

# LAND RIGHTS NEWS

NORTHERN EDITION



NORTHERN  
LAND COUNCIL

FREE

ARIMADA - ARIWARIK 2021/22 • NLC.ORG.AU

HEALTH  
SPECIAL

GET  
THE  
JAB



KNEEBONE HANDBACK



YOTHU YINDI EXCLUSIVE!

AUSTRALIA'S OLDEST ABORIGINAL NEWSPAPER. SINCE 1973.

## EDITORIAL

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## FRONT COVER

Constantina Bush with the 'Get the Jab' message.

*Arimada*, Malak Malak for the November and December months when the rains begin. *Ariwarik* is the monsoon time.

# Towards 2022: Working together to keep us safe on country

A message from the Northern Land Council Chairman Samuel Bush-Blanasi

WELCOME to the last edition of *Land Rights News* for the year.

It has been another tough year as we learnt more about doing business while keeping our mob safe from Covid-19.

Over the past 12 months, as the world continued to fight this horrible virus, the NLC has been doing everything in our power to keep our mob safe, informed and supported.

As Chairman, one of the pandemic's silver linings has been that it has forced us to all work closer together, with the Federal and Territory governments, the Aboriginal controlled health organisations and emergency services.

While Covid-19 has made things tough in many ways, it has been a really successful



NLC Executive Council Member Chris Neade, NT Minister for Remote Housing Minister Chansey Paech and NLC Chairman Samuel Bush-Blanasi at the NLC Full Council meeting in July at Banatjarl.

year for the NLC.

Our primary mandate of helping our mob to acquire and manage their traditional lands and seas has been achieved.

We've never stopped fighting for our land and sea rights and we never will.

I want to send a big thanks to all the NLC members who have worked hard over the year to represent their communities and organisations, especially the members of the Executive Council.

I also thank the former

CEO Marion Scrymgour and the current Acting CEO Joe Martin-Jard and staff who are dedicated to delivering services to our mob.

Congratulations to everyone for achieving so much together in tough times.

# Land Councils play a critical role in Covid-19 response

A message from the Northern Land Council acting CEO Joe Martin-Jard

I'd like to begin by acknowledging the significant legacy and achievements of my predecessor, Marion Scrymgour, who was the first woman CEO of any land council in the Northern Territory. Marion guided the land council through one of the most challenging periods in all of our lives, with the global Covid-19 pandemic.

2021 has been a difficult year for all of us. Our Covid-19 response showed that Aboriginal land councils can readily lead from the front with both government and the non-government sectors to make good decisions for Aboriginal people.

The Covid-19 response demonstrated land council leadership; but also that we can work together with purpose and determination to make things happen.

For months we've been working to keep our mob

safe. I want to encourage all Aboriginal people in our region and across Australia who have not yet been vaccinated, to get the jab as soon as possible.

I'll just talk about our governance now. Our executive council has 12 members, chosen by the four council regions, plus the chairperson and deputy chair. Our council members are grassroots people who

represent the regions and towns where they live. Many of our members also wear multiple hats. They are local government mayors, members of national cohorts of management, business operators, organisation directors, fathers, mothers, grandparents and even great grandparents. Each year, we hold two full council meetings, four executive council meetings and 14

regional council meetings. I'm proud to work for an organisation that has been governed by grassroots members who represent their communities.

Finally, we would like to say a big thank you to all of the NLC Full Council members, Executive members and all of the NLC staff.

I wish you a safe and restful Christmas break.



NLC Caring for Country Program Coordinator Anthony Kerr, Bulgul Ranger Coordinator Timothy BurrBurr and NLC acting Chief Executive Officer Joe Martin-Jard speak to the crowd at Bulgul.

# Stay safe, stay on country, care for family and get vaccinated

## ON THE MISINFORMATION BEING SPREAD ONLINE

“Anti-vaxxers are spreading wrong and hurtful information.

“It’s important that we don’t listen to them. We applaud the Northern Territory Government for their response to this crisis.

“We are strong people, we need to band together to help each other fight this virus.”

NLC Chairman Samuel Bush-Blanasi told *The Age* in late November.



## ON THE ‘GET THE JAB’ CAMPAIGN VIDEOS

“People should be really careful with information they see on Facebook, TikTok or other social media.

“To get the right story, go to your clinic or talk to your health worker, your doctor or your nurse.”

Constantina Bush from Katherine teamed up with the NLC and AMSANT to make a short film about the Covid-19 vaccination.

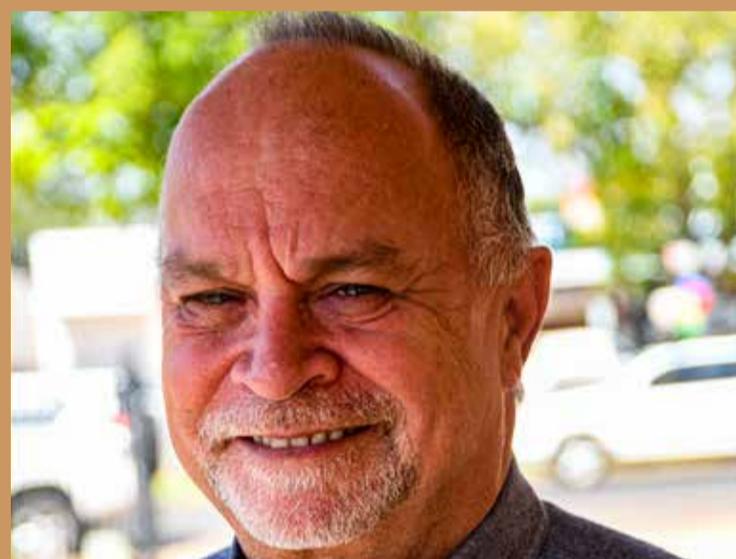


## ON THE NLC’S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

“Keeping remote communities and homelands in the NLC area safe is the key priority for the NLC.

“We remind all permit holders that want to enter Aboriginal Land that in addition to following those rules they should take all necessary extra steps to keep themselves and the community safe.”

Acting NLC CEO Joe Martin-Jard told *The Katherine Times* on 20 August.

