



# Land Rights

## NEWS



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

Vol 5 No 3 October 2003



**INSIDE: Coniston Massacre  
Remembrance Day, NT Parks, Telstra  
Art Awards and more...**

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Passion and pride were on full display at this year's NAIDOC 2003 March and rally in Darwin on Friday 11 July. The march drew hundreds of Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants onto the city streets in a celebration of Indigenous culture.

## Land Rights NEWS

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**COVER PHOTO**  
Warlpiri women from Yuendumu, Willowra and Mt Allen provided spectacular dancing at the Coniston Massacre commemoration day at Brooks Soak in Central Australia.

# Land Councils join NT Government in joint *Land Rights Act* reform package

The four Northern Territory Land Councils and the NT Government have agreed on a package of measures to streamline the workings of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act 1976*, including proposals to free up the mining provisions of the Act and to simplify Land Council administrative processes.

It is the first time the Land Councils and any government have agreed on reforms of the Act, and – if accepted by the Federal Government – will be the first substantive reforms to the Act in almost two decades.

“This is an historic moment in the history of Aboriginal land rights in the Northern Territory,” NLC Chairman Galarrwuy Yunupingu said. “Never before has a State or Federal Government sat down in a non-adversarial way to reach consensus with Aboriginal people on ways to improve the Act.”

Central Land Council Director David Ross said the 12 recommendations agreed to by all parties included:

- delegating powers to the Land Councils’ regional committees;
- improving the accountability and



Paul Henderson with a map showing Aboriginal land subject to exploration

governance of the Aboriginals Benefit Account;

- providing Land Councils with more certainty of funding;
- enhancing Land Councils’ ability to ensure royalty payments are distributed properly;
- freeing up the Act’s mining and exploration provisions to cut complexity

and encourage a more collaborative approach.

“These and other recommendations, if agreed to by the Federal Government, will provide a quantum leap forward in the ability of Land Councils to respond quickly and efficiently to the twin demands of safeguarding traditional owners’ interests while at the same time promoting economic

independence for Aboriginal people living in the NT,” he said.

“Much has been made in some quarters of how the *Land Rights Act* has been an impediment to the development of the NT. The challenge for our critics now is to respond constructively to this initiative rather than continuing to run a negative campaign based on the prejudices of yesteryear.”

“We look forward to working with the new Indigenous Affairs Minister, Senator Amanda Vanstone, to get these important changes through the Federal Parliament.”

The reform package was agreed to in response to an Options Paper put out by the previous Minister for Indigenous Affairs, the Hon. Philip Ruddock, in which he said he was seeking “an agreed approach on reforms to the Act that will maximise the potential benefits” for Indigenous Territorians.

NT Resource Development Minister Paul Henderson said: “The Territory Government and the NT Land Councils have delivered the Commonwealth that agreed approach, and I urge the Commonwealth to move forward quickly.” ●

## Consultations begin on parks management overhaul

The Northern and Central Land Councils have negotiated a framework agreement with the Northern Territory Government for settling some ownership and joint management arrangements affecting 49 NT parks and reserves.

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The agreement came a year after the High Court’s *Ward* decision, which effectively found that parks and reserves declared by the NT Government between 1978 and 1998 had been declared invalidly because they did not take into account native title interests.

Rather than litigate over the matter, the NT Government opted to enter discussions with the Land Councils both to resolve outstanding issues and to improve the overall workings of the NT parks estate.

Now, after almost a year of negotiations, the Land Councils have started to consult on a park-by-park basis with traditional owners affected by the framework agreement, who will make their own decision about whether to accept the Government’s offer.

“The Land Councils and Territory Government have worked hard to settle on a framework agreement which will produce a world class parks system,” CLC Director David Ross said. “This framework goes a long way towards achieving these aims.”

“After months of working through the details, we have finally reached a point where the offer can now be put to traditional landowners. At the end of the day traditional owners will make their own decision about whether or not to accept this offer.”

On 8 October the Government introduced its *Parks and Reserves* bill to Parliament, which sets a deadline of June 30 2004 for final agreement to be reached between all parties.

Key aspects of the legislation include:

- development of a parks masterplan to expand and more effectively manage the parks estate;
- current mining and exploration leases and applications and tourism operator concessions to be guaranteed;

- all Territory parks and reserves to remain accessible to all Territorians and visitors on a no-fee no-permit basis;
- business as usual in parks until negotiations are completed; and
- where title changes occur they will be conditional on the land being leased back to the NT for a 99-year period, subject to joint management arrangements being put in place.

### Parks rescheduled

It is proposed that some 14 parks and reserves will be rescheduled as Aboriginal land, including Devils Marbles Conservation Reserve, Gregory National Park and West MacDonnell National Park. Another six parks and reserves will be granted as park freehold title.

The remaining parks and reserves will continue to operate under their current title with the key difference that joint management arrangements will be entered into.

NLC Chairman Galarrwuy Yunupingu said that for the first time, “there is a recognition of the importance of cultural heritage



West MacDonnell’s scene

issues, and the crucial role that Aboriginal people can play in managing and promoting Territory parks”.

“We have seen how well the arrangements have worked at Nitmiluk,” he said.

“We are also very pleased about the explicit commitment to Aboriginal employment and economic development as an intrinsic part of an effective parks system.” ●

# NT Government Bungles Cyanide Prosecution

Central Land Council Director David Ross has accused the Northern Territory Government of bungling the investigation into the cyanide spill on the Tanami Highway.



"We are extremely disappointed that a major incident like this one has not resulted in a prosecution," he said. "The evidence was clear cut, and I simply cannot understand how this bungling has occurred. The process has been confused and shoddy, with no clarity about which agency had primary responsibility for the investigation and prosecution."

"I am extremely unhappy about the lack of communication from the Northern Territory Government back to traditional landowners. After all, it was traditional landowners who first reported the pool of contaminated water surrounded by dead birds and animals. The contamination site is bounded by Aboriginal land, and traditional landowners have been very concerned about the impacts of the spill. Repeated correspondence from the CLC on behalf of traditional landowners has failed to result in any response from the Northern Territory Government."

"Clearly, the Northern Territory Government does not have adequate systems in place to deal with major incidents like this. The Minister needs to act quickly to ensure that incidents such as this one are dealt with in a coordinated fashion - quickly, efficiently and competently. This is a major concern for traditional landowners living in the Tanami region."

"The only positive aspect of this whole debacle was the immediate response from Newmont to clean up the discharge. Following this the CLC carried out an independent scientific study to confirm that the area had been sterilised and this appears to have been achieved."

"It now seems that no one will have to answer for the danger to traditional landowners and the travelling public on the Tanami Highway, nor the hundreds of birds and animals that were killed as a result of the criminal release of cyanide."

The cyanide spill occurred early last year, 100 kilometres to the west of Yuendumu along the Tanami Highway and 150 kilometres to the east of the Granites gold mine.

The CLC Tanami region coordinator at the time, Neville Poulson, helped alert people about the cyanide spill.

"When I drove out there, I knew straight away it was some kind of poison, there was white stuff around the water. I thought about a cyanide spill, I'd seen the pools of it at the gold mines and knew it was dangerous. I put the window up and drove past slowly. We were scared too. I could see finches, drinking from the pool, flying to a tree then just dropping out, it was so dangerous," Mr Poulson said.

He rang the police at Yuendumu and then the CLC Mining Section.

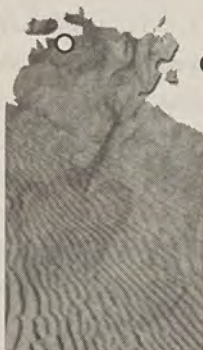
"I went to Warlpiri Media (broadcasting Pintubi, Anmatjere, Warlpiri - PAW Radio) and asked the announcer to repeat each hour that no Yapa should go hunting around the Chilla Well area, people had to be careful out there. A lot of Yapa go hunting around there, it's a most important place."



Peggy Mawson, Jerry Anderson and Bill Dodd study the diamond

## Naming ceremony for Australia's biggest diamond

The biggest diamond ever found in Australia now has an Aboriginal name, following a ceremony at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory on 16 August.



Seven members of the Garrawa and Gurdanji clans from the Borroloola area came to Darwin for the ceremony, where they gave the diamond the name 'Jungiila-Bunajina' - meaning 'Star Meteorite Dreaming Stone'.

The diamond was found in March 2002 at the Merlin diamond mine, located some 80 kilometres south of Borroloola. At 104.73 carats, the diamond has been valued at more than \$1 million.

NLC executive member Max Finlay headed the contingent of traditional owners, which also included Jerry Anderson, Billy Coolibah, Les Hogan, Billy Dodd, Jocelyn Mawson and Peggy Mawson. Mr Finlay said it was difficult for the

traditional owners to see a piece of their country removed from its place of origin.

"But in a broader sense I see it is good because we are sharing it with the outside world," he said. "Giving this stone an Aboriginal name means it goes into the world with our full blessing."

Brendan Hammond, the managing director of Argyle Diamonds - owner of the Merlin mine - said that naming the diamond was quite significant because Australia "had not produced another diamond worthy of this honour".

The unveiling of the Jungiila-Bunajina diamond is a worthy last hurrah for the Merlin mine, which is due to be closed later this year. It began operation in 1998 following the signing of an historic native title agreement with traditional owners.



Peggy Mawson, Paul Henderson, Max Finlay, Norman Fry and Clare Martin at the ceremony

# Future of the Daly under a cloud

Aboriginal people in the Douglas and Daly Rivers region remain highly concerned about the fate of the Daly River. The Northern Territory Government has still not released proposals and planning documents regarding extensive agricultural developments in the region.



The agricultural developments are proposed for the middle reaches of the Daly River on Douglas, Jindare and Claravale Stations. The plans are for mixed farms and will involve extensive tree

clearance and pumping water from the river and water table for irrigated agriculture. Already the Government has approved 8,000 hectares of native vegetation to be cleared before public consultations about this development have even begun.

The river holds enormous cultural values for Aboriginal people and is a vital source of food such as fish and freshwater turtle. It is a very special river as it is one of the few left in Australia which has not been seriously damaged by developments. Environmentally it is unique as it contains the largest diversity of freshwater turtles of any Australian river as well as other significant species such as bull-sharks, whip-rays and sawfish.

Aboriginal representatives from



A tranquil Daly River scene

throughout the region have spoken at public meetings about their concerns over the past few months. The NLC's Darwin/Daly/Wagait Executive Member, John Sullivan, addressed a public meeting about the proposals hosted by the Environment Centre NT on 5 August. He talked about the importance of the river to Aboriginal people, including the Malak Malak people who are located downstream of the proposed developments.

At a public meeting at Douglas Research

Farm later in August, NLC Deputy Chairman John Daly described the cultural importance of the river to traditional owners, and also how people living on the river had noticed changes in the health of the river over the past couple of decades which they thought were due to tree clearing upstream. Mark Casey, the president of Nauiyu Nambiyu Community Government Council, also spoke at this meeting. The council represents over 400 residents and Mark was disappointed that the Government had not

consulted with them about this important issue.

The NLC has requested that the Government undertake comprehensive consultations with Aboriginal people who have connections to all affected areas of the Daly River. The NLC is also concerned that the Government has not gathered enough information to fully understand what impacts changes to the Daly River might have.

There has also been no investigation into how the Government's proposed developments might affect the economic opportunities of people living downstream. For example, what will happen to industries reliant on a healthy, vibrant river system such as recreational fishing and other forms of tourism for which the Daly is famed?

The NLC is requesting that the Government collect more information on the values of the river so that an informed decision can be made about the developments.

In the meantime, the NLC has requested that any further developments, including tree clearing, be stopped immediately. ●

## Alcoota Land Claim

The Central Land Council will continue its work on the Alcoota Land Claim following the recent dismissal of an appeal to the Northern Territory Court of Appeal.

The Court dismissed the appeal by the Arthur Turner and the Alcoota Aboriginal Corporation. The plaintiffs / appellants sought to argue a number of technical legal objections, with the intention of preventing the Alcoota land claim from proceeding.

The CLC Director, David Ross, says that after a decade of disputes, the land claim lodged in 1993 under the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act (NT) 1976* should now continue.

The land claim was part heard in 1996 but the Aboriginal Land Commissioner Mr Justice Gray suspended further hearing of the claim pending the outcome of the court case.

"At the time the hearing was suspended the judge made the comment that the evidence that had been provided up to that date was, in terms of proof of traditional ownership, one of the strongest land claims he had ever had any involvement with," Mr Ross said.

