect Nunavut's language and culture in the classroom; amending laws

to reflect the philosophy of the people; establishing a less complicated court system; and developing a *Human Rights Act* to ensure that everyone's rights are protected in the territory.

"Canada's greatest successes have been accomplished through our acceptance of and passion to protect that which is different," Premier Okalik suggested.

"The creation of the territory of Nunavut is a laudable example of both tenacity and understanding (by both Inuit and non-Inuit.)

"Canada is a country that celebrates its diversity in communities from coast to coast. But we must keep in mind that this

expression and promotion of distinctiveness does not come without the creation of some challenges, especially for the political leadership of the day," he said.

"It is my firm belief that the development of the territory of Nunavut and the reclaiming of the Inuit homeland is a testament that through embracing diversity and change, a nation grows stronger, not weaker."

Premier Okalik did admit, however that "this is not an opinion held throughout the country."

"My colleagues and I realise the road ahead will be fraught with challenges; we accept that we have a daunting task. We recognise that we will make mistakes, but we also appreciate that these will be *our* mistakes," he said. ●



Photo courtesy Brendon Read.

Premier Okalik delivering his lecture in Sydney.

Bio Piracy in the Kalahari

The hoodia cactus, a native species in South Africa, has been used for thousands of years by tribesmen who eat it to stave off hunger and thirst on hunting trips.

Now the same cactus is part of a bio-piracy row between the Kung bushmen of the Kalahari Desert and pharmaceutical firms, who hope they have found the ultimate slimming cure and are ready to exploit the natural remedies held by this small group.

Like many ancient cultures around the world, this story highlights the continual struggle for Indigenous people to protect and hold intellectual rights to

traditional flora, fauna and their traditional knowledge, which western society exploits for monetary benefits without consultation or respect for the traditional people they gained the knowledge from.

Whilst the pharmaceutical company, Phytopharm, boasts about its newly found product and share prices rise as their scientists talked about the revolutionary slimming pill - there's not a mention of the Kung bushmen.

The firm's excuse for not talking to the bushmen about the use of their natural remedy was that they believed the tribes, which used the cactus, was extinct.

It sold the rights to licence the drug for \$21m to Pfizer, the US pharmaceutical giant, which hopes to have the treatment ready in pill form within three years.

Having made millions from Viagra, the impotence drug, Pfizer now believes it has

in its laboratories a drug that is going to beat fat.

Now the people once thought of by the pharmaceutical firm as extinct are angry and are planning a strategy

against Phytopharm and Pfizer for the stealing of their ancient knowledge and will launch a challenge and demand compensation.

"This is a major case of bio-piracy. Corporations are scouring the globe looking to rip off traditional knowledge from some of poorest communities in the world. Consent or compensation is rarely given. The patent system needs urgent reform to protect the knowledge nurtured over the generations by groups like the African bushmen," said Alex Wijeratna, a campaigner for ActionAid, the International development charity aid. ●

“Having made millions from Viagra, the impotence drug, Pfizer now believes it has in its laboratories a drug that is going to beat fat.”

Landmark native title ruling in Malaysia

A landmark ruling in Sarawak, a Malaysian state on the island of Borneo, could have vast consequences for Indigenous land rights around the world.

After two years of litigation, the High Court in Sarawak upheld the customary rights of the Iban village Rumah Nor, finding the Borneo Paper and Pulp (BPP) company did not have the right to destroy Rumah Nor's rainforest.

Without any consultation with the villagers from Rumah Nor, Sarawak's Land and Survey Department had granted a licence to BPP to create a one million hectare plantation to raise fast growing species.

The High Court decision expands the definition of customary lands to include rivers, streams and communal forests, which is a significant precedent for native villages seeking land rights in Malaysia.

Prior to this ruling, only farmlands actively cultivated by forest-dependent communities could be considered native customary lands.

The High Court placed an immediate injunction on the company from entering the lands in dispute and declared BPP's title to the area null and void and ordered the Land and Survey Department to rectify the BPP land title to exclude this

Furthermore the judge ordered BPP to pay all court costs incurred by the villagers of Rumah Nor.

The Sarawak Land and Survey Department and BPP have announced they will appeal the case.

If the ruling is upheld, this could have vast implications for native land rights struggles around the world, since legal precedents from British Commonwealth countries like Malaysia can be used in other Commonwealth countries, such as Australia.

Given that law and court decisions over the years have ultimately favoured industrial developers over Indigenous farmers, the decision handed down was a shock.

There has reportedly been no coverage of the story in Sarawak's mainstream media.

Logging and plantation interests own many of the media outlets.

No doubt, they would be adversely affected if other villages, hearing of the victory, were to assert their land rights. ●

Bush Mechanics – The Series



The Bush Mechanics (from left): Steven, Simeon, Junior, Errol and Randall en route to a gig in their hand-made convertible.

Following the national and international success of the original half-hour *Bush Mechanics* TV programme in 1999, *Bush Mechanics – The Series* has been produced and screened on ABC television.