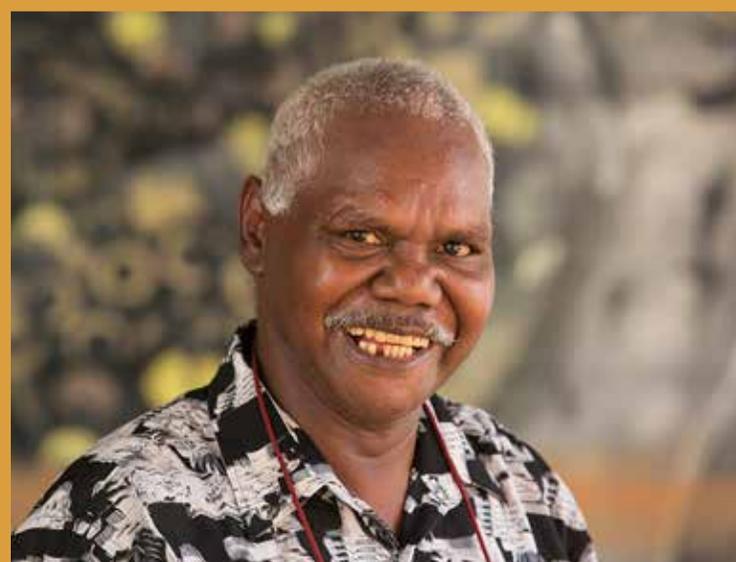


## ON THE COVID-19 HEALTH RESPONSE IN ROBINSON RIVER

“Please show respect for my people and my community and also the team that worked through this process.

“These teams that are going to be coming around in your area, which is infected now, support them.”

NLC Deputy Chairman Dickie Dixon told *ABC News* in late November.



# 'Call him wungurru': New dog sparks old story



This robot dog, which visited Timber Creek for Exercise Koolendong, reminded Mr Johns of a story.

RESIDENTS of Timber Creek had a rare glimpse of the latest weaponry used by Australian Defence Force soldiers and US Marines when they were invited to a community day at Bradshaw Field Training Area in late August.

For Ngaliwurru elder Larry Johns one of the stand out futuristic weapons he saw in action was the robot dog.

He sat down with NLC Regional Manager Reg King at Bradshaw to talk about the robotic dog.

"That man-made kinda dog, the way that it walks reminded me of a story when I was a kid growing up there at Timber Creek.

"When we was about three or four years old they always used to tell us 'Beware of the boogey man'. Beware of ... there they call it 'wungurru'. 'Beware of this wungurru, they can get you

**"That man-made kinda dog, reminded me of a story when I was a kid."**

and take you away'.

"When I saw that thing I asked one of the people from the Army, I said 'Well, what do you call this thing?' I freaked out, because it's a scary looking thing. And they said 'We haven't got a name, but we'll let you name him!'

"Oh, geez ... and I looked at it again and it reminded

me of that bad spirit. That wungurru.

"I said 'Call him wungurru!' and it went on from there. Wungurru. He's from my country, he's that bad spirit, that devil that

roams around that area.

"I never, ever seen one, but sometimes late at night you can hear strange noises when you camp out in the bush.

"I always think that might be that wungurru. But anyway, I named that army robot dog wungurru, so that's what it is!"



Larry Johns telling soldiers about Bradshaw in the old days.

# Out and about: Who's reading Land Rights News?



Wardaman Elder Bill Yidumduma Harney catches up on the news.



Wagiman Ranger Theresa Bandison having a break with the newspaper.

# 'Almost 30 years in the making': Native title holders celebrate recognition of rights in country

MORE than 20 people gathered at Kneebone Community, about 60km northeast of Kununurra, on 1 October to celebrate a Native Title determination in the Legune region.

In 1994, the group of families from the Keep River area set up a campsite at Kneebone to help look after the Country with the consent of the senior Native Title holders of Goorbidjim Country. During the 27 years of living in the area, the community have created housing, kitchen facilities, reticulation, ablution blocks, water security and fencing - all by hand and without external financial assistance.

"The applicants have faced many hurdles to receiving the title to Kneebone Community Living Area however they never faltered in their determination to see it through," an NLC spokesperson said.

"Kneebone today is a lively, growing community that reflects the long term prosperity and viability of the Community Living Area."



At front left to right: Wilma and Camille Huddleston, Deborah Jones and Geraldine Brandy with friends and family at Kneebone.



Geraldine Brandy and Noelene Bending.



A big day for the Kneebone community.

## Advertise in *LAND RIGHTS NEWS*

The *Land Rights News* is read by Aboriginal people across the Top End of the NT.

If you want to place an ad, simply email [media@nlc.org.au](mailto:media@nlc.org.au) and ask for our media kit and advertising rates.



# 'It's a first for the Top End': Cultural water needs project kicks off

By Bridie Velik-Lord, NLC Environmental Policy Officer

IN a first for the region, the Northern Land Council is working with Traditional Owners, Wardaman Rangers and the Northern Territory Government to work out how much water is needed to protect cultural values in one of our significant rivers.

Water is important for everyone – we all need water to drink, while plants and animals need water to live, grow and breed. Industries such as agriculture, horticulture and mining also need water to produce products.

Where water is in high demand, it is especially important that enough water is available to ensure culturally important places and cultural uses of water are protected now and into the future.

In partnership with Traditional Owners, Wardaman Rangers and the NT Government, the NLC has started working to determine how much water is needed

to keep wetlands, springs, creeks and the Flora River flowing to make sure that cultural places always have the water they need.

The first step of the Cultural Water Needs Project is to identify the culturally important places along the Flora River. Some information about important places has already been collected and documented in plans like the Wardaman Indigenous Protected Area Management Plan and the Giwining-Flora River Joint Management Plan.

Information about other important water places has been collected during field visits this year.

The next step of the project is to determine what water is needed at those places during different times of the year.

In some cases, the stream or spring is small and Wardaman Rangers have worked with the NT Government to measure water flows. If it is safe to

do so, Rangers use a pygmy meter to measure how much water flows through the stream or out of the spring every second.

In other cases, we need to work out how much water is flowing in large sections of the river. Where it is not safe to enter the water, a boat is used

to measure the water flow.

