

LAND RIGHTS NEWS

Volume 11, Number 2, September 2008

1928

Coniston

1928-2008

Message with

**Blue Mud Bay, NT Music
awards, Garma,
Coniston 80 years on,
Warlpiri education,
The Big Walk**



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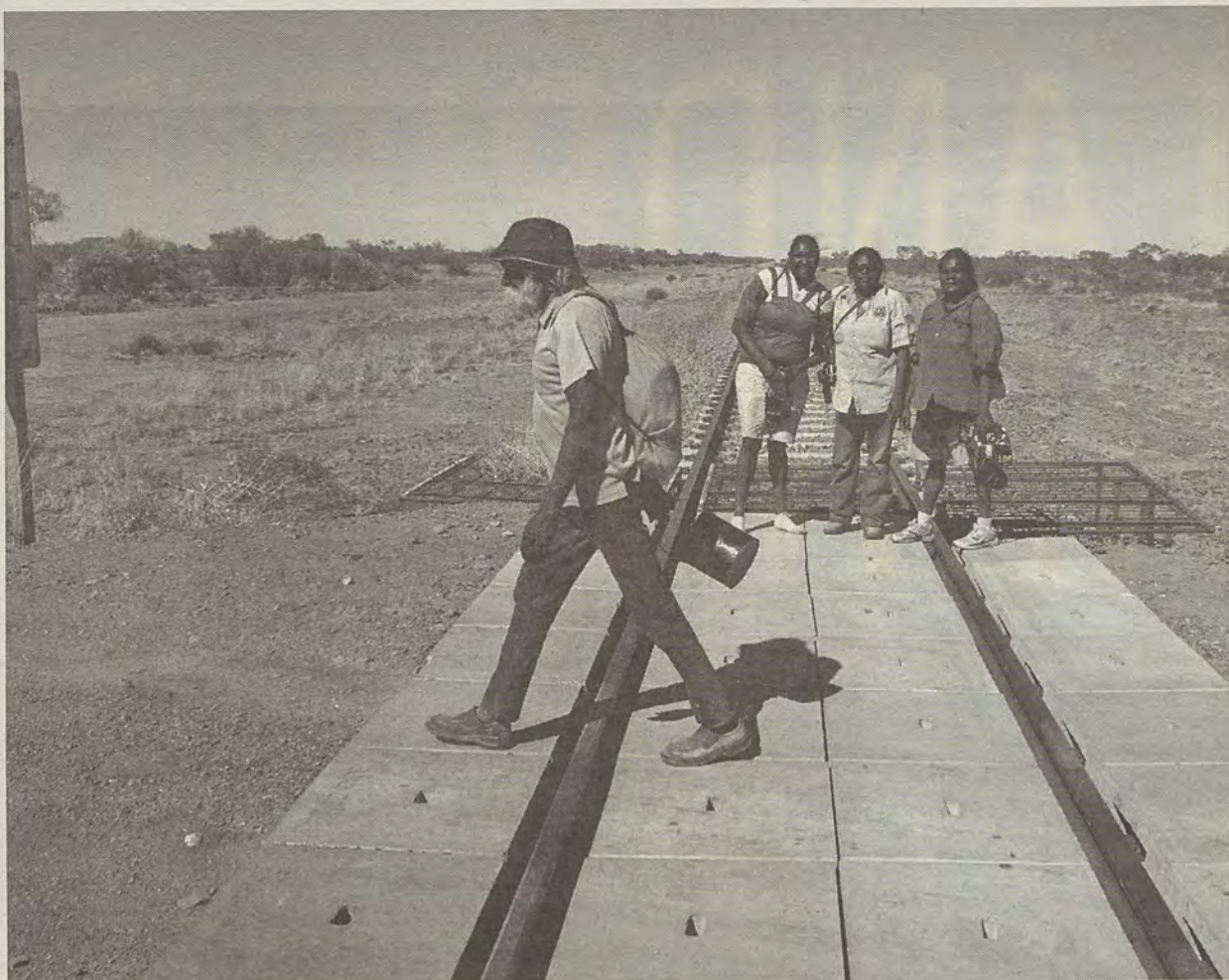
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A winning photo taken on the walk from Bonney Well to Barrow Creek. The Muru-warinyi Ankkul Rangers won a national Working on Country photography competition with this photograph. It shows Tommy Thompson in the foreground and Lynese Breadon, Anthea Graham and Annette Thompson in the background.

Land Rights NEWS

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Park joint management plans continue



Above: Traditional owners involved in joint management plans at Rainbow Valley. Rainbow Valley has become the first Territory park to operate under a joint management plan under the frameworks-for-the-future legislation.

The creation of jobs for Aboriginal men and women is a key goal traditional owners are hoping to achieve from the joint management of the Northern Territory's national parks.

Discussions are continuing between traditional owners of the various parks and the Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission over the formation of management plans for the parks, but traditional owners are telling the Central Land Council that they want more Aboriginal rangers working within the parks in full-time jobs.

In the past year, traditional

owners for the Chambers Pillar Historical Reserve have been working with Parks and Wildlife to write a new joint management plan for the reserve.

A draft management plan for the Devils Marbles Conservation Reserve was also completed in 2007, the Tjuwanpa Rangers have been involved in a variety of projects and N'Dhala Gorge and Trepkina Gorge traditional owners met with Parks for the first time in 2007 to plan the writing of a joint management plan.

In 2007, traditional owners from the east, central and western regions of the West

MacDonnell National Park attended a series of planning meetings with Parks to discuss a joint management plan for the park.

Traditional owners of the Davenport Range National Park met this year to discuss how to improve fire management practises and Dulcie Range National Park traditional owners began planning how they could better manage important sites in the ranges.

Watarrka National Park traditional owners appointed a group to work on the writing of a new joint management plan for the park.

COVER PHOTO
Alekerange ladies dance for the opening of the Baxters well memorial to the Coniston Massacre.

A decision 50 years in the making has confirmed what Yolngu people have always known – that their estate extends into tidal waters overlying Aboriginal land.

The High Court decision acknowledges that traditional owners of the Blue Mud Bay region in north-east Arnhem Land have exclusive rights regarding commercial and recreational fishing in tidal waters overlying Aboriginal land.

This decision means that Yolngu people must now be included in any discussions and agreements about fishing, or any other business, on Aboriginal lands to the low water mark.

The decision applies to the inter-tidal zone of over 80% of the Northern Territory coastline, and also to tidal rivers overlying Aboriginal land.

This issue has been raised by traditional owners since the Woodward

Royal Commission in 1973, and has been raised in the Courts since the Croker Island case which was lodged in 1994.

Northern Land Council chairman, Wali Wunungmurra, said traditional owners had waited over 50 years to have their sea rights legally recognised.

"This is a very important decision for traditional owners," Mr Wunungmurra said. "For me personally, as Chairman of the Northern Land Council, as I walked to the High Court registry in Darwin having heard we had won, I felt that I could breathe normally again."

Yolngu sea rights recognised in High Court decision



Traditional owners celebrate the Blue Mud Bay decision outside the Supreme Court in Darwin.

Mr Wunungmurra said Yolngu people of north-east Arnhem Land had been fighting since 1963 for the legal recognition of land and sea rights through their objection to the then proposed Nabalco bauxite mine at Nhulunbuy (Gove).

He said that Yolngu people and other Aboriginal people along the Territory coastline will for the first time be able to develop a true partnership regarding commercial and recreational fishing.

"There will be a minimum 12 month amnesty in favour of the status quo to enable good faith negotiations to occur, with the current

interim licensing scheme extended for that period," Mr Wunungmurra said.

The scheme is free and involves the automatic grant of licences to commercial operators, with recreational licences automatically granted on request.

The interim scheme was implemented in response to the Federal Court's decision in March last year in favour of traditional owners, and is administered by the NLC on behalf of the Anindilyakwa, Northern and Tiwi Land Councils.

"A negotiated outcome will mean that traditional owners

around the Northern Territory's coastline can jointly participate in the management and development of a sustainable fishing industry – including the protection of fishing stocks, protection of sacred sites and participation in enterprises," Mr Wunungmurra said.

"Traditional owners have developed a constructive relationship with commercial and recreational fishing representatives over the last year, and the NLC looks forward to continuing that relationship and obtaining a win-win outcome for all Territorians."

continued page 12-13

Territory election shock for Labor

The Labor Government of Paul Henderson retained power in the Northern Territory election on the ninth of August, but took a heavy hit from voters in the process.

The Chief Minister had called the election a year ahead of the government's full term, but Labor was hit hard by voters, dropping six seats from 19 to 13 while the Country Liberals picked up seven seats, increasing their presence from four seats to 11. There is one independent member.

Mr Henderson admitted winning a third term for Labor had come at a huge cost. "Territorians have sent the government a strong message and we will listen, and act," he said.

The opposition leader Terry Mills told the Country Liberals election night function that his party had already listened to the people and that's why it had done so well in the poll.

"We have listened to what the people have said," he told supporters. "We know that there are concerns and we have responded with a comprehensive plan to address those needs in a sensible way," Mr Mills said

In an attempt to address voter opinion from centres outside Darwin that the capital had abandoned them, Mr Henderson elevated three Aboriginal members to his cabinet.

The Member for MacDonnell Alison Anderson has been made the Minister for Central Australia, Natural Resources, Environment and Heritage and Parks and Wildlife.

The Member for Stuart Karl Hampton has been given the Regional Development, Sport and Recreation, Information, Communications and Technology Policy and Minister Assisting the Chief Minister on Major Projects and Economic Development portfolios.

The Member for Arnhem Malarndirri Mc-

Carthy becomes the Minister for Children and Families, Child Protection, Statehood, Senior Territorians, Young Territorians, Women's Policy and Minister Assisting the Chief Minister on Multicultural Affairs.

They, Chief Minister Paul Henderson and their Labor colleagues have a job to restore their government's standing among voters, including Aboriginal constituents, with criticism coming from many directions.

The president of the Northern Territory Council of Social Services Barry Hansen has claimed successive Territory Governments, including the present one, have misspent billions of dollars in federal grants meant for Aboriginal communities.

While the Central Land Council's director David Ross has called for a Royal Commission to investigate successive governments since self-government in the NT have spent the money.

Constitutional change called for at Yirrkala

Constitutional recognition for Indigenous Australians has been called for by Yolngu leaders of north-east Arnhem Land during the first Federal Government Community Cabinet held in a remote Aboriginal community.

