

FREE

LANDRIGHTS NEWS

April 2022

VOLUME 12. NUMBER 1.

CENTRAL AUSTRALIA

WHO WILL YOU VOTE FOR?

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ISSN 1839-5279

EDITORIAL

Land Rights News Central Australia is published by the Central Land Council three times a year.

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Contributions are welcome

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Land Rights News Central Australia subscriptions are \$22 per year.

It is distributed free of charge to Aboriginal organisations and communities in Central Australia.

To subscribe email media@clc.org.au or call 08 8951 6215

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Advertise in the only newspaper to reliably reach Aboriginal people in remote Central Australia.

Next publication date: August 2022

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COVER



Who will you vote for? Election posters have been stylised for creative purposes only. LRN readers should refer to the candidates' current campaigns.

CLC MEETINGS

17-18 May 2022
Executive
Alice Springs

28-29 June 2022
Executive
Alice Springs

23-25 August 2022
Council Meeting
Kalkaringi

Native title holders go to court over Singleton water



The Mpwerempwer Aboriginal Corporation is taking the NT Government to the Supreme Court over the controversial Singleton water licence.

THE CENTRAL Land Council has served a court claim against the Northern Territory Government and Fortune Agribusiness on behalf of the native title holders for Singleton Station.

The Mpwerempwer Aboriginal Corporation asked the court in mid-February to declare the decision to grant the company the NT's biggest water licence invalid.

"We will show that the government didn't comply with the NT Water Act, failed to consider Aboriginal cultural values, and that its decision was seriously irrational," CLC

chief executive Les Turner said.

The CLC will tell the court that the decision was "not even a proper decision" because it leaves many important things to be decided later.

"This uncertainty means that what Fortune Agribusiness is eventually allowed to do might be very different from what it proposed in its licence application," Mr Turner warned.

The added uncertainty that comes with global heating has the native title holders and their neighbours very worried about their futures.

"We will show that the government didn't comply with the NT Water Act, failed to consider Aboriginal cultural values, and that its decision was seriously irrational."

"The water licence decision is unconscionable considering the impacts of climate change on highly vulnerable desert communities," he said.

The CLC will also argue that the government failed to give Mpwerempwer a fair go (procedural fairness).

Continued p. 12

Use your power, don't waste it



By CLC chair Sammy Wilson.

ANANGU will have a lot of power in the federal election that is just around the corner – the power to decide who runs this country.

That's because the CLC region is in the federal electorate of Lingiari.

This time, all eyes are on a

few electorates where voters can change the government in Canberra.

Lingiari is among them.

Anangu together can have a very strong voice in Lingiari. Our voice deserves to be heard.

Lingiari is one of the seats any party must win if it wants to become the next Australian Government.

This election will be tough for the Australian Labor Party, after the retirement of long-term member for Lingiari, Warren Snowdon.

Marion Scrymgour is trying to follow in his footsteps for Labor.

You will see her and the candidate of the Country Liberal Party, Damien Ryan, and a lot of other politicians in your communities and on the TV.

"I want you all to enrol to vote and be ninti about who you vote for."

They will promise you all sorts of things because, right now, you are very powerful.

You can keep this government, or kick it out.

I want you to use your power, not waste it.

I want you all to enrol to vote and be ninti about who you vote for.

I want you to listen closely to the candidates and ask them lots of questions about the things that matter most.

They are the things for which our communities have been asking for too many years and they are the same everywhere.

Continued p. 4

The seat of Lingiari covers all of the Territory, except for Darwin.

It could decide the next election.



The Australian election is coming. **Enrol Now To Vote.**

Your vote, your future.
Your voice will be heard.



Call **8982 8008**
aec.gov.au/enrol

Low voter turnout in the bush could deliver election win to Scott Morrison

THERE is no shortage of good ideas for helping more Northern Territory voters out bush to have their say in the next federal election.

Some of them are about changing the law, but the government of Scott Morrison, whose candidate Damien Ryan hopes to win the important Northern Territory seat of Lingiari, is not interested in boosting the bush vote.

In the big and important NT electorate of Lingiari, one in every three eligible voters lives in remote communities.

This means bush voters have a lot of power in the next election, if they decide to use it.

Most bush voters have traditionally supported the ALP, while the majority of non-Aboriginal voters in Central Australia's towns have supported the Country Liberal Party.

If this tradition continues, a high voter turnout in the bush will help Labor to hang on to Lingiari and win government.

But if enough bush residents don't enrol and vote, town voters will get to decide who wins the seat and who runs the country.

One in three Aboriginal people in the bush are not enrolled to vote and many enrolled people don't vote.

The spread of the Coronavirus in remote communities is expected to lower the number of bush votes even

further during the election, which has to be held before the end of May.

All this could add up to a big loss of power for the bush.

The chairs of the NT's most powerful land councils have called on bush voters not to leave non-Aboriginal voters to decide who runs the country.

Central Land Council chair Sammy Wilson wants more election workers to visit remote communities to enrol people and explain how to vote.

"Come with a malpa (helper) who knows the language and make sure that all the community's languages are covered," he said.

"Lets us know when you are coming, take enough time, cook some 'roo tails and explain."

Mr Wilson said election workers need to visit the clinic so they can make contact with people who are isolating and quarantining with COVID.

Northern Land Council chair Sammy Bush-Blanasi wrote in an opinion piece in the NT News that people need to be given enough time to vote.

He agreed the Australian Electoral Commission, the government agency which runs elections, should work with local agencies and organisations in remote communities.

"Post offices, local councils, associations and corporations, ranger groups, not-for-profit organisations and CDP providers could be paid to provide enrolment services," he suggested.

"Improvements must be made to how polling booths at larger communities and mobile polling for homelands and smaller communities operate."

Mr Bush-Blanasi also wants better laws to encourage remote residents to have their say.

"The electoral law should be changed so that it is easier for remote, and other unenrolled people, to vote," he wrote.

Groups like Get-up have called for people to be allowed to enrol right up until the election.

But time has run out for the parliament to change the law and make this possible.

The Morrison government made sure the parliament only met for a few weeks in early 2022.

Late last year, it even tried to make it harder for people out bush to have a say in the next election.

It tried to pass the voter ID bill, a new law that would have forced people to show a form of identification before

Mr Ryan and Ross Mandi, from Galiwin'ku, last year complained to the Australian Human Rights Commission about how the AEC maintains the NT's electoral roll in remote Aboriginal communities.

They said the AEC has discriminated against them and their communities by not applying a policy called direct enrolment.

The direct enrolment policy has lifted enrolment rates to almost 10

"Come with a malpa (helper) who knows the language and make sure that all the community's languages are covered."

they could vote, but the opposition defeated these changes in the Senate.

CLC chief executive Les Turner was one of many leaders who spoke out against the bill.

"It is just adding another burden for Aboriginal people. It's unnecessary," he told the ABC.

"For many — if not most — Aboriginal Territorians that live in remote communities and homelands, the voter ID legislation will provide yet another barrier to them exercising their democratic rights and responsibilities," wrote Mr Bush-Blanasi before the bill was defeated in the Senate.

Labor Senator Pat Dodson said the bill was designed to give the Morrison Coalition government a leg up at the next election.

"Given that there's wide acceptance that First Nations voters will be particularly disadvantaged by voter ID, and that the government fears their votes might favour Labor, the Coalition stands to benefit in a seat such as Lingiari in the Northern Territory," he wrote in *The Australian*.

Western Arnhem Regional Council mayor Matthew Ryan called the bill "racist".

out of 10 voters around the country, but not in the remote areas of the NT where less than seven out of every 10 voters are enrolled.

Whether the commission will hear the complaint before the election is anyone's guess because it never comments on the complaints it receives.

Meanwhile, Mr Bush-Blanasi urged the AEC to use direct enrolment before the next election.

"There are affordable and effective ways to ensure that people can be notified they are on the roll," he said.

USE YOUR POWER
VOTE
 IN THE FEDERAL
 ELECTION
 BEFORE
 MAY
 Call the Australian Electoral
 Commission on 8982 8008
 or visit www.aec.gov.au/enrol



From page 2:

Central Land Council members are getting ready to ask the politicians who will come to the council meeting in early April again.

These are their top 20 questions:

Housing

1. Will you make a remote housing agreement with the NT Government and chuck in at least \$110 million for five years?
2. Will you fund sewerage and power upgrades with the NT Government?
3. Will you fund a plan to build an Aboriginal-controlled housing sector?
4. Will you design community housing trials with the land councils and the NT Government?

Outstations

5. Will you fund new outstation houses to create local jobs and business opportunities?
6. Will you fund a homeland resource centre plan?

Sacred sites

7. Will you make site protection laws stronger?
8. Will you stop threats to our sites until you have passed stronger laws?
9. Will you put the Minister for Indigenous Australians back in charge of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act*?
10. Will you give Aboriginal people a say in decisions about their sites?
11. Will you make sure site protection laws are in line with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*?

"Ask the politicians what they will do! Stand your ground. Try to get clear answers, not sneaky words."

Real jobs

12. Will you negotiate and put in place a national remote jobs plan with the Coalition of Peaks?
13. Will you make income management voluntary?
14. Will you pay job seekers more income support?

Aboriginal rangers

15. Will you fund 10 new ranger groups in Central Australia in the next 10 years?
16. Will you grow the number of women rangers?
17. Will you grow funding for ranger sheds, offices, cars and equipment?

Uluru Statement from the Heart

18. Will you let Australians vote on putting a voice to parliament in the constitution?
19. Will you do this in your first two years in government?
20. Will you adopt all the recommendations from the Uluru Statement?

I'm sure you have more questions. Ask the politicians what they will do! Stand your ground. Try to get clear answers, not sneaky words. Can they look you in the eye and say "palya, we will do it"? If they can, make them Number 1. If not, put them last on your voting paper. It's your decision. Whatever you do, enrol and vote! Palya.

AIM FOR OUR VACCINE TARGET! GET YOUR BOOSTER SHOT!



CONTACT YOUR CLINIC TODAY!

On our own with Omicron

LAST YEAR'S worries that unvaccinated people would get sick and die when COVID spreads out bush have sadly come true.

"Unless we act quickly, around half of remote community residents will be sitting ducks when the virus comes to the NT," CLC chief executive Turner warned in October, when vaccination rates in Central Australia were scarily low.

Now, as the rest of the country is busy moving on from the pandemic and the Northern Territory Government is dropping the last protections, it's mostly Aboriginal Territorians who are dying with COVID.

Many Aboriginal people rushed to get vaccinated around Christmas, when the Delta variant of the virus began to spread in remote communities from Katherine to Alice Springs.

Then came a new, more infectious COVID variant known as Omicron, and suddenly remote community residents felt very much on their own.

At a time when many of them had not even had their second vaccination, they were told they needed a third (or booster) shot to protect themselves from getting very sick or dying.

Despite the calls by Aboriginal organisations for the NT Government to delay border openings, so more people could be vaccinated and boosted, it let the virus in.

Town camp residents and hundreds of Aboriginal prisoners, including children, were among the first to catch it.

From there the virus went bush, greatly helped by some super spreader events around New Year's Eve.

That Omicron has proved to be milder in vaccinated people than the previous Delta variant has no doubt saved lives.

But by the end of February more people per head of population were in hospital with COVID in the NT than in any other state.

"The NT has the fastest rate of growth of infections in Australia and the highest hospitalisation rate, per head double that of NSW at its peak," the chief executive of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, Donna Ah Chee, told ABC Radio.

Nine in every 10 COVID patients in hospital were Aboriginal and so were at least 18 of the 21 Territorians who had died with the virus by the end of February.

Aboriginal health services believe that almost none of them were up-to-date with their vaccinations, but the government refused to confirm this.

Every time it announced more sad news mentioned that the deceased had "underlying health issues" – as if there were many elders in excellent health.

Plan, what plan?

By early February, only six in every 10 people over five years of age in Yuendumu were double-vaccinated, and at least one in eight had COVID.

By then the NT Government's plans to test community residents and keep them safe in isolation and quarantine facilities had gone out of the window.

"Only the people at highest risk

of disease have been transferred out and everybody else has been isolated in their homes, often with dozens of people there and multiple generations," Dr Jason Agostino, an adviser to the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations told the ABC's 7:30 Report.

"That change has been communicated really poorly," he said.

"If they are unable to test, trace, isolate and quarantine they need to tell the people of Central Australia what their new policy is," added Dr Josie Douglas from the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress.

"There is a complete lack of extra resourcing that the government promised, so it's a broken promise."

"If they are unable to test, trace, isolate and quarantine they need to tell the people of Central Australia what their new policy is."