Water samples are collected at all the sites and then taken to a laboratory in Darwin. Samples are then tested to make sure the water is healthy.

The project will continue into 2022 and the information collected will be used by

Wardaman Traditional Owners to make sure the water needs of culturally important places are protected into the future.

It is hoped this will be the first of many projects to come with the NLC looking to commence cultural water needs projects in other areas over coming years.



The team reviews the flow measurements.



Wardaman IPA Rangers prepare water testing equipment.



Rangers measure water flow using a Pygmy Meter.

# NT - NLC Indigenous stimulus package helping grow Aboriginal businesses



Demed was able to secure some heavy machinery to increase its core duties to homelands and expand its civil program.

## The Minister for Indigenous Australians, the Hon Ken Wyatt AM, MP, announced a \$100 million NT Indigenous Economic Stimulus Package in November 2020.

THE package was developed in partnership with the four NT Land Councils to provide immediate support for Indigenous businesses, jobs and economic development.

The NLC has been allocated \$36.7 million to be delivered over two financial years - with \$22 million in 2020-21 and \$14.7 million in 2021-22.

The funds, which are from the Aboriginals Benefit Accounts (ABA), are for Aboriginal people in the NT to create and sustain jobs through capital

injections in 'shovel-ready' economic, social and infrastructure projects.

NLC Chairman Samuel Bush-Blanasi said the package is an example of Aboriginal people and

### **"Having this heavy machinery enables the Jawoyn Association to be able to complete works required in a timely fashion without having to rely on outsourcing jobs to other companies."**

Government coming together in shared decision-making.

"The four Land Councils in the NT are strong organisations connected to

all of their communities and know how ABA funding can be used effectively," said Mr Bush-Blanasi.

"By investing in small scale Aboriginal-owned infrastructure projects with short or no lead time, we can have an immediate and lasting effect on our people."

As at 30 June 2021, 55 projects valued at \$16.8 million had been approved across NLC region.

The Jawoyn Association Aboriginal Corporation in Katherine applied for funding to upgrade their plant and equipment fleet to enable more works to be carried out

in the 12 Jawoyn communities.

The purchases included a water truck, a roller and grader, said Jawoyn Association CEO John Berto.

Mr Berto said using equipment owned by the Jawoyn Association is "more cost effective and reliable".

The Jawoyn Association was also able to purchase a bus for the Banatjarl Strongbala Wimun's Grup and to upgrade their

rangers' work space.

"This again was a much needed vehicle which will be heavily utilised by the Banatjarl Strongbala Wimun's Grup with transportation

to festivals, funerals, activities and between communities", Mr Berto said.

"The ranger room extension has been gratefully received by the Jawoyn Rangers, who are very happy with the extra space to work from. It has a modern fresh look and much more space. A great space for training on site."

Demed Aboriginal Corporation in Gunbalanya sought funding from the NLC Stimulus Package to buy heavy machinery and to improve housing on homelands.

"Demed was able to procure some heavy machinery to increase our core duties to homelands and expand our Civil program," said Demed Aboriginal Corporation's Deputy CEO Josh Oddy.

"The civil program consists of 80 per cent local Indigenous employees - that wouldn't have been possible without the Stimulus Grant. Our civil program provides a much need career pathway and training in the civil sector. The stimulus grants also provided some much needed career pathway and improvements to some very remote homelands."



Jawoyn Association's Tony Berto, Peter Chapman and Chris Berto (in the cab).



Demed prepares a container house for residents on homelands.

# 'Don't pay attention to the bullshit'— a message from Territory health leader John Paterson

The CEO of Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT) tells readers to ignore misinformation and get vaccinated.

THE last 20 months have been rough ones due to the Covid-19 pandemic. At last official count, over 5 million people have died from this disease - other estimates put this at 29 million taking into account poor record keeping in so many countries.

Yes, 29 million people - more than the whole population of Australia!

Overwhelmingly, across the world, the disease has hit First Nation peoples - and hit them hard. It is as if Covid-19 was designed to smash our peoples worse than others: our poorer living conditions, combined with pre-existing health conditions, make our peoples more at risk during these plague times. It's not a whitefella disease, it is a disease that can kill Aboriginal people in much greater numbers than it will kill whitefellas. Without vaccines, it is a sickness that threatens our communities and our culture.

Look what has happened to the Navajo Nation in the USA, and Indigenous tribes in Bolivia—not to mention how it has affected our brothers and sisters in western NSW.

I want to make it perfectly clear. It's not a



AMSANT boss John Paterson has been encouraging everyone in the NT to get vaccinated.

matter of if this disease hits our old people and our kids, it's a matter of when.

If we have been lucky so far it has been because of the tireless work of AMSANT membership - the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services that make up our membership. Weeks before the World Health Organisation declared it a global pandemic, our members were working on

plans to counter this threat. At a community level, and at a broader political level—hassling governments to listen to us mob.

Working with groups such as the NLC, we have produced information packages in language, on posters and videos - to get the message across. And those messages are simple: Stay safe and get vaccinated!

And that work has

gone on ever since the beginning. In this, I want to pay a heartfelt tribute to our health centres - government and community-controlled - who have been at the front line. Our health workers, our nurses and doctors, our community workers and drivers, our allied health workers. They have sacrificed many, many hours of their lives - often away from their own families and

friends. They are our heroes in this battle.

So next time someone from the clinic comes to talk about vaccination: listen to them. Don't pay attention to the bullshit and lies. Listen to them.

And get vaccinated: for our elders, for our kids, for our communities.

## Advertise in *LAND RIGHTS NEWS*

The *Land Rights News* is read by Aboriginal people across the Top End of the NT.