The series is a blend of documentary, drama and humour which follows the exploits and ingenious car repair techniques of a group of Aboriginal characters as they travel through Central Australia.

The four-part series produced by Film Australia and Warlpiri Media looks at five bush mechanics from Yuendumu who are presented with a new set of challenges to solve as they set off on their journey in

their clapped out motorcar.

These challenges include catching a car thief, getting a nephew out of jail, racing to an outback rock concert and travelling thousand of miles to gather pearl shells for a rainmaking ceremony.

Along the way, the bush mechanics manage to solve many car problems with wacky and inventive bush repair techniques which have been passed down from generation to generation.

The series also provides the audience with a unique insight into both contemporary and traditional Aboriginal culture, combining adventure, mystical realism and a distinctive brand of Indigenous humour throughout the series.

The series was directed by David Batty and produced by Jeni McMahon with assistance and guidance from the entire Yuendumu community.



Left to right: Nellie Patterson, Lizzie Ellis and Mantatjara Wilson perform their show at Araluen in Alice Springs.

Powerful show goes national

Ochre and Dust is a moving and delightful show, featuring the natural performance of two senior Anangu-Pitjantjatjara law women sitting on red sand and talking about their lives.

Throughout the show, which is on a national tour, Nellie Patterson and Mantatjara Wilson talk about past and present experiences, where they've been and where they are going in the future. They also sing timeless songs as powerful images of their country appear in the background.

Although set in a theatre, the audience is able to experience oral storytelling the old way with a combination of modern technology providing soundscapes and a journey through the Pitjantjatjara homelands through photos.

These dynamic women recount tales of their lives, the pervasive influence of the

land upon their lives and their Tjurkurpa in their traditional language – with narrator Lizzie Ellis translating into English for the audience.

Ochre and Dust premiered at the Perth International Festival and the Telstra Adelaide Festival in 2000.



Daisy Marjar.

Litchfield artist plans annual exhibition

Visitors to Wangi Falls in Litchfield National Park in August had the chance to see traditional paintings illustrating the richness of the region's rock art.

The Rock Art Motif exhibition, presented by the Marjar Aboriginal Corporation, featured about 100 canvas paintings by local Indigenous artist and traditional owner Daisy Marjar.

The freshwater crocodile, Daisy's totem, features strongly in her work, along with other totems including the goanna, turtle, sugarglider, blue-tongued lizard, kangaroo, pelican, catfish, emu, barramundi and darterbirds.

A number of artists from various clans also displayed their art work, particularly the paintings of Wendy Petherick and didgeridoos made by Glen Petherick.

"A lot of the rock art featured in my paintings are in restricted areas – so this is a chance for people to get a better idea of the richness of the rock art in this area and the importance of totems to our clans," Daisy said.

"Many of the rock art was painted many, many years ago and the stories have been handed down through each generation.

"I'd like to have an exhibition every year and the plan is to have the next one in July."

Daisy explained that the freshwater crocodile was the totem of her father's, father's, father's family. "In my language, it is called Tjinggurr," she said.

"During the creation of Wangi Falls, the freshwater crocodile was created and this is how my family got the totem for the freshwater crocodile.

"We are not allowed to eat the freshwater crocodile's meat, but we can eat the egg. When we hunt for food and I am with my sisters and grandchildren, we collect the eggs by probing the sandy areas for the eggs until you find the nest.

"When we find them, we can only take five eggs. Then we build a small fire and put the eggs in to cook, stirring them around with a stick. When they are cooked, we put some of the yolk part of the egg under the children's chin to give them strength to go on living."

Aboriginal health loses a great fighter

The passing of Dr 'Puggy' Hunter is a great loss to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people throughout Australia.

He was a prominent and outspoken Aboriginal health activist who held a number of positions as an Indigenous leader throughout his career.

Puggy was born in Darwin in 1951 to Dora and Paddy Hunter and gained his nickname "Puggy" from his Auntie Lena Murphy. To this day, he was always known as Puggy.

In Kununurra, where he worked for the State Welfare Department and Waringarri Aboriginal Corporation, Puggy worked tirelessly with Aboriginal families in crisis, youth at risk and those suffering the consequences of poverty, exclusion, child abuse and sexual abuse.

It was here that he became heavily involved in

Aboriginal health and played a significant role in the concept of Aboriginal community controlled Medical Services in the region.

Puggy was elected chair of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) in 1991, which he held until his passing.

He worked tirelessly, patiently and forcefully for improvements in Aboriginal health throughout Australia and was actively involved and sat on a range of advisory and planning committees on health, education and social welfare at the Federal, State and community levels.

He had the expertise to deal with all kinds of people

from grassroots levels to the academics and politicians.

Puggy recently received an honorary doctorate from James Cook University in Queensland for his dedication and tireless work towards improving health services and the health and well being of Aboriginal people.

Over the last 12 months Puggy had been reliant upon constant kidney dialysis. He died from heart failure a week after celebrating his 50th birthday.

Puggy will be remembered by many for his leadership and commitment in addressing the appalling health status of Indigenous people and his great humour and beautiful nature will never be forgotten.