No RATs, no roadblocks

A lack of rapid antigen tests at the Ampilatwatja clinic allowed the virus to spread while the community was cut off by flood waters.

By the time additional RATs arrived more than 20 residents were infected.

"Personally I feel dejected at the response," health worker Reik Luak told the ABC.

Imanpa, two hours south of Alice Springs, felt equally abandoned in the middle of sorry business.

There were no local government staff, health workers or police officers in Imanpa when store manager Tanya Luckey heard about six COVID cases in her community who had been told to isolate in their hot and overcrowded houses.

"There's nobody here to spread information about COVID and what's the procedure to follow if anybody has been tested," Ms Luckey told the ABC's PM program.

A visiting dietician dropped some RATs and masks with her, but there was no help with testing and reporting.

"I got really upset because it's not my responsibility to go around testing everyone in the community. I said 'no, I don't want to put my life on the line. I've kids at home'."

"I'm feeling quite angry because the government opened the door for this virus to enter in, and now the government doesn't want to do anything about it. Stand up and support us. You let it into our community."

"Broken promise": When COVID hit Central Australia, the NT Government abandoned the plan to test, isolate, quarantine and support remote community residents.

"The government has got to stop worrying about the economy and start saving the people," she said.

Ms Luckey's frustration spilled over two weeks after the Aboriginal Peak Organisations of the NT urged the Australian Government to help fight the out-of-control outbreak.

"Despite a lot of hard work and good collaboration on the part of government and Aboriginal community sector organisations, the haste towards 'living with COVID' is pushing the health system, Aboriginal organisations and the communities they serve to the brink," the APO NT's John Paterson said.

"The multiple outbreaks we are now seeing in remote communities and in our towns have been fuelled by a critical shortage of workforce, testing and logistical capacity that is



Donna Ah Chee, chief executive of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress.

not being identified and are spreading the virus undetected".

It wasn't until the second half of February that RATs became widely available in communities.

The Australian Government had failed to order enough of them, even though all of 2021 these tests had been widely used overseas.

It also failed to let the army help stop the spread and support communities.

"This is the time to enlist the direct support of the Commonwealth and defence force," Mr Paterson pleaded.

Unlike with the aged care crisis, where Canberra reluctantly and belatedly brought in the army to help vulnerable residents, both governments refused to deploy it out bush.



Nothing to see here?

The NT Government kept insisting that the outbreak was under control.

This triggered a damning open letter from Congress, Lhere Artepe, the Alliance of the Aboriginal Medical Services of the NT and the CLC on 27 January.

The letter called out a long list of the government's "catastrophic" failures, such as the late introduction of a vaccine pass system and a mask mandate for high risk events and an inadequate test, trace, isolate and quarantine response after these events.

"When positive cases were located in crowded households, they were left at home for more than 48 hours by which time the virus had spread within and between households and then to other town camps and houses," the letter read.

"This was in contravention of all agreed plans to remove positive cases immediately from households where they were unable to safely self-isolate."

The letter slammed the "failure to seek additional health and logistical support from Australian Government agencies, including the Australian Defence Force, which could for example have been used to stand up an additional isolation facility in Alice Springs and/or provide immediate transport of positive cases to the Centre for National Resilience [Howard Springs]".

It also demanded an urgent circuit breaker lockdown with enforcement and support measures to slow the spread of Omicron and buy time for more vaccinations.

"We need the police and the Australian Defence Force to staff road blocks to restrict movement between communities and into regional centres, to provide residents with remote isolation facilities and a surge workforce to help test, trace, isolate, quarantine and vaccinate them," Mr Turner told Radio National.

He accused the NT Government of "inaction, complacency and underreporting of positive COVID cases out bush" and said that trying

"It's those vaccinations that saved us."

to get through to it was like "talking to a brick wall".

A week later the Australian Government declared biosecurity zones across the Territory, for the second time in two years.

The CLC got ready to issue permission letters allowing residents with negative RATs to safely return to their communities in the Barkly, Central Desert and MacDonnell council areas.



John Paterson chief executive of the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory.

But the measure came without the support Aboriginal organisations knew would make it work.

Both governments refused to enforce it.

"Roadblocks you can get around," Minister Wyatt told the ABC. "Our people know the old tracks and where there's a will there's a way."

He called on residents to police themselves, calling for "maturity" and "self-determination".

"The leaders in the communities are going to have to say to people 'hey, have you been tested, are you ok to come back into the community? And if you are not you really should leave'."

What did the biosecurity zones achieve?

The number of permission letters the CLC issued tell their own story.

When the biosecurity zones came with roadblocks, between 26 March and 5 June 2020, the CLC issued 158 letters a week.

During the two weeks without enforcement, between 2 and 17 February 2022, it issued fewer than 35 a week.

While the biosecurity zones didn't stop people from moving around, did they at least boost life-saving vaccinations?

A week after the zones were lifted, vaccination rates in many communities looked much healthier.

In Utju 66 out of every 100 people had received their booster shots, in Ltyentye Apurte it was 45 out of 100, and in Yuendumu 61 out of 100 were at least double vaccinated.

According to Congress' Dr John Boffa, vaccination rates jumped from last October, when the federal government funded the health service to employ an additional 12 nurses and 24 community engagement officers at its clinics.

These workers also helped out in remote NT Health Department clinics.

"It's those vaccinations that saved us," Dr Boffa said.

"The high level of vaccinations has meant we are not seeing the deaths and hospitalisations that we'd otherwise be seeing."

Omicron only 'mild' for the fully vaccinated

While elders have got the message, not enough children and young people are up-to-date with their vaccinations.

"Among older people, in town and remote Congress clinics, we're doing really well with the booster dose," Dr Boffa said. "But the demand for boosters is really not there amongst young people."

He said two in every 10 Aboriginal people in Alice Springs were still not double-dosed by late February.

Both in Yuendumu and in the Barkly less than 15 in every 100 people have had their third shot.

Those who are not up-to-date with their vaccinations are not only "seriously at risk from Omicron" themselves, they are also spreading it to more vulnerable family members.

Aboriginal health services are very worried that the false idea that



The CLC's Michael Turner and Aaron Kopp feed participants of a COVID vaccination meeting at Ltyentye Apurte.

Omicron is 'mild' for everyone is now stopping the unvaccinated from getting the shots they need.

"The experience of so many is mild because so many are double vaccinated," Dr Boffa warned.

"Omicron is a serious, life

"They need to be removed immediately to an isolation facility. Omicron spreads so fast that 24 hours is too long if we want to slow the spread.

"We're calling for a large-scale suitable isolation facility that allows

"Omicron is a serious, life threatening illness in people who are not up-to-date with their vaccinations."

threatening illness in people who are not up-to-date with their vaccinations.

"It's just as severe as the original version of the virus, and we know what that did around the world."

Antiviral medicines save lives ...

The other big life saver is antiviral medicine, whether it comes as a drip in the arm or in a tablet.

"It has made a very big difference," Dr Boffa said.

"It's very effective if given within the first five days of becoming infected, and a lot of people in town and remotely have been given that medication."

In eight out of every 10 people with COVID it prevents very severe disease.

"That medicine has really saved them in a way that wasn't even foreseen even six months ago. That has been a major reason why we have done better than expected," he said, but only if people get it within the first five days.

"That's why it's incredibly important that people get diagnosed [tested], especially if they are at risk."

Everyone who has contact with a positive case or has symptoms needs to get tested straight away, so they can get these life-saving new drugs in time.

... so do isolation facilities

Sharing a house with a big family has never been more dangerous.

"People who test positive in an overcrowded house cannot safely isolate," Ms Ah Chee said.

people who are positive freedom of movement," she said.

"It needs to be established immediately for at least the next 12 months."

Congress has asked for one of these facilities to be established at the Alice Springs showgrounds, but so far without success.

Even mainstream medical associations have urged the NT Government to provide crisis accommodation in Alice Springs to COVID-positive people with nowhere to isolate.

"Sadly those calls have fallen on deaf ears," Australian Medical Association NT President Dr Robert Parker said.

People with COVID are trying to isolate inside their communities, with disturbing reports of people being kicked out of houses and elders sleeping under trees.

In some communities the CLC is supporting people with tents and blankets, but it's a far cry from the response governments had promised.

These testing times won't end soon. "This is not going away tomorrow, this is going to be around for a while," Ms Ah Chee predicted.

Omicron is here to stay, and it's unlikely to be the last COVID variant to test humanity.

A question many bush voters will be asking themselves ahead of the election is whether they can trust governments to keep them safe.

ABA comes home to the Territory

SAMMY WILSON and Barbara Shaw are helping to set up a new Northern Territory-based body that will make decisions about the Aboriginals Benefit Account in the future.

Like other NT land councils, the Central Land Council delegates those two members to represent them on the interim board of directors of the NT Aboriginal Investment Corporation.

The CLC and the NLC chose their chair and deputy chair.

The new corporation is taking over the power to make decisions about ABA grants and investments from the Minister for Indigenous Australians.

The four NT land councils have been fighting for this change for many years.

It means that, for the first time, an Aboriginal-controlled body will make decisions about the ABA, which distributes payments from royalties for mining on Aboriginal land in the NT. CLC chief executive Les Turner

it's high time that they get to decide how they want to drive their own development with this income," Mr Turner said.

The corporation will replace the ABA advisory committee which had five CLC representatives, but no decision-making power.

The corporation's 12-member board will have two elected representatives from each NT land council, two independent directors appointed by the board and two independent directors appointed by the Australian Government.

"This means Aboriginal people will always have the majority on the board," Mr Turner said.

The new corporation will be a Commonwealth corporate entity set up under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act.

It will be a bit like the land councils and follow similar rules. The chief executives of the NT



Chair Sammy Wilson and deputy-chair Barbara Shaw are the CLC's representatives on the interim board of directors of the new NT Aboriginal Investment Corporation.

"The ABA funds were always intended to benefit our people and it's high time that they get to decide how they want to drive their own development with this income."

said the reform, which passed the Australian Parliament late last year, brings control over the ABA to the Territory, where it belongs.

"The ABA funds were always intended to benefit our people and

land councils will be able to attend corporation board meetings, but won't be able to vote.

Mr Wilson and Ms Shaw will be on the interim board until the CLC meeting in April, which will elect two

directors for a three year term.

By June the board will hold its first meeting, agree on a code of conduct, hire an acting chief executive, form an investment committee and set up the corporation's office.

The corporation will receive \$500 million, roughly half of the current balance of the ABA, plus \$60 million annually for the first three years of its operation.

"We look forward to the corporation getting off to a strong start and, in time, assuming control over the remaining funds in the ABA, which can now be invested strategically," Mr Turner said.

He and the other land council chief executives have urged the National

Indigenous Australians Agency to hire a transitional manager to find office space, provide secretariat services and put in place administrative arrangements such as drafting job descriptions.

Since the beginning of the land rights act in 1976, federal Aboriginal affairs ministers have been free to take or leave the advice of an ABA advisory committee made up of elected members from the four NT land councils.