The Alcoota court case, started in 1996, was heard at first instance before Chief Justice Martin of the Supreme Court of the

Northern Territory in December 2001.

The Judge handed down his decision in August 2002. The decision was a complete victory for the Alcoota land claimants. Each and every one of the arguments raised by the plaintiffs was dismissed by the judge.

The plaintiffs lodged an appeal and on 26 August 2003 the Court of Appeal handed down its decision. All three judges rejected the plaintiff's claims in total and the outcome again was a complete victory for the Alcoota land claimants and the CLC.

The plaintiffs have now sought special leave to appeal to the High Court.

In the meantime the Aboriginal Land Commissioner has determined, in the light of the decision of the Court of Appeal, that the Land Claim should now continue and a date in November has been set down for a directions hearing.

If the application for special leave to appeal is granted the process of the land claim might well be further delayed but for the time being the Alcoota Land Claim is back on again. ●

## Review of Diversionary Scheme now under way

A review of the Northern Territory's Juvenile Pre-Court Diversion Scheme (JPCDS) and Aboriginal Interpreter Service (AIS) has begun with submissions being taken through to the end of October.

Both the JPCDS and the AIS were set up in 1999 with \$20 million in Commonwealth funds following widespread concerns over the NT's discriminatory mandatory sentencing laws, subsequently repealed by the Labor Government following its election in 2001.

In the four years since the two schemes were set up, more than 2,000 juveniles have been offered diversion through the JPCDS and three case management services have been established in urban centres.

The AIS has employed around 250 interpreters covering more than 100 languages and has responded to over 5,000 interpreter requests.

Independent consultant Urbis Keys Young has been appointed to conduct the review under the direction of principal reviewer Alison Wallace.

Ms Wallace said the review would look

closely at the effectiveness of the diversion scheme in diverting young people from the criminal justice system, and the AIS in alleviating language barriers.

"(The review) is likely to have an important impact on the future of diversion and the provision of Aboriginal interpreting services in the Territory," she said.

"We want to hear from young people involved in the diversion program as well as their parents and other family members."

Meetings have already been held in Darwin, Wadeye, Groote Eylandt and the Tiwi Islands, with more scheduled in late October for Alice Springs, Papunya, Tennant Creek and Katherine.

Submissions must be sent to the review team by the end of October.

The review team can be contacted by calling (02) 8233 9900 or emailing to [awallace@urbis.com.au](mailto:awallace@urbis.com.au). ●

# King backs Danila Dilba on child abuse strategy

**The current system protecting children from child abuse is inadequate and in need of review, according to a prominent Northern Territory Aboriginal media identity.**

Charlie King is best known as a sports broadcaster, but not too many would know that for more than 20 years he's been fighting to end child abuse in our communities.

Mr King made his concerns public at the launch of the Danila Dilba Medical Service initiative "Safer Communities, Safer Children" in Darwin on 13 September.

The Aboriginal-controlled and Darwin-based Danila Dilba has made combating child abuse a top priority.

"I am distraught at the amount of abuse being levelled at children today," Mr King said. "The system we have in place is 20 years old, and it simply isn't working."

"It is in need of review, but it shouldn't be an internal review as the Government

has identified. If we are serious about fixing the problem, then it must be an external review."

Mr King believes an external review would ask the relevant questions, not overlook or shy away from them as an internal review might.

"We've seen so many internal reviews that it is becoming a continuous thing. If you get a system to review itself, it doesn't ask the hard questions, and as a result, confidence in that system lacks and the cycle continues," he said.

Difficult to detect, still the number of reported child abuse incidents is on the increase. Those working within the system say the number of cases reported would,



Guest speakers at the Danila Dilba *Safer Communities, Safer Children* launch sadly, only represent half of the actual cases existing. The perpetrators are largely men, and often the incidents are extreme.

Danila Dilba Medical Service Chief Executive Kez Hall has committed her organisation to reporting all and every case that is treated by the service.

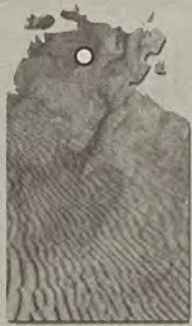
"Danila Dilba will automatically report child abuse cases, and we believe we can lead the way towards a national model," Ms Hall said.

A series of information pamphlets and

handouts has been produced not only to inform parents and adults of the severity and long lasting effects of child abuse, but also to encourage children to report incidents.

Further information on how to stop child abuse can be obtained by contacting the National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) on 08-8931 0477, or the Danila Dilba Medical Service in Darwin on 08-8936 1717.

## Kakadu traditional owners hit back at park critics



**Traditional owners of Kakadu National Park have hit back at critics of current park management arrangements, saying there is no campaign to restrict visitor numbers or permanently close off sections of the park.**

Their comments followed a sustained attack on park management by politicians and some tour operators during July, sparked by the closure of Twin Falls to swimmers after the sighting of a large crocodile in the area.

The Chairperson of the Kakadu Board of Management, Jonathon Nadji, said: "Parks Australia and traditional owners are NOT trying to keep tourists out of Kakadu."

"As an example Parks has just spent lots of money on a new campground at Jim Jim Falls. Parks are supporting the tourism industry and wanting tourists to come to Kakadu and Jim Jim and Twin Falls."

"Park staff and traditional owners have been working very hard on finding a safe solution for tourists to visit Twin Falls. Traditional owners feel responsible for the safety of tourists visiting their country. They do not want to feel responsible for the death or injury of park visitors."

NLC Chief Executive Norman Fry backed traditional owners' concerns, calling on critics of Kakadu management



Twin Falls

arrangements to discuss their concerns with the Kakadu Board of Management rather than engage in self-serving media campaigns.

"The traditional owners of Kakadu have a wealth of knowledge about their country built up over thousands of years of occupation that they are keen to share with outsiders," he said.

"It would be better for all concerned if the Kakadu critics started listening to the traditional owners and working with them to improve the visitor experience at Kakadu, rather than poisoning the atmosphere with unfounded conspiracy theories."

## Jawoyn take up the Itinerants challenge

**The Northern Territory's major regional centres are moving to reduce anti-social behaviour as the collaborative Itinerants Project expands beyond the confines of Darwin.**

The Harmony Project in the town of Katherine is one such project seeking long-term solutions to a deeply entrenched problem.

Heavily involved in the project, the Jawoyn Association has welcomed the collaborative approach, and is working hard to formulate ideas and strategies to prevent the escalation of incidents.

The level of co-operation that exists between all involved is a positive foundation according to Jawoyn Association General Manager, Mick Pierce.

"We believe for the first time we've got the three tiers of government and NGOs (non government organisations) like the Jawoyn absolutely involved in this on a basis that is fair dinkum," Mr Pierce said.

"For the first time in many, many years we are very positive we are going to make some progress."

To ensure that progress is made, the Jawoyn Association has initiated consultations with the Commonwealth on a proposal to re-direct welfare payments.

Removing the opportunity for entire cheques to be spent on alcohol and other

substance abuse is regarded as a step in the right direction, allowing women and children the opportunity to purchase necessary home items.

"It will remove the ability for people to consume their entire cheque on alcohol ... it's attempting to ensure kids get fed," Mr Pierce said.

The Jawoyn Association is under no illusions about the enormity of the task confronting it and other organisations involved in the project. Implementing the completed strategy will not be restricted to the town of Katherine itself.

"It is a regional project, it is not Katherine-centric, and I think we are going to make some progress. There is a fair bit of pressure on to get some runs on the board," Mr Pierce said.

"It is something the Jawoyn Association and other Aboriginal groups in the Katherine region have wanted to see for some time, and it's also a viewpoint that's been taken up by a whole lot of community groups. The attitude and the drive in it is very positive," Mr Pierce said.

The Harmony Project forms part of the Itinerants Project launched by the NLC, ATSIC, the NT Government, Larrakia Nation and others in 2002. After providing start-up funding for the project, the NT Government allocated \$5.25 million in this year's May Budget to expand the project into regional areas.

# Railway arrives in Darwin

The 1,420 kilometre rail line linking the north and south of Australia has finally arrived in Darwin.

The last official length of track was clipped into place during a special ceremony at Darwin's East Arm Port facility on 25 September.

Northern Territory Chief Minister, Clare Martin, and former Darwin Lord Mayor, Dr Ella Stack, handled the honour of securing the final pandrol clip in place.

Mrs Martin said the event was not only an historic occasion, it was also a great opportunity for industry and business to develop strong trade links with Asia.

"To stand here on the Port and realise that the line now comes from Adelaide through to Darwin is many years of promises realised, and is a great historic occasion for the Territory, but, also says – this is about the future," Mrs Martin said.

"We've constructed a fantastic railway line, a new trade-link, and now we've got to make it work – and that really is the challenge."

A keen supporter of the railway, Dr Stack – Darwin's first Lord Mayor – waited al-



Left: Final track laying at Darwin's East Arm Port

Above: Prime Minister Howard with Indigenous workers

most 25 years to witness an event she thought might never happen.

"I was very involved – it was my magnificent obsession," Dr Stack said. "There really was something sad and incomplete about a line that ended in Alice Springs in 1929."

The completion ceremony came just weeks after a visit by Prime Minister John Howard to a railway construction site north of Adelaide River, where he was able to see the benefits of the NLC's Indigenous employment and training program on the railway.

Mr Howard met several Indigenous railway workers and was briefed by NLC Chief Executive Norman Fry on potential opportunities for Indigenous people to participate in further major projects in the Top End.

"The Prime Minister has made it clear that genuine economic development for Australia's Indigenous peoples is among his top priorities, as it is for the NLC," Mr Fry said. "There is no doubt he was impressed by what he saw."

Under its innovative training and employment program, the NLC in partnership

with the Territory Construction Association took direct responsibility for identifying, training and providing on-the-job mentoring to Indigenous people as part of its "One Point of Contact" approach.

The NLC plans to use the same model to pursue Indigenous employment and training initiatives on other major projects planned for the Top End.

While track laying on the railway is now complete, work continues with the first freight train scheduled to arrive in Darwin in January 2004.

## Training nets jobs for Aboriginal graduates

The NLC has achieved further success with its employment and training strategy, securing jobs and apprenticeships for the first Aboriginal graduates from a major projects training program.

Eleven graduates received their certificates on 22 September from Labor MLA and Government Whip Delia Lawrie, with another 10 course participants due to graduate by mid-October.

Already 12 apprenticeships and two skilled labouring jobs have been offered to the graduates from major NT-based construction firms Building Skills (a subsidiary of Northern Construction) and Sitzler Brothers. Four more jobs will be offered to graduates when construction begins on Darwin's Chinatown development.

NLC Chief Executive Norman Fry said the job offers were "a clear demonstration" of the benefits flowing to Aboriginal job seekers from the burgeoning partnership between the NLC and the Territory



Graduates from the major projects training course with NLC staff Richard Buckle (far left) and Patrick Briston (bottom row, centre)

Construction Association (TCA).

He said the likely graduation of 21 Aboriginal trainees – most of them Larrakia – from a total intake of 30 was an above-average outcome for training programs of this type.

"We would anticipate all 21 graduates

being placed in employment or apprenticeships within the next month," Mr Fry said.

The training program was announced on 6 June and arose out of an agreement between the NLC, TCA and the NT Government. It provided for an initial 30

Indigenous pre-employment training positions in a course custom-designed to meet construction industry needs.

All graduates receive the industry-accredited Certificate 1 in General Construction, although their training has also included additional units from Certificate 2 and Certificate 3 courses.

Graduate Henry Rainger said the training program had given him the confidence he needed to break into the skilled employment market.

"This course gives you accreditation towards an apprenticeship program. It gives you the edge over someone who doesn't have the certificates," he said.

"They made it enjoyable for us. The course was helpful, it was good, and I had no problems with it at all."

Mr Fry said that if NT industry was serious about growing the Top End's economy, it was vital to develop a permanent skilled workforce with strong Aboriginal representation.

"Others may come and go, but for Aboriginal Territorians, this is our home and we're here for the long term," he said. "It makes sense to make the most of the potential we have to offer."

# Gibbo in the running for Award



Geoffrey Gibson (right) with workmates Paul Ross and Daryl Shaw

**Geoffrey Gibson (Gibbo), a Warlpiri man from Nyirripi, is a finalist for the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations Outstanding Individual Award for 2003.**

His nomination for the award has come from his persistence, hard work and dedication to the job.