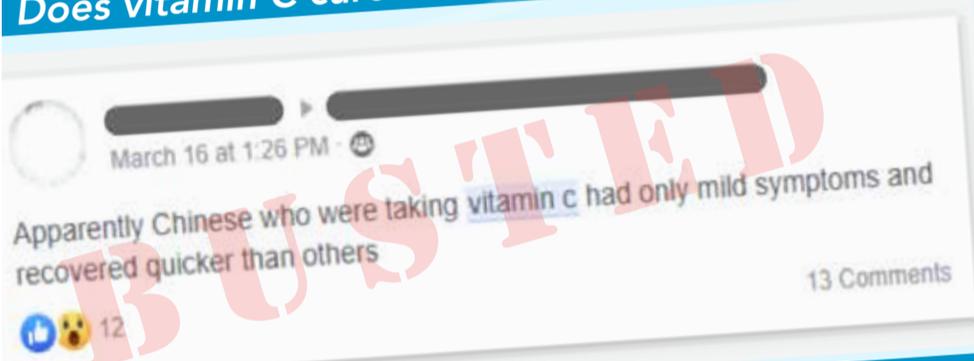
If you want to place an ad, simply email [media@nlc.org.au](mailto:media@nlc.org.au) and ask for our media kit and advertising rates.



# COVID MYTH BUSTERS

Social media is full of UNTRUE information about COVID-19, vaccines and home cures and treatments. You must get your COVID-19 facts from the right place. Below are myths that have been busted by the Australian Government to keep you safe.

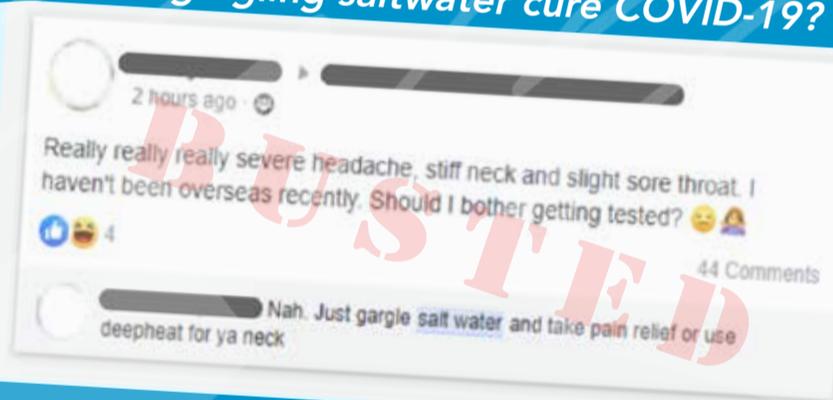
## Does vitamin C cure COVID-19?



**NO.** The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) investigated this claim and "found there is no robust scientific evidence to support the usage of this vitamin in the management of COVID-19".

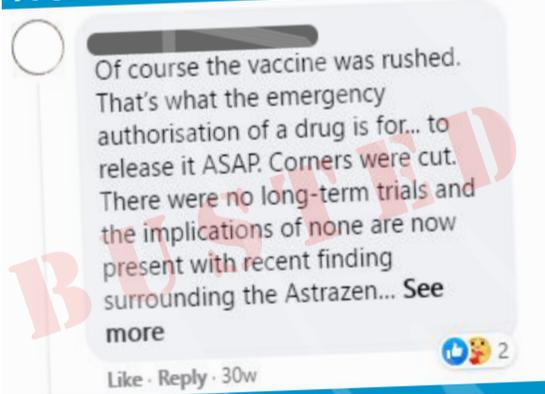
Vitamin C deficiency is rare in Australia. The only well-established evidence for the use of Vitamin C is in the treatment of scurvy which is caused by Vitamin C deficiency.

## Does gargling saltwater cure COVID-19?



**NO.** Gargling salt-water does not prevent COVID-19. While gargling is a common treatment for a sore throat, there is no evidence to suggest that it would eliminate or prevent COVID-19.

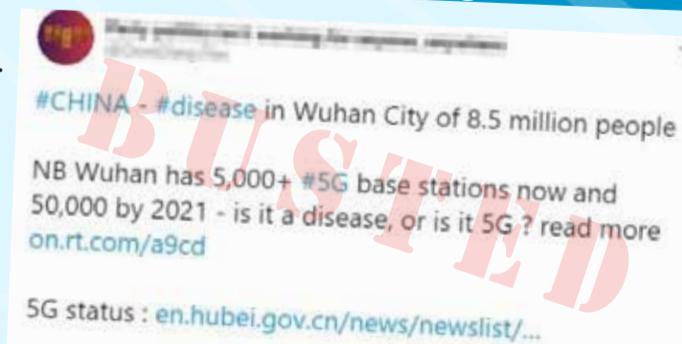
## Were COVID-19 vaccines rushed through approvals?



**NO.** Australia has made a full and thorough assessment of the Pfizer and AstraZeneca vaccines. The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) provisionally approved these vaccines after a complete assessment of all the available data. This is the same process as any vaccine approved in this country. The TGA will only register and approve a COVID-19 vaccine if it is safe and effective. No part of the process has been rushed, and there was no emergency authorisation granted. The TGA does not have an "Emergency Use Authorisation" pathway for COVID-19 vaccines.

## Are 5G networks spreading the virus?

**NO.** 5G mobile networks do not spread COVID-19. The World Health Organisation has noted: "Viruses cannot travel on radio waves/mobile networks. COVID-19 is spreading in many countries that do not have 5G mobile networks." "COVID-19 is spread through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes or speaks. People can also be infected by touching a contaminated surface and then their eyes, mouth or nose."



This information has been adapted from the Australian Government 'COVID-19 Mythbusting' webpage: <https://www.australia.gov.au/covid-19-mythbusting> For more information about COVID-19 visit: <https://www.australia.gov.au/>

# REGIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Use the resources below to access the appropriate health and wellbeing services in your community

## KATHERINE SUPPORT SERVICES

### IN AN EMERGENCY

- Policelink ..... 131 444
- Emergency ..... 000
- Katherine Hospital ..... 8973 9211
- Mobile phones with no coverage.....112

## TENNANT CREEK SUPPORT SERVICES

### IN AN EMERGENCY

- Policelink ..... 131 444
- Emergency ..... 000
- Tennant Creek Hospital ..... 8962 4399
- Mobile phones with no coverage.....112
- National Indigenous Critical Response Service (NT, SA & WA).....1800 805 801

## NHULUNBUY SUPPORT SERVICES

### IN AN EMERGENCY

- Policelink ..... 131 444
- Emergency ..... 000
- Yirrkala Clinic ..... 8987 2650
- Gove District Hospital ..... 8987 0211
- Mobile phones with no coverage.....112
- National Indigenous Critical Response Service (NT, SA & WA).....1800 805 801

When making a referral, the following should be said:

"Hello, my name is .....I'm from .....I have a person with me who ....."