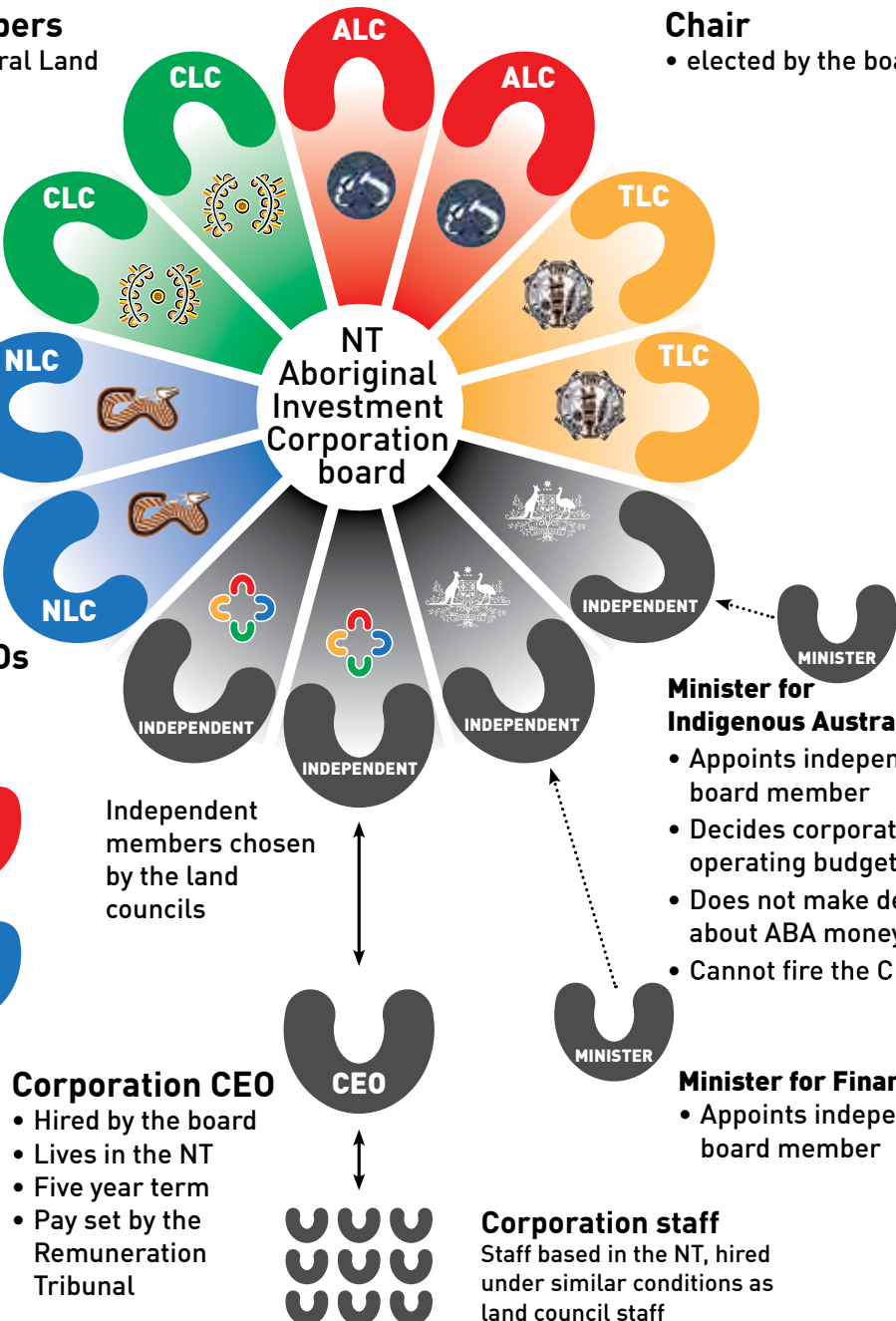
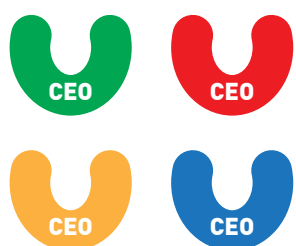
Many former ministers did just that, with the Liberals' Mal Brough and the Country Liberal Party's Nigel Scullion two notable examples.

CLC board members

- Elected by the Central Land Council members
- Can be appointed part time
- Three year term
- Pay set by the Remuneration Tribunal

Land council CEOs

- can observe board meetings
- cannot vote



Chair

- elected by the board

Minister for Indigenous Australians

- Appoints independent board member
- Decides corporation's operating budget
- Does not make decisions about ABA money
- Cannot fire the CEO

Minister for Finance

- Appoints independent board member

Corporation staff

Staff based in the NT, hired under similar conditions as land council staff



Any questions about CLC business? Call your regional officers

1. ALICE SPRINGS Aaron Kopp 89 51 6264	6. TENNANT CREEK Darryl "Tiger" Fitz 89 62 2343
2. SOUTH WEST Wayne Clarke 89 51 0577	7. EASTERN SANDOVER Jesjames Carr 8951 0606
3. NORTH WEST Charlie Hodgson 89 51 0627	8. EASTERN PLENTY Richard Dodd 8951 0622
4. TANAMI Amos Egan 89 51 0581	9. CENTRAL Michael Turner 8951 6250
5. WEST Vacant 8951 0591	

Overcrowding too slow to end, say government auditors

OVERCROWDING in remote communities is not disappearing fast enough because governments are too slow to build the new houses they have promised.

That's the finding of a report from Australia's National Audit Office in February.

The report found that only 19 per cent of targeted new home builds, the equivalent of 121 three-bedroom houses, had been completed by last September.

"The auditors found that more than half of our houses are still overcrowded," Central Land Council chair Sammy Wilson said.

"Overcrowding kills, as this pandemic has shown once again, because our growing families can't safely isolate from the virus.

"How many more reports do governments need until they admit that they are not reducing overcrowding fast enough?"

In 2018, a \$550 million federal government funding commitment, the National Partnership Agreement for Remote Indigenous Housing, was expected to provide 650 three-bedroom houses in remote communities by next year.

The audit report showed governments are not on track to

achieve the Closing the Gap target of 88 per cent of Aboriginal people living in houses that are not overcrowded by 2031.

The CLC executive committee has used the audit to call on the major parties to say how they will fix the broken remote housing system if they

stop pointing the finger at each other and work with the NT's Aboriginal representative organisations to build a sustainable Aboriginal housing sector.

"The governments need to support remote community housing trials that will reveal the true cost of shifting to Aboriginal-controlled housing and

"Bush voters want to know what the major parties will do about overcrowding if they win government in May."

win government in the federal election.

It wants them to increase their investment in remote housing and rebuild the Aboriginal community-controlled housing sector with the NT Government.

"To save lives and improve the life chances of our people, we need the federal and NT governments between them to spend at least two billion over the next five years," CLC chief executive, Les Turner, said.

"This will build 2,000 new houses and make another 4,000 houses more liveable in communities and homelands across our region."

The audit found that the NIAA did not get an assurance from the NT Government that it is contributing \$550 million to the national partnership agreement.

Mr Turner said governments need to

invest in re-building the sector that was decimated by the Intervention," he said.

"Bush voters want to know what the major parties will do about overcrowding."



"How many more reports do governments need until they admit that they are not reducing overcrowding fast enough?" CLC Chair Sammy Wilson asked.



Les Turner, chief executive of the Central Land Council.

Ltyentye Apurte's court win is good for all bush tenants

TENANTS FROM Ltyentye Apurte have won another important court victory against their landlord and that is good news for community residents across the Northern Territory.

The NT Supreme Court in February rejected an attempt by the NT Government to deny tenants a right to habitable houses.

Daniel Kelly from Australian Lawyers for Remote Aboriginal Rights told the ABC the decision sets "a new legal standard" all public housing in the NT must meet.

He said it is not enough for houses to be "safe", they must also be "fit for purpose" and allow Aboriginal people "to live a healthy and fulfilling life".

The court decision opens the door for other communities to take similar legal action and have it assessed against the new legal standard.

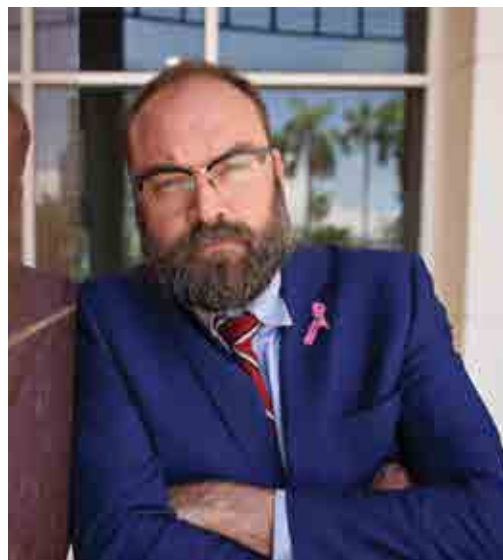
In 2020, just as Chansey Paech was being sworn in as minister for remote housing and town camps, the NT Supreme Court first ruled that houses in remote communities must be "humane and comfortable".

The ruling lifted the bar for the NT's housing department and raised the prospect of millions of dollars in compensation payments for people whose houses are not fit for humans.

Ltyentye Apurte residents and their lawyers were disappointed when the department announced that it would fight the Supreme Court decision, and Minister Paech refused to overrule his bureaucrats.

"I make it my business to not get involved in legal proceedings that were [underway] prior to my commencement," he said at the time.

"We've done a lot of work to make sure those homes are in a better condition."



Lawyer Dan Kelly, from Australian Lawyers for Remote Aboriginal Rights, said the rights of remote tenants are now clear. (ABC News: Michael Franchi)



Annie Young, from Ltyentye Apurte, can now have her court case assessed against the new remote housing standard. (ABC News: Isabella Higgins)

Following the latest court victory, Mr Kelly said all landlords in the NT, including the housing minister, are now legally required to "give [tenants] some comfort and some basis for a decent life".

"The NT Government has been thwarted again in trying to lessen those obligations."

All landlords in the NT, including the housing minister, are now legally required to "give [tenants] some comfort and some basis for a decent life".

Ltyentye Apurte's long legal battle started six years ago, when 70 local tenants sued the department over the condition of their homes.

They complained they were often

without electricity, working plumbing and hot water for months or even years at a time.

One of them, Enid Young, did not have a back door on her property for five years and was awarded more than \$10,000 in compensation in 2019.

In the coming months the court will also rule on further compensation for

enforcing their rights through the courts — those rights are now very clear," Mr Kelly told the ABC.

"If the government won't meet that standard on their own, [communities] now have this option to go through the courts and enforce it that way."

He also paid tribute to the family of Mr Conway, one of the lead litigants in the drawn-out case, who "unfortunately did not live to see his fight deliver better outcomes for his community".

"The onus is now on chief minister Gunner to work with Aboriginal peaks to implement community-led solutions to the housing crisis," he said.

The tenants took the government to court at no cost to the community. The litigation costs are being financed by Grata Fund.

the Ltyentye Apurte tenants, and their lawyers hope other communities will be encouraged by their success.

"Hopefully this leads to other communities coming forward and

Kick-starting Aboriginal jobs and businesses out bush

ALEKARENGE STUDENTS are getting job-ready without having to leave their community, thanks to an innovative horticulture work experience trial.

The Alekareng work experience pilot program is a partnership between Alekareng Horticulture Pty Ltd and Centrefarm.

It helps middle and senior school students in the community south of Tennant Creek to gain valuable industry experience.

The students learn to grow crops such as garlic, pumpkins, cabbages, zucchini and watermelons alongside adult workers on the Aboriginal-owned farm near the community and also study horticulture at school.

Economic stimulus funding from the Aboriginals Benefit Account, administered by the Central Land Council, has allowed the project to expand its farm.

The project is using the \$1,619,000 from the CLC to buy equipment, build infrastructure and pay wages.

It has seen the first 10 trainees from the community graduate with a Certificate 1 in Agrifood Operations last year.

It has also sold fresh produce to Aboriginal-owned supermarkets in Tennant Creek, Alice Springs and Alekareng's Mirnirri Store.

The students also sold the store zucchini chocolate muffins and zucchini fritters they made.

"The funding will go a long way towards providing training and employment opportunities," Centrefarm's Joe Clarke said.

The work experience trial aims to offer fulltime work for six to 10



Freedom Kelly, Rose Ahearn and Andrew Lawton operated the Jajjikari Café smoko truck.

students, or a higher number of parttime placements by 2024.

The CLC's economic stimulus funding has assisted 14 Aboriginal businesses and organisations with a combined total of more than \$17 million in approved funding in 2021.

The money is helping to set up new ranger groups out bush, fund an Aboriginal economic development forum in Alice Springs, support

another horticulture business near Ti Tree and kick-start or expand several social enterprises.

One of them has created some competition for Central Australia's only funeral service.

Desert Funerals, a joint venture between Ngurratjuta and Centrecorp, aims to bring down the high costs of farewelling loved ones.

"Desert Funerals brings new

competition to the market whilst committing to culturally appropriate and affordable funerals," Centrecorp chief executive, Randle Walker, said.

The plan for a not-for-profit, culturally sensitive funeral service for remote communities and town was hatched in late 2018 and the service moved into an office near the Alice Springs cemetery last October.

Almost \$400,000 in economic



Quinston Poulson, Randall Rice and Delton Martin harvested garlic at the Alekareng farm.



Alekareng student Joe Beasley checked water levels for the Asian greens at the school's hydroponic system.



Desert Funerals' Emma Wilson and Noel Naidoo.

stimulus funding has helped the social enterprise get started, with the business holding its first funeral service in February.

Mr Walker said the funds were "instrumental in assisting Desert Funerals to become a credible alternative funeral provider through funding for hearses, building alterations and funeral equipment".

Tennant Creek is not missing out on

stimulus funding either.

When the Julalikari Council's Jajjikari Café re-opened at the Nyinkka Nyunyu Art and Culture Centre in early 2020, after it had been closed for five years, the CLC's stimulus funding allowed it to branch out into street food.

The Jajjikari Café smoko truck is literally a vehicle to train two Aboriginal workers in hospitality and

customer service.

"The smoko truck drives around to businesses and the community living areas, serving home-made fresh treats," Julalikari's Jacquelin Pereira said.