Gibbo first came to Central Land Council in August 2000, seeking work with mines in the Tanami area. Gibbo at that time was unable to fill out the forms required by Roche Mining due to his lack of schooling and in particular his lack of reading and writing.

He is a Warlpiri man who has lived at Nyirripi for most of his life, coming into Alice Springs to play Aussie Rules on the weekends whenever he could.

In January 2001 Gibbo was finally offered a place in an eight-day familiarisation Indigenous Training program at the Granites Gold Mine run in conjunction with Roche Mining, CLC and the Granites Gold Mine operators as a means of getting Indigenous people employed on site.

Gibbo was very keen and showed a great deal of interest in the course which included site inductions, working with the blast crew, dump trucks and helping the service men with their duties.

Once Gibbo completed the course, he had to wait a further six months before a position became available with Roche at the Granites Gold Mine. While waiting, Gibbo continued to work at the Nyirripi Store on the community where he grew up as a child and where his family resides.

In July 2001 Gibbo finally started work as a trainee plant operator, moving through all areas of the Roche operations at the mine site. However, he indicated his preference to work with the blast crew. All reports received by the CLC's Mining Employment Unit stated that they had never seen anyone as keen and enjoy their work as

much as Gibbo, despite the difficulties of living in two cultures.

To help with his reading and writing problem, Gibbo signed himself up with the WELL (Workplace English, Language and Literacy) program available on the mine site, and since then his numeracy and literacy skills have improved. Gibbo has been attending the WELL program of his own volition since he started with Roche.

As a means of selling the employment opportunities available in this field to his own people, Roche Mining has called on Gibbo, the CLC's Mining Employment Unit, Newmont and other contractors to participate in a Career Day on the communities in the Warlpiri area, outlining the benefits of working within the mining industry.

Gibbo is a tremendous ambassador for his own people, with the ability to talk to his community in the English and Warlpiri languages.

The CLC can only stand back and admire Gibbo for what he has done and achieved so far through the process. He has decided to stand up and go for what he wants and believes in. He has progressed in his employment field, and wishes to go on and do better, and the way he sees this happening is by improving on his reading and writing skills and continuing to work.

His voluntary attendance at the WELL program is an example of how much he wants to achieve and improve his own life and work skills.

The CLC wishes Geoffrey Gibson all the best in his nomination for the Outstanding Individual Award. Geoffrey certainly is a glowing example for his people. ●



The Larrakia Nation aged care graduates

## Milestone for Larrakia Nation Aged Care

**Larrakia Nation's aged care program reached a new milestone in August, with the first seven aged care students graduating from the Certificate II course in Community Services Aged Care Work.**

Graduates Roxy Musk, Pauline Baban, Rosemary Parfitt, Tanya Williams, May Timacpatua, Lorelle Fejo and Jocelyn Archer will form the foundation staff of Larrakia Nation's planned aged care facility, which will be located next to the Larrakia Nation offices at Karawa Park, Marrara.

Larrakia Nation Coordinator Kelvin Costello said the aged care facility would provide services to elderly Larrakia who wished to be cared for at home.

"This facility will coordinate the delivery of services such as food, upkeep and in-home nursing," he said. "It's been two years since we undertook this

program to deliver in-home care and we believe we now have a model that will work well with our community."

Graduation certificates were presented by Fay Acklin, Head Lecturer in Health Studies at the Batchelor Indigenous Institute of Tertiary Education (BIITE) and Francis Storer, BIITE council member.

"I know our elders will be in the best hands," Ms Acklin said at the conclusion of the graduation ceremony.

Larrakia Nation is due to hold the official opening ceremony for its new premises on 17 October. The premises already include a main office, a nursery and an art and craft workshop. ●

Francis Storer, Rosemary Parfitt (with certificate) and Fay Acklin





# Defence signs ILUA over Bradshaw Station

*'In the Dreamtime this land was covered by ocean and a big tidal wave came and washed away our Dreamtime and spiritual soul was taken away by the big tidal wave. So I built a wall to stop the tidal wave but I couldn't protect my land. So as you can see now the hills are built as a wall. Then it made itself as rivers and land and animals as you can see the Victoria River now.'*



This simple but powerful description of the Dreaming story for the Bradshaw Station area was sung in language by Nungali/Ngaliwurru elder Jerry Jones on 16 July, the day traditional owners and the Department of Defence signed an Indigenous Land Use Agreement covering the station.

Defence is now moving ahead with developing the 8,700 square kilometre station into northern Australia's largest training facility.

Under the terms of the agreement, Defence can use the former cattle station for an initial period of 75 years with a right to renew for up to 225 years, and have won traditional owners' consent for the construction of a bridge, an all-weather road and other infrastructure including accommodation facilities.

In return Defence has agreed to protect sacred sites and guarantee access to Bradshaw by the area's 800 traditional owners in addition to undertaking a raft of financial, training and employment commitments.

Importantly, native title will not be extinguished by the defence purposes lease.

Traditional owners, Defence Department



Left: Alan Griffiths presents a painting to Defence Minister Robert Hill  
Below left: Onlookers and dancers

personnel, NLC officers and politicians joined Defence Minister Robert Hill at the signing ceremony, during which Senator Hill thanked traditional owners and the NLC for persevering during the lengthy negotiations that led up to the ILUA signing.

"This is the most significant agreement

to date to be concluded by the Commonwealth under the *Native Title Act*," Senator Hill said. "It will provide a critical training ground in northern Australia for the Army's 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade."

Senior Aboriginal elders Alan Griffiths and Captain Waditj described the moment



as a "landmark" for the Jamundjung, Nungali/Ngaliwurru, Murinkura, Muringpatha and Wardaman people.

"Our country is more important to us than words can convey," Mr Griffiths said. "This agreement will allow us to set our own course, and will help keep our people strong."

Bradshaw Station was established in 1894 and was run as a pastoral venture until being bought by Defence in 1996. Documented Aboriginal resistance to the occupation of their lands continued through to 1932, although Aboriginal people eventually formed the backbone of the station's workforce.

However, the Aboriginal workforce walked off the station in 1978 in a dispute over wages, never to return.

NLC Chief Executive Norman Fry said the agreement offered traditional owners a "fresh start".

"This agreement shows what can be achieved when government is prepared to sit down with Aboriginal people and talk to them as equals," he said. "I congratulate all those who played their part in making this agreement a reality."

## Hard work pays off for Pastoral Project players

**The Indigenous Land Corporation, the Northern Land Council, Central Land Council and the Northern Territory Government collaboration on the Indigenous Pastoral Project continues to move forward.**

Several Aboriginal pastoral properties are gearing up for a brighter future based upon strong strategic planning coupled with good old-fashioned hard work.

Elsy Station has moved to increase its productivity by recently advertising for business partners to lease two sections of the property. The two leases should run approximately 3,000 head of cattle each, and will create additional revenue for the station that can be put back into infrastructure development.

John Edwards from the ILC, who is coordinating the expressions of interest, said: "Interest in the leases has been terrific with 40 applications from across Australia - it just goes to show the willingness of the pastoral industry to do business with Aboriginal people."



Ngali-Wurru rangers Eric Lewis, Aldrid Jones, Roy MacMillan and Lindsay Daly building a trough at Auvergne Station

The expressions of interest are currently being reviewed and a decision is imminent.

Amanbidji Aboriginal Corporation continues to move forward, with mustering taking place across the property in readiness for a potential business partner and to sort out cattle from neighbouring properties. Two detailed property

management plans are being prepared and should form the basis of a future lease arrangement.

The cattle committee at the Minyerri community is in the process of fencing 22 kilometres of the Hodgson River. The fence will protect the river from cattle and form part of a major paddock area. Funding for

this project was sourced from the Roper River Landcare Group.

The Wagiman Guwardagun Rangers have been working long hours fencing off a holding paddock for breeding stock that they plan to purchase soon. This will create a starting point from which to expand their cattle enterprise. They have continued working with the mustering contractor across their large area of Land Trust land.

Corporate governance training is also proving a big hit. Several groups are now undertaking training thanks to funding support from the NT Farmbiz Program.

It's not only Aboriginal people with pastoral land that can benefit from the pastoral industry. The Ngali-Wurru Rangers at Timber Creek have been completing contracts for Consolidated Pastoral Company and Heytesbury Beef.

The rangers have been fencing and building troughs, as well as doing contract weed control, and have proven such terrific workers that some have been given full-time ringing work on Auvergne Station.

# Traditional fishing not to blame for species decline

**The NLC and traditional owners of sea country have rejected allegations that Aboriginal hunting practices have contributed to the decline of sensitive marine species such as dugong and turtle.**

The allegations arose out of a media release put out by Federal Fisheries Minister Ian Macdonald on 4 August, in which the opening paragraph said the just-released National Recreational and Indigenous Fishing Survey had shown that 26,000 members of such species were killed over a 12-month period by Indigenous hunters.

Senator Macdonald went on to suggest that Indigenous fishing practices were linked to these species' long-term chances of survival.

Buried within his press release were the real figures: Indigenous communities harvest about 3 million aquatic animals annually, compared with recreational fishers who harvest an estimated 136 million aquatic animals. That means that Indigenous hunters take just 2 per cent of the total non-commercial marine harvest annually.

Researchers have also estimated that the Aboriginal take of dugong in the Top End is less than 1% of the total dugong population here – even by conservative assessment that is sustainable. Figures for turtles are also similarly low when we take into account the range of species caught.

It therefore defies logic that Indigenous communities are responsible for the long-term decline of sensitive aquatic species. But don't tell the media outlets, who hopped on Senator Macdonald's bandwagon virtually without exception.

NLC Chief Executive Norman Fry said Senator Macdonald's focus on sustainability needed to be directed at the recreational and commercial fishing industries, rather than using Indigenous people as a soft target.

"Aboriginal people are watching trawlers and net fishermen catch tonnes and tonnes of bycatch in their sea country, which is not sustainable," he said. "We are also largely excluded from the commercial industry despite our traditional links to the sea and its resources."



A Dhimurru ranger frees a turtle trapped by drift nets

The facts are that Aboriginal people living on the coast have raised concerns about overfishing, by-catch and habitat damage for years.

Modern resource managers could learn a lot from Aboriginal systems of traditional law and sea country management. Under Aboriginal law you cannot simply deplete a fishery and move on to the next area as our current management arrangements allow.

People are responsible for their sea country – they live on it and if the environment is damaged they pay the price.

Senator Macdonald's attempt to cast Indigenous people as the villains in this piece is nothing but camouflage to avoid the hard questions: how to regulate the recreational fishing sector, and how to impose responsible fishing practices on profit-driven commercial operators. ●

## Thamarrurr rangers in new coastcare plan



NLC Deputy CEO John Berto discusses the plan with ranger Leonard Dulla

**The Thamarrurr Land and Sea Management Plan developed by traditional owners in the community of Wadeye (Port Keats) is the latest addition to a coast care movement that is growing rapidly across the Top End.**

Launched at the community on 25 September by Project Coordinator Scott McIntyre, the management plan combines traditional hunting and gathering patterns with known seasonal patterns.

It's an important aspect according to Arthur Karui, Senior Ranger with the 13-strong Thamarrurr Rangers group, which

started last year with just four rangers.

"The plan tells us to follow the direction of the old people. The people know the ways to look after our country. The plan lets us do that," Mr Karui said.

Mr McIntyre said traditional owners were keen to develop a plan of action that would help protect their country.

"The local council and traditional owners recognised that issues such as illegal entries onto coastal areas, soil erosion, weeds, feral animals and fire all needed some form of control."

With the help of traditional owners and agencies such as the NLC, NT Fisheries, Coastcare and the Natural Heritage Trust, the plan is now a reality. ●

## Sea Ranger workshop



**An innovative training program being conducted in the Top End of the Northern Territory is setting the trend for the rest of the country.**

With southern States looking on, the Northern Land Council with funding support from the World Wildlife Fund for Nature, the NT Government's FarmBiz program and the Department of Employment, Education and Training has brought together a range of agencies to skill and educate members of Aboriginal Sea Ranger programs across the Top End.

To achieve this goal, training workshops have been held this year in regional locations. The most recent was held between 29 September and 3 October at the picturesque Mariah Outstation, located on the Cobourg Peninsula in the NT.

Here, more than 35 attendees from coastal communities along the western half of the NT were taught skills they will need to know to carry out their work.