On the 23rd of July, the community of Yirrkala played host to the Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, and deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard, as well as many Federal Cabinet Ministers, in what is part of a series of Federal Cabinet meetings in remote, regional and rural Australia.

Yolngu clan leader, and Northern Land Council chairman, Wali Wunungmurra, said Aboriginal people in Arnhem Land were looking forward to 'working in partnership' with the new Commonwealth Government and the NT Government.

"The enshrining of the rights of Indigenous Australians into the constitution is one way of ensuring those inherent rights aren't eroded by any particular government or change in political climate," Mr Wunungmurra said.

Mr Rudd was also presented with a bark petition, by Gumatj



Yolngu dancers conduct ceremony for the Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and his cabinet in Yirrkala.

clan leader Galarrwuy Yunupingu, during a ceremony calling for constitutional recognition and protection of the rights of Indigenous Australians.

A statement by clan leaders, associated with the communities of Yirrkala, Gunyangara, Gapuwiyak, Maningrida, Galiwin'ku, Milingimbi, Ramingining and Laynhapuy homelands, representing 8000 Indigenous peoples of Arnhem Land, called on the Australian Government for a better working relationship.

"Yolngu and other Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory have been marginalised and demeaned over the past decade by the Howard regime and have been denied real opportunity to have a say about our aspirations and futures," the statement read.

"We recognise that we are now in a new era, and are hopeful of a fundamental change in the way Government does business with Yolngu."

The statement also refers to education and training, housing and

infrastructure, and national environmental issues.

"The National Estate needs to be managed, not left unoccupied, and Aboriginal people can contribute formally to this by continuing to live on country through expanded ranger programs and Indigenous Protected Areas."

The petition called for recognition and protection of "our full and complete rights", including "our way of life in all its diversity", property and economic independence.



CLC surveys intervention

The Central Land Council says a survey of people in Central Australian Aboriginal communities has given them a chance to

voice their views on the Federal Government's emergency response in Northern Territory Aboriginal communities.

The research was undertaken in six case study communities – Titjikala, Papunya, Yuendumu, Ali Curung, Kintore and Hermannsburg - between February and June this year with the help of local Aboriginal researchers.

It focussed on the main measures of the intervention, including income management, housing repairs and maintenance, the abolition of CDEP, the introduction of store licensing, voluntary child health checks, increased police resources, the introduction of five year leases over communities, the roll out of government business managers and changes to the permit system.

The research was based on a participatory evaluation survey of 141 Aboriginal residents in the communities. They were asked their awareness of the intervention measures, feelings on the measures and the effect on them and their community.

The community surveys were supplemented by 51 semi-structured interviews with other community-based employees or agencies such as government agencies and government business managers in the target com-

munities. Additional information was provided by the Intervention operations centre, the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and Centrelink.

CLC director David Ross said the survey is the first real effort to collect evidence of the effects of the intervention on people in remote communities.

"There's a wide range of views out there," Mr Ross said. "For instance, on income management, half supported it and half were opposed to it."

"The results of this survey show that it's not as simple as saying well, someone in this community likes it so everyone does. This survey shows that what works in one community doesn't necessarily work in another."

The findings of the survey will form part of the CLC's submission to the committee, which is reviewing the intervention.

Simpson desert last of land claim hearings in the Centre

The era of winning Aboriginal land back under the Land Rights Act is coming to a close in Central Australia.

The hearing of a land claim that's expected to be the last in the Central Land Council region is nearing completion.

The Simpson Desert Land Claim Stage IV is over about 18,000 square kilometres of land, some of which was previously subject to claim during the Simpson Desert Land Claim Stage II.

The opening evidence was heard before Aboriginal Land Commissioner Howard Olney in the claim area just south of Atula Station on the northern edge of the Simpson Desert in late June.

Traditional owners from the area presented Commissioner Olney with evidence of their links to the land under the latest claim during the sittings from June the 30th to July the 3rd.

The area is so isolated that some evidence was heard after a helicopter flight deep into the Simpson Desert.

Other evidence was heard in Alice Springs later that week.

The Central Land Council is represent-



Claimants at the Simpson Desert land claim

ing the Eastern Arrernte claimants in the case, many of whom are presently living at Santa Teresa, and as far afield as Urandangie in Queensland.

The claim is part of another that was first lodged in 1980. Over the years there have been four earlier land claim hearings to other parts of the original land claim.

As a result of amendments to the Land Rights Act no further land claims will proceed in the Central Australian region.

CLC director David Ross said the land rights era has been a lengthy and exhausting process

for all involved.

"Time after time people have had to come forward to repeat their stories, share private aspects of their culture to prove ownership of their land," Mr Ross said.

"But they've done more than that, they've shown their determination to keep their culture alive and their resilience in the face of all that has happened since European settlement.

Commissioner Olney's expected to make a recommendation to the federal Indigenous Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin later this year.

Traditional owners continue struggle against Xstrata

Traditional owners in the Borroloola region have filed an appeal against the recent Federal Court decision which allowed mining company Xstrata to divert the McArthur River and expand its mining operation.

Ten traditional owners from the Borroloola region travelled to Sydney for the hearing on August 18 and 19.

This follows a stand-off between Traditional Owners from Borroloola and mine security, Borroloola police and the Northern Territory's Tactical Response Group (TRG) at the entrance of the McArthur River Mine, one of the world's richest zinc deposits.

Traditional owners were denied access to the 'Stinking Turtle' sacred site, inside the mine

boundary, and prevented from performing a ceremony.

Under the Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act (NT), Aboriginal people are provided with a statutory right to access sacred sites in accordance with Aboriginal tradition.

Northern Land Council chairman Wali Wunungmurra said traditional owners are deeply upset about the diversion of the river, and its effect on their sacred sites, culture and environment.

"The grounds of the appeal include that the former Commonwealth Environment Minister, Ian Campbell, claimed he had considered Xstrata's mining management plan when approving the diversion, when in fact it was never in his possession," Mr Wunungmurra said.

"The grounds also include



Jacob Lansen and Harry Lansen (centre) with NLC members after the Federal Court decision

that there was no public comment regarding additional material provided by Xstrata as required by Commonwealth legislation."

The Full Court of the Federal Court ruled that the appeal be 'expedited' because of the urgency of the matter.

Traditional owners are anxious that the decision be handed down

before the wet season because McArthur River Mine has already diverted the river, and there are serious concerns about whether the mine can revert the river to its original course after the rains begin.

If traditional owners win the appeal, the matter will be sent back to the Environment Minister Peter Garrett to reconsider.

GARMA

Land ownership must lead to prosperity: NLC

Turning land ownership into economic prosperity is one of the biggest challenges faced by Aboriginal traditional owners in the Northern Territory, according to the Northern Land Council.

NLC chairman Wali Wunungmurra, who addressed the Indigenous Economic Development forum at this year's Garma Festival, said Aboriginal people had to release the potential of the land.

"The challenge for us today is to convert our land ownership into economic opportunity – to create high employment among our people who currently experience Australia's highest unemployment," Mr Wunungmurra said.

"To move to a brighter future, Yolngu people have to draw on our history of living with the land, drawing on its resources to sustain ourselves and our families."

Federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs Jenny Macklin agreed, saying her government supported a strong agenda of economic development for Indigenous Australians.

"Everyone knows that a job is the key to unlocking personal, social and economic progress. A job means self esteem. It means financial independence," Ms Macklin said, in a speech to the Indigenous Economic Development forum at Garma.

"One of the biggest challenges for all of us – communities, the corporate sector and government – will be to create jobs and stimulate business development in remote locations."

Mr Wunungmurra said one of the main barriers to Aboriginal employment had been the low numbers of Aboriginal people 'job ready'.

"The education system has failed Aboriginal people by not providing the tools necessary for employment," Mr Wunungmurra said.

He added that land councils have not been adequately funded to provide and to coordinate the training necessary to get Aboriginal people into real jobs.

"The fact is that Aboriginal Australia has been neglected for too long, has been under-funded for too long and only seen as a 'problem' for mainstream Australia," Wunungmurra said. "But today's challenge is about more than winning court cases about land, it is to



Some of the young people who participated in the youth forum



Family is a focus of Garma



The NLC's Land is life exhibition attracted a lot of attention



convert our land ownership into economic prosperity, into real jobs that will carry our people and our culture into the future," he said.



Left and above: Every day at Garma ends with an afternoon bunggul where clan groups from the region perform their traditional dances to Garma visitors

In the footsteps of past feet

For generations before white settlement and for generations after it, the highways across Central Australia were travelled by foot.

There were distinct travel routes between the various language groups through the dry, rough terrain.

These routes usually weaved their way between the soaks or waterholes required to sustain life. The arrival of the motor vehicle and graded roads gradually reduced the practical need to make the long walks, but their spirit was re-enacted earlier this year south of Tennant Creek.

In June, 65 Warrumungu, Kaytetye, Warlpiri and Alyawarra people took 15 days to walk 140 kilometres from Bonney Well to Barrow Creek.

Despite two days of rain and cold, wintry conditions, the old and young walked on from the plain country to finish in the hill country.

One of the oldest, Tommy Thompson, said the walk "was great for younger people as they weren't just hearing stories about history and about country but they were making history and living the country".

Amy Nambula said, "The walk made me feel really strong and really proud, it felt good having the four tribes walking together like they did before."

The idea of the walk came about when women from Ali Curung attended a women's land management meeting in Alice Springs last year and the Central Land Council organised the logistics of the exercise.

Senior woman Mona Heywood from Ali Curung wanted to take young people along the old travelling route that she used to walk as a young woman to show them the soakages and to give them a better understanding of their history and country.

More than half the people who took part in the walk were younger family members keen to learn from their elders. They used cameras and other recording equipment to record people's stories and knowledge of the walk.

The walk took in about 30 soakages with traditional owners working to maintain the health of them along the way. Ellen Haywood said the walk offered a chance to learn off the old people.

"The best thing is the knowledge to be carried on by young people, handed down from old people to us young people and the stories need to be told about this walk and our history," she said.

"Telling them stories about how our old people used to live and travel and survived along the way. How to find food, how to find water and to know which direction we travelling which land, whose land.

"Sometimes some lands have boundaries that certain people have to carry on and if you're travelling from another place then they're the person, owner that has to take the lead."

Mr Thompson said getting young people involved in traditional acts like the walk can help repair some of the damage experienced in Aboriginal communities.