The \$190,000 from the CLC also paid for equipment for outdoor film nights and music events, a stage and a jumping castle for the school holidays. The project goes some way towards

meeting the demand for Aboriginal tourism experiences and quality catering services in the town.

The CLC's economic stimulus project was made possible by an injection of \$36.7 million from the Aboriginals Benefit Account in November 2020.

For more information email aba.stimulus@clc.org.au or call 8951 0667.

Tommy finds goldmine of opportunities at the Granites

APPRENTICE Thomas 'Tommy' Ellis owes some of his success to the Central Land Council's employment support team.

He asked the team to help him look for a job at Newmont's Granites mine in 2015.

"Working in mining has always been one of my life goals from a young age and I've always liked being out bush," Mr Ellis said.

The employment team helped him land

a job with Sodexo, a subcontractor at the mine.

Since then he has worked in a range of different roles.

"I started in dry mess, then moved to utilities, but since then I've become an apprentice fitter and machinist," he said.

He had some advice for people who wanted to work at the mines.

"Don't be afraid to take the leap and work out here. It's one of the best

moves I did. I've been given so many opportunities and it's unreal with all the help you get."

The CLC employment support team helps Aboriginal people find and keep jobs with contractors working on Aboriginal land.

It assists with applications, job interviews, pre-employment checks, travel, and more.

Job seekers can email the employment support team at employment@clc.org.au or call 8951 6211.

"Don't be afraid to take the leap and work out here. It's one of the best moves I did. I've been given so many opportunities and it's unreal with all the help you get."



Tommy Ellis got his apprenticeship at Newmont's Granites mine through the CLC.

CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL
LOOKING FOR WORK?

The CLC's employment support team helps job seekers to write resumes and job applications and to prepare for interviews.

We support employers to develop strategies to find and keep Aboriginal workers.

Contact the CLC on 8951 6211 or employmentunit@clc.org.au

We also talk to schools and community groups about job opportunities.

Joint management of parks should be about learning and working together

MORE 'joint doing and joint learning' remains high on the wish list of the traditional owners of jointly managed national parks.

Late last year 40 traditional owners met twice with NT Parks staff at Ross River to discuss joint management and how to improve it together.

Conrad Ratara, a CLC delegate who is also on the joint management committee for the Finkel National Park, would like to go back to how it used to work in the early days, when the Northern Territory Government funded the flexible employment program for traditional owners much better.

"In the past joint management was a good alternative for young and old traditional owners to learn and listen, talk more and learn about country together," he said. "Now it's not happening so much."

Others said looking after country for future generations was very important.

"We'd like to see more opportunities and more interaction from both sides, so that the younger generation can come up to the plate in the future and

look after country in a way where we can all work together," traditional owner for the Watarrka National Park, Louis Clyne, said.

The meetings were the first time in six years that traditional owners of parks across the CLC region came together to discuss joint management.

Their feedback is informing the recommendations of a submission the CLC is planning to send to the NT Government in the coming weeks.

The submission will focus on jobs and business opportunities for traditional owners in their parks, as well as better collaboration with Parks and Wildlife staff.

Traditional owners expressed frustration at the lack of government funding for members of their families who want to help Parks staff manage fires, weeds and feral animals.

"There's no money for flexible employment and we were surprised [the budget] was so low," one said.

Solutions include more money for Parks' traditional owner employment strategy and the flexible employment program and sharing data with



Freda Johnson, Eva Hayes and Christine Davis discussed Aboriginal jobs in the NT parks.

the CLC about traditional owner employment and training.

Some traditional owners also asked for more control over joint management planning and committee meetings, saying "We don't want Parks to set the agenda and ask us

permission, it needs to be the other way round".

The Aboriginal Governance and Management Program of the Aboriginal Peak Organisations of the NT facilitated the meetings.

Celebrating 21 years of Tiger

IF THERE was ever a question about the Barkly, the man to ask is Darryl 'Tiger' Fitz.

There is little the manager of the Central Land Council's Tennant Creek office, who celebrated two decades of working for the land council last year, does not know about "Region Six".

Mr Fitz spent most of his early working life in construction. He came to the land council in 2001, looking for a change and a chance to work with his Warumungu people.

"I applied for a community development officer role in Tennant Creek," he said.

"I wanted to work for my people, with my people."

Tiger has held many positions at the office, including senior project officer.

Being out bush is what he enjoys most.

"The CLC has such a good working environment," he said.

"Back in the day it was a lot of bush work, but now it's more being stuck in the office."

Francine McCarthy, executive manager policy and governance, has been at the CLC for even longer than her cousin Tiger.

She speaks fondly of his contribution.

"Tiger is a very hard worker. He's also steadfast in the way he deals with issues," she said.

"He's very open and diligent when it comes to advocating for the people in the region and can identify what the needs of the office are."

So what can he look forward to in 2022, the year the Chinese may as well have named after him?

According to the horoscope, the Year of the Tiger will bring positive changes, a stable business environment and smoothly flowing finances.

Here's to many more Tiger years!



Darryl 'Tiger' Fitz, (centre) at the Barunga joint land councils meeting, 2018.

From page 2:

Central Australia's peak environmental organisation is also taking the NT Government to the Territory's highest court over the Singleton decision.

The Arid Lands Environment Centre (ALEC) filed their court papers on the same day as the CLC.

ALEC's Jade Kudrenko said the government is putting economic development above its duty to protect threatened groundwater-dependent ecosystems.

"The government is giving away water for free to developers like it's infinite. It's not infinite. Our communities and the environment will bear devastating costs if they don't slow down," Ms Kudrenko said.

ALEC called for a "complete overhaul of our Water Act to bring it in line with 21st century challenges and expectations" and for fixing "the systemic problems that led to Singleton, independent scrutiny and rigour over water licensing decisions".

The combined pressure has already had some success, even before the Supreme Court hears both legal challenges.

Late last year the CLC asked the government not to grant any more licences in the water control district around Singleton Station until the Wester Davenport water allocation plan has been reviewed.

It called for the freeze due to its grave concerns about the over-allocation of groundwater.

In early February Jo Townsend, the water controller and chief executive of the Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security, told the CLC that she would postpone her decisions on new or bigger water licences in the region until a new water allocation plan is declared.

"This buys more time to review the science of our aquifers so all the water, including around Singleton, isn't given away," Mr Turner said.

The CLC wants the government to make sure the plan is based on

enough scientific data so it can make better decisions about water licence applications.

"More facts, more knowledge, more understanding of our aquifers is needed," he said.

"Only then can Aboriginal cultural values and the environment be fully protected."

Fortune wants to use up to 40 giga litres per year for 30 years to grow thirsty export crops in the desert.



"Our communities and the environment will bear devastating costs if they don't slow down."

Former CLC worker Jade Kudrenko now leads the Arid Lands Environment Centre which is also taking the government to court. Photo by Xavier Martin, ABC Alice Springs.



Women rangers take reins and learn new skills



Tjuwanpa Women Rangers Sonya Braybon and Arltarpilta Inelye ranger Salbina Cleary.



The rangers mapped plants around Ntaria.

RANGERS work together year-round to look after country, but it's rare for women rangers to share their land management knowledge with each other.

A women's ranger exchange in Ntaria (Hermannsburg) brought together the Central Land Council's female Ltyentye Apurte and Arltarpilta Inelye rangers with the Tjuwanpa Women Rangers.

The week-long training by Low Ecological Services helped the women to build on their land management skills. They looked for black-footed rock wallabies, surveyed birds, and collected and identified plants.

"It was alright from day one," Ltyentye Apurte ranger Bronwyn Cavanagh said.

"We went to see some waterholes and the country was really lovely, I enjoyed being out on new country as well."

One in four CLC rangers are female, and Salbina Cleary, from the Arltarpilta Inelye Rangers, said that the week in October 2021 highlighted the women's contribution to the ranger program.

"Back in the day only the men worked as rangers," she said.

"So its good that we can come together and do these types of activities together with other women."

The Tjuwanpa Women Rangers, the only all-female ranger team in Central

Australia, showed the CLC rangers how they map the plants around Ntaria.

They then pressed the plants they collected and took them back to the office to be identified.

"We were able to show the CLC rangers how we look after country out here," Tjuwanpa Womens Ranger, Stephanie Webb said.

"It was really good to learn off each other."

The women didn't expect to save lives during their exchange, but ended up pulling an abandoned net full of dying fish and yabbies out of a waterhole.

The idea for the exchange came from the Ltyentye Apurte Rangers, who would like to return the favour.

They hope to host the Tjuwanpa Womens Rangers in their community later this year.

MEET OUR RANGERS



Enid Long

How long have you been a Kaltukatjara ranger?

I've been a ranger now for one year.

What made you want to become a ranger?

Because I like to join Thelma (Meneri). To look around country, look at different bush foods and earn money.

What's the best thing you've done as a ranger?

I like going on trips, looking around and keeping the office tidy. I like looking around at waterholes too. My favourite work was looking after *Utjutja* (the name of a natural spring). There was a big tree and too many dead horses blocking the spring. We moved the *punu* (trees) and cleaned the area. It was *pantinyi kura* (bad smelling). A little bit of water started to come out, it was dirty at first, then became clean. There was no sound when we first got there, no birds in the trees, but now with the water the *tjulpu* (birds) are back there now. I made a little creek heading down the hill, making

a small *karu* (river, creek). I did this because the *pana* (ground) was wet. The *kapi* (water) needed somewhere to go.

What would you say to young people who are wanting to become rangers?

They should keep learning about bush medicine and bush tucker from their family.

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CDEP, CDP – what next for remote employment?

THE AUSTRALIAN Government’s failed work-for-the-dole scheme for remote communities will end next year, but will the next employment program be any better?

Bush voters are wondering if the next government will finally work with them to create real jobs.

What is happening?

Since announcing that he would axe the so-called Community Development Program (better known as CDP), Indigenous Australians Minister Ken Wyatt proposed five regions to trial new employment programs.

His National Indigenous Australians Agency did not consult with the Central Land Council before it chose the Barkly, Western Australia’s mid-west/west region and Ngaanyatjarra lands, the Eyre region in South Australia and Palm Island in Queensland.

The Aboriginal Peak Organisations of the NT have accused the minister of not delivering on his co-design promise.

“It absolutely is not co-design,” the CLC’s Dr Josie Douglas told a Senate inquiry late last year.

“APO NT [Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory], of which CLC is a member, received a letter from the NIAA about this legislation and trial sites in September. There has been no co-design and no consultation.”

Five months later, the NIAA was still not able to tell the CLC which organisations will be part of the trial in the Barkly and when they will meet.

The government also has not promised to deliver real jobs with proper conditions if it is re-elected.

Labor Senator for the NT, Malarndirri McCarthy, said the trial

“Bush voters should ask the federal election candidates if they support our model.”

He said a national working group will be established, alongside co-design groups in each trial region, to try out different approaches.

“We want to see what works best and [for] regions to determine their priorities so that a national program has the flexibility it needs to work in each region,” Minister Wyatt said.

was a “continuation of a welfare model” and “does not include proper working conditions such as superannuation or workers compensation”.

The APO NT has developed a model backed by more than 40 organisations across Australia that offers both real jobs and proper conditions.

The CLC would like to present APO



Dr Josie Douglas presented at the CLC council meeting in Kalkaringi.

NT’s ‘fair work, strong communities’ proposal to the Barkly co-design group.

The council adopted the proposal at its meeting in Kalkaringi last year as a starting point for a new jobs program.

So what is the new model and how is it different?

CDP

The Australian Government brought in the CDP in 2015. It funded providers to offer job search appointments and job-like activities, rather than real jobs.

People in remote communities had to do these activities for more hours than job seekers in the city.

The providers had to tell Centrelink if people missed appointments and activities.

Those who did were punished and suffered cuts to their welfare payments.