Bryan Harty, Employment and Training Officer with the NLC's Caring for Country Unit, says there are other, more practical advantages of hosting the workshops.

"It's an ideal way to bring people together," he said. "These workshops introduce rangers to relevant agencies they will have to liaise with in their day-to-day operations. But as well as that, they are taking the first steps towards acquiring

their Certificate Two in Fisheries Compliance."

The workshops teach valuable skills such as safe boating techniques, marine debris identification, GPS mapping and location skills, marine pest monitoring techniques and conducting sea animal autopsies.

Learning in an outdoor environment on country has real benefits, according to Patrick Lami Lami of the Goulburn Island Sea Ranger Program. He says new skills can often be employed on site as they are taught.

"We've got heaps of nets washing up onto our shores, and we get trawling boats coming up too close to our community. Hopefully we'll get this sorted out pretty soon," Mr Lami Lami said.

The development of the sea ranger network, encompassing 14 coastal communities and 60 active rangers, is an initiative whose merits have been recognised by both industry and government. There are currently 12 sea rangers (Dhimurru, Djelk, Mabunji, Thamarrurr, Tiwi, and Anindilyakwa) working in Aboriginal communities funded and resourced by either DBIRD's Fisheries Group or community funds.

Government agencies such as Customs, Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service and the Marine Fisheries Enforcement Unit recognise the ability of sea rangers to actively and successfully collaborate with them. ●

## Quolls alive and thriving

**Quolls are alive and thriving on two islands in the remote English Company Island group off the north-east Arnhem Land coast following their relocation there in February and March this year.**

The quolls were moved to the islands from the mainland in a joint rescue program mounted by the Department of Infrastructure Planning and Environment (DIPE), the NLC's Caring for Country Unit and Aboriginal traditional owners.

The program was put in place to ensure viable populations of northern quolls remained in the face of a looming invasion of their mainland habitats by the poisonous cane toad.

A follow-up visit to the islands by scientists and traditional owners in July discovered that the quolls had settled into their new homes with gusto.

Consultant scientist Brooke Rankmore described the results as "heartening".

"On both islands, the quolls are thriving," she said. "Pretty well all the quolls



Pouches full of babies

re-caught had put on plenty of weight and were in great condition. All the female quolls caught had pouches full of babies."

"We found quoll tracks and other evidence over most of the islands, well away from release points. They are obviously finding the islands very suitable, paradise even."

Traditional owners will continue to monitor the quolls' progress in between now and the next scientific assessment, which is due to take place in January or February next year. ●



Sandy Willy and Roy Yaltjanki at one of the rockholes being protected

## Kaltukatjara Rockholes finally get a clean up



**The Central Land Council, Kaltukatjara Council and traditional owners are working together to protect important rock holes in the Petermann Ranges.**

Three senior men, Sandy Willy, Ron Allen and Roy Yaltjanki, have continually raised their growing concerns about the damage that feral camels are causing to some of the rock holes in the area.

Many of these rock holes hold significant cultural importance to the people, who want to protect them from any further desecration.

Early this year the Kaltukatjara Reconnect project obtained funding for a Work for the Dole project to undertake work on the rock holes.

This project was initiated by the elders of the community and is having a positive impact, bringing senior men and a group of young unemployed men together to look after their country.

Initial work for the project involved

surveying the rock holes in the area south of Docker River and assessing their condition.

The work being carried out on the rock holes varies from the need for a steel mesh cover to form a removable lid to others which need a lot of work including cleaning out the rock hole and refilling as well as covering.

The aim of the work being carried out is to have as little long-term impact on the sites as possible, thereby avoiding the use of bolts or any other permanent fixtures.

A CLC staff member is working closely with the group on the rock hole project as well as talking with them to explore other land management related issues in the area like a proposed tourism venture, fauna surveys and the establishment of an ongoing landcare unit at Docker River. ●

## Garden Open Day



Macka talking to visitors about the vegetable garden

**Sharing information and knowledge is just one step in helping communities on the way to self-sufficiency.**



And that's why the family at John Holland North outstation (90 kilometres south of Alice Springs) held a vegetable garden open day inviting communities to

share in their knowledge and expertise on how they got started, where they got help, the people they saw, cost of materials, garden design and watering methods.

Members of the Ali Curung community - President Creed Nelson, Lennie Nelson and

Mick Warka - made the long journey south to visit the John Holland North outstation open day.

The Ali Curung men said they were frustrated with waiting for the younger ones to get a garden going for the community and instead decided they would get it going. In the early days Mick Warka used to look after a small garden at Ali Curung but said he did it the hard way, and after seeing the vegetable garden at John Holland North outstation said this was a better and much easier method.

The only real problem they saw was trying to keep all the young kids out of the vegetable garden.

After just one year's hard work the 240 square metre vegetable garden has an ample supply of fresh produce. Three hundred pumpkins, 100 silverbeet, 400 cabbage, 100 tomatoes, 500 turnips, 100 broccoli, 200 watermelon and 200 rockmelon are just the start of their new garden.

They turned to making a garden for health reasons when Macka's wife was diagnosed with diabetes and with many other family members also suffering from health problems such as asthma.

The family sees their new garden as a pathway to self-sufficiency. Macka and Ruth's plans have grown in record time as their four grandsons completed horticultural studies through Centralian College with ongoing plans for their grand daughter to start studies in business administration to help with the family business.

The John Holland North outstation was

just a prickly patch when the family first moved back onto their country at the end of December 2001.

With their first vegetable garden underway early this year they had plenty of produce to enter at the Alice Springs Show and became the talk of the town, becoming Grand Champions in the agriculture and horticultural section of the show.

Their plans of making a garden to give the younger people something constructive to do and to provide the family with healthy eating on their land has progressed into a market garden which is already supplying fresh produce to the Titjikala store 100 kilometres south west of the outstation.

The family is also trying the town market but competition from down south is proving a challenge.

For information on getting a garden started contact Tangentyere on (08) 8953 3120, CLC on (08) 8950 5013 or Centralian College (Geoff Miers) on (08) 8959 5247. ●

# Coniston Massacre Remembrance Day



It seemed an unlikely spot for a major event with hundreds of guests. Brooks Soak, 280 kilometres north west of Alice Springs, is a small portion of Crown land surrounded by Mt Denison pastoral lease.

Yuendumu is the nearest community - 60 kilometres away along the old Tanami Highway, little more than a dusty track.

But this patch of land on the banks of a creek is well remembered as the site of the murder of Frederick Brooks 75 years ago, a murder that triggered vicious reprisals which left many innocent Aboriginal people dead and others fleeing their traditional country for years.

Despite the distance and the heat, nearly 800 people turned out to acknowledge a little known piece of Australian history. Visitors from Darwin, Canberra and Melbourne as well as the local Anmatyerr, Warlpiri, and Kaytetye people all joined each other in one of the few truly reconciling events of recent years.

Liza Dale Hallett, great niece of the infamous Constable Murray, delivered a moving speech and said she hoped that the occasion would "offer a gift of peace to the spirits of those who were killed and each person who is connected with this massacre" and to provide a greater understanding of the way the past affected the future.

"The Coniston Massacre links my life with yours. We share this past. We also share the future. I hope that our coming together today will help us to find new meanings from our difficult and painful pasts, and to create a future that gives respect to the diversity and equal rights of all Australians," she said.

She said that her deepest wish was that non-Indigenous Australians would extend the same generosity of spirit to Aboriginal Australians, as they had extended to her and her husband Martin at the Coniston Commemoration Day.

Many Aboriginal people took the opportunity to tell of the pain and distress that the massacre had caused their families. Others

stressed the need to move forward while still remembering their ancestors. David Stafford, grandson of Brooks' mate and Coniston Station boss Randall Stafford, said Stafford had told his father, who was also present at the ceremony, that many of his family "from the Anmatyerr were killed and that's why there are not many left."

"That's why we've come forward with this old man to keep moving forward as a family and as a tribe because even now we don't know our great grandfathers and great grandmothers due to them being killed," he said.

Kaytetye man Thommy Thompson stressed the need to move on and educate their children. "We'll put it in our history and we've got a good start with all our new generations We've got a big job with our kids to school them and teach them," Mr Thompson said. "We're sorry about this, we all know that, don't forget this and we just keep up with new generations for a new life."

The Central Land Council's field kitchen was in full swing providing meals to the guests, while Sammy Butcher with his band Tjupa and the Lander River band entertained everybody until late at night.

The community of Willowra had worked for months to make gifts for speakers who had come especially from interstate and to paint a banner, which was quickly purchased by Museum Australia for its special display about the Coniston Massacre.

Finally the plaque was unveiled, and to the delight of the many guests and journalists at Brooks Soak, ladies from Willowra, Mt Allen and Yuendumu provided some spectacular dancing to finish the day.

The Day was organised and compered by a committee of Warlpiri people including Duncan Brown Jampijinja, Harry Nelson Jakamarra, Jeannie Herbert Nungarrayi and Teresa Ross Napurrulla.



# Making Peace with the Past

***"At Pilykirparla, the white man came upon Yinirpi's father (Japaljarri). He had one boomerang with him. They shot him, they shot him, they shot him. He was singing a spell on them and with that he was waving one boomerang. They were shooting until they ran out of bullets but none of the bullets could hit him."*** (Jack Ross Jakamarra interviewed by Teresa Ross Napurrula)

The story of the Coniston killings is well known to many Central Australian Aboriginal people. It has been told and retold to generations of Aboriginal children by their parents and grandparents but most Australians are still unaware that such a brutal event happened in our recent past.

For many years Aboriginal people in the region have been asking the Central Land Council for a memorial to those who were killed, and this year, the 75th anniversary of the Coniston killings, seemed like a good opportunity to commemorate the event.

What is now known as the Coniston Massacre was in fact a series of punitive raids following two key events. The first began after the murder of Frederick Brooks on 7 August 1928 at Yurrkuru (Brooks Soak). Brooks, a friend of Randall Stafford who ran Coniston, had set out with camels from Coniston in the hope of improving his fortune trapping a few dingos. He set up camp at the soakage and was by many accounts well-liked by the local Aboriginal people.

Many innocent Aboriginal people were caught up in the violence that followed.

There are many stories told about Bullfrog (Japanangka) and the man who killed Brooks – some say he had one wife staying with Brooks, some say he had two. Most agree that Bullfrog was angry about his wife staying with Brooks and that perhaps Brooks didn't pay him enough in rations. A reprisal party led by Constable George Murray, who was already on his way to investigate cattle killings at Pine Hill and Coniston, set out from Coniston Station on 16 August and killed five people that day.

Below: Bullfrog (Japanangka) hid from the revenge party in a cave.



By the time they returned to Coniston Station on 30 August at least 17 people were dead.

People still visit the cave where Bullfrog hid from the revenge party with his little dog. Bullfrog blocked the entrance of the cave with a stone or spinifex to hide himself. He lived to an old age until he died peacefully at Yuendumu.

*"At Yurrkuru my grandfather killed a whitefella. He hit the whitefella because the whitefella stole his wife. That old lady was my grandmother, a Napurrula. She was frightened when that whitefella took her – that's why the old man hit him. After that the old man ran up to the hills to hide. My grandfather was living in the hills, in a cave. That's what saved his life while the police were out looking for him. He stayed in the hills. They didn't find him because he was sitting in the cave."*

(Rosie Nungarrayi speaking with Petronella Vaarzon Morel, *Warlpiri Womens Voices*, IAD Press 1995, p36)

Meanwhile, at Boomerang Waterhole, up on the Lander River, Nugget Morton was attacked by a group of Aboriginal men. He was a very strong man and fought them off



Teresa Ross Napurrula with her father Jack Ross Jakamarra who was a first hand witness of the tragic event in 1928

Murray and his party had acted in self-defence. The Board and its findings were widely criticised for having no Aboriginal witnesses except the tracker Paddy, no counsel for Aboriginal people, and that the evidence was not made public.

Many people still talk about their uncles, fathers and grandfathers who were gunned down during ceremony or hunting. The effect of the Coniston killings is felt widely in Central Australia, scattering people far to the north-west and north-east. Many have never returned since that time 75 years ago.