"We had too many problems," he said. "That's why Aboriginal law break down. It got cut in half, chopped off. You have to go back to the start back from that end, start on again, teach the young kids."

Images taken on the walk from Bonney Well to Barrow Creek. A key component of the walk was recording the senior people's knowledge along the way. Many young people were involved in the process and have since edited the footage themselves.



PERMIT UPDATE

The Australian Government has moved to reinstate the permits system on Aboriginal communities by passing the Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and Other Legislation Amendment (Emergency Response Consolidation) Bill 2008 in the House of Representatives.

The amendments will give government workers and journalists increased access to Aboriginal communities.

The Bill will now be decided in the Senate within the next few weeks, and it is expected that the federal government will seek support from the minor parties to pass the legislation.

Both the Northern and Central Land Councils urge the Senate to support the Bill.





Turtles such as these have a better chance of survival thanks to the management of North Australian waters by Indigenous rangers.

Protection of dugongs and turtles wins rangers national award

A new initiative by Aboriginal rangers that protects threatened dugongs and turtles in north Australian waters has been recognised at a national awards ceremony.

The North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAILSMA) was awarded top prize in the Indigenous category at the Banksia Awards ceremony in Melbourne for its Dugong and Marine Turtle project.

NAILSMA executive officer Joe Morrison said it was an honour to receive an award that acknowledged the management of Indigenous land and sea ranger groups across northern Australia for significant ecosystems.

"The project has taken a practical approach to dugong and marine turtle management by creating new Indigenous ranger programs and supporting existing

ones," Mr Morrison said. "It demonstrates that having Indigenous people on country managing their lands, delivering environmental benefits for all Australians is an important asset for the national good."

The project helps Aboriginal communities combine Indigenous knowledge with modern research and training. They undertake management activities such as mapping and monitoring populations, habitats, tracking turtle migrations by satellite and developing turtle and dugong management plans.

Partners in the project include the Northern Land Council, Kimberley Land Council, Carpentaria Land Council, Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation and the Torres Strait Regional Authority.

Indigenous rangers have long been championed by the NLC, which has worked with ranger groups in Arnhem Land for over 10 years.

Garrett meets with the NT's land councils

Northern Territory land councils took advantage of a visit to the Top End by the Federal Cabinet in July to meet with the Environment Minister Peter Garrett.

The Federal Government's ministerial contingent was in the Top End for a Community Cabinet in north-east Arnhem Land.

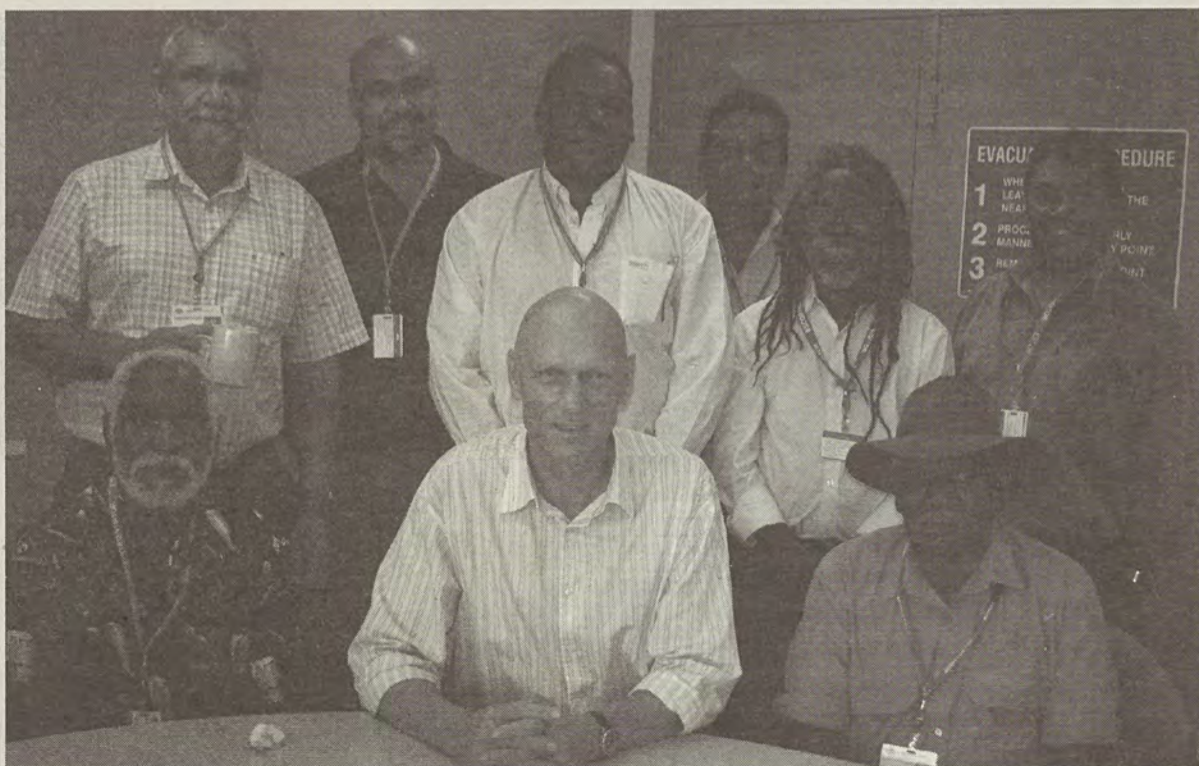
Representatives from the Northern Land Council, Central Land Council, Tiwi Land Council, and the National Aboriginal and Islander Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAILSMA) met with Mr Garrett in Darwin to discuss a range of issues affecting Traditional Owners in the Northern Territory.

Those issues included

increased investment into remote Aboriginal communities; committing to Indigenous Protected Areas, feral animal control and improving the funding methods to Aboriginal land and sea managers.

Traditional owners spoke to Mr Garrett about control programs for the camel population in Central Australia; barramundi farms on the Tiwi Islands; buffalo management in northern Australia; and the clean-up of the Rum Jungle uranium mine site.

Mr Garrett said his government was committed to preserving the rights of Aboriginal peoples and would look at the potential effects on Aboriginal land management by climate change.



Representatives who met with Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett (centre front). (From left) Robert Tipungwuti, TLC Chairman (seated); David Ross, CLC director; Joe Morrison, NAILSMA; Samuel Bush-Blanasi, NLC deputy chairman; Kim Hill, NLC CEO; Dean Yibarbuk, Djelk ranger; Lindsay Bookie, CLC chairman (seated); and, Richard Ah Mat, Director Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation.

Helicopter assisted burning Lake McKay ALT

Traditional landowners in the Tanami used a chopper recently to burn land around Lake McKay near the West Australian border.

By lighting lots of small fires in the cool time they broke up large areas of same-age spinifex to protect fire sensitive vegetation and promote bush foods and habitat for animals that need different ages of grasses for food and shelter.

The traditional landowners from Yuen-dumu and Nyrripi are concerned about large scale hot wildfires like those that burnt out vast tracts of land between Lajamanu, Tennant Creek and south of the Granites mine in 2007.

"Gotta burn him little bit, little bit, little bit – in cool time. Gotta stop that hot fire, dangerous one, burning up all the trees and food for animals," traditional landowner Alice Nampijinpa Henwood said.

Landowners Paddy Lewis and Micky Singleton took the opportunity to put in an east – west fire break between their countries at Mina Mina and Yalalya.

This group were the first to use a helicopter for fire management in the CLC region and fully understand the scale of the problem they are facing.

Next year they are keen to return with a chopper set up to drop incendiaries: ping pong sized balls filled with a flammable mixture that are injected with glycol that triggers a chemical reaction. The balls are dropped through a special chute and ignite when they hit the ground.

The country is some of the most inaccessible in the country: there are no roads and plenty of sand dunes.

Helicopter access also made it possible for the group to see the damage done by wild camels to their rock holes and soak-ages.

"Rock holes marlukalangu (belong to the kangaroos) not camels," said Paddy Japaljarri Simms.

Mr Simms and others will return over the next year to teach young people interested in ranger work how to maintain the rock holes and to continue land management planning as they work toward an Indigenous Protected Area on their country.

The chopper also provided a rare opportunity to visit important and remote sites and everyone in the group took the opportunity to record ecological knowledge and site information to pass down to the younger generations and to include in the IPA plan of management currently under development.

Funding for the helicopter assisted burning was provided by the NDMP (Natural Disaster Mitigation Program).



Top: l-r Alice Henwood, Margaret Lewis and Paddy Lewis ready for the ride

Above left: Paddy Simms

Above right: a spectacular rim of fire near Lake Mackay

Left: Otto Simms, Walter Tex and Nelson Tex

Ant with big head stopped by Malak Malak rangers

Aboriginal rangers from Nauiyu Nambiu have been instrumental in eradicating a pest ant species from the Daly River area south of Darwin.

The Malak Malak rang-

ers worked with the CSIRO to stamp out the African big-headed ant, which scientists say is one of the world's worst pests.

Rangers planted bait where the ants had been detected and it killed off the colonies.

Ecologists believe the ant

continues to have a strong hold in the Top End of the Northern Territory, but with the successful results at Daly River, it is possible to get rid of it in isolated locations and areas of particular conservation importance.

making peace with the past

CONISTON

Eighty years after his father was killed in a brutal and cowardly attack by police, Johnny Nelson from Tennant Creek was able to finally put the past to rest.

More than 250 people travelled down the remote and sandy Jarra Jarra track to attend a ceremony commemorating 80 years since the 1928 Coniston Massacre in August this year.

Mr Nelson and many other Aboriginal people in the region affected by the events of 1928, have been asking for a memorial to be built at Athimpelengwe (Baxters Well) 180 kilometres south west

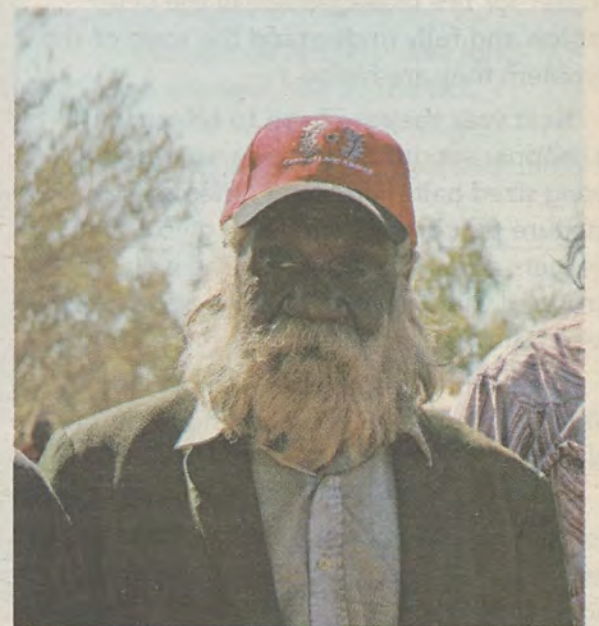
of Tennant Creek for many years.