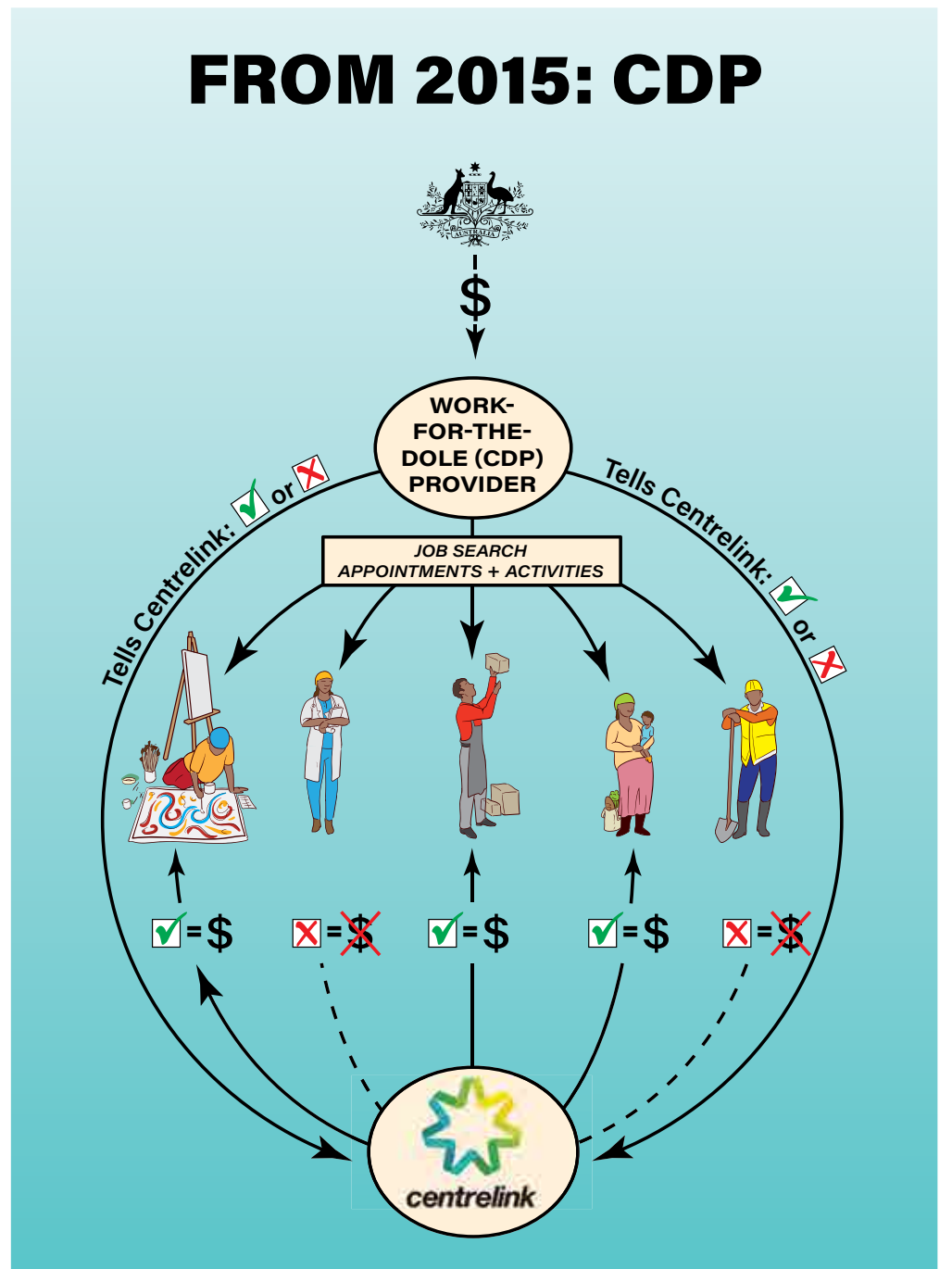
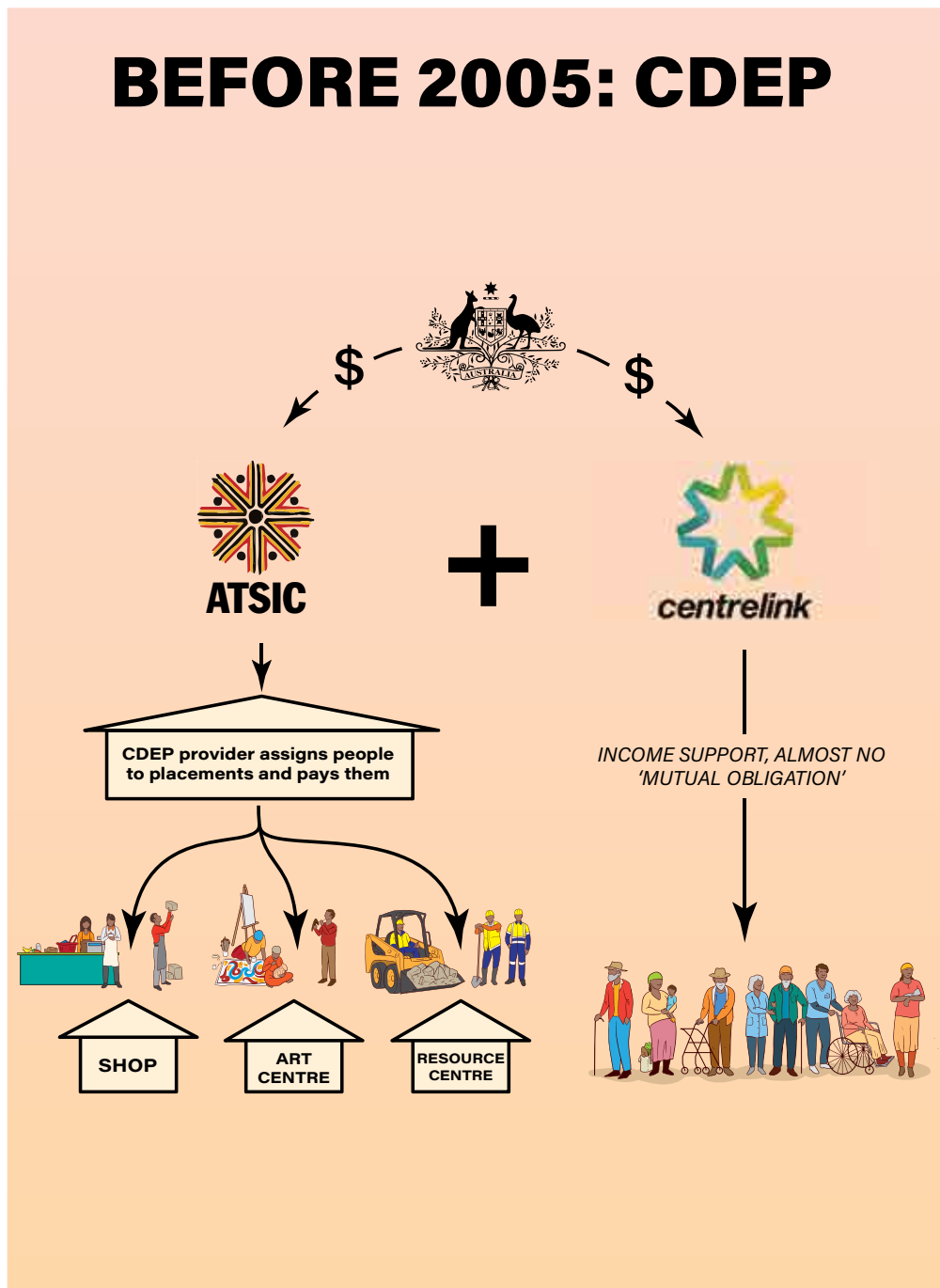
Many, especially young people, dropped out of the system altogether.

CDEP

The coalition government of John Howard ended the Community Development Employment Program 17 years ago, but many remote community residents still remember it fondly.

Before 2005, the Australian Government funded the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and Centrelink to run the CDEP.

ATSIC gave the funds to organisations and businesses such



as outstation resource centres, shops and art centres, who used it to top up the wages of their workers.

These were real jobs and the rule, at least, was “no work, no pay”.

Centrelink supported people who were too old, too sick, had caring responsibilities or a disability. There was not a lot of “mutual obligation” (working in return for welfare payments) for these people.

Many Aboriginal people have told the CLC they want something like the CDEP back.

Fair work, strong communities

That’s the name of the proposal the CLC members have endorsed.

The would like the Australian Government to fund a new, national Aboriginal-led body to support Aboriginal organisations and businesses in remote communities to employ Aboriginal people in real jobs, with proper conditions.

It would be a lot like what ATSIC did with the CDEP.

In addition, Aboriginal remote job providers would offer traineeships in these organisations to stop young

people from falling through the cracks.

The providers would also help all job seekers with training, career advice, appointments and with finding work.

Like with the CDEP, Centrelink would make welfare payments to old, sick and disabled people and to carers.

If any of them can work they will have to contribute to their communities in some way (mutual obligations).

What can bush voters do now?

The CLC is working with the APO NT and the national Coalition of Peaks to negotiate a decision making process

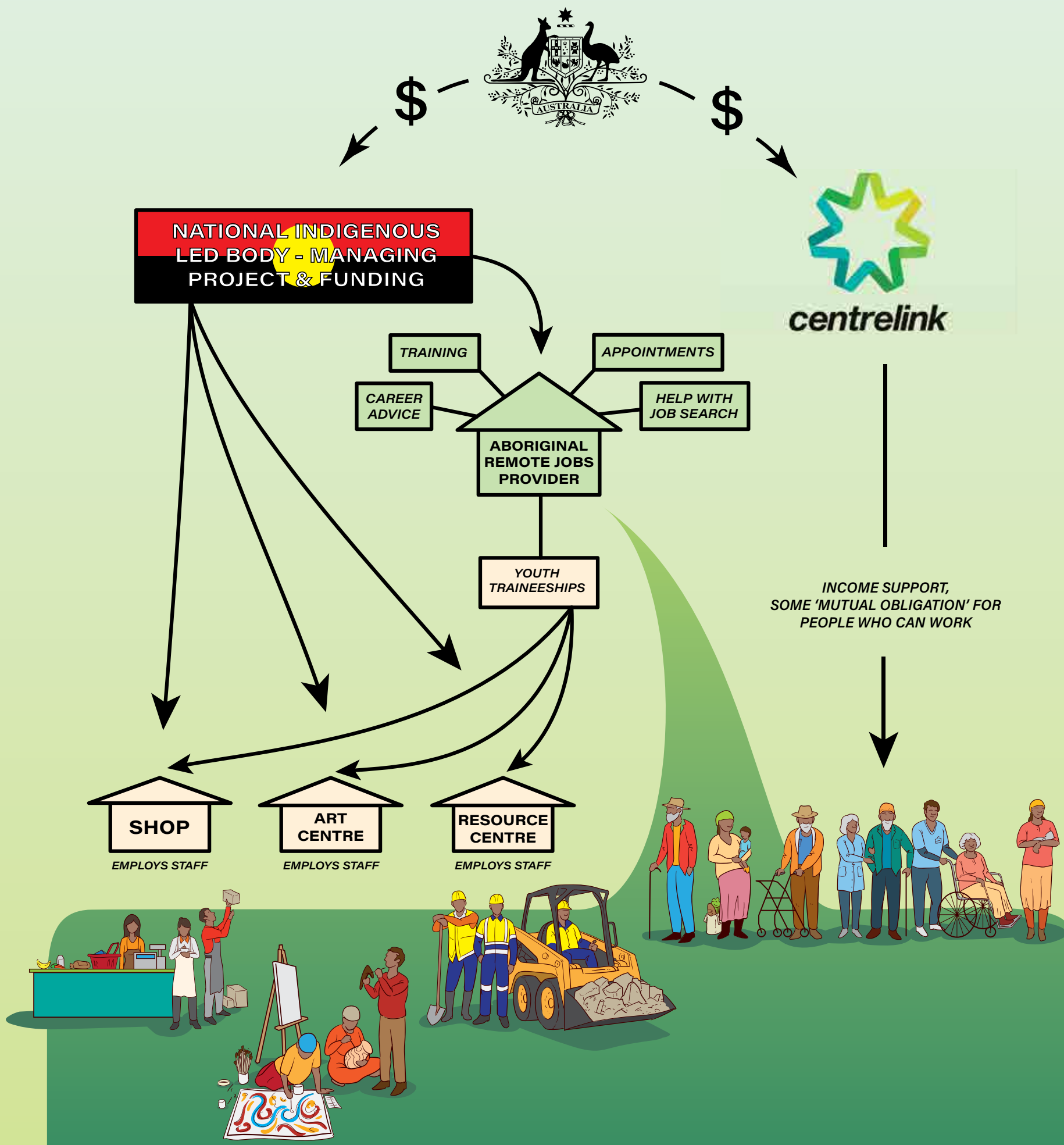
about the new remote jobs program with whoever wins the next federal election.

It wants that process to be a true co-design, in line with the Closing the Gap Agreement.

The council has asked for the process to be open and transparent and protect the employment and social security rights of remote community residents.

“Bush voters should ask the federal election candidates if they support our model,” CLC chief executive Les Turner said.

FAIR WORK, STRONG COMMUNITIES PROPOSAL



Valerie Patterson honoured for her contribution to Yapa education

ONE OF the founding mothers of the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust, Valerie Patterson, has retired from the WETT advisory committee, after almost two decades as a solid champion for two-way education.

The Lajamanu teacher and language worker's passionate plea on the ABC's Q&A program for more Warlpiri language and culture programs brought her national attention in 2017.