*"She came with a fire, Napaljarri came with a fire."*

*She was painting herself white in sorrow and putting white ashes all over her body. She was crying. I asked her, "Why are you crying?" Well she struck me again and then she said in handsign, I have no son. All the grandfathers (Jupurrulas) didn't know what was going on. They didn't know. (Jack Ross Jakamarra, Central Land Council, May 2003)*

***"She came with a fire, Napaljarri came with a fire. She was painting herself white in sorrow and putting white ashes all over her body. She was crying. I asked her, "Why are you crying?" Well she struck me again and then she said in handsign, I have no son. All the grandfathers (Jupurrulas) didn't know what was going on. They didn't know."***

**(Jack Ross Jakamarra, Central Land Council, May 2003)**

and killed one man. He then went for help and eventually sent off a letter from Ti Tree to the police at Alice Springs. Constable Murray arrived in late September and the killings continued around the Lander and Hanson Rivers until mid-October. During August and September 1928 there were a minimum of six sites where massacres are known to have taken place.

The Board of Enquiry which began in late 1928 found that 31 Aboriginal people had been killed by Constable George Murray and others following the murder of Brooks and the attack on Nugget Morton, but it seems likely that there were many more. TGH Strehlow, FW Albrecht, MC Hartwig and even Randall Stafford estimate the death toll was likely to be have been at least double that. The Board of Enquiry also found that

The loss of so many people has long been a cause of deep sadness to Aboriginal people in the region and the lack of acknowledgement by the non-Aboriginal community of what occurred during those fateful months of 1928 increased the despair felt by people about this black moment in our history.

As time has passed most of the Aboriginal people who were present have passed away, although there are still some elderly survivors. However, there are still many accounts told by people in land claim evidence in the 1980s and in other publications such as *Warlpiri Womens Voices*, *Kaytetye Country* and *Long Time Olden Time* (refs).

The story still remains vivid and painful to the descendants.

Tommy Thompson retells the story of his family and the Coniston massacre at the Commemoration day



# Norforce plans new Borrooloola depot

Norforce is planning to extend its presence in Borrooloola with the construction of a depot in the town, which will be backed by the signing of an Indigenous Land Use Agreement.

The depot site has already been fenced off and is right next to the site of the soon-to-be constructed Borrooloola Women's Shelter.

Norforce's second-in-command, Major Mark Hankinson, told *Land Rights News* that the new depot would augment Norforce's existing network of 30 depots spread across the Northern Territory and the Kimberley region of Western Australia.

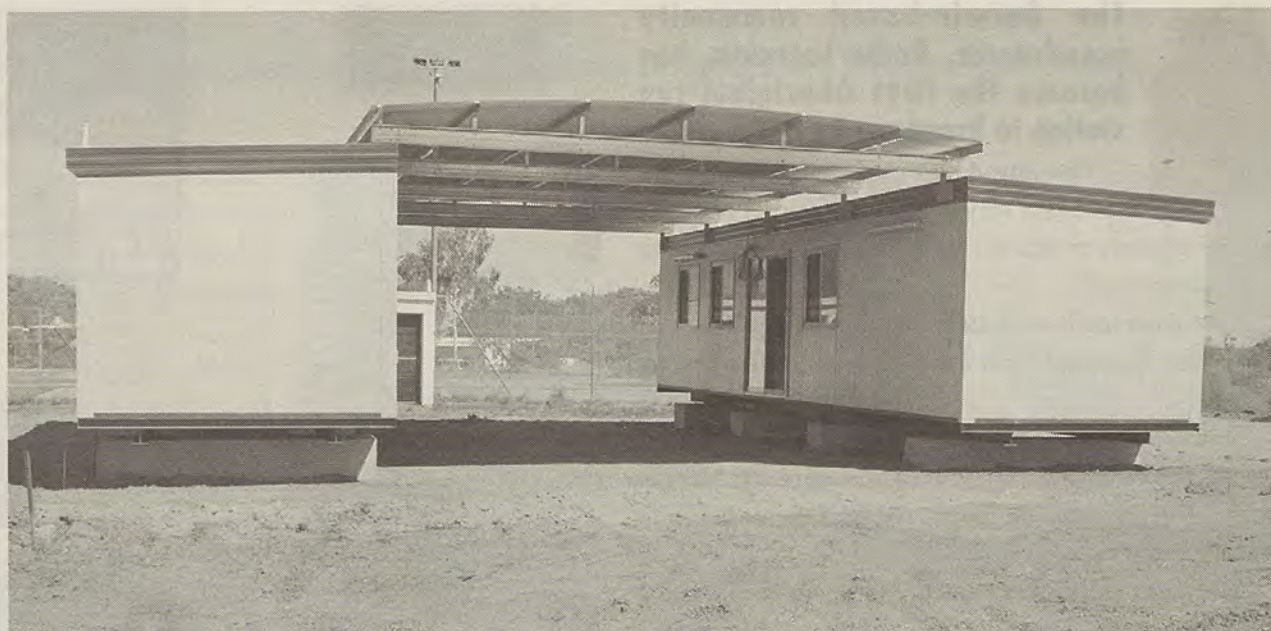
"We have 20 Norforce members in Borrooloola and the community gives us a lot of support," he said.

"In return we want to show our support for them by building a permanent base in Borrooloola, which we've never had before."

Major Hankinson said the depot would be used to store equipment such as vehicles, tents and boats, and would directly support Norforce training in the area.

"As the troops gain skills we would bring in the equipment on which those skills could be used," he said. "At the moment the Borrooloola unit has only basic patrol skills but over the next six to 12 months we believe these soldiers will become fully-trained patrolmen."

"Once that stage is reached it would certainly be



The Borrooloola Youth Centre is close to completion

good to have a depot in place."

Meanwhile, the new \$180,000 Borrooloola Youth Centre is close to completion and should be open before the end of the year.

The centre, which consists of two modules, a covered area and basketball/tennis courts, will focus on providing young people with life skills – such as basic carpentry, mechanical, sewing and plumbing – that they will need as they move into adulthood.

The centre will focus particularly on 'at risk' youth, such as those who have been in trouble with

the police or who have suffered dislocations in their family lives.

It will be staffed by a Youth Coordinator, a Sports and Recreation Coordinator and two youth assistants.

NLC Executive member for Borrooloola, Max Finlay, said the community had been waiting a long time for a facility like the Youth Centre.

"We need to think about the next generation and helping them find a place for themselves in the world," he said. "This centre will go a long way to addressing those problems." ●

## High-speed Internet links for regions

Some 70 Aboriginal communities and community organisations throughout the Northern Territory are set to receive high-speed satellite internet links as the result of a Federal Government initiative.

Funded through the Government's \$8.3 million Telecommunications Action Plan for Remote Indigenous Communities (TAPRIC), the offer includes the supply and installation of equipment such as satellite dishes, cabling, computers, printers and webcams.

The Government hopes the installation of high-speed internet links will lead to lasting improvements in telecommunications services to remote communities.

Telstra has already begun installing the equipment in some Arnhem Land communities with the roll out expected to be completed in the NT by the end of 2003. It is a condition of the Government's funding that all community members should have access to equipment installed in any community.

However, while the equipment and installation are free, communities will be required to meet the cost of one of three satellite internet packages on offer. Costs start at \$16.95 per month for the Home Sat package. Each internet package is available for a minimum 18-month period.

Trainers will be visiting communities between now and March 2004 to show people how to use the equipment, as well as how to make the most of the internet. This will include assistance in establishing and maintaining community websites.

For more information, call Telstra on 1800 680 019. ●

## Gurindji Freedom Day



Central Land Council Member Max Stuart speaking at the Gurindji Freedom Day celebrations

The Kalkaringi and Daguragu communities were in high spirits as they celebrated the anniversary of the famous walk-off from Wave Hill cattle station in 1966.

The weekend of celebrations was kickstarted with a traditional day by the Victoria River, where the community gathered to have a barbecue and listen to guest speakers and elders.

This year the celebrations included lots of sports activities, a battle of the bands and painting and damper competitions with prizes for the best of all categories. ●

# Radio Larrakia goes live ...to the world



**The Darwin-based community broadcaster, Radio Larrakia, has become the first Aboriginal-run station to broadcast to the world.**

The introduction of the station's new Jetstream service via the internet not only allows listeners to tune in, but it also introduces them to Larrakia culture.

Like most innovative ideas, the move towards a web broadcast originated from a simple conversation among friends.

"We initially had a computer problem, and a fellow called Jacob Gray came in to fix it," Office Manager Larry Morgan said. "The conversation progressed, and things began to develop from there."

The idea progressed so much, and so rapidly, that on 3 September, two months after the initial conversation, Radio Larrakia's "Jet-streaming on the internet" became active.

Like Larry Morgan, Program Manager Billy 'T' shares Larry's vision for the future.

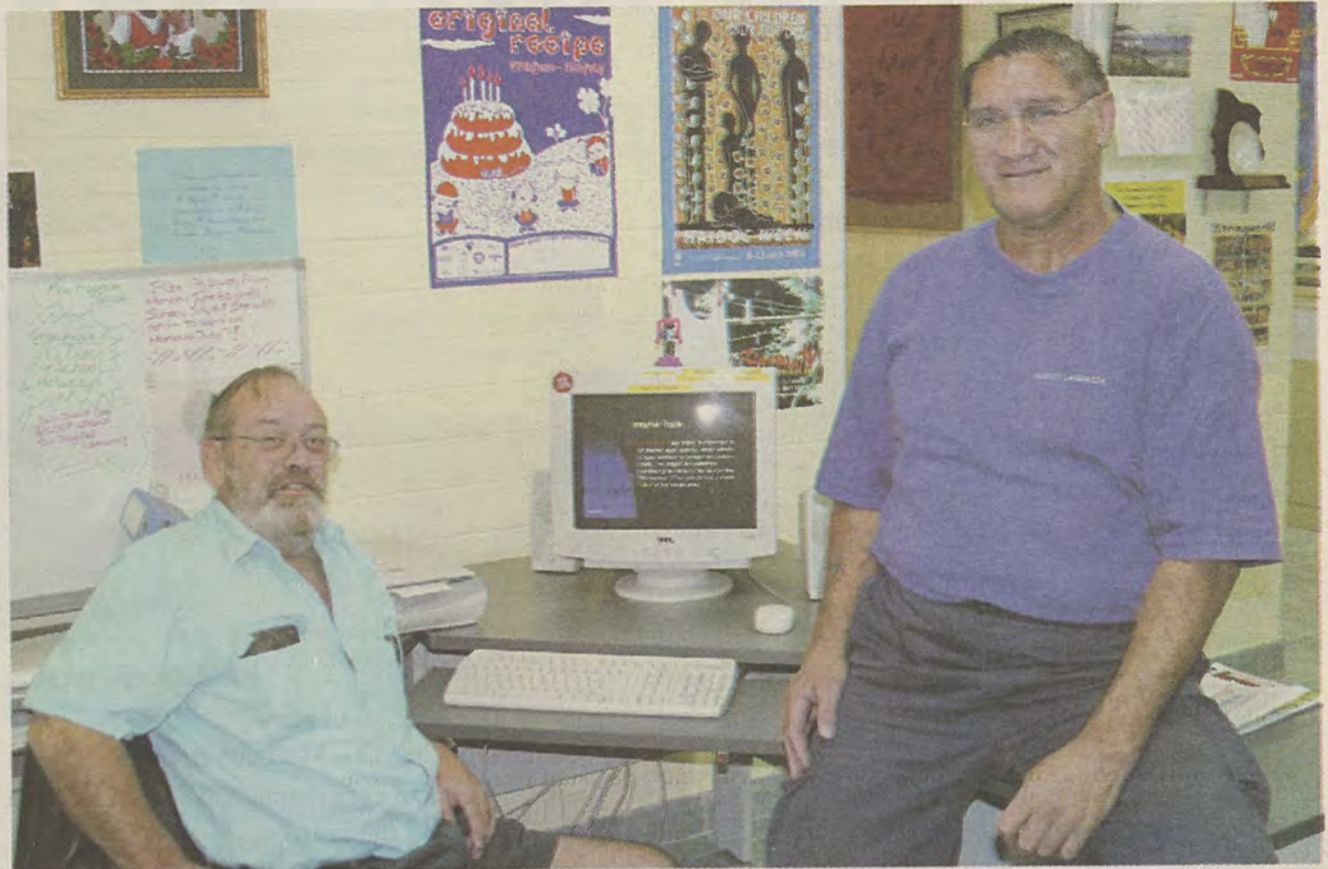
The duo adopted a collaborative approach to their work very early, and the indications are that it is paying dividends for the station.

"We would like to steer this station towards a level of economic independence to ensure the long term viability of the station," Billy said.

Larry Morgan agrees, and can see the new initiative offering up other opportunities.