## OTHER OPTIONS FOR REFERRAL AND ASSISTANCE

### KATHERINE

- Dads in Distress .....1300 83 437
- Elder Abuse Helpline .....1300 651 192
- DV Connect .....1800 600 636
- Parent Line (8am-10pm daily) ..... 1300 301 300
- Pregnancy Counselling Link .....1800 777 690
- Relationships Australia .....1300 364 277
- Sexual Assault .....1800 010 120
- TeamHEALTH ..... 08 8971 0904
- Headspace.....08 8912 4000
- Catholic Care..... 08 8971 0777
- Katherine Mental Health Service ..... 08 8973 9211
- Wurli Wurlijang Health Service ..... 08 8972 9100

#### 24-Hour Referral Services

- 13Health ..... 1343 2584
- Alcohol & Drug Information Service ..... 1800 177 833
- Bereaved by Suicide.....1300 467 354
- Beyond Blue.....1300 224 636
- Child Safety Service ..... 1800 177 135
- Family Drug Support .....1300 368 186
- Kids Helpline .....1800 551 800
- Lifeline Australia ..... 131 114
- Men's Line Australia.....1300 789 978
- Poisons Information Centre ..... 131 126
- Salvo Care Line ..... 137 258
- Women's Domestic Violence Helpline.....1800 811 811
- NT Mental Health Line ..... 1800 682

### TENNANT CREEK

- Dads in Distress .....1300 83 437
- Elder Abuse Prevention Helpline .....1300 037 072
- Elder Abuse Helpline .....1300 651 192
- DV Connect .....1800 600 636
- Parent Line (8am-10pm daily) ..... 1300 301 300
- Pregnancy Counselling Link .....1800 777 690
- Relationships Australia .....1300 364 277
- Sexual Assault .....1800 010 120
- Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation ..... 08 8962 2633
- Catholic Care NT Tennant Creek ..... 08 8962 3065
- Sobering Up Shelter ..... 08 8963 2500
- Tennant Creek Women's Refuge .....08 8962 1940
- Men's Centre.....08 8962 2914
- Barkly Mental Health Service ..... 08 8962 4300

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- Salvo Care Line ..... 137 258
- Women's Domestic Violence Helpline.....1800 811 811
- NT Mental Health Line ..... 1800 682 288

### NHULUNBUY

- Miwatj Health - Yirrkala .....08 8987 2650
- Miwatj Health - Nhulunbuy..... 08 8987 1900
- Ski Beach (Gunyangaga) Clinic ..... 08 8987 3800
- Layhapuy Homelands Health Clinic - Yirrkala ..... 08 8987 1242
- Dads in Distress .....1300 83 437
- Elder Abuse Prevention Project .....1800 037 072
- Elder Abuse Helpline .....1300 651 192
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- NT Mental Health Line ..... 1800 682 288

# 'No soft drink or fatty meat': Homeland community stores serving up fresh food

Laynhapuy Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services now operate four community food stores in the homeland communities of East Arnhem Land.

THIS year Laynha signed a lease for the Wandawuy grocery store, which in 2017 a store was opened in Gangan, and a second was opened a year later in Garrthalala. They also run the store in Yilpara.

Laynhapuy homeland communities are remote. It takes at least three hours to drive one-way from Gangan to the regional centre of Nhulunbuy, and the road is impassable during the wettest months of the year and if you can get through, a return trip in a bush taxi can cost a family hundreds of dollars.

This is why one of the reasons why Laynha Health has been focused on facilitating homeland community stores – they want residents to have year round access to affordable and nutritious food.

Yolngu residents run the

stores, while Laynha Health staff provide training and facilitate provision of new stock.

Decisions on stock are made collaboratively between the communities and the Laynha Health team, which includes nutritionist Harrison Milne.

Cigarettes, soft drink, confectionery and fatty meat are not stocked; instead there is an emphasis on fresh foods.

The stores are subsidised by Laynhapuy Homelands Aboriginal Corporation (LHAC or Laynha) but are likely to pay for themselves in the longer term by reducing demand on clinical services.

Food security is a major issue for many homelands communities in the Northern Territory and poor nutrition has serious consequences for health.

"Facilitating community-run stores has long been an aspiration

**"Poor diet is a major cause of some of the common health conditions among Yolngu, including diabetes," said nutritionist Mr Milne.**



A community meeting outside the Wandawuy store.



The four shops leased by Laynha sell fresh veggies and no soft drink.

for Laynha Health and is strongly supported by homelands residents."

Not only do the stores improve food security, provide access to a wider array of nutritious foods, save people money and allow people to spend more time on Country, but

they also provide opportunities for employment, training, enterprise development and management.

## Are you interested in sports, exercise, wellbeing and health?



### A career in health might suit you!

Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA) is a national not-for-profit, member-based, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander allied health organisation. We work with our members – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities, and organisations to lead workforce development and

support to improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our Northern Territory Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Academy (NTAHA) provides a culturally centred program. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 11 and 12 can complete a qualification in allied health assistance while building on their work readiness and employability skills for the health sector through paid workforce placements while completing their Year 12 certificate.



To find out more information, contact the IAHA National Academy (NT) team.  
Phone: 0447 313 663 Email: [ntacademy@iaha.com.au](mailto:ntacademy@iaha.com.au) Website: [www.iaha.com.au](http://www.iaha.com.au)

INTERACTIVE | ROLE MODELS | FUN | INDIGENOUS LED | SUPPORTIVE | CULTURALLY SAFE

**Coronavirus  
[COVID-19]**

# COVID-19 HAS COME TO THE NT

## IT HAS MADE ITS WAY INTO OUR REMOTE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES



**PROTECT OUR ELDERS,  
OUR LANGUAGE AND  
OUR CULTURE**

Ross Jakamarra Williams, Chairperson of  
Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation

The COVID-19 sickness spreads quickly and it has already infected Aboriginal people in the NT.