She regularly pressed her case with government ministers and other politicians and presented at national conferences about the achievements of the WETT.

Central Land Council chair Sammy Wilson paid tribute to her important contribution to the trust over a period of 17 years.

"Your commitment to improving the future of young Warlpiri people through their education is to be commended," he said.

"You have been a strong advocate to government and others for Aboriginal control of education. Your voice has been heard far and wide, from the basketball court in Lajamanu all the way to national TV.

"Thank you for all the energy and time you have dedicated to building a bright future for our Yapa communities."

Ms Patterson has inspired her fellow WETT advisory committee members.

"She was a strong voice, a teacher in both ways," CLC delegate Jacob Spencer, from Nyirripi, said.

"I learnt from her. The way she speaks up in WETT committees. She is a strong person who makes every committee member want to be strong like her."

CLC executive member Sharon Anderson said Ms Patterson was part of the reason she took up teaching herself and later joined the WETT advisory committee.

"When I left Yirara College she used to work at the literacy centre in Lajamanu. I was always looking up to her when I worked as a teacher's assistant before I went to Batchelor to do teachers training," Ms Anderson said.

"I learned a lot from her, just by observing her at the literacy centre and at the school. She always had that sense of humour. When I came to WETT she was also there. She supported me a lot, and I got good encouragement from her to stay strong and positive. She said 'just keep going and don't give up'."

During her last committee meeting, Ms Patterson appealed to the young Yapa members to follow in her footsteps.

"The young ones should stay on," she said.

"I was young when I started and I stayed and became strong, learning from the older ones – Maisie [Kitson], Barbara [Martin] and Yamurna [Oldfield] helped me on this WETT journey and kept me strong."

"We are educators in our own right, we can run our own schools."

She said the WETT has come far and has won greater recognition for Yapa teachers.

"We are educators in our own right, we can run our own schools," Ms



Valerie Patterson told the Q&A panel that Lajamanu wants more support for Warlpiri language and culture programs.

Patterson said.

Stepping back from the WETT doesn't mean her people will have to do without her leadership skills.

Ms Patterson will keep working for Lajamanu as part of its Granites Mine Affected Areas Aboriginal Corporation committee which plans and oversees

community development projects funded from mining compensation income.

She is also continuing as a director of the corporation.



Founding mothers of the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust: Valerie Patterson, Barbara Martin, Fiona Gibson, Helen Morton, Maisie Kitson and Yamurna Oldfield.

Matched funds trial drives community change

MORE GOVERNMENT 'chuck-in' for community development initiatives is changing how Aboriginal groups are investing their income from land use agreements.

In early 2021 the National Indigenous Australians Agency gave the CLC \$3 million for a trial designed to encourage more Aboriginal people to use their income for projects that help their whole community.

The three-year trial doubles the funds for groups and communities that get only a small income, but still want to invest in community development projects. The NIAA chucks in two dollars for every dollar communities decide to spend on projects they drive themselves.

"The first 12 months of the trial went so well that the Central Land Council executive approved another \$4.6 million for it that we had left over from former Aboriginal Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin," CLC chief executive Les Turner said.

By the end of last year 18 communities and traditional owner groups allocated more than \$1.1 million in matched funds to 37 community benefit projects.

Among them are five traditional owner groups east of the Stuart Highway, which invested a total of more than \$314,000 in community projects.

"They all said the matched funds trial was a big reason for their decisions," Mr Turner said.

Alpurrurulam, near the Queensland border, allocated \$190,000 of its lease money and matched funds to renovate and expand the kitchen of its church and to build accommodation for church visitors.

The community expects the upgrades to employ local Aboriginal workers.

The trial has also changed minds west of the highway, in Papunya, where traditional owners used to



Lynda Lechleitner: "Now there's just not one person speaking, it's a collective."



Mitchell Mahoney and Eddie Rusty put up the Alpurrurulam church framework.

distribute most of their community lease money to individuals rather than use it for projects.

All that changed at a community meeting in October 2020, where the CLC's community development team talked about the matched funds trial.

Papunya now has twice as much money for community development and can tackle bigger projects.

"There was a diagram and [CLC staff] explained it," community development working group member and CLC delegate Lynda Lechleitner said.

"I think it's good from the government to give us that money... because in our case it's a lot of money... we looked at it and we actually seen that it was a lot of money."

The meeting decided to allocate 80 cents in every dollar of their community lease income (around

\$80,000 per year) to community benefit projects for the next three years and to distribute only the rest, 20 cents in every dollar, to individuals.

The decision meant Papunya now has twice as much money for community development and can

tackle bigger projects.

The community also elected several younger people to the working group that prioritises, plans and allocates funds to the projects.

Ms Lechleitner said the change meant "the community [is] actually more open-minded and listening to others".

"Now there is not just one person speaking. It's a collective. There are a lot more people thinking 'that will be a good idea' or 'that won't be a good idea'. You get more discussions."

Working group members have started to prioritise, plan and fund projects, such as toilet and shower blocks for a sorry camp area.

"So while our people are out at sorry camp they have facilities available for them instead of having to go all the way back home," Sarah Stockman explained.

"That's another really good project, I think. It would be good to see that up and running."

The Ingkerreke Outstation Resource Centre will manage the \$164,000 build.

A picnic area and a plant nursery are also in planning.

Both projects may recycle the community's grey water (from showering, washing and toilet flushing).

Papunya will decide how to allocate its lease income beyond 2023 once it hears if the matched funds initiative will continue.

Indigenous cadets are going places

A CADETSHIP with the Central Land Council can land you a good job, just ask its new communications officer, Dakota Lally.

Ms Lally won't graduate with a communications degree from the University of South Australia until April, but she has already snapped up a job with the team that puts together *Land Rights News*.

"I was able to gain insight into the communications industry while I was both studying and completing my cadetship with the CLC," Ms Lally said.

She's planning to stay with the communications team to gain even more experience.

"It opened up many opportunities that I'm sure I'll be thankful for throughout the different stages of my career."

Indigenous cadetships have launched the careers of many Aboriginal professionals.

For example, Mischa Cartwright, the CLC's first communications cadet, is the NT Government's Director Stakeholder of Engagement and Communications, while Leonie Jones is a driving force in the CLC's human resources team.

Cadets spend 12 weeks a year working at the CLC, and get a wage, mentoring and financial support.

The CLC pays for text books, laptops and airfares back to Alice Springs.

Today, the CLC has four cadets working in areas such as anthropology, land management, policy, law and information technology.

Its newest cadet, Declan Miller, will follow in Ms Lally's footsteps.

Mr Miller, who is off to study visual arts and animation at Griffith University in Brisbane, will start his first placement during the mid-year semester holidays and work closely with designer, Tina Tilhard.

"I graduated in 2020 and one of my greatest achievements while at school was getting my picture book, *Mixed Feelings*, published. That's where my interest in animation came



New communications cadet Declan Miller.

from," he said.

"I wanted to give back to the community in a way so that I could bring back what I learnt from university and show what I learnt through the cadetship.

"It's an amazing opportunity."

For more information about cadetships at the CLC call 8951 6211.



Communications cadet turned communications officer Dakota Lally.

Ngulajuku! How Tiger Morris' mob

THE FIRST illustrated history of the remote Tanami Desert community of Nyirrpri is so much more than a pretty book.

Ngulajuku (Warlpiri for 'that's all for now') features a fascinating eyewitness account by one of Nyirrpri's founders, the late Tiger Japaljarri Morris, of clearing the way for a road to the community, four hours north-west of Alice Springs.

It is also a celebration of the resilience and ingenuity of the community's first families and their thirst for independence and education, and a bilingual resource for today's Yapa teachers.

The book's co-author, Fiona Gibson (better known as FM) said it all started with a long yarn with her grandfather, Mr Morris, in the early 1990s.

"The story is about him living out in the bush and then meeting all the kardiya (non-Aboriginal people) on Mount Doreen Station, my country, where they used to walk around in the old days," she said.

"He was thinking they were monsters talking in their language, in English, and he was learning it slowly.

The book starts with "all that history and the old mission days on Mount Doreen, where the missionaries got them and moved them to Yuendumu", but quickly turns into a tale of self-determination.

Born in 1924, Mr Morris was one of a dozen men who dug the road from Yuendumu to Nyirrpri by hand, while women like his wife Maudie Morris cooked damper and gathered bush tucker.

"There was too much fighting there, and drinking," Ms Gibson said.

Yuendumu community advisor Paul Ashe and others supported the group, thanks to some of the money the Whitlam government put into the outstation movement in the 1970s.

"They gave them shovels, picks and all that and [the group] went south of Yuendumu and from there just started walking, no cars or anything."

"It was just amazing," said Ms Gibson's collaborator Angela Harrison, from the Batchelor Institute for Indigenous Tertiary Education.

"They started in April 1975 and had gone about 70 kilometres west by July, just digging with shovels and axes, no machinery."

Outstation staff from Yuendumu, including Ms Gibson's mum and dad, took rations and water out to them while they were close to the community.

The further west the road crew went, the more this support trickled away.

At one point they were ready to give up because it all became too hard, but Ms Gibson said "they said 'no, we've got to keep on going'".

"They knew those places, where the water holes were. They knew where all the bush foods were.

"And that's what they did, they didn't want to turn back, so they kept walking until they got to Three Way, where they headed off to Vaughan Springs and followed the waters."

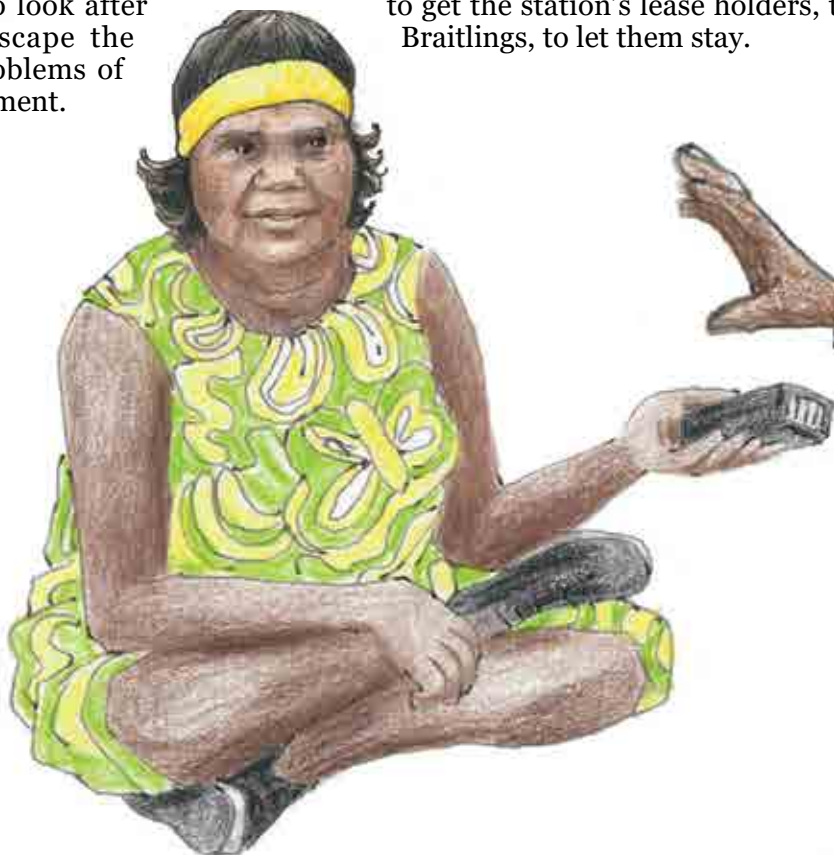
Eventually they reached a place on the Waite Creek, on Mount Doreen Station, where they wanted to make their new home.

"They started in April 1975 and had gone about 70 kilometres west by July, just digging with shovels and axes, no machinery."

The families decided to leave Yuendumu so they could live closer to the country they needed to look after and to escape the social problems of the settlement.

Today that place is known as Old Nyirrpri.

They camped there while they tried to get the station's lease holders, the Braitlings, to let them stay.



They refused, so the group kept walking until they found a new place beyond the southern border of the station that also had water.

"Where the road ends today, and what we now know as Nyirrpri, is really a place that's called Jitirlparnta," Ms Harrison said.

Ms Gibson says the families looked to the missionaries for help.

"All the missionary people came

Ms Gibson was teaching at the Nyirrpri school when she transcribed the cassette tapes of the interview with her grandfather on 26 neat, hand-written pages.

"I did a little bit of [teaching his story] at the school, but it wasn't

"The book came out of a project that FM and I worked on together about 20 years ago, which was in response to the cuts to the bilingual program. It was about how Yapa wanted education to be in their communities."

down from Alice Springs and gave them clothes, everything.