"We view our access to the web as a positive move towards attracting a major sponsor," Larry said.

Going on-line is another significant step forward for an organisation that has grown from its humble beginnings in a single room in 1999 to now operating two studios, providing 120 hours of programming per week, and



Station manager Larry Morgan with Billy 'T' proudly displaying the new website

accommodating some 60 volunteer presenters.

According to Larry and Billy, the station's strength lies in the flexibility of its programming, which has been tailored to suit its listening audience.

"What we are driven by is helping the community," Larry said. "There is no doubt we have captured the youth market on a Friday night."

With the new service now on-line, Larry and Billy have focused their attention on another task - talent spotting, specifically at the management level.

"We are looking to put a nice solid foundation in place for anyone coming in behind us," Billy said. "We would like to see our positions filled with Larrakia talent."

It's a vision shared by Larry Morgan.

"I would like to leave behind a radio station that is a leader and will continue to be a leader as an Aboriginal community broadcaster in Australia, and possibly the world," Larry said.

Readers can access the site by logging on to [radiolarrakia@internode.on.net](mailto:radiolarrakia@internode.on.net)

# Papunya opens new music studio



**The Papunya community rocked to the sounds of Warumpi Band and former Midnight Oil frontman Peter Garrett as they celebrated the opening of the new Warumpi Recording Studio.**

The new music studio is an initiative of the community wanting to keep the young people away from petrol sniffing.

The Warumpi band's Sammy Butcher, Neil Murray and George Rrurrambu reunited for a one-off performance in honour of the opening.

"Our communities have needed a recording studio for a very long time. Now we have the chance to take our music everywhere," said Sammy Butcher.

"We are not going to just use it for music. We are going to use it for old people too - so their stories can be told in that studio and put on disc. It's going to be there forever for the young kids to listen too. They can listen to their words, Dreamtime stories come from, where their grandfather comes from - everything going to be there," said Sammy.

Papunya's youth coordinator Gavin King said the studio was a big part of the community's youth program, but only part of the solution to beating petrol sniffing.

He said the studio would certainly provide many



Above: A young musician tests out the equipment.

Top left: Young kids with Sammy Butcher

Bottom left: Kids having fun in the studio



opportunities for the community with young people learning how to use the equipment and instruments, music engineering and recording.

The launch of the music studio was a community affair with food stalls, arts and craft stalls, face painting for kids and lots of music to mark the moment.

Funding for this studio has come through a variety of initiatives including World Vision, government departments and Papunya Council.

# Croker children heal the wounds

By their own definition they are a close knit group who get together whenever possible, and during NAIDOC Week this year that's exactly what the Croker Island members of the Stolen Generations did.



The group represents a broad cross section of members who, during the 1940s, '50s and '60s, were removed from their parents from regions throughout the Northern Territory and relocated to remote Croker Island off the Northern Territory coast.

During NAIDOC Week the group visited the NT Archives to continue seeking information on lost relatives and friends, before flying to Croker Island on 8 July for the unveiling of a commemorative plaque.

The group held a family day in the Water Gardens on 10 July, an important occasion for those who lost so much of their personal history.

For many the gathering was an opportunity to renew old acquaintances, share the grieving for those lost and no longer with them, or to just sit and reflect on their time growing up as displaced children.

"When we are amongst ourselves it's

like group therapy, we cry and remember," said Maurie Ryan Japarta, Chairperson of the Croker Island Stolen Generations Aboriginal Corporation. "Each individual copes with it in their own way."

Removed from their biological parents at a young age, the Croker Island children were often kept until late in their teens before being cast off the island and either sent to foster homes or orphanages.

Mr Japarta remembers those times as occasions of confusion and uncertainty.

It was only during his adult life that he was able to gauge the impact the forced removal had on his life.

"As a child your mind doesn't develop, but as an adult you start thinking of those things and the forced displacement," he said.

However, with the help of his adopted family, Mr Japarta, like many others, has managed to reconstruct pieces of his fragmented life.

"We have been a pretty close knit group and we have retained communication over the years," Mr Japarta said. ●



Above: Edna Iles, Irene McLennan and Gladys Long at the family day

Below left: Eileen Sariago and Barbara Raymond

Below right: A historical shot of boy scouts on Croker Island



# All the fun of the fair at Gunbalanya

Over the past 10 years the Gunbalanya Open Day has become a Top End institution, evolving from a fundraising event for the local school into a fully fledged festival and tourist drawcard.



This year's event took place on Saturday 13 September and as usual there was all the fun of the fair, with a football carnival, scenic flights, rock art tours, didgeridu performances and plenty of stalls, including one from the NLC.

Visits to the nearby Injalak Art Centre were popular, especially given the chance to win an Aboriginal painting valued at \$1,000.

In the evening the activities reached a crescendo with a band performance featuring Nabarlek and a fireworks show that lit up the night sky.

Many thanks to all the NLC volunteers who helped organise the NLC's presence at the Open Day. All the pictures on this page were taken by permits officer Natasha Jeffrey, who for once didn't have to worry about permits – the Open Day is the one day when of the year when visitors don't need a permit! ●



Above: Onlookers take in the football action

Right: A dancer at the Open Day





# Garma – bigger and better than ever



The ancient Yolngu ceremonial ground of Gulkula in north-east Arnhem Land came alive once more from 8-12 August as visitors flooded in to participate in the annual celebration of Yolngu culture, the 5<sup>th</sup> Garma Festival.

This year the focus was on Dhuni: Indigenous Arts and Culture, a theme which proved a magnet for Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists, arts workers, gallery owners, curators and others from all over Australia.

Yothu Yindi Foundation Chairman Galarrwuy Yunupingu opened the Festival in front of a display of coffin poles crafted by his family, which he said was the first time his mother's dreaming had been put on public display.

"This Garma is the biggest yet, and it will be a special one for me and my family," Mr Yunupingu told an audience that included NT Chief Minister Clare Martin, Federal Defence Minister Robert Hill, Labor Senator Trish Crossin and Federal Member for Lingiari Warren Snowdon.

Then it was the turn of the Gulpilil Dancers, who performed the Water Python dance amid the coffin poles which told the story of the Wagilag Sisters Dreaming.

The opening set the scene for the rest of the Festival, which included nightly bungguls (performances of dance and song) from a wide variety of Yolngu communities, an exhibition of Yolngu art, a display of coffin poles, bush food workshops, women's basket-weaving workshops, spear making workshops and dance workshops.

The Government Leaders Forum Program was the centrepiece of the festival, with an extensive discussion flowing over two days on various aspects of Indigenous arts and culture, such as legal issues and copyright protection, art centre governance, government art policies and the role of knowledge centres in keeping culture strong.



Galarrwuy Yunupingu with family coffin pole

As part of this there was also a trip to the Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Art Centre in Yirrkala, where Mr Yunupingu personally described the creation and history of the famous church panels crafted by Yolngu elders in the 1960s in which they set out their connection to their country.

Will Stubbs, the art centre manager, followed up with a description of the arts centre, its work and its importance to the community.

Accompanying all this relentless activity were films, musical performances and the sheer pleasure of yarning around the campfire.

However, in terms of sheer atmosphere nothing could beat the nightly experience of watching the sun go down as Yolngu dancers weaved their magic across the sandy expanse of the main ceremony ground, cooled by a soft breeze blowing in from the Arafura Sea.



Scenes from Garma (from top): opening Water Python Dance; performers at the evening bunggul

# Happy 25<sup>th</sup> Birthday Yipirinya School



The Yipirinya school celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary with kids enjoying an end-of-semester school assembly, a big cake and traditional dancing.

The young students shared this important milestone with the grandfathers and grandmothers who helped gather support and funding for the school 25 years ago. Since then the school has continued to grow stronger every year.

The Yipirinya School Council president, Davey Inkamala, helped celebrate the day, saying the school was proud to have over 150 students enrolled and a good network of teaching staff.

Yipirinya school is the only independent Aboriginal school in the Northern Territory still offering 'two-way' education. The school maintains and keeps Aboriginal languages strong and presently teaches four languages – Western Arrernte, Central Arrernte, Luritja and Warlpiri.

The school first started teaching kids under trees and in old sheds in the town camps around Alice Springs. Then after a few years the kids were moved to demountables at Tangentyere and eventually to its present location on an area of land connected to the caterpillar dreaming of Alice Springs where a permanent school has been built.



Above: young dancers. Below: Louise Raggatt with daughter and grand daughter



Above: Pre school kids blow out the candles. Below: Kids enjoying the celebrations



# BRIEFS

## Vanstone takes over Indigenous Affairs

Senator Amanda Vanstone has taken on the portfolio responsibility of Indigenous Affairs following a major Cabinet reshuffle unveiled by Prime Minister John Howard on 29 September. Her predecessor, the Hon. Philip Ruddock, has become the new Federal Attorney General.

Ms Vanstone has already had some experience of Indigenous Affairs through her previous portfolio of Family and Community Services, and has a reputation for being a strong advocate of women's rights. The forthright South Australian senator is also a keen collector of Aboriginal art.

## ATSIC Chair suspended

ATSIC Chair Geoff Clark has been suspended from his position on the grounds of misbehaviour, stemming from an incident in Warrnambool which led to his conviction on

charges of obstructing police and of behaving in a riotous manner in a public place. Mr Clark, who was stood down by former Indigenous Affairs Minister Philip Ruddock on 13 August, is appealing against his conviction. ATSIC Deputy Chair Lionel Quartermaine will act as Chair pending the outcome of the appeal.

## Aboriginal health in crisis

A joint report of the Australian Bureau of Statistics and Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has confirmed that the life expectancy at birth of Indigenous Australians is 20 years lower than the average for the total population. The report, *The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples 2003*, also said that Indigenous mothers were more likely to have babies younger and Indigenous babies were twice as likely both to be of low birthweight and/or to die around the time of birth.

## Farewell, Slim Dusty

Aboriginal people throughout the Northern Territory have mourned the passing of country music legend Slim Dusty, who touched the lives of virtually

all he met and influenced the careers of Aboriginal musicians such as Lionel Rose, Herb Laughton, Kevin Gunn and Troy Casser-Daley. Slim's career spanned six decades of constant touring through small Outback communities, where he built up a loyal following of Aboriginal fans both through his songs about Aboriginal lives and his strong support for reconciliation.

## Agreement on CLAs

The Northern and Central Land Councils have made significant progress in resolving the long-running Community Living Areas (CLAs) issue, which has seen no CLAs granted for several years because of NT Government arguments that native title concerns prevented the transfer of title to CLAs. In late 2002 a template Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) under the *Native Title Act* was negotiated between the Land Councils and the Government, allowing for the grant of CLAs without extinguishing native title. Several agreements have now been successfully negotiated with more expected before the end of the year.

## Desert Knowledge Research Centre opens

Alice Springs witnessed the official opening of the new Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre on 23 September. The new centre will provide an opportunity to develop research to improve the wellbeing of all communities in the vast desert region. Funding for the Centre was provided by a number of organisations including the Central Land Council, CSIRO, ATSIC, the NT Government, NT University and Desert People's Centre.

## Comic focuses on rights

Sydney-based Streetwise Communications has produced a new consumer awareness comic book directly targeted at Aboriginal people. Produced on behalf of the Australian Securities & Investments Commission (ASIC), the comic – called *Moola Talk!* – tackles all of the important issues identified by research, including credit cards, loans, insurance, contracts, sales practices and budgeting. Copies are available by calling ASIC on 1300 300 630.