The best thing you can do to protect yourself is to get the COVID-19 needle.



**GET THE VACCINE TO  
PROTECT YOUR FAMILY  
AND COMMUNITY**

Mildred Inkamala,  
Community Leader, Ntaria

You need two needles to protect you from getting very sick or dying from the COVID-19 sickness.

**Get your COVID-19 needle  
from your local health clinic**



[coronavirus.nt.gov.au](https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au)



# Peppi clinic service growing stronger everyday



Peppimenarti health service meeting.

A good health care service requires good governance, and that's just what the Peppimenarti community has been working tirelessly to achieve.

The past year has seen local Ngan'gikurrungurr leaders working to improve health services for residents in their community of Peppimenarti (Peppi) and the wider West Daly region. This includes the community health clinic, 320 km south-east of

Darwin, as well as outreach and allied health services.

Working closely with the APONT Aboriginal Governance and Management Program (AGMP), as well as government and other stakeholders, a review undertaken this year showed that the service was facing big challenges in its capacity, as well as the many risks associated with delivering vital health services in a very remote setting. Many people wanted to have a say in how to solve problems and improve the level of service available through the clinic.

Throughout these discussions, leaders have maintained a strong commitment and consistent desire for the service to be Aboriginal controlled while also delivering the best outcomes for all community members. It is

this motivation and vision that guided the AGMP and local leaders' work together throughout 2021.

Excitingly, the hard work paid off in October when the clinic transitioned to the Peppimenarti Health Services Aboriginal Corporation. The new Aboriginal Corporation is registered under the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC), bringing it in line with other similar organisations in the NT and nationally.

**“While work continues at Peppi, this has been a unique story of community leaders speaking up to improve the immediate needs for community health.”**

Grace, a local clinic worker for 20 years and participant in stakeholder meetings about the service transition, described the

feeling on the ground, saying: “I feel happier. I know that with the new organisation I'll have support and it will be happier for our people here”.

AGMP are working to support the board throughout the transition. This has included practical support for local leaders throughout stakeholder negotiations to broker a smooth transition process. AGMP also worked closely with ORIC and community leaders to develop a Rule Book for

Health Services Aboriginal Corporation for making strong decisions and thinking about the best outcomes in service delivery for their community.

Of course, all good things take time. Whilst recognising that community control is the ultimate aspiration, the board have also been brave enough to know their limitations. Time is needed to fully build up the organisation with all the structures, capacity, skills and resources to deliver a great health service. AGMP will continue to work with them to bring stability and strength to the new organisation.

While work continues at Peppi, this has been a unique story of community leaders speaking up to improve both the immediate needs for community health while also planning ahead for a sustainable future.

## APONT's program: helping our mob with governance

WHEN was the last time you attended governance training? Have you ever considered a governance tune-up or health-check for your organisation?

The Aboriginal Governance and Management Program (AGMP) was set up by the Aboriginal Peak Organisations NT (APONT) in 2014 to help our mob with all these things - and more.

Regular governance training is essential for all Aboriginal organisations

to ensure board members and managers have the skills needed to run strong organisations.

AGMP specialises in governance training and are dedicated to building the skills and confidence of Aboriginal boards for remote Aboriginal organisations across the NT.

Their goal is to work alongside boards and managers to build resilient and sustainable Aboriginal organisations to better deliver their services. This

is done through training and workshops, side-by-side mentoring, plus on the ground and desktop support to help organisations build strong systems for operating and decision-making.

AGMP understands the challenges and opportunities of working remote. AGMP is focused on two-way governance and understanding the importance of cultural authority and traditional decision-making that makes our organisations strong. Two-way governance means balancing the requirements of the white-fella law with the importance of traditional law and customs.

This year, AGMP have been busy with lots of organisations across the Top End, delivering money-story (financial literacy) training, inductions for new board members and helping small organisations getting their compliance reports in order. AGMP have

also been helping with Annual General Meetings and Directors meetings – teaching Directors how to set and follow a productive agenda, chair meetings and set up good decision-making and conflict resolution processes.

AGMP makes a long term investment with sites,

supporting community leaders in their request to strengthen governance and service delivery. If you are interested finding out about how AGMP can support board members and improve governance within your organisation please get in contact. See details below to get in touch.



**APONT Aboriginal Governance & Management Program**

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*Illustration created by digital artist Charlotte Allingham, a young Wiradjuri woman living in inner Naarm (Melbourne).*



# 'I gotta work': Hearing loss hasn't held back thriving Wagiman Ranger

Hearing loss hasn't stopped Arthur Muggleton from being one of the NLC's most dedicated rangers. The 49-year-old has been working on Wagiman country for over a decade and has no plans to stop anytime soon.

"HE can't talk, but he can understand what we're telling him, he can pick it up," Theresa Bandison – Arthur's mother – told *Land Rights News*.

"He understands what they are telling him he's gotta do at work. And he work hard too."

Theresa and Arthur were sitting side-by-side and going over maps of Wagiman country when *Land Rights News* caught up with the pair at the ranger base outside Pine Creek.

Despite needing to attend numerous medical appointments due to his hearing loss, Arthur has only had one day off since the beginning of the year, Theresa explained.

"Arthur loves coming to work. I say, 'Do you want a holiday?' he say 'no mum, I gotta work'."

The Wagiman Rangers operate on the Wagiman Land Trust, which covers over 130,000 hectares – almost the size of Litchfield National Park. Work for the rangers includes weed and feral animal management, fencing for protection of culturally significant or sacred areas, and large-scale fire management.

While Arthur's hearing impairment prevents him from speaking in the conventional sense, over the years he's developed a

system that allows him to communicate with family and his colleagues by using hand gestures, lip reading and short sentences.

Wagiman Ranger Daphne Huddleston says she's enjoyed working closely with Arthur since he became a ranger over 10 years ago.

"He understands what we're saying, and he's a good worker too," said Daphne.

"When he is told to go cut the grass, he do it. He goes quick and gets whipper snipper, even he go on the ride-on mower, he's really good at it."

Wagiman Ranger Coordinator Carl Joswig said

be investigated.

Besides compliance work, on a daily basis they also observe biodiversity and water quality and know when country is being impacted, for example, by erosion, 'bad fire', illegal hunting or pollution.