"One missionary was John Henwood, and they gave him a place to stay. It was called Jitirlparnta but everyone wanted to call it Nyirrpri. He was Alice Henwood's husband."

From the beginning, education played a big role in the families' plans.

The first Nyirrpri school was under a bean tree.

Fiona and Wendy Baarda, from Yuendumu, taught there while they lobbied to get a school building.

enough," she said. "So I decided to do this [book] so the kids can use it."

Ms Harrison, was the first person she called when she had finished the transcript.

"It was so full of integrity and grit and determination," she said.

"Young Yapa should know this story. They will be really proud of it. Tiger said to FM 'this is why I am telling you about it, for the next generation to know it'."



made a new home in Nyirрпи

The next generation had a hand in the book, with the middle-year students of the school illustrating stories Maudie Morris and Pauline Gallagher told them about the journey to Nyirрпи.

Ironically, without the NT's first Labor government's cuts to bilingual teaching in remote community schools *Ngulajuku* may not have seen the light of day.

beginners, but books for older students are still hard to find.

Ngulajuku plugs this gap.

"The idea of this book is to produce something for middle-years and older students that's longer and more challenging, not an academic text but a story," Ms Harrison said.

"We'll be teaching from that book," Ms Gibson added.

"The kids are really looking out

"I tell them, I'm still here, I'm the one who was teaching your father and mother and I'm the one who is teaching you kids now. You mob should be proud."

"The book came out of a project that FM and I worked on together about 20 years ago, which was in response to the cuts to the bilingual program. It was about how Yapa wanted education to be in their communities," Ms Harrison said.

She said the project was part of the bilingual program's plan "to flood the place with literature".

Over the years, the Bilingual Resource Development Unit in Yuendumu has produced many Warlpiri language readers for

for this book and they have been supporting me with this.

"When we launch it, people will think 'oh, that's good, that somebody had this story of how they made the road to Nyirрпи and came back to country'."

She hopes the book will inspire the students to write down their own stories, to "keep the history of Nyirрпи going".

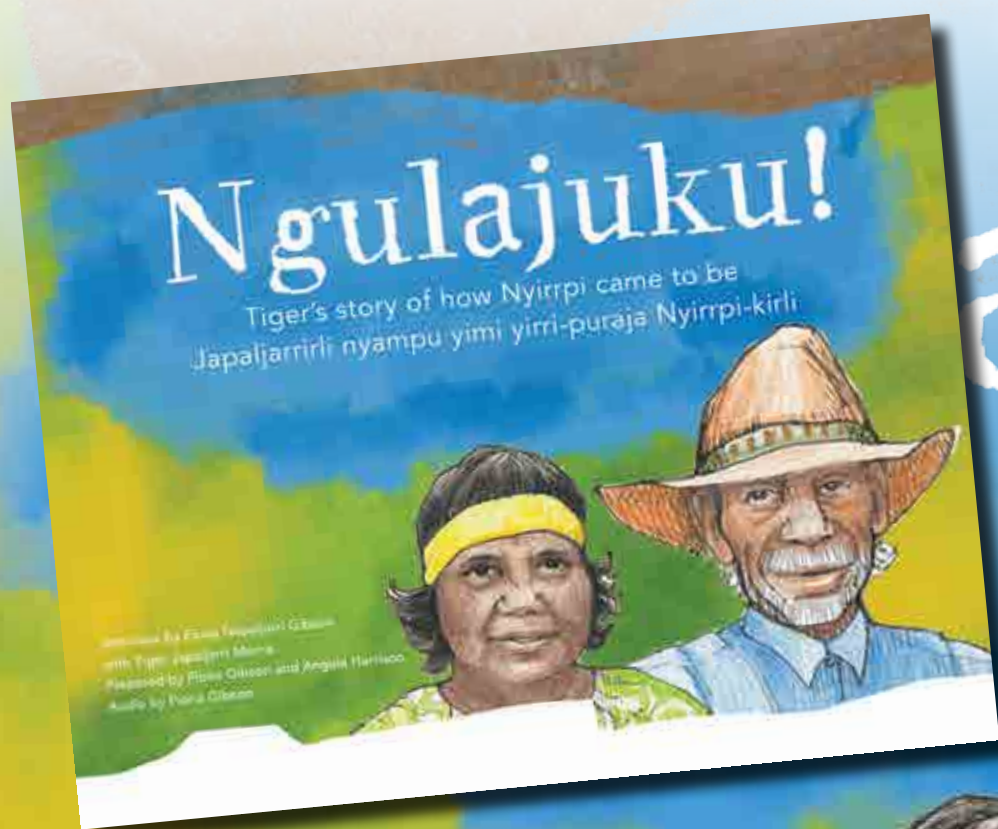


Fiona Gibson and Angela Harrison.

"I tell them 'I'm still here, I'm the one who was teaching your father and mother and I'm the one who is teaching you kids now. You mob should be proud.'"

The authors are also preparing a study guide that is packed with historical documents so Yapa teachers can bring the book to life in the classroom.

Ngulajuku and the teacher's guide will be published by the Batchelor's Centre for Australian Languages and Linguistics in April 2022. To pre-order call Maurice O'Riordan on 8939 7352, or go to <https://batchelorpress.com>.



ajuku!



Cynthia Burke's *Kapi Tjukurla* now in Canberra

THE INTRICATE and ingenious entry by Maruku Arts' Cynthia Burke is unique, certainly in the Vincent Lingiari Art Award, yet based on a woodworking technique now common in the Western Desert. The artist used age-old cave, ground and body painting symbols.

The story her entry *Kapi Tjukurla* tells is intricate and all about water, *kapi*.

Burke explains: "The sculpture represents the trees that lead us the way to the water and the water is within them and around them, even if we can't see it; their roots still touch it.

The sculpture is made from the tree that shows us the way to the water. They are one and the water flows around them and in them, just like the lines of my etching. And the circles represent the waterholes where we find the water."

Burke is a Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards finalist. Her work has been exhibited interstate and overseas, and collected in major Australian museums.

Since the Vincent Lingiari Art Award *Kapi Tjukurla* has been acquired by the National Museum of Australia.

"The sculpture is made from the tree that shows us the way to the water. They are one and the water flows around them and in them, just like the lines of my etching."



Detail of *Kapi Tjukurla*.



Cynthia Burke with her work, *Kapi Tjukurla*, at the 2021 Vincent Lingiari Art Award. Image courtesy Desart, Oliver Eclipse Photography.



Cynthia Burke, *Kapi Tjukurla*, (detail) 2021, Itara-River Red Gum. Image courtesy the artist and Maruku Arts.



Vale, Mr Furber

FOR THOSE who knew him, the loss of Harold Furber was a double hit. The Central Land Council lost a former assistant director, and Alice Springs lost a leader of great passion and strong convictions.

Mr Furber was born in Alice Springs in 1952, but in 1957 that small four-year-old boy, along with his younger sister Trish, was taken from his mother Emily, and transported more than 1,500 kilometres north to the Croker Island Methodist Mission. During his early years on Croker, Trish was adopted by a couple from Queensland. Other future leaders such as the late Tracker Tilmouth became the bereft boy's surrogate family.

Mr Furber first left the island to attend Darwin High School, returning to Croker for the school holidays until he was 16 years old. Later, he did an apprenticeship as a cabinet maker in Adelaide and completed a Bachelor of Arts and a Diploma in Social Work, the latter at what is now the University of South Australia.

A talented football player, he rubbed shoulders with the great players of his day at the North Adelaide Football Club in the early 1970s. During the off season he also played for the Buffaloes in Darwin.

After he found his way back to his Arrernte family in Central Australia, he made a name for himself at the Pioneers and Souths football clubs in Alice Springs.

Determined to find his sister Trish, he signed up with a Queensland footy team, which gave him the opportunity to search for her. He eventually succeeded and was best man at her wedding in 1974.

In the late 1970s he became one of the early employees of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress in Alice Springs and in 1991, when he was the director of the Yipirinya School, he decided to again broaden his education. With the help of an ATSIC scholarship, Mr Furber studied at the University of Canberra, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts (Public Administration).

Mr Furber became the CLC's assistant director in 1994 and worked there in a variety of senior positions until 2005. He was invested in the repatriation of cultural objects to their rightful owners and is one of the authors of the CLC's oral history collection *Every Hill Got A Story*.

His recollections about his experiences as a member of the land rights movement, the Stolen Generations and as a driving force

behind many Aboriginal-controlled organisations around Alice Springs in the 1970s and 1980s make for compelling reading.

Organisations that have benefited from his energy and passion for more than three decades include the Tangentyere Council and Desert Knowledge Australia, where he was a deputy chair and board member. He was part of the committee that planned the Desert Knowledge Precinct and served there as elder-in-residence.

He also chaired the Desert People's Centre (a joint venture of the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous

for a National Aboriginal Gallery at the ANZAC Oval, a location that has been repeatedly rejected by Alice Springs native title holders.

His friend Owen Cole reminded mourners at Mr Furber's funeral at the Desert Knowledge Precinct that only weeks before his death in early November he called for

Only weeks before his death in early November he called for an investigation into the Northern Territory Government's botched handling of the project.

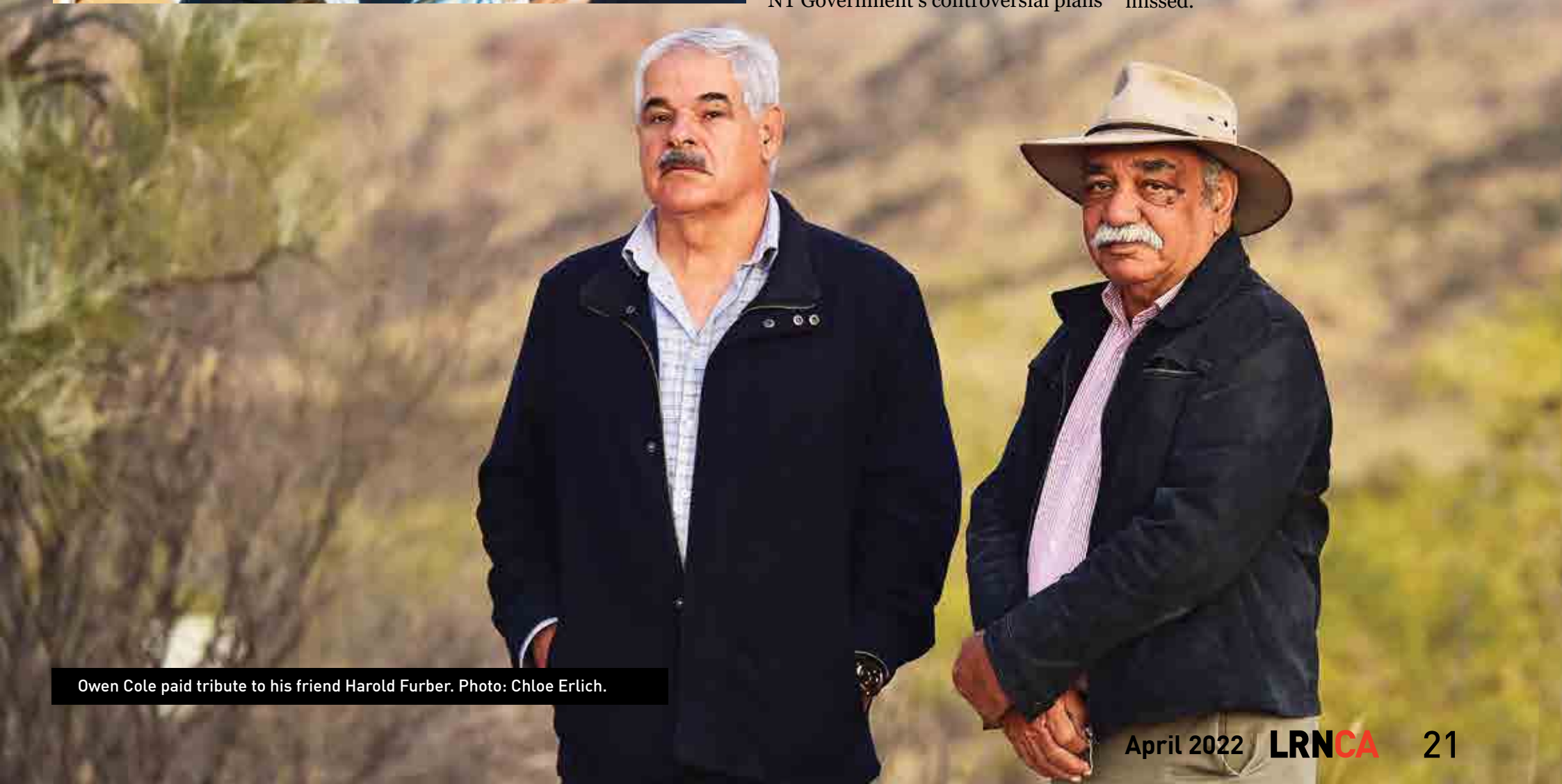
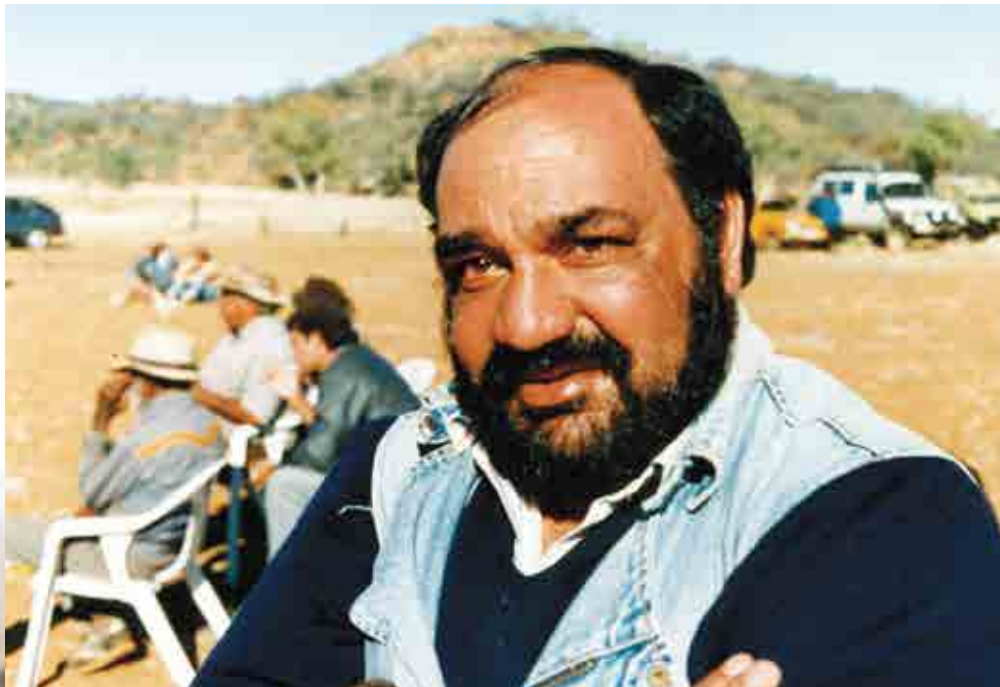
Tertiary Education and the Centre for Appropriate Technology) and was on the board of the Desert Knowledge Co-operative Research Centre.