## Museum & Art Gallery of the Northern Territory

**20th TELSTRA NATIONAL ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER art AWARD**

By popular vote the People's Choice has been awarded to:

Sylvia Huege de Serville  
'Assimilation Blues' 2003



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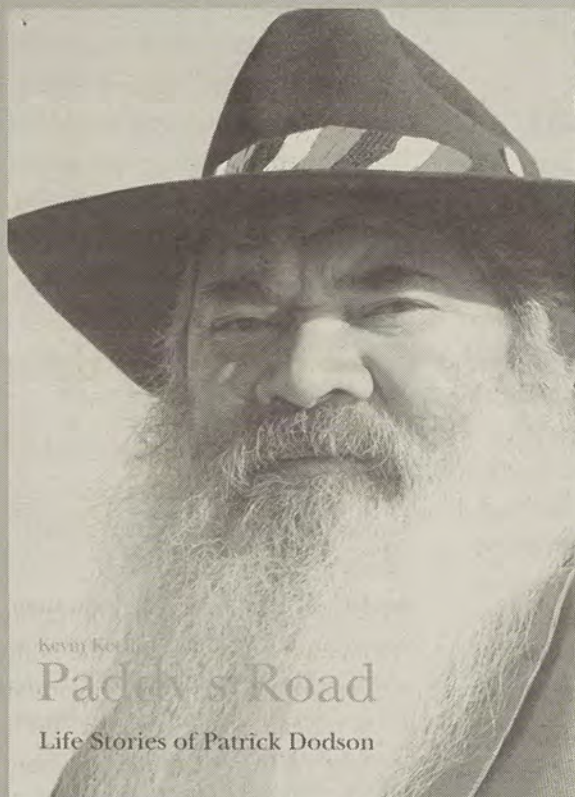
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Ask for an information package and application form



# Paddy's Road: Life Stories of Patrick Dodson



PUBLISHED BY ABORIGINAL  
STUDIES PRESS

BY KEVIN KEEFFE

RRP: \$49.95

**This book is a fact-filled insight into the life history of Patrick Dodson, from his birth in Broome in 1948 to his time in the Catholic priesthood and right through to his many struggles on behalf of Aboriginal people.**

The book also weaves in the family history, dating back some 150 years, beginning with Patrick Dodson's great grandparents, Jilwa and Wanan, Yawuru people, in the country Patrick calls home, and continues up to an interview recorded in 2001.

Author Kevin Keeffe has known Patrick for many years, and enlivens his account with personal reminiscences of times spent in Patrick's company.

The family history begins with the lives of the great grandparents, the grand parents, and through to Patrick's parents. This history takes up the first half of the book. The text is rich with details of the lives of these family members who lived through hard times. This includes years in missions in Broome and Beagle Bay for the grandparents, and Beagle Bay and Moola Bulla Native Station for Elizabeth, Patrick's mother.

The author examines the terrible consequences of government policies on Patrick's family, who, if they had been left alone, may have suffered less tragedy. They had the means to make their lives different from the legacy of Joe Fagan to his daughter Elizabeth from his property, Spring Creek station in the Ord River basin which he purchased in 1901, and had willed to her before he died in 1917. This was denied her by the Native Affairs Department in Western

Australia, administered by A.O. Neville, and she had to beg for small sums of her inheritance in times of great difficulty to herself and her family, and fought for her entitlement for thirty-five years.

The second half of the book tracks Patrick's life, and to a lesser extent, his brother Mick. First is the amazing story of their parents, beginning with the persistence of Snowy Dodson in his love for Elizabeth Djiagween. They defied the laws preventing their marriage and eventually settled in Katherine, where they moved while Patrick was young.

Patrick's life story is also strongly linked through Yawuru culture to his grandfather, Paddy Djiagween, who lived 111 years. His grandfather was an authority on Yawuru law, songs and ceremonies, and was "adept at using the Aboriginal laws to explore the ... pressure points with European law, culture and society".

The author covers the history of the land rights movement of the 1960s, particularly at Wave Hill, and Patrick's involvement in promoting Indigenous rights in the 1970s. After he left the church, the book also details his work for land rights during the 1980s and 1990s.

This is a very important and long awaited book of a very humane man, a great Australian, and someone who has been, and still is, a great inspiration and important figure to all Indigenous Australians. This book will be essential reading for anyone wanting to know a better way for many years to come. ●

## Elders: Wisdom from Australia's Indigenous Leaders

BY PETER MCCONCHIE

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

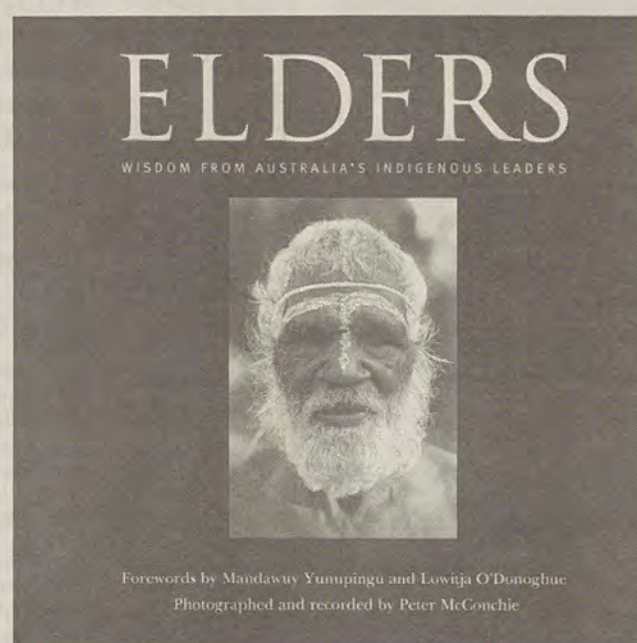
RRP \$32.95

**Melbourne-based photographer Peter McConchie has left himself a bit underdone in this across-the-nation revelation of the traditional "wisdom from Australia's Indigenous leaders", as he describes it.**

True, the photographs – particularly the portraits – are very atmospheric and certainly capture the spirit of those Indigenous Australians who participated in the book. However, the book is too much of a whistlestop tour through traditional knowledge to really do justice to the topic.

*Elders* certainly comes with some heavy-hitting commendations, with forewords from Yothu Yindi lead singer Mandawuy Yunupingu and former ATSIC chair Loitja O'Donoghue. Perhaps McConchie should have listened to O'Donoghue when she wrote:

"With a wonderful book like this, one wishes that it could be a thousand pages long and that Elders from every nation and every clan within Australia and the



Torres Strait Islands could be listened to and their knowledge made available to all."

McConchie spent two years working on *Elders*, taking pictures and recording the thoughts of 17 Indigenous elders from Tasmania to the Torres Strait, from Western Australia's south-west to Queensland's north-east. It is unfortunate that McConchie has done nothing else than transcribe the Elders' words as spoken, giving no background information on the various clan groups' recorded history and

present circumstances that would have made for a far more satisfying experience.

Readers in the Top End will readily identify with the worlds of Gumatj man Nungki Yunupingu and Rirratjingu elders Laklak Marika and Bunthami (1) Yunupingu, who give evocative descriptions of hunting and gathering and the impact of the seasons on food availability. Laklak Marika makes the point that, with all this bush tucker around, why would you want to go to the shop?

"Shop food just to fill up stomach, that's all, true; just to fill up stomach," she says.

The most impressive speakers in the book are Torres Strait islanders Athe Walter Nona and Ephraim Bani, who manage the difficult feat of taking pride in their culture while resisting the temptation to build walls between their culture and others. As Ephraim says:

"All culture is something to be understood and respected... Culture enhances life and strengthens... Every one of us living under this heaven, no matter what colour, what creed, what language, what culture, are equal in status."

The point being that true wisdom is transcendent, not exclusive.

McConchie's excellent photographs are currently being exhibited at various galleries around Australia. If they come to the Top End, make a point of trying to see them – as they say, a picture is worth a thousand words. ●

# Print house turns 10 in style

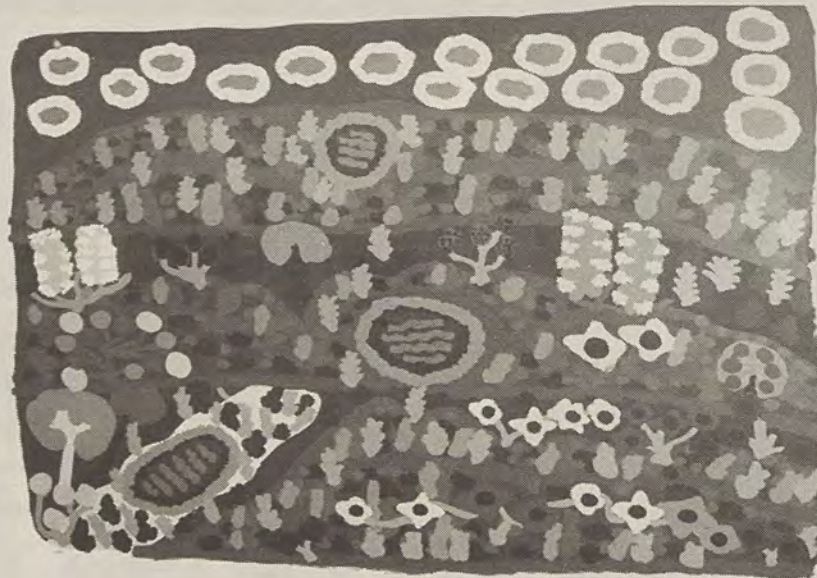
The master print makers at Northern Editions have celebrated their 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a small but stunning exhibition of works at Charles Darwin University by some of Australia's most important Indigenous artists.

It was a chance for the printmaking team to demonstrate the valuable contribution it had made to the development of Australian art over the past decade, with linocuts, etchings, screenprints and lithographs by artists such as Banduk Marika, Queenie McKenzie, Rover Thomas, Prince of Wales, Helicopter Tjungurrayi and Paddy Japaljarri Stewart spread across the walls.

While many of the artists have become well known in the wider community, Northern Editions continues to maintain a low profile in the leafy surrounds of the Charles Darwin University (CDU) campus.

Founded as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Print Workshop in 1993, Northern Editions has grown to become the most significant publisher of Indigenous prints in Australia.

Along the way it has introduced the



Above: Daisy Jugadi's *Muruntji waterhole* Right: Lily Karedada's *Wandjina*

whole spectrum of print-making techniques to Aboriginal communities in Western Australia, Queensland, South Australia and the Northern Territory.

The exhibition, "A Decade of Prints 1993-2003", was curated by CDU Art Collection Coordinator Julie Milton and drew exclusively from the CDU's extensive collection of Aboriginal prints.

In making her selection Julie chose works that reflected the diversity of

techniques, styles and regions that go to make up the dynamic universe of Aboriginal art.

From Lily Karedada's monumental *Wandjina* figure and Peter Nabalambarl's Mimi figure in the act of hunting, to Daisy Jugadai's *Muruntji waterhole* and Christine Yambeing's screenprint of swarming dragonflies heralding the return of the dry season, these prints are imbued with the interconnectedness of land and life.



While the growth of community-controlled art centres across the north of Australia has provided new opportunities for Aboriginal artists, Northern Editions continues to foster the development of fresh talent with innovative publishing ventures and continued workshops in remote communities.

## It's raining arts strategies!

The exploding interest in Aboriginal art and culture has led to a sudden rush of government strategies aimed at bolstering the industry.

First off the mark was the NT Government with its \$3.2 million Indigenous Arts Strategy, *Building Strong Arts Businesses*, launched at the 2003 Garma Festival by Chief Minister Clare Martin.

It sets out a six-year vision of improved delivery of government support for the arts industry and raising the profile of Indigenous arts via three processes:

- Talking Arts Businesses – negotiations and partnerships.
- Doing Arts Businesses – service delivery.
- Sharing Arts Businesses – showcasing opportunities.

In the first 12 months of the program the Government has promised to set up an Indigenous Arts Development Unit and an Indigenous Arts Reference Group.

It has also undertaken to put in place intellectual property and copyright strategies, an export action plan, an Arts Centres infrastructure and employment action plan, and to participate in a range of events to showcase Aboriginal arts and culture.

The Government also says it will coordinate and monitor the program by a whole-of-government interdepartmental committee, and

will integrate the planning and delivery of Aboriginal arts services and programs across the NT.

Meanwhile, Canberra also got in on the act with a Federal Government strategy called the *Indigenous art centre strategy and action plan*. Launched by outgoing Arts Minister Richard Alston in early October, the plan focuses on strengthening Indigenous-owned arts centres in remote areas "so that our artists can strive to attain new levels of excellence".

Senator Alston said the plan aimed to deliver results in terms of:

- stabilised funding;
- improved business management;
- employment and training;
- professional art practice;
- community capacity and maintenance of culture;
- data collection and research.

Senator Alston said his department would be supported in its efforts by ATSIC, ATSI, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) and the Tax Office, which would deliver business and tax management training to art centre administrators.

Senator Alston indicated that all governments – Federal, State and Territory – would undertake to deliver a guaranteed percentage of their total arts funding to Indigenous art, although he did not nominate a specific figure.

## "Yarnin Up"

It's funny, it's quirky, and if you get the chance to take in a performance, then do so!

Written by and starring Darwin-born Aboriginal playwright, Anthony Newcastle, "Yarnin Up" is a humorous look at what it's like to be white, and black, in contemporary Australia.