Carl said Arthur enjoys being on country and recalls a time when they were driving through the bush and came across a gorge, which they explored on foot.

"There were some beautiful waterfalls there... I took some pictures of Arthur looking around, I could tell that he loved being there in that bush.

"Then we were at the top

## Wagiman Rangers operate on a land trust that is almost the size of Litchfield National Park.

Arthur enjoyed the chemical training that the group had completed a week ago.

"Chemicals – and fire – are dangerous for all of us. That's why training is so important," said Carl.

Arthur and his colleagues were trained in the handling, transporting and mixing of chemical herbicides for weed spraying. This training enables rangers to effectively treat different weed species that spread through Wagiman country, such as Gamba, Mimosa pigra and bellyache bush.

The Wagiman Rangers are also in the process of completing their Certificate II in Government (Ranger Compliance Support). This training course was developed by the NLC to give Aboriginal rangers the skills to effectively report non-compliant activity on their land such as illegal entry, hunting and 'pet-meating'.

Rangers are often described as the 'eyes and ears' of country - they keep a watch out for non-compliant activity and report back to NLC if it needs to

of the big hill... and Arthur's saying something and I'm going 'what's he saying?'

"He was pointing, trying to explain that looking that way it's all Wagiman country and that he loves it."



Arthur Muggleton points out a Green Plum bush on the Wagiman Land Trust.



Wagiman Rangers Arthur Muggleton, Theresa Bandison and Daphne Huddleston.

# Thamarrurr women lead the charge in Kakadu Plum exports

A community-run bushfood organisation from Wadeye has won an NT Export and Industry Award for their harvesting and export of native fruit Kakadu Plum.

Thamarrurr Plums harvests and supplies over 50 per cent of the nation's Kakadu Plums, also known as Mi Marrarl in Thamarrurr language.

In mid-September the organisation was awarded the INPEX Indigenous Business Award, which promotes Territory businesses who have demonstrated outstanding achievement in manufacturing, innovation, resource supply and service.

Thamarrurr Plums began in Wadeye over 15 years ago and

is supported by the Thamarrurr Development Corporation (TDC) and the all-female Palngun Wurnangat Aboriginal Corporation (PWAC).

With the plum itself ranking amongst the highest in vitamin C content and recent superfood trends, demand on both a national and global scale has grown quickly.

Virginia Gilbert is a Thamarrurr woman who has been harvesting plums this season to be exported around Australia and the world.

The plums she has hand-picked have been sold to a range of industries over the past 10 years, including pharmaceuticals, health and skin care products, native

foods and preservatives.

"We go out with a lot of ladies and pick plums, we fill the bags up, then we go back and weigh them," she told ABC's NT Country Hour.

Mi Marrarl has long been recognised and used by Traditional Owners of the Thamarrurr Region for its nutritional and medicinal values.

Ms Gilbert says they can be used to treat illnesses such as the common cold and sores.

"In the old days us mob used to go out bush and collect plums and eat it with seafood. That used to make us healthy... the trees and the plums, they got everything for health."

Kakadu Plums have the

highest recorded natural amount of vitamin C of any food in the world, with 100 grams of fruit providing well over 3000 per cent of the daily required intake.

well as a large picking force of around 250 women.

Harvesting starts each year in April, with the women picking for two to three months.

**Kakadu Plums have the highest recorded natural amount of vitamin C of any food in the world - 100 grams of the fruit provides over 3000 per cent of the daily required intake.**

This season, 12.5 tonnes of plums were harvested by the Thamarrurr women – the second highest on record.

Coordinator Claudia Prendergast puts this down to a good wet season, which promotes healthier bushes, as

Ms Prendergast says the annual plum harvest not only gives the women a sense of independence, but supports their connection to country and transfer of knowledge about the land and bush foods to younger generations.



Beatrice Tchernia with a healthy handful of Mi Marrarl.



Plum harvesters Catherine Parmbuk, Stephanie Berida and Clare Jongmin.

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# Passion for inspiring others drives health practitioner

Urapunga-based Jason Watson is studying a Certificate IV in Aboriginal Health at Batchelor Institute. His goal is to run a local health clinic.

JASON is the nephew of William John, a Mambali Ngubayin (the Johns) native title holder. The Johns are working with the NLC's Community Planning and Development Program to realise a strong vision around youth training and leadership. This includes promoting positive role models like Jason.

**Can you tell us a bit about yourself?**

I'm doing Certificate IV Aboriginal Health. I started last year, but because of lockdown and the virus they had to close Batchelor. I had to withdraw from studies last year. When it was the New Year I was able to start my studies again. I'm still in first year and it's a two year course. I've been coming up for two weeks a month and staying in Batchelor, then I travel back home to Urapunga. Travelling to Batchelor is about 7-8 hours.

**What made you want to study?**

Aspiration. It was my dream to become an Aboriginal health practitioner and to work in the clinic, to make it more comfortable and cultural – to help the community feel much more comfortable. Knowing that I'm in the clinic, that everything is okay and everything is safe culturally. I enjoy seeing patients and people that know me.

**Can you tell us about your job?**

I work at clinics in the communities, I used to work in Ngukurr. I would travel from Urapunga to Ngukurr for work. I started working there in March and finished in September. It was a work placement, it's a two-way learning program. You read the books to understand and to get experience we need to do a work placement.

**What do you do to get through this?**

I get some space or some time to myself. Sometimes I do meditations, or sit



Jason Watson hopes to one day run a clinic in his community.

down and giving that expression to someone I am working with or to a friend that I know. It's better to let it out then hold it in.

**What would you tell other young people?**

Take every opportunity possible, live it up to the fullest. Make memories, sometimes the best part of it is enjoying yourself and what you do.

**Where do you see yourself working in the future?**

I would like to go for diploma, then Registered Nurse. I want to run the clinic back in my community.

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# Minjilang and Red Lily celebrate taking control of local health clinic



Red Lily community members.

THE West Arnhem Land community of Minjilang celebrated on 14 October the transition of local decision making for primary health care to Red Lily Health, an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service.