Mr Furber also ran (unsuccessfully) as a Labor candidate for the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly twice – first in 1990 in Greatorex, and then MacDonnell in 2001.

Most recently, he advocated strongly for the establishment of a National Aboriginal Cultural Centre and Gallery. He was firmly opposed to the NT Government's controversial plans

an investigation into the Northern Territory Government's botched handling of the project. Mr Cole said he made him promise to continue fighting for the centre to be built right there, "on Desert Knowledge land".

Mr Furber passed away peacefully, surrounded by his family in Alice Springs. He is survived by his three children, Melanie and Patricia Marron and Declan Furber-Gillick, and his sisters, Margaret Furber, Toni Arundel and Trish Kiessler. He will be deeply missed.



Owen Cole paid tribute to his friend Harold Furber. Photo: Chloe Erlich.

Another icon lost, this time a warm, caring and unrelenting advocate



"I AM NOT the problem. I have never left my country, nor have I ceded any part of it. Nobody has entered into a treaty or talked to me about who I am. I am Arrernte, Alyawarre female elder from this country. Please remember that. I am not the problem."

With those powerful words in 2014 Rosalie Kunoth Monks OAM again forced herself into the consciousness of Australians, an iconic presence not to be denied notice, a representative of her people who non-Indigenous Australians were compelled to hear and who inspired many.

It wasn't the first time that, through her presence, use of language and heartfelt emotion, she'd surpassed the ability of most to cut through to the wider world.

The experience of starring in a film that would become an Australian classic was not altogether a good one for her.

Ms Kunoth Monks had been doing it for most of her life, but her appearance as a teenager the film *Jedda* in 1953 (pictured right) was another moment of reach most campaigners can only hope for.

The experience of starring in a film that would become an Australian classic was not altogether a good one for her. In 2017 she told the ABC that at the time of filming, she didn't really understand all the elements or expectations of playing the role of an Aboriginal girl brought up by a white woman, but thought it did help shape the work she would undertake later in life.

"Because I was so young, I learnt that I was not subservient to people and the first fire in my guts, that I still have at this age, was probably kindled back then," she told the ABC.

"When somebody came and patted you on the head or something, like you were a little puppy dog ... And I'm thinking 'I'm not a dog.'

"From there on I became fairly feisty." Ms Kunoth Monks was born in 1937 at Arapunya (Utopia Station)

to her Anmatyerre/German parents, Allan and Ruby Kunoth. Her paternal grandfather Harry Kunoth and grandmother Amelia Kunoth managed several cattle stations in the Northern Territory.

Before becoming a movie star, she learnt about her culture among her family and educated at school in Alice Springs.

Ms Kunoth Monks didn't pursue a film career beyond *Jedda*. Instead, she became an Anglican nun and established the first Aboriginal hostel in Victoria. But later, in 1970, she married Bill Monks with whom she raised daughter Ngarla Kunoth-Monks. Grandchildren Amelia and Ruby followed.

All have traced Ms Kunoth-Monks'

footsteps onto a path of committing to social justice causes. Daughter Ngarla served as Central Land Council delegate and executive member.

Having settled in Alice Springs in the 1970s, Ms Kunoth-Monks became increasingly involved in politics. Driven by the controversial plan for a dam near the town, she stood for the NT Legislative Assembly in 1979. The dam plan was eventually abandoned.

Later she returned to Utopia, always maintaining the struggle to advance her people.

In 2008 she became the Barkly Regional Council's first president.

In a statement, the council said as president she advocated heavily for communities of the region and showed true leadership.

Current mayor Jeffrey McLaughlin described her as a "leader" and a "warrior".

"Her legacy will live on in the Barkly and in our hearts," he said.

In a front page tribute, the *Tennant and District Times* newspaper

pronounced her "a Barkly legend and a national treasure".

The paper called her "a warm and caring woman; and a passionate, unrelenting advocate for her country and her people" as well as "a staunch defender of her traditional ways and cultural rights, and a vocal denouncer of assimilation".

Minister for Indigenous Australians, Ken Wyatt, also recognised her determined efforts on behalf of her people.

"Ms Kunoth-Monks was a strong advocate for Aboriginal, environmental and human rights," he said.

"She was renowned in her community and on the global stage for her tireless campaigning and, over the years, has provided invaluable advice to governments at the federal and territory levels.

"In 1993, Ms Kunoth-Monks was awarded the Order of Australia medal for her service to the Aboriginal community and in 2015, she was rightly recognised as NAIDOC's Person of the Year and the Northern Territory's Australian of the Year – all fitting recognition for a lifetime dedicated to improving the lives of those around her," he added.

"There were very strong voices at the front of that debate from the start and Rosalie was one of them," he explained.

"Rosalie was a constant voice. Always calm, measured, but blistering, insightful words about the terrible predicament that indigenous people found themselves in, but also the real strength that is in Aboriginal culture.

"She just had this incredible presence. She just very clearly, very articulately put her point of view across in a way that you just couldn't ignore."

Seamlessly switching between languages, Ms Kunoth Monks's 2014 appearance on Q&A was typically forthright, communicating in a way that could not be denied, let alone ignored.

"I have a culture. I am a cultured person," she stated.

"I am not something that fell out of the sky for the pleasure of somebody putting another culture into this cultured being. I am not an Aboriginal or indeed Indigenous, I am Arrernte, Alyawarre, First Nations person. A sovereign person from this country.

"I didn't come from overseas. I came from here. My language, in spite of whiteness trying to penetrate into my

"I am Arrernte, Alyawarre female elder from this country. Please remember that."

Dr Paddy Gibson, senior researcher at the Jumbuna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research at the University of Technology Sydney, told CAAMA Ms Kunoth-Monks' loss would be felt far beyond Central Australia.

"There's ripples from this right across Australia and the world," he said. "So well known, so well loved and such an important advocate for Aboriginal people and all people who are struggling, so this has been deeply felt everywhere," he said.

Dr Gibson got to know Ms Kunoth Monks while campaigning against the Howard Government's NT Intervention in 2007.

brain by assimilationists, I am alive. I am here and now, and I speak my language.

"I practise cultural essence of me. Don't try and suppress me and don't call me a problem. I am not the problem."



Farewell to the man in the hat

“HE WAS a bit of a joker more than anything. He’d try and make you laugh.”

Central Land Council colleagues would agree that those words by Stephen Ellis sum up perfectly long-term regional officer Dale Satour. By the time he sadly passed away, last November, Mr Satour had spent more than 20 years at the CLC.

He has left a lasting impression and will always be remembered in the office and out bush.

Born in Alice Springs on the 24th September 1971 to parents Ali John and June Satour, he grew up with a passion for horses and the country life.

officer in the CLC’s land management unit. He stayed for 12 years.

In 2009 he joined the regional services unit and impressed his colleagues with his diligence and reliability.

“When he had something to do, he was straight onto it and got the job done,” his friend and co-worker of 20 years, Stephen Ellis, said.

“He was a serious person when there was work to be done, but when we were sitting down he’d crack a joke, muck around and tell you stories.”

His passion for the bush was always reflected in his work around Papunya and Alice Springs.



Rarely seen without his cowboy hat, Mr Satour is remembered as a genuine, approachable and easy-going bloke who would go that extra mile for his colleagues.

He attended school in Alice Springs but decided to drop out in his high school years to chase cattle in the wide open spaces.

He worked on stations around the Northern Territory and Queensland until 1996, when he became a project

Rarely seen without his cowboy hat, Mr Satour is remembered as a genuine, approachable and easy-going bloke who would go that extra mile for his colleagues.

For example, he would offer his sparkling clean office in Papunya to a

group of his tired co-workers so they could roll out their swags after a long council meeting at Kintore.

He even stocked the office fridge with nice food so they could have breakfast.

Outside of work, Mr Satour was an

avid darts player and enjoyed watching his beloved horses race.

His enormous contribution to the CLC will never be forgotten.

He is survived by his children, grandchildren and many family.



EVERY HILL GOT A STORY
is now back in print

I loved school, loved to listen



I went to school in Ernabella. I didn't learn English, I learnt Pitjantjatjara. Learnt to write and do other things. I loved school, loved to listen. I always went to school, Monday to Friday, I listened to the teacher and obeyed, sat quietly, wanted to learn. I didn't scream and shout. I took it all in. I went to school in Amata as well. It was a really good school. I really took notice of what the teachers told me and I worked really hard. Then I went to Yirara College to learn more.

Later I went back to Amata and was learning about inma [ceremony] from

the old women. We'd go from school in the afternoons, learning Seven Sisters. It was good, we were learning to dance.

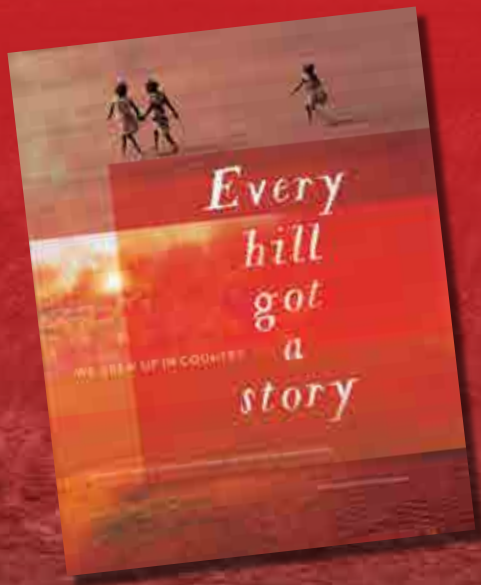
...

I have always danced the Seven Sisters, from when I was young right through to now. I sing the inma [ceremony], the verses of the epic song cycle, and I also dance. I listened very carefully when the old women were teaching.

We went down to Canberra and did a wonderful inma, telling the sacred story of the land and working with non-Aboriginal people.

Rene Kulitja

Excerpt from *Every hill got a story*



For more information go to clc.org.au/every-hill-got-a-story



Photo: National Archives of Australia NAA: A1200/18, 7913408.

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