Athimpelengwe was just one of the sites where massacres occurred.

The Central Land Council brought the project to reality with support from Newmont Gold, the Centre for Appropriate Technology in Alice Springs, Alekerange Council and Indigenous Community Volunteers.

Five years ago a similar ceremony was held at Yurrkuru (Brookes Soak) to commemorate 75 years since the massacre.

More Coniston Massacre resources at www.clc.org.au



Top: Johnny Nelson singing at the ceremony. Mr Nelson had pushed for many years to have the memorial built.

Above: Tommy Thompson.

Above left: The men opening the ceremony with songs from the area.

Left l-r: Lenny Nelson, Tommy Thompson, Joseph Thompson, Johnny Nelson, Valda Shannon, Amy Hatchees, Peggy Trailen and Ned Kelly.

making peace with the past

1928 - 2008

Kaytetye man and Vietnam veteran Geoff Shaw told the story of Baxters Well in English as told by Tommy Thompson to the CLC in 2003 during research for the 75th anniversary of the Coniston Massacre.

"This place - as Tommy Thompson has said, this is everyone's big place - Kaytetye, Warlpiri, Waramungu, Anmatyerr Athimpelengkwe is a 'joint venture' country," Mr Shaw said.

"This is the place that used to join for every business.

"But the story of Baxters Well and the Coniston Massacre is not just our story - this story needs to be told to all Australians. It belongs now to Australian history and it is our job to get it told.

"When Frederick Brooks was killed in August 1928 at Yurrkuru by Bullfrog, Constable Murray came up from Alice Springs with a group of men. They started shooting any Aboriginal person they saw.

"The police went on horseback along the side of the creek, following the people's tracks. They travelled and shot people as they went along.

"They were with two police trackers who showed them where our relatives were.

"When they were on their way to Barrow Creek they came upon a big group of old Kaytetye men.

"They were from Arnke [Barrow Creek], Jarra-Jarra, Alapanpe, Ertwerrpe, Ngkwarnte, Warlekerlange, Errene, Apewempe, Arnerre, Ileyarne.

"They had gathered for an ltharte ceremony. Poor things, they were unaware of what was going on.

"They were holding a green budgerigar ceremony, a ltharte atetherre ceremony here at Athimpelengkwe when they got shot.

"The police told the trackers to tell the Aboriginal people to make a big fire. 'And tell them that we're going to get some meat for them, a killer. When they make

the fire we will be able to see them dance properly in the light,' the police said.

"They made a big bonfire near the ceremony ground. They made a fire on each side of the tyayengarre [the place in the middle of the ceremony ground where the men paint up]. The poor old men got painted up with down [feathers] and everything. Then they started dancing. The police said: 'We'll watch them more when the sun comes up.'

"So the men danced in the [early] daytime. The police came around on horseback with their guns.

"Then they started shooting everyone. They circled around the ltharte camp, all the people were in the middle.

"They were killed there at Athimpelengkwe.

"Even the little children were beaten over the head with the stirrup. The police smashed the children against the trees.

"All the mothers and fathers were shot, the young girls, the young people, the old men, the old ladies and middle aged people.

"The two trackers piled the bodies up on the fire, on the high flames. They were all burnt.

"Here at Athimpelengkwe there were Kaytetye, Warlpiri, Anmatyerr and Waramungu people. The skulls of our relatives are here, the skulls of our forefathers.

We still remember. The memory just won't go away.

But we're not bitter. We just want everybody to know and to acknowledge this black spot in Australian history

Our people's spirit is here and we want to tell everyone about this place where our relatives lie."



Top: Willowra ladies danc
Above: Ned Kelly, who was another key for in having the memorial erecte
Far left: Alekerange ladies did sever dances to close the ceremon
Left: Geoffrey Shaw made an impassion speech about the need to remember t recent history of the Coniston Massac



Traditional owners walk to the High Court in Canberra.



Traditional owners from Aboriginal coastal communities at the High Court of Australia.



Djambawa Marawilli leads his clan to dance at Garma



Justice Mansfield hears the case at Blue Mud Bay in 2005.



Blue Mud Bay (above) and a fire ceremony (below) at Garma celebrating the Blue Mud Bay win.



The High Court decision on July 30 this year acknowledged that traditional owners of the Blue Mud Bay region in north-east Arnhem Land have exclusive rights regarding commercial and recreational fishing in tidal waters overlying Aboriginal land.

This decision means that Yolngu people must now be included in any discussions and agreements about fishing or any other business on Aboriginal lands to the low water mark, thus ending 50 years of uncertainty

"The Australian Government will work with the Northern Territory Government, commercial and recreational fishers and Indigenous Territorians to achieve positive outcomes for all parties.

"The collaborative approach between the NT government, fishing interests and the Northern Land Council shows that a sensible approach to these issues is possible." *Jenny Macklin, Federal Indigenous Affairs Minister*

"The Blue Mud Bay decision presents Territorians, including traditional owners, professional and amateur fishing and the NT Government with unique opportunities and challenges." *Paul Henderson, NT Chief Minister*

"While we may be disappointed with the decision, we must accept it and move on to work with all the various parties to ensure the best possible outcome for all.

"AFANT, the NT Seafood Council, Aboriginal land councils, the NT Government and others have been discussing how we might best do this for some time now and, although we could not anticipate the court's decision, we have come up with some ideas about how we might move forward." *Chris Makepeace, Amateur Fishermen's Association NT (AFANT)*

"There is no doubt that this is a very positive outcome for those coastal traditional owners who have argued for decades that commercial and recreational fishing in the intertidal zone impacts negatively on their social, cultural and economic interests.

"This decision has fundamentally altered the leverage that these traditional owners will be able to exercise in negotiations with either commercial or recreational fishers who want to access to Aboriginal-owned waters." *Professor Jon Altman, Australian National University*

The mainland coastline of the Northern Territory is 5,100 kilometres long, of which approximately 72% is Aboriginal land. Offshore islands encompass a further 2,100 kilometres of coastline of which more than 95% is Aboriginal land. Thus approximately 5,670 kilometres, over 80% of the total Territory coastline, is Aboriginal land.



Children at the Federal Court hearing at Yilpra in Blue Mud Bay in 2005.



A Federal Court hearing on the beach at Yilpara in 200



People of Blue Mud Bay celebrate their historic win at the Garma Festival

WARLPIRI USE ROYALTIES FOR EDUCATION

Royalty payments to Aboriginal people from mining on their country have attracted more than their fair share of negative publicity. But for the last four years, Warlpiri people from the CLC region have been using some of that money to educate themselves and their children.

Several years ago, the CLC made an agreement with mining giant Newmont Gold to make extra payments to the Kurra Aboriginal Corporation specifically for training and education.

The Warlpiri Education and Training Trust (WETT) was set up by the CLC to advise Kurra on suitable programs.

Educator Marlkirdi Napaljarri Rose from Lajamanu in the north west of the CLC's region, sits on the WETT advisory committee with members from Willowra, Yuendumu and Nyirripi and other education stakeholders.

"WETT is about using royalty money for further education and training for Warlpiri communities," Ms Rose said.

"We have been talking about a lot of things that people have wanted to see, like a Warlpiri early childhood program, a Warlpiri youth and media program and a Warlpiri Learning Community Centre where we could go and do night school in our own community.

"There are other things we are funding which are very important, like secondary support for our children going to both our local schools and to boarding schools," she said.

Funding has been approved by Kurra to support Warlpiri secondary students for the next three years through rewards, trips to and from boarding school, holidays away or family visits for boarding school students.

Last year Lajamanu students went to Melbourne for a school excursion.



Marlkirdi Napaljarri Rose

WETT has engaged the Mt Theo Substance Abuse Program to work on the youth media program and training has begun.

In partnership with World Vision, and with some Australian Government funding, WETT has also set up an early childhood program.

And access to library books and the internet are now possible through Community Learning Centres at Lajamanu. Willowra is still in the planning stage but money has been allocated for a new building.

Ms Rose said it's important that senior Aboriginal people now get paid with a small WETT allocation for their long, and often unrecognised, contribution in schools

She says these are projects that Warlpiri have wanted for years and the benefits of community ownership will be enormous.

"People are supportive because they want to see things happening in their communities.

"Some people don't understand what it's all about. So we need to go in there and say 'we're doing it for ourselves, for yapa (Warlpiri) people'. Not look at kardiya (non Aboriginal people) all the time," she said.

"It has taken the Government a long time to do what people have been asking for in education.

"With WETT because its yapa money, some of it can happen now.

"I think it is really important that people come up with something like this that benefits the whole community. I think it has really helped people decide and think about how they want to spend their money.

"Education is important for Aboriginal children – it helps them become part of Warlpiri society and part of Western society, to learn to read and write in our own language as well as English."

"Having something like WETT for our community really will make a difference to our children growing up and how they receive their education.

"We have community mentors involved and the programs are programs that people ask for themselves." Ms Rose said.

Maintaining ecological knowledge through generational change

When young people are willing to speak out about their excitement at being involved in a new program rolling out across the Northern Territory it's a strong indicator that something interesting is on offer.

Jessie Bartlett and Shaun Angeles are just two of the young Aboriginal people speaking passionately about the Natural Resource Management Board (NT) Intergenerational Transfer of Indigenous Ecological Knowledge (IEK) program.

The IEK program is designed to help young people develop concepts that will help them return to country with their old people while maintaining knowledge and practices relating to their country.

Jessie is studying conservation and land management with the eventual aim of becoming a teacher.

She is planning a trip to her grandmother's country with her grandmother, mother and other members of her family. Jessie hasn't been there since she was 16.

"I was always interested," she said, "but now I'm getting older and my grandmother is getting older and I want to spend that time with her

before she's gone and get it (cultural knowledge) before it is lost forever.