NT MLA John Ah Kit's Tribute

"Puggy Hunter – what a bloke. What fond memories of a good mate and Parap Camp brother."

At the memorial service at the St Mary's Cathedral in Darwin on September 27 for Arnold "Puggy" Hunter, Northern Territory MLA John Ah Kit spoke about his lifelong friendship with Puggy, from their days growing up together to his passion to improve the health of Aboriginal people.

"From the days of when we were kids, we did it all," he said. "The making of shangeyes, steamrollers, playing marbles and the Parap camp Caledonian Pipe Band."

Mr AhKit went on to explain how the young boys at the camp, inspired by the Darwin Caledonian Pipe Band, would march in unison to imitate the band, with the help of stray cats in the neighbourhood.

"What a bunch of ratbags we were," he said.

"I share this yarn with you because I know that's what he would've wanted. As you would all have witnessed, Puggy had a great sense of humour.

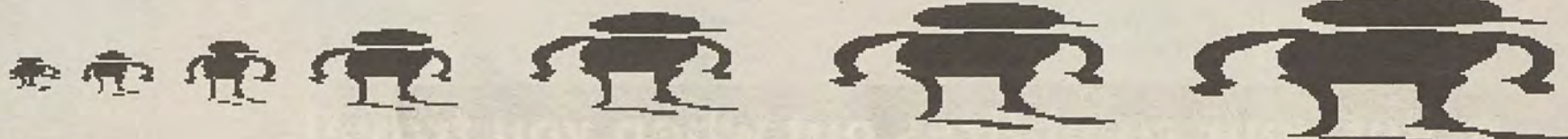
"We grew older and went our separate ways. But as the

friendships of Parap Camp days dictated, we always kept in touch with each other over the years.

"His contribution to the field of Indigenous health policy went to the another level when Puggy was elected Chairman of the NAIHO, which later became National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO).

"His work was always fuelled by his empathy with people at the grassroots. This ability meant he combined smart national politics and lobbying with community level outcomes and concerns," Mr Ah Kit said.

"Puggy's special abilities and extraordinary contribution were recognised in the conferral of an honorary doctorate."



LOOK OUT

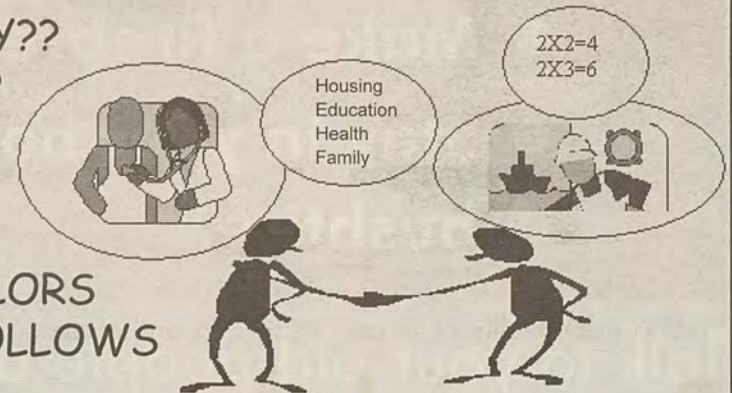
YOUR REGIONAL PLANNING MOB ARE COMING!!

WHAT IS REGIONAL PLANNING??

- WHAT YOU SEE IN THE FUTURE FOR YOUR COUNTRY??
- WHAT YOU WANT IN YOUR REGION TO GET THERE?
- HOW DO WE GET THIS?
- WHO IS GOING TO HELP?

ATSIC TOGETHER WITH JABIRU REGIONAL COUNCILLORS WILL BE COMING TO TALK TO YOU. DATES ARE AS FOLLOWS

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| • TIWI ISLANDS | 1 - 4 OCTOBER 2001 |
| • DALY RIVER | 8 - 12 OCTOBER 2001 |
| • JABIRU/OENPELLI | 22 -26 OCTOBER 2001 |
| • MANINGRIDA/BAWINANGA | 29 OCT - 2 NOV 2001 |
| • PORT KEATS/PALUMPA | 5-8 NOVEMBER 2001 |
| • CROKER /GOULBURN ISLAND | 12 - 15 NOVEMBER 2001 |



Have your say and help Jabiru Regional Council decide what is important!

FIRE CAN KILL

The Bushfires Council says that the danger of wild bushfires this year is the worst it's been for 25 years. Big rains have made lots of grass and the weather is getting hotter. With big wind those bushfires will burn hotter.

SO, YOU'LL BE SAFER IF YOU....

- Don't make fires in dry country if its hot and windy;
- Put your campfires out when you travel;
- Wait 'til you get back home or to a clear place before you cook that kangaroo or turkey;
- Clear long grass from your community;
- Make a firebreak around your community;
- Stay in your house or your car if caught in a bushfire.

Talk to your old people about the proper time and proper way to burn country. Fire can make your country fresh when its cool but destroy it when its hot.

So be careful – when its hot and when its windy that fire can run faster than you.



Central Land Council