"Malcolm" – played by Newcastle – works for ATSIC, and is fond of a little wheeling-and-dealing. "Evey" – (Roxanne McDonald) – is a simple country girl trying to make a new start in life after a relationship breakdown. Meanwhile, "Ken" (Daniel Murphy) – the white coordinator of the Reconciliation Council – can't stop saying "Sorry" for all the wrongs that have been imposed on Indigenous Australians.

Evey's at the Council because she beat up her husband so often, he ran away to a women's shelter. As for Malcolm, he's on the run. A computer training deal has gone wrong, and he's looking for a place to hide.

As their characters begin to evolve and interact, Evey and Malcolm discover that their shared experiences expand beyond the colour of their skin. Ken on the other hand is confused. He wants to help – to do the "right thing" – but just what that is



he hasn't quite figured out yet. Ken cherishes the nickname of "Balanda," given to him on a reconciliation march across the Sydney Harbour Bridge – that is, until he learns it's a generic term for "whitefella."

As the wheels turn the audience begins to identify Ken's transformation from white sympathiser to Canberra bureaucrat. Evey and Malcolm, on the other hand, undergo a complete role reversal.

Under the guidance of his astute manager – the entrepreneurial Evey – Malcolm re-acquaints himself with his once forgotten cultural image; he even manages to play the didgeridoo.

This then is the story of three very dysfunctional characters that invite the audience to laugh at the things they know, and learn from things they don't.

All in all, it's good fun

# Country too strong for Town

**In late September a historic football match was held in Alice Springs at Traeger Park.**

This football match was the first time a team made up of the best remote Central Australian community footballers and the best Aboriginal footballers from Alice Springs and Tennant Creek came together for the clash.

The country team defeated the town team by 49 points. In a one-sided contest Country had too much speed for its opponents, winning 16-17 (113) to 9-8 (64).

The game was the first of its kind used to select the Centralian Football team to compete at the Charles Perkins National Football/Netball carnival in Canberra from 24 to 26 October 2003.

The Country team, coached by Joe Clarke, was proud of his team's efforts.

"Full credit must go to all community players that played, they came to win this game, and Country is the first name to go on the Cup....Our side was smaller, younger and much faster than the Town blokes, and more hungry to win the football," Joe said.

Roy Arbon, coach of the town team, said: "What a great game to have, let's hope there are many more to come in the future...Country were more focused on winning the game and town players were too casual... Most of the town players were coming off one of the greatest CAFL grand finals and it showed on the scoreboard."



Above: The Country team will represent Central Australia at the Charles Perkins Football/Netball Sports Carnival in Canberra next month.

Left: Town team

## Yuendumu Magpies Grand Final Premiers 2003

**After being banned for a year from the Central Australian Football League country competition, the Yuendumu Magpies roared back to form to take out the 2003 Grand Final against the Western Aranda Bulldogs.**

**Yuendumu won by 56 points in the clash between the sides - final score: Yuendumu 18-10-110 defeating Western Aranda 9-8-62. Western Aranda went into the game undefeated all season but were unable to take the cup this year.**



Courtesy Centralian Advocate

# Joseph Daniel 'Pumeri' McGinness

2/7/1914 - 11/7/2003

**For many Aboriginal men, World War II was the defining experience in their lives that changed forever their outlook on Australian society. So it was for Dr Joe 'Pumeri' McGinness, who never forgot the injustice of being denied citizenship of his country, having risked his life fighting for it.**

Joe went on to become one of the pioneers of the Aboriginal rights movement, first as a trade unionist and later as the first Indigenous president of the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI).

His struggle for his people took him far away from the place of his birth, on Kungarakan land south of Darwin in the Finnis River region. He was the youngest of five children born to Irish tin miner Stephen McGinness and his wife Alyandabu, a Kungarakan woman also known as Lucy.

His experience of injustice began early when, along with his mother and sister Valentine, he was 'rounded up' and moved to Darwin's Kahlin Compound. In his book *Son*



*of Alyandabu – My fight for Aboriginal rights*, Joe recollected the harsh times inside the compound where he and his sister "were left to fend for ourselves".

However, it was at Kahlin that Joe met the first person to have a major impact on his political consciousness, the author and – at that time – resident compound chemist Xavier Herbert.

In 1935 Joe met and married his first wife Jaura Ahmat, with whom he had two children – Elsie and John. Unfortunately Jaura passed away four years later and on the eve of World War II Joe was struggling to take care of his young family.

For Joe the War was both a liberating

and embittering experience: liberating because of the camaraderie built up with his mates during his time fighting in Morota and Borneo; and embittering because of his treatment on return to Darwin.

In 1949 Joe moved to Thursday Island to be closer to his children, and it was there that he became actively involved with the Waterside Worker's Federation. Along with a few other unions, the WWF was one of the few organisations in Australia at the time that actively campaigned on behalf of Aboriginal rights.

After moving to Cairns in 1951 Joe met his second partner, Amy Nagas, with whom he had a daughter in 1954. He also welcomed Amy's two sons into his home.

In 1958 Joe became a foundation member of the Cairns Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders Advancement League, which in turn agitated for what became FCAATSI. Joe was elected president of FCAATSI in 1961 and served in that role for 17 years, from 1961 to 1973 and then from 1975 to 1979.

FCAATSI quickly became an organisation of national significance. The greatest victory for Aboriginal people during this

time was the 1967 referendum, which resulted in responsibility for Aboriginal welfare being transferred from the States to the Commonwealth and allowed Indigenous people to be counted in the national census for the first time.

After spending time in Canberra during the 1970s working as a political adviser, Joe returned to his native Kungarakan country in 1982 to fight for the return of his people's land under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act*. Working closely with the NLC, Joe and his people were able to achieve victory with the return of their land in the early 1990s.

Joe was a big man who proved his courage in many arenas, including on the battlefield (he was awarded the Pacific Star War Medal and the Australian Service Medal for his wartime service) and on the football field (he won the NT Football League's Best & Fairest award in 1942). He was also awarded the Order of Australia, General Division, in 1990.

Family and friends descended on Darwin for his funeral on 30 July, where many eulogies were read out. One of the most poignant came from his grand-daughter Helen Bishop, who farewelled him in the Kungarakan language. ●

## THE FORMER MEMBER FOR BARUNGA 8/8/1966 – 12/8/2003

**The Northern Land Council family has lost one of its most talented young members, a man who will be remembered for his energy, his enthusiasm and his devotion to his community.**

Although born in Darwin, he grew up in Barunga and – like the rest of his family – was adopted by the local community. His sister Helen Lee said her earliest memories of her brother were of his incredible energy.

"He was so energetic, we used to walk for miles just to gather food and go hunting," she said. "While we were out he used to make me help him tighten up his slingshot and if I didn't, he'd punch me!"

As the eldest in a family of six, he was also protective of his younger brothers and sisters. He set a good example for them, gaining work experience on the local community housing program while still at school.

After leaving school he took a traineeship with Parks and Wildlife, which led to employment at Nitmiluk as a ranger working out of the Mary River Ranger Station.

Later he joined the Northern Territory Police as an Aboriginal Community Police Officer, where he stayed for about five years, and then worked in a variety of occupations including CDEP.

From there he joined the Barunga

Community Council and eventually worked his way up to be Council President.

When the Barunga Council amalgamated with five others earlier this year to form the Nyirranggulung Regional Council, he was appointed Chairman. At the same time he was also the President of the Barunga Progress Association.

He joined the NLC as the member for Barunga at the October 1995 council elections and stayed in that role until his untimely death, impressing everyone with his commitment to the Barunga community.

"He was a very popular and respected bloke in Barunga," Helen said. "Everyone encouraged him to represent the community – he always respected the senior traditional owners and backed the community to the limit."

"His passing has left a big hole in this town."

The NLC wishes to extend its condolences to his wife Belinda and his five children, Antonia, Scott, Samara, Shimayne and Robert. His life is a lesson to us all. ●

## JOHN LAWRENCE CUBILLO 4/9/1934 – 16/7/2003

**John Lawrence (Laurie) Cubillo may not be a household name, but to his family and his people, the Larrakia, he will long be remembered as a patriarch and a champion of equal rights.**

Born at Two-Mile Dam, Police Paddock, in Darwin in September 1934, Laurie Cubillo grew up through the hard years of Darwin's development. It was a time when Aboriginal people struggled for recognition, and were subjected to a level of exclusion not experienced today.

In 1934, Aboriginal people were prohibited from being within the town boundaries after 6pm without written consent, and home was a compound on the outskirts of town.

Overcoming the harshness and adversity, this returned soldier, who saw active service in the Korean War, rose to become a respected voice for his people.

Kelvin Costello, Coordinator of the Larrakia Nation, spoke of Laurie's prominent role as a founding member and interim Chairperson of the Larrakia Development Corporation (LDC). The LDC has been responsible for developing a new residential subdivision in Darwin's satellite city of Palmerston.

Kelvin said Laurie brought a level of skill and knowledge to the board that won't be



easily replaced.

"He certainly had a far better knowledge of construction, particularly road works, than any other member of the board," Kelvin said.

Described as a quiet, gently spoken man, Laurie's wife Janet remembers a story Laurie once relayed to her about his first experience with discrimination.

"He was in the Army at the time and had just returned from Korea," Janet said.

"He and his friends, who were also soldiers, had gone to a pub in Adelaide to have a drink. When the time came for Laurie to shout a round, he was refused service. His mates weren't happy about that and walked out of the pub in protest. Laurie never forgot that, and he was proud of his mates for standing by him."

Laurie passed away in Darwin on 16 July 2003 after a long battle with illness. He is survived by wife Janet and six of their seven children (their first born passed away in 1958). ●

# Diversity the winner in Telstra Art Awards



This year's 20<sup>th</sup> Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award showcased the diversity of Aboriginal art, with the \$40,000 top award going to Brisbane-based urban artist Richard Bell for his work *Scientia E Metaphysica (Bell's Theorem)*.

Although much of the media comment surrounding the awards focused on the T-shirt Richard wore to the opening night presentation on 15 August (for those few who don't know, the slogan read 'White Girls Can't Hump'), the reality is that his painting is a serious protest work aimed at challenging assumptions about Aboriginal art.

A high-energy series of swirls surrounds and cuts through his key statement 'Aboriginal Art - it's a white thing', highlighting the cultural divide between those doing the painting and those doing the buying. The fact that Richard chose to use a Western graffiti-influenced style of art to get his message across is, once again, an in-your-face reminder that Aboriginal artists don't need to be what the buying public expects them to be.

So despite the criticism of the award from some quarters, hats off to judges Francesca Cubillo (manager of Adelaide's Tandanya Art Centre) and Dr Brian Kennedy (director of the National Gallery of Australia) for making an inspired choice that will help keep the Awards at the centre of Aboriginal art.

Another good choice was the awarding of the \$4,000 Wandjuk Marika Memorial Three-Dimensional Award to Maningrida-based Lorna Jin-Gubarranguniya for her work titled *Conical Fish Trap*. Rather than something of purely artistic merit, the fish trap is both functional and beautiful in its simplicity.

Yirrkala-based artist Galuma Maymuru won the \$4,000 Bark Painting category for her work *Guwak*, a major clan painting from her Djarrakpi homeland in north-east Arnhem Land. In her acceptance speech Galuma dedicated the award to her father, the great artist Narritjin Maymuru.

"This award started 20 years ago," she said. "My father passed away two years before that. He taught me everything I know. I paint for my father, my land and my children. This award is for him."

Peppimenarti artist Regina Wilson capped off a phenomenal three years by taking out the \$4,000 General Painting Award for her work *Syaw-fishnet*, modelled on the intricate weaving patterns used in the construction of fishnets. Regina and her fellow Peppimenarti artists only started exhibiting in 2000 but are now garnering national recognition for the quality of their art, most of it based around traditional weaving patterns and body painting motifs.

The \$4,000 Works on Paper Award went to Torres Strait artist Alick Tipoti for his work titled *Kuiyk ar Mari - Head and Spirit (Reincarnation)*. ●



Clockwise from top left: Telstra Award winner Richard Bell; Galuma Maymuru's *Guwak*; Julie Dowling's *The Coolaroo Club*; Lorna Jin-Gubarranguniya's *Conical Fishtrap*; Richard Bell's *Scientia E Metaphysica (Bell's Theorem)*; General Painting Award winner Regina Wilson; Sylvia Huege de Serville's *Assimilation Blues*;