"I want to learn from my grandma and then I can go back and do teaching and take all the knowledge that has been passed down to me and then I can teach my kids and family and at school and that's what I want to do.

"I've been talking about it. I'm excited. I can't wait. I just don't want culture to disappear," Jessie said.

The IEK program is helping Shaun visit a place he's never been to before.

"There's a lot to learn, it's not just a matter of going and visiting," he said.

"That's how we do it apart from burning off and looking after places. Performing ceremony and that increasing plant species and animal species and that.

"It's all one, all one. This white side tries to pull out and dissect everything and make this separate from this and this but in our world everything is just one, everything is just one, everything," he said.

"I've dreamt of something like this. Like a place just for that, where old people, an old man feels like he's coming to the end of a life and he's got



The Tennant Creek Walk: Recording traditional ecological knowledge
books and books and books up here to hand down and he goes to a place like this and he says I need your hand. That would be a special place I tell you."

Warlpiri Triangle pointing to a brighter future

More than 80 Aboriginal people involved in education got together again this year for the Warlpiri Triangle which unites the Lajamanu, Nyirrpri, Wirliyajarrayi (Willowra) and Yumtumu (Yuendumu) schools.

The Warlpiri Triangle is traditionally one of the most powerful Aboriginal education forums in the Northern Territory.

Its mission statement reads (in Warlpiri): Nganimpa-rlalu jintangu yapa Warlpiri manu wangkami jinta jaru. Warlpiri-patu kurlangu Jaru. Nganimpa yungurnalu waja-waja mardarni maninja wangurlu nganimpanyangu jaru manu culture. Nganimparlu yungu-rnalu tarngangkujuku mardarni pirrjirdinyayirni tarngangkujuku.

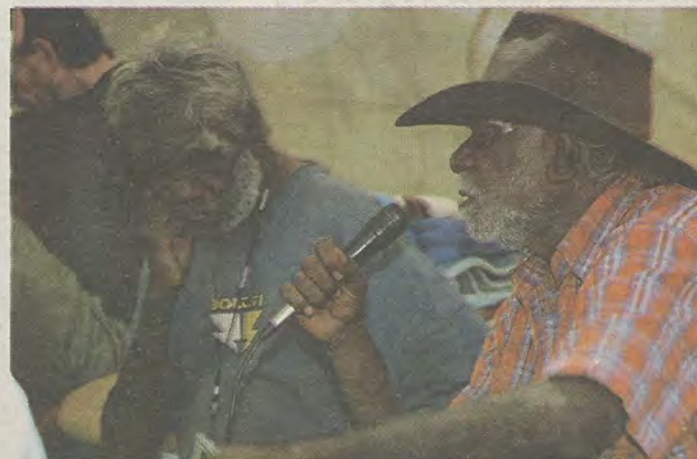
Or (in English): We are one Warlpiri peo-

ple and speak one language. We don't want to lose our language and culture. We want to keep it going and we want to keep it strong.

The Triangle began as an annual meeting of Warlpiri people involved in education, which grew out of kinship links between people working in Warlpiri schools and professional links that began to develop between educators – Warlpiri and non-Warlpiri – working in these schools.

The Triangle has now been incorporated as the Warlpiri-patu-kurlangu Jaru.

Warlpiri participants in this year's annual meeting discussed their hopes and dreams for the triangle. Many were particularly concerned about the lack of young Aboriginal teachers coming through the system and the deterioration of the Warlpiri language in young people.



The views of some teachers at the Warlpiri Triangle...

BARBARA MARTIN (YUENDUMU)

Barbara recalled her personal education journey through the stages, from the 1980s when she was a literacy worker at Lajamanu to her becoming a teacher and working in various capacities at Yuendumu School.

She is concerned that young people are not coming through.

They used to have a tutor based in the community at Yuendumu. She recalls how five other older women and one man at Yuendumu came through a similar system to her, and got trained.

This enabled them to keep strong connections with country, language and people through a two-way system.

They became real teachers in the classroom through the bilingual program. But she now feels that the program is not strongly supported.

"We want a strong bilingual Warlpiri program to continue. We want to talk strong, we want action for our young people to get training and become teachers. We are worried about no young people coming behind. We are all getting old now," Ms Martin said.

NANCY OLDFIELD (YUENDUMU)

Nancy started working in the school at Yuendumu in 1979. She has worked as a literacy worker and teacher and has done training through BIITE, along with Barbara. She, also, is worried about the future as now there are not many Yapa staff in the schools and fewer coming through as teachers and doing training.

"They need to help the next generation to come through so the older ones can retire," she said.

FIONA GIBSON (NYIRRPRI)

Fiona started working in an Outstation School in 1984. They had no buildings. She was helped by Wendy Baarda, a teacher from Yuen-

dumu, to prepare programs. In 1985 they went into the Education Department Office in town to request a school at Nyirrpri.

Eventually the Education Department put in a caravan school there, and later proper school buildings. They had a bilingual programme going at Nyirrpri and still want one.

Fiona did a lot of study with BIITE. She spoke about how it had been really hard doing the study to become a four-year trained, proper teacher through RATE.

She can see the need to mentor young people as teachers.

However she says there needs to be more support to get young people working.

JERRY JANGALA PATRICK (LAJAMANU)

"I want to talk about the Warlpiri Triangle that started in 1983. Now 2008 and it's changing now the two way program and in every community school. How long is the Teacher training course in Batchelor? Three or four years.

"This Warlpiri Triangle has been going for a long time but our own people no-one has come into a proper principal, for all that training, in all that time, why?

"Still wasting all that time. Government now says you got to stop your language and teach only English.

"But we want our own language – what are we, England? We want our own language in our own school.

"We got the teachers but only under name assistant teacher, not principal, all that training wasted for our people.

"That's why we can't teach our kids because the government says stop your language.

"But our language is our life.

"We want to teach that language, we know that language we sing that language, we dance that language in the ceremony time.

TALKING TOUGH FOR EDUCATION
Top: Martin Johnson and Jerry Jangala Patrick
Middle: Elizabeth Ross
Bottom foreground: Nancy Oldfield and Barbara Martin at the Warlpiri Triangle in Lajamanu recently

"That's our teaching time, we got to keep all that story strong. Yitakimani we want that teaching our language and showing our kids.

"We like that English but can we take responsibility now to teach our language in the school and out bush too.

"What about us, how come the government lets the kardiya take those jobs first? I'm a pastor and I learn all the hard words for translation, we're doing it in the church anyway, we already using it, doing it in church - how come government can say we can't do it in school? We got two languages in church. We got Warlpiri Bible and we're reading it but government school says no, they keep putting their foot on top of us.

Everybody should learn. Good that we can learn English, but what about our language? "

Stolen mob return to Garden Point

Members of the stolen generations in Darwin recently returned to an island off the coast of Darwin where they were taken as children.

A resilient group, including members of the Garden Point Association Committee in Darwin, saw as a 'healing journey' a return to Garden Point on Melville Island where they were raised by the Roman Catholic Mission.

Garden Point Association Committee's Cherry McLennan said the trip allowed members to spend quality time together, relive fond memories and reconnect emotionally in a special place.

"This has had a positive impact on the way that they can, together, come to terms with the apology and acknowledgement of the plight of the stolen generations made by the Rudd Government earlier this year," McLennan said.



Above: Garden Point members reunite on Wulawunga Beach and below right: A mass was conducted at the beach

The group visited familiar landmarks, gathered bushtucker including sugarbag and mussels, and fished and camped on the beach at Wulawunga.

The trip was organised jointly by the Garden Point Association Committee and Danila Dilba Health Service's Emotional and Social Wellbeing Centre.



Toilet on sacred site investigated

Contractors for the Federal Intervention are being investigated by the Northern Territory's Aboriginal Protected Area Authority for building a pit toilet on a sacred site in Numbulwar.

The Northern Land Council held a meeting in June at Numbulwar, 600kms southeast of Darwin, to explain the process to Traditional Owners.

The toilet was dug by a contractor with NT Link, a company employed as part of the Federal Intervention into Northern Territory Aboriginal communities. It was then reported by Traditional Owners, and subsequently investigated by the Northern Land Council and AAPA.

Traditional owner, and NLC project officer, Bobby Numggumajbarr, said the site was culturally significant, and off limits to local children.

"This ground is very, very important to us," he said.

The operational commander of the intervention taskforce Major General David Chalmers said if proven, the behaviour of the contractors is 'appalling'.

AAPA, which administers the Sacred Sites Act, has passed on evidence to the NT Justice Department to consider if any prosecutions are warranted.

Bob Nunthabala and Langina Nung-gumajbarr at the sacred site



Card broadens shopping choices

The federal Human Services Minister Joe Ludwig has said about 500 Northern Territory businesses have expressed an interest in accepting the new welfare debit card.

More than three-quarters of welfare recipients in prescribed areas of the Northern Territory are now having half of their payments quarantined.

The measure was one of the Commonwealth intervention's most controversial. Senator Ludwig said the pin-protected card replaces the store cards for major retailers and is being rolled out over the next month. Many businesses had complained the former system took customers away from them to the big retailers.

Senator Ludwig said stores will have to pass an accreditation process before they'll be licensed to accept the new welfare debit card.

Labour rush on at The Granites gold mine

There's a new rush on at The Granites gold mine in the middle of the Tanami Desert northwest of Alice Springs.

Increasingly, the Warlpiri traditional owners are finding the mine is bringing them windfalls beyond the obvious financial dividends it offers to TOs. Each year the Central Land Council's prevocational training course at The Granites is being taken up by Warlpiri people in greater numbers.

The 10 week course is strongly backed by Newmont Mining which is keen to build up a local workforce.

"The motivation, firstly, is just out of the fact that we are on Aboriginal land and the Aboriginal people of this community deserve to be able to be given the chance to work at an operation," Newmont's geology manager Jamie Pendergast said, "and then I suppose secondly, another factor is the mining industry's suffering a shortage of personnel, a shortage of people, skilled people, so if we can get some the local people into these training programs, build up their skill levels, they're going to be suitable to help us out with the manning shortage.

Marie Elena Ellis is an Arrernte/Warlpiri woman from Amoonguna and said the prevocational course has been an excellent introduction to working at a mine and thinks others should take up the chance.

"I strongly would encourage people to come

along and do this because this is something different," Marie said.

"Yeah, come out and try it, it's really good and a chance to have a permanent position and a chance to have pride in yourself and your skills as well and earning a lot of money. You feel like you're earning enough to buy a house and live comfortably."

Lorraine King lives in Papunya and Yuendumu and is a Pintupi/Luritja/Warlpiri woman.

"CLC helped us get onto the course at Yuendumu," she said. "It has worked well for us because it's actually the first time they've got a Warlpiri majority like there's more Warlpiri in this group than before so it's great."

Warlpiri man Gerard Sullivan from Yuendumu and before that Darwin said he's hoping to use the course to get an apprenticeship.

"I'd like to get an apprenticeship for diesel mechanic or something, still just looking around," he said.



Bobcat operation is just one of the skills picked up during the Central Land Council's prevocational training course at Newmont's The Granites mine in the Tanami Desert. An increasing number of Warlpiri traditional owners are joining the course.

"(The CLC) just encouraged us a lot. Helped us out with the forms. It's a bit scary but you get helped through. It's a good chance to earn some money and it's a good job."

More than 100 of the 500 employees at The Granites are Aboriginal. The CLC's employment unit provides trainees who undertake the prevocational course with ongoing mentoring and support after they've completed their training.

Award for reporting

Annual reports are generally not seen as the most exciting publication produced by an organisation.

And as the end of the financial year comes around it is one project dreaded by many senior managers.

However, it is increasingly seen as the blueprint of the organisation, as well as a reflection of corporate governance.

Believe it or not, in the 'governance' world there are annual awards for the best reports in the previous year for NGOs, local government bodies and private sector companies.

This year the Northern Land Council entered for the first time in the Australasian Reporting Awards, and surprised organisers with their silver award for its 2006/2007 Annual Report.

"The NLC received a silver award for its 2006/2007 Annual Report, its first-time entry in the ARA awards – a most impressive achievement," ARA director Malcolm Duce said.

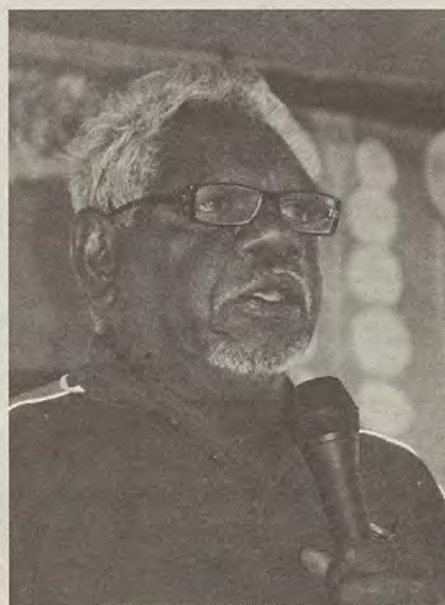
NLC commits to national jobs plan

A national jobs plan for Indigenous Australians is welcome, but highlights deficiencies in education and training by successive Australian and State/Territory governments, according to the Northern Land Council.

Fortescue Metals Group's chief executive, and Australia's richest man, Andrew Forrest, has pledged to create 50,000 private sector jobs for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.

In a public statement, the chairman of the Northern Land Council Wali Wunungmurra committed the Land Council to working with the Government and industry on the development of an effective plan and called for additional resources in order for Land Councils to effectively contribute to the plan.

"I welcome this bold initiative of Andrew Forrest and Fortescue Metals and the willingness of the Australian Government to join with employers to prepare Aboriginal people for employment and to create real jobs for our people,"



NLC Chairman
Wali Wunungmurra

Mr Wunungmurra said.

"One of the key questions before us is exactly how did we arrive at this situation where Indigenous people are not job-ready and are often unable to access employment opportunities."

He said overcoming the historic underspending of successive Northern Territory and Australian

Governments in Indigenous education and training is critical to providing job-ready Indigenous people into the future.

"The Northern Land Council and other peak Indigenous organisations have the experience, expertise and proven track record in training and employment - our challenge has been that the education system has failed Aboriginal people and we have never received adequate funding to properly train our people and create real and sustainable jobs," Mr Wunungmurra said.

Mr Wunungmurra said it is important for government and industry to acknowledge the significant unrealised economic potential of Aboriginal land in the Northern Territory.

"Significant economic opportunity exists on Aboriginal land and the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act provides the framework for genuine and sustainable economic development," he said.

Hard work makes art centre concept reality

The Arplwe Art Centre and Gallery at Ali Curung south of Tennant Creek has opened with a celebration of culture and stories.

The centre was opened on the 27th of June with the event attended by large crowds from neighbouring communities, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs and holiday makers.

Arplwe Art Centre Chairperson, Alison Nelson, opened the centre, announcing the importance of the new facility for maintaining traditional culture and stories.

In her speech, Ms Nelson said, "Arplwe Art Centre helps us to keep our stories strong. We use this place for painting, teaching the young ones and telling our old stories".

Ms Nelson's speech was supported and endorsed by traditional owners for the Ali Curung area.

Art Centre workers, Jennifer Nelson, Valerie Nelson and Maureen O'Keefe then made the opening official by accepting a mat inscribed with the words 'Arplwe Art and Cultural Centre'.

The workers were kept busy during the event selling art works, cooking kangaroo tails, displaying bush tucker and organising dancing groups from nearby communities.

Visitors browse through the newly opened Arplwe Art Centre and Gallery at Alekerange (top) shortly after its opening. Dancers who performed at the art centre opening (middle and right). Traditional owners enjoy the new facility (bottom).

The art centre was funded through a shared responsibility agreement with the Australian and Northern Territory governments.

The event climaxed with a display of traditional dancing in the centre of the Ali Curung community.

Dancers and singers from the Ampilwatja, Willowra and Tennant Creek communities joined Ali Curung men and women in an afternoon-long event of dancing and singing.

The evening was filled with performances by contemporary bands such as Desert Eagle, Tableland Drifters and the Winanjikkarri All Stars late into the night.

The event was a reminder to all attendees of the value of art centres in building community harmony and spirit. Lorna Martin, Art Centre Co-ordinator, said the day was made possible because of a lot of hard work from volunteers and people in Ali Curung community. Arplwe Art Centre workers should be congratulated for their efforts, enthusiasm and co-ordination on the day.



Mining boom on display at Kalinjarri

In July, the mining boom was fully evident at the small outstation of Kalinjarri, south of Tennant Creek.

The ability of traditional owners of Aboriginal land to be the masters of their own destiny was also played out over a two-day period.

On the 16th of July a series of mining companies walked up to a meeting of traditional owners from the Karlantijpa South, Warumungu, Mungkarta and Mungkarta 2 Aboriginal land trusts and presented their cases for mineral exploration.

Each presentation emphasised the value of the Land Rights Act to Aboriginal people as it provided them with the ability to carefully consider each company's proposal to explore their land and to either give approval or not.

In each case, approval to explore their land for minerals would automatically have meant approval to mine on their land.

Five companies presented their cases at Kalinjarri, including Imperial Granite and Minerals, Westgold (Navarre Resources/Castille Resources), TNG Ltd, Sammy Resources and Kettle Rose.

They were hoping to be granted permission to explore for a wide range of minerals including uranium, gold, tungsten and base metals.

Nine exploration license applications were considered with five-and-a-half refused by traditional owners and subsequently refused consent by the CLC. The remainder are under further consideration.

The decisions followed seriously considered discussions among the traditional owner groups.

Daly River a focus of Merrepen

Children from Daly River perform on the river bank during the Merrepen festival.

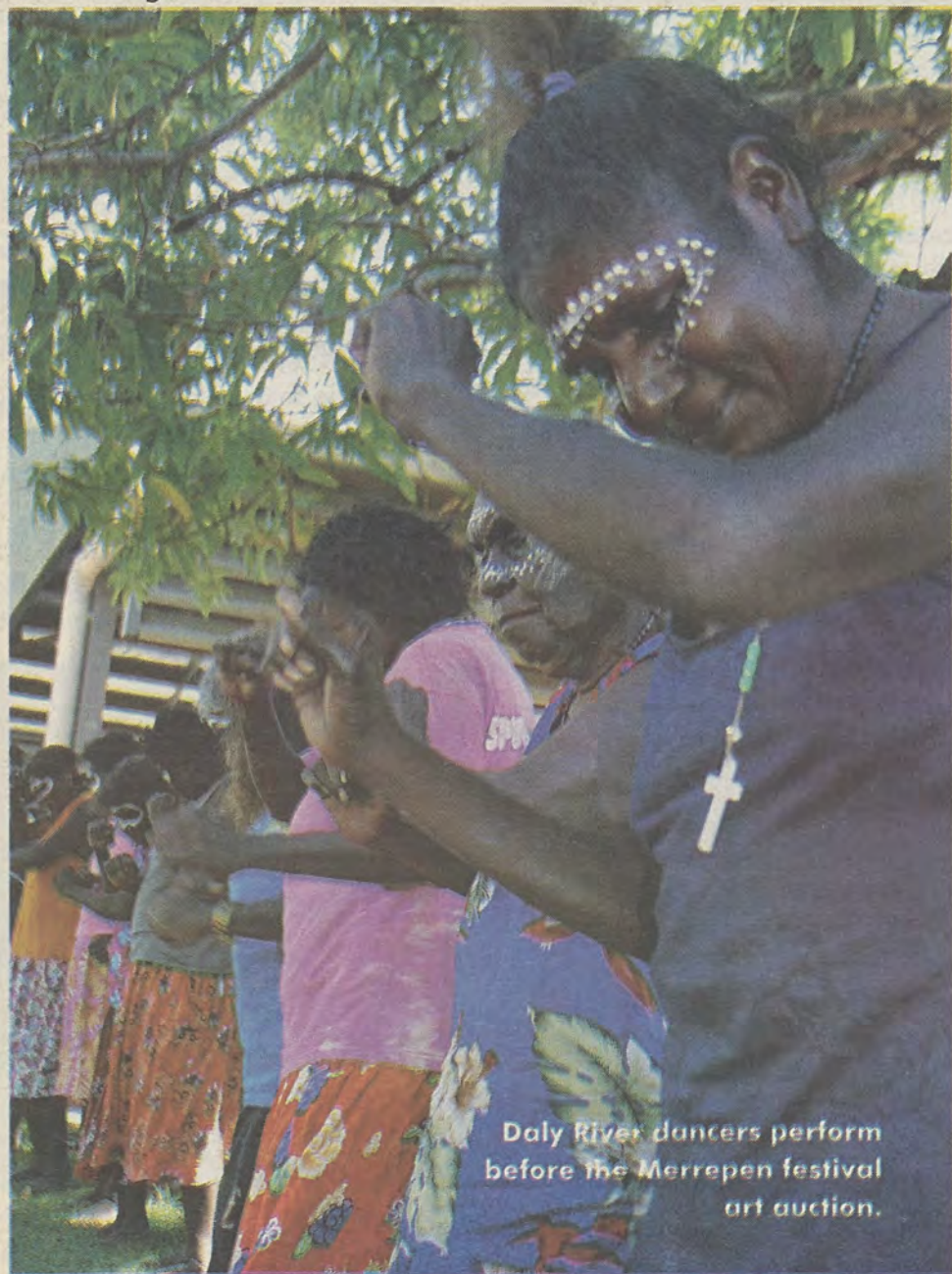
One of the first events on the dry season calendar is the Merrepen Arts Festival, held at the Nauiyu community near the Daly River, 240kms south of Darwin.

The festival, now in its 21st year and held on 1-2 June, is eagerly anticipated by all the Aboriginal communities in the region, such as Palumpa, Peppimenarti and Wadeye, with most sending football, basketball and softball teams fighting for local bragging rights.

While the art auction held at the local art centre is a traditional highlight, another added spectacle this year was the performance of Geoffrey Gurumul Yunupingu, a musical legend in the Northern Territory, having cut his teeth with music giants, Yothu Yindi, and Saltwater Band.

Accompanying Yunupingu in the open-air concert on the banks of the Daly River, were the Ad Hoc String Collective, a world renowned string quartet.

Prior to the concert, senior women from the Nauiyu community welcomed the musicians to country by performing a water ceremony, amidst the dancing of local children.



Daly River dancers perform before the Merrepen festival art auction.

30-year wait for claim hearing



Tiwi Land Council Chairman Robert Tipungwuti going through evidence.

Thirty years after their original claim was launched, the Aboriginal land commissioner has begun a hearing into a land claim made by Tiwi Island people over the Vernon Islands.

Traditional owners made the claim over the uninhabited islands between Darwin and Melville Island in 1978 under the Northern

Territory Land Rights Act. The commissioner, Justice Howard Olney, held a hearing on the Tiwi Islands in June.

Traditional owners argue they have strong links to the islands.

Northern Land Council chairman Wali Wunungmurra attended the hearing to show solidarity with the Tiwi Land Council in its efforts to win the right to have ownership of their islands recognised.

Pride on show at Bagot

The Aboriginal community in the heart of Darwin city opened its doors recently to the public with a series of concerts, fashion parades, exhibitions, and sporting events.

Activities leading up to the weekend of events included the establishment of community gardens for and by kids, an interned hub, which also doubles as a digital workshop and after school homework centre, circus skills training, an on-line Bagot history project and lantern and flag making workshops.

The Bagot Cultural Gathering began with a film night and ended with a family fun day.

Bagot president Lyle Cooper said local people were excited to show off their community, adding that it is timely that such a gathering is held.

"If you reflect on the history of Bagot, we used to have an Open Day every year and that went on until the 1970s," Mr Cooper said.

"So we're hoping we can hold a Cultural Gathering every year."

Some of the locally-renowned bands that frequently played at Bagot were the Reflections in the 1970s and the Swamp Jockeys – who helped the formation of Yothu Yindi – in the 1980s.



One of the many highlights this year included the FigJam concert featuring Sunrize Band, Wild Water, Crazy Boys, and Letterstick.

The Northern Land Council showcased the 30-year history of land rights in the Top End of the Northern Territory with the display of its 'Land is Life' photographic panel exhibition.

Organisers, InterCultural Services, are confident that the gathering will become an annual event.

Mustering team for hire



A group of men from Willowra are keen to form their own mustering team after they travelled to Tanami Downs near the West Australian border recently for a week's work mustering.

"It was pretty good," Paul Long said as he put the finishing touches on the donkey fence the men have built at Willowra. "The money was good and we went out on bikes to get the cattle into the yards then we cut them out."

Maxie Martin has worked on cattle stations for much of his life and leads the team of five local men.

"We trucked off about 140 head of cattle from there and it was really good. They looked good too. We did seven days and I think we're going back in a few weeks. We've got a cattle business here and we want to make it really strong and have these young fellas working on it."

Maxie said that anybody wanting mustering work done should call the Willowra Council and leave a message for him to return their call. Telephone: (08) 8956 4820

Opal saves \$100 million and 13 lives in two years



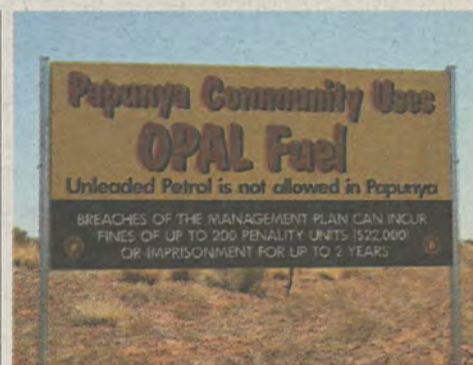
Petrol sniffing in Central Australia has almost completely stopped thanks to the introduction of Opal fuel.

The fuel, developed by BP, has been a crucial weapon in the fight against petrol sniffing, which fell by 90 per cent after Opal was introduced into the region in 2005.

"Before Opal was rolled out, there were more than 500 petrol sniffers in this region, with seven deaths every year from sniffing.

The health and social problems caused by sniffing in the region cost the taxpayer an estimated \$78.9 million per year.

"When Opal replaced ULP fuel in the region, the residents of remote communities in the NT and Alice



Springs took the opportunity to stop their young people sniffing and have so far kept it out of their home communities" said Blair McFarland the Co-ordinator of the Central Australian Youth Link Up Service.

"We estimate that 13 lives have been saved by the introduction of Opal and through community actions," he said.

Hundreds take to the streets in Darwin for NAIDOC

Around 300 Aboriginal and Islander people, and their supporters, made their presence felt in the CBD of Darwin at this year's NAIDOC celebrations, held on July 4.

Traditional owners and staff of the Northern Land Council joined the Top End's other peak Indigenous organisations such as Danila Dilba, AMSANT, and the Larrakia Nation, in marching through the city centre to Raintree Park, where speakers debated the pros and

cons of the Federal Intervention, and the national apology to the Stolen Generations by the Federal Government on 13 February.

The theme for this year is 'Advance Australia Fair: Saying Sorry was the First Step'.

NLC chairman Wali Wunungmurra said NAIDOC Week celebrations in the Northern Territory and across Australia provided an opportunity for Indigenous Australians to be proud of their language, song, ceremony, dance and law.

"It is my hope that this time of year provides strength to Indigenous Australians struggling with their living conditions," Mr Wunungmurra said.

"It is a time to remember our history of standing up for our rights, the gains we've made, and the challenges ahead."

Activities in Darwin and Palmerston included a church service, flag raising ceremony, art competitions, baby competition, and a NAIDOC ball at the newly-



opened Darwin Convention Centre.



Aboriginal men unite (above) in opposing violence against women and children and the apology they signed (below) to those women and children.

The men's apology

"We, the Aboriginal males from Central Australia, and our visitor brothers from around Australia, gathered at Inteyerrkwe in July 2008 to develop strategies to ensure our future roles as grandfathers, fathers, uncles, nephews, brothers, grandsons, and sons in caring for our children in a safe family environment that will lead to a happier, longer life that reflects opportunities experienced by the wider community.

"We acknowledge and say sorry for the hurt, pain and suffering caused by Aboriginal males to our wives, to our children, to our mothers, to our grandmothers, to our granddaughters, to our aunts, to our nieces, and to our sisters.

"We also acknowledge that we need the love and support for our Aboriginal women to help us move forward."

Aboriginal men say sorry for the violence

About 400 Aboriginal men have given an historic apology to Aboriginal women for the pain, hurt and suffering caused by Aboriginal men.

The apology was given at the end of an Aboriginal male health summit, held over three days at Ross River, outside of Alice Springs.

The summit also allowed Aboriginal men to respond collectively to the effects of the federal intervention into Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory.

Central Australian Aboriginal Congress male health manager John Liddle said one of the effects of the Federal Intervention had been the perception that all Aboriginal men were violent abusers.

"We need to acknowledge the hurt and pain that has been caused by violence, which has shamed many Indigenous males who are not violent," Mr Liddle said.

"More importantly, we want to come up with solutions that will bring about safe, healthy environments for our children and families."

Federal Aboriginal Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin, intervention administrators Sue Gordon and Major-General David Chalmers and members of the intervention review team attended the final day to witness the apology and accept recommendations that came out of three days of workshops.

Recommendations included the establishment of community-based violence prevention programs specific to Aboriginal men, creating healing places for Aboriginal men such as men's shelters, providing tax-free status for professionals working in Aboriginal communities, incentives to employ Aboriginal people in similar positions and better support for Aboriginal-controlled businesses to tap into the minerals boom.

Bush tucker and medicine garden at Desert Park

A specialised garden has been created by the Alice Springs Desert Park (ASDP) that will provide bush tucker and bush medicine to chronic renal patients.

ASDP Nursery Manager Tim Collins said the park is proud to be involved with the project as it supports and promotes Indigenous health and culture as well as the use of Central Australian plants.

"The garden was created for the Western Desert Nganampa Walytja Palyantjaku Tjutaku (WDNWPT), a local charity that supports renal patients from remote communities who have had to relocate to Alice Springs for lifelong dialysis treatment," Mr Collins said.

"The ASDP developed a plan to create a bush food and bush medicine garden so that resources are more readily available for the patients and visitors to use, as well as having a beautiful garden to improve the aesthetics of the house.

"The bush onion (Yalka) and Quandong (Pmwerlpe) are some of the plants to be used for bush tucker.

"Some of the plants being used for bush medicines include *Stemodia viscosa* (Pintye-pintye) used as a compress to relieve colds and flu, *Eremophila freelingii* (Arrethe) used as a skin wash to treat scabies, and *Cymbopogon ambiguus* (Ilintjii) used as a drinking medicine or rubbing medicine for colds and flu."

WDNWPT Manager Sarah Brown said the organisation was extremely grateful to everyone involved in creating the garden and they were overwhelmed by how magnificent it looks.

"When we first walked out into the garden it felt like 'Backyard



L-R Tim Collins, Marina Alice, Norah Nelson and Gary Dinham.

Blitz' Desert Park style; the transformation was truly amazing and brought tears to our eyes," Ms Brown said.

"It means a lot to WDNWPT to have received such tremendous support towards the project and that the garden will help our patients and their families.

"WDNWPT, whose name means 'keeping all our families well', was formed from the Western Desert Dialysis Appeal, which raised over \$1 million dollars in 2000 when Indigenous painters from the Western Desert painted pictures

and auctioned them off at the Art Gallery of NSW," Ms Brown said.

"The aim of the Appeal was to support patients in town and set up dialysis out bush, with the money raised used to help WDNWPT buy a house in Alice Springs, which now has two dialysis machines and acts as a meeting place for patients and their families."

The Australian Government youth initiative Green Corps, Alice Springs Town Council and pharmaceutical company Amgen also contributed towards the project.

SANTA TERESA AT THE MCG



Above: Faron Gorey from Santa Teresa in action against the Fitzroy Stars on the MCG.

Another of the Northern Territory's Aboriginal communities will soon have the chance to earn the right to play football on the sacred turf of the Melbourne Cricket Ground next year.

Last year, Santa Teresa south-east of Alice Springs won the community division of the Umpires' Carnival in Darwin, which brought the reward of playing the Fitzroy Stars of Victoria on the MCG as part of the AFL's indigenous round earlier this year.

And so, on Saturday May the 24th 2008, a group of young men representing the Ltyentye Apurte football team from Santa Teresa strode onto the MCG, fulfilling childhood dreams and creating life-long memories.

Unfortunately Ltyentye Apurte went down to the Fitzroy Stars in a spirited display 9.8 (62) to 17.14 (116), but those involved said there were many more gains from the week that outweighed any loss on the scoreboard.

Glenn Moreen got to play with his son Brentley on the MCG, the players trained with Richmond in the week leading up to the match and players from both sides linked arms with Essendon and Richmond players as part of the 'No More' campaign encouraging men to take a stand

against violence towards women and children. Now months after the experience, co-coach Phillip Alice said the trip has changed his players.

"They are taking more responsibility. Turning up for training, working," he said.

"The highlight is that anyone, any of the Territory sides can make it to the highest stage. Not just the Tiwis. Any side who plays well enough can make it.

The AFL's indigenous round also included 'The Long Walk' led by Michael Long and members of the Stolen Generations in support of reconciliation.

This year's Umpires' Carnival to launch the football season in the Top End will be held in Darwin from October the 10th to Sunday October the 12th.

Phillip Alice said he's taking another group of footballers from the edge of the Simpson Desert to the tropics of Darwin in the hope they'll be able to make a second trip to the MCG.

"This time I'm taking the best eight players from Santa Teresa, the best eight from Titjikala and the best eight players from Finke, which will be good because it'll be a different group of fellas," he said.

"We're going to be called the Rodinga Eagles, which will be good because they'll play a different style of footy."

FOOTY ROUNDUP IN THE CENTRE

Two Aboriginal community sides have won their way through to the inaugural final series of AFL Central Australia's combined super league.

At the start of the current football season AFL Central Australia merged its town and country competitions.

The decision meant Aboriginal community teams from around Central Australia including Ltyentye Apurte (Santa Teresa), Yuendumu, Anmatjere (Mt Allan, Ti Tree and Laramba), Hermannsburg and Papunya would play against the five teams from Alice Springs (Pioneers, Federal, Rovers, South and West).

The change also saw Plenty Highway (Harts Range) and AP Crows (communities from the APY Lands) drop out of the competition.

The creation of a combined league has increased travel demands on communities, taking them to Alice Springs twice as often as when

they only played other communities in the Country competition.

AFLCA general manager Kate Egan said the combined league has had a successful start with the community sides matching it with the town teams.

"We're very happy with the way the competition has gone this year," she said.

"You only have to look at the top four of both the A grade and under 17s to see that with two town and two community sides in each one.

Ms Egan said all aspects of the combined competition will be reviewed at the end of the season including whether the travel burden on bush communities is too great.

"We've got some concern with the number of forfeits, particularly Papunya and Hermannsburg.

"Yuendumu hasn't forfeited any this season and they've got a long way to come into town.

They should be congratulated on that," Ms Egan said.

Both Ltyentye Apurte and Yuendumu made it into the top four of the combined competition's first season.

Anmatjere (fifth), Hermannsburg (sixth) and Papunya (10th) missed out on the finals.

Anmatjere gave itself every chance of making the finals after thrashing Rovers by 72 points in its last round match, but was relying on Yuendumu to lose to West for it to sneak into fourth spot. But Yuendumu, winners of the last three premierships in the Country competition, rose to the occasion again by defeating the reigning Town premier - West - by 14 points.

In the under 17s Ltyente Apurte, Rovers, South and Anmatjere finished in the top four. Ltyente Apurte was the only team to have both it's A grade and under 17 teams finish in the top four.

20 YEARS AFTER THE LANDMARK BARUNGA STATEMENT

Hundreds turned out recently to celebrate a special milestone for the ever-popular Barunga Festival – the 20th anniversary of the Barunga Statement.

Barunga, east of Katherine, is the scene of an annual cultural and sporting gathering of the region's Aboriginal people, hosted by local traditional owners, the Jawoyn.

It is also the site of the presentation of the Barunga Statement by traditional owners to then Prime Minister Bob Hawke in 1988, Australia's bicentennial year.

The Barunga Statement, which took its inspiration from the Yirrkala bark petition in 1963, called for Aboriginal self-management, a national system of land rights, compensation for loss of lands, respect for Aboriginal identity, an end to discrimination and the granting of full civil, economic, social and cultural rights.

Northern Land Council chairman Wali Wunungmurra, and one of the last surviving signatories to the Bark Petition, joined other Indigenous and Government leaders in speaking about the event of 20 years ago, and the lessons learned.

"The most important thing a government can do to assist Aboriginal people to overcome disadvantage, is to consult us and listen to us," Mr Wunungmurra said.

"To allow us to have our own representative bodies, so we can make decisions for ourselves – so we re-establish our independence."

Mr Wunungmurra acknowledged that the national apology to the stolen generations by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd 'is a first step in the right direction', but says that more needs to be done in consultation with Aboriginal people.

"I urge government to listen to

Traditional Owners when we talk about the plans we have for our communities and our land," he said.

"We all need to work together, Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people, to make sure that when the government gives, it does not take away at the same time.

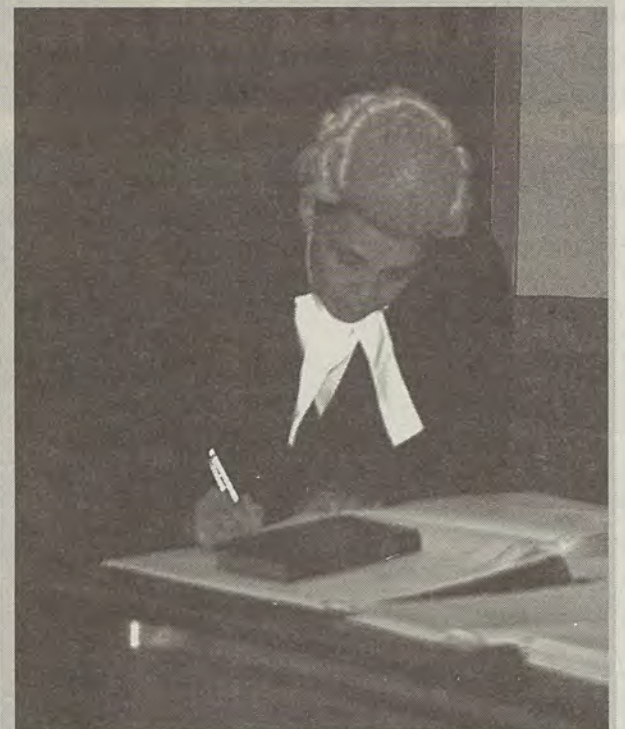
Mr Wunungmurra also spoke about the historic photographic exhibition, Land Is Life, which was display at the festival.

"It (the exhibition) tells the story of struggle to have our land rights recognised," he said.

"It is an epic tale of setbacks and celebrations."



Legal admission for NLC staffer



Trish Rigby-Christophersen

Northern Land Council Indigenous land management facilitator Trish Rigby-Christophersen took her first steps into the legal profession recently, with her official admission at the Northern Territory Supreme Court in Darwin. Trish completed her Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice while working full-time.

NLC members and staff congratulate her.



Gurrumul scoops music awards



Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu accepts one of his four awards.

Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu has capped off a magical year, by taking out four awards at this year's NT Indigenous Music Awards in Darwin.

Gurrumul has had considerable national and international recognition since releasing his first solo CD earlier this year, titled Gurrumul.

The Northern Land Council sponsored the award for traditional music, which this year went to joint winners, Muylngarnbi – Songs

from Walking with Spirits, which features music from Tom E Lewis, Roy Ashley and Mickey Hall, and the Tiwi women's choir Ngarukuruwala (We Sing Songs).

Ali Mills and 'Big Frank' Djirrimbilwuy hosted the awards ceremony in Darwin, which featured performers such as, Kenbi Dancers, Wild Water, the Chooky Dancers and a full performance by Saltwater Band featuring Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu.



Tom E Lewis



Ngarukuruwala



Jimmy Little



A Kenbi dancer performs on the night.



The now world-famous Chooky Dancers in action.

WINNERS

Act of the Year

Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu

Album of the Year

Gurrumul – Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu

Song of the Year

Wiyathul – Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu

Artwork and Design of the year

Gurrumul – album cover designed by Carlo Santone

Emerging Act of the Year and Touring Award B2M

School Band of the Year

Rocky Creek Band

Gospel Album of the Year

Harold Dalywaters and the Elliott Gospel Band

DVD/Film clip of the Year

Saltwater Band Live

Traditional Music Award of the Year

1. Muylngarnbi – Songs from Walking with Spirits
2. Ngarukuruwala – We Sing Songs

People's Choice Award – Most Popular Song of the Year

Wild Wild Water – Wild Water

Hall of Fame

1. Peter Miller and Blekbela Mujik
2. Mark Raymond and the Kulumindini Band

Special Contribution Award

1. Galarrwuy Yunupingu
2. Mr Nundhirribala