Priscilla Muswibe, Health Centre Manager at Red Lily Health, said the

transition will help the community become more engaged with their own health needs, leading to improved outcomes.

"The way I explain moving to local control of health services to residents, is that it's like going to a relative's house – when you come to Red Lily for

help with your health, you are not a stranger visiting, you're going to your own home where you have a say and have a contribution to make," Ms Muswibe said.

Red Lily assumed operations of the Primary Health Care Clinic on July 1 and the community celebrated the milestone with a handover ceremony in October. About 120 people, including around 50 visitors, attended the event.

Red Lily Chair Reuben Cooper explained the history of the person who is named on the Health Centre signage.

"The transition of the Minjilang Health Centre has coincided with the recent passing of a significant former Red Lily Director

and Member representing Croker Island, who was also a mentor and originator of Red Lily Health Board," Mr Cooper said.

"The Minjilang community has requested the health centre continue to be named after Nellie Alabumbu and new signage is being procured.

"Red Lily will continue to work to improve the health and well-being of the people of the West Arnhem region."

The Red Lily Health board consists of representatives from areas including Minjilang, Waruwu, Gunbalanya, Jabiru and surrounding homelands.

The NT Government has overseen the transition of primary health centres in North East

Arnhem to community control including Yirrkala, Milingimbi, Lake Evalla, Ramingining and Maningrida.

NT Health Minister Natasha Fyles said increasing community involvement in the planning and delivery of health services brings additional health benefits to local residents.

"We have seen a smooth transition from NT Health to Red Lily with a majority of local staff remaining in the primary health care clinic," Ms Fyles said.

"This is all about putting the rights of remote communities first and giving Aboriginal Territorians access to appropriate health care which suits their needs."

# Remote bike workshop a hit with kids

Brian Dallo runs **Deadly Treadlies**, a small repair focused bike shop in Darwin. He sat down with *Land Rights News* in October to tell us what he's been up to lately.

"I'm out at Binjari today, about 10km outside of Katherine. I'm out here for about three days and we've had about 20 or 25 people

coming through each day," Mr Dallo said.

"We've been fixing up the bikes that are here and I have a reserve supply of about six in the Troopie. When I get those bikes out it will be like Santa's sack has arrived."

Recently Mr Dallo has been running bike repair workshops at Belyuen, near Wagait Beach across from Darwin, and Gunbalanya in West Arnhem Land.

He visits remote communities in the NT, upon the invitation of individual schools, councils and the NT government, to run bike repair workshops.

Deadly Treadlies

takes old bikes out to communities and then helps people to build up the bikes and get them going again. These bikes become community-owned bikes and are left in the community for everyone to use. They also bring out lots of spare parts like tyres, tubes, chains and oil and check to see what's lying around at the rubbish dump in case there are spare parts that can be reused.

Originally a teacher, Mr Dallo has had various careers so far, including running golf clubs and fish hatcheries. During his first year in the NT in 1979, Mr Dallo raced the Katherine to Darwin Tour. He's been in bike business since 2017.

"I'm in my late 60's. I've always ridden bikes. I used to race when I was a teenager. I went to university in Melbourne and used to race down there."

If you're in Darwin and keen to chat bikes, you can find Deadly Treadlies at 15 Bennett Street.



Bringing old bikes back to life - pretty deadly.



Brian Dallo outside his iconic repair shop in Darwin.

# The NLC and police working together



L to R: ACPO Rodney Baird, NLC Chairman Samuel Bush-Blanasi and ACPO Juan Huddleston.

NORTHERN Land Council councillors and staff have been briefing new police recruit squads on the key compliance issues faced by land councils, Traditional Owners and communities across the Top End.

The squads included Frontline Auxiliary Stream 70, Constable Squad 142 and Aboriginal Community Police Officer Squad 27.

NLC Chairman Samuel Bush-Blanasi, Women's Sub-Committee Chair Joy Cardona, Compliance Project Coordinator Carmen Taylor and Sea Country's Jamie Damaso visited the NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services (NTPFES) College in Darwin in August.

Topics of discussion included the Aboriginal Land Rights Act (ALRA), Aboriginal Lands Act (ALA), the Blue Mud Bay decision and illegal activities that commonly occur on Aboriginal land.

The visit in August was followed up with other presentations in October and November, which included presentations from Bulgul Ranger Coordinator Timothy BurrBurr and other NLC staff members. Several Wagiman Rangers from Pine Creek also attended the October session, where they shared a BBQ lunch with the new recruits.

Acting Senior Sergeant Matt Allen said all recruits appreciated the NLC's

attendance and contribution to their courses.

"Many of these recruits will be working in communities in the NLC regional areas so it is vital that they get a good understanding of the many facets of life and law out there," said Senior Sergeant Allen.

The new recruits also completed a cross-cultural language unit where they were required to research and present on Indigenous languages spoken in the NT.

Marcellus Nurse, who is soon to be posted to Katherine, is a member of the Frontline Auxiliary Stream 70.

Mr Nurse said the language unit was a fantastic way for his team to prepare for community engagement during their posting.

"Our communities are comprised of many different

cultures and people who speak and understand many different languages. So trying our best to engage with the community can help the NTPFES connect and understand all the different aspects of the different cultures, which can then help us with our job to serve and protect," he said.

"As the NT is made up of 30 per cent Indigenous people – 60 per cent of whom speak their language at home and 90 per cent who live remote – we think these figures alone show how important our cultural competence and partnerships are within these communities."

Mr Bush-Blanasi said he's looking forward to continuing this partnership between police and the NLC.

"It's good for the police recruit squads to build strong relationship with Rangers and Traditional Owners," he said.



Police recruits discuss the importance of cultural engagement.



Marcellus Nurse (L) and Ashok Kumar (R) whip up a BBQ lunch.



NLC staff and Wagiman rangers enjoy getting to know the police recruits.

# Deadly cars at the Borrooloola Family Fun Day

The annual family fun day in September in Borrooloola, located about seven hours drive southeast of Katherine, was a great success. Many locals brought along their cars dressed up in the colours of their favourite footy team. Emily Evans, NLC's administration officer for Borrooloola/Barkly, has sent these photos in to *Land Rights News*. Who do you think won the prize for the best dressed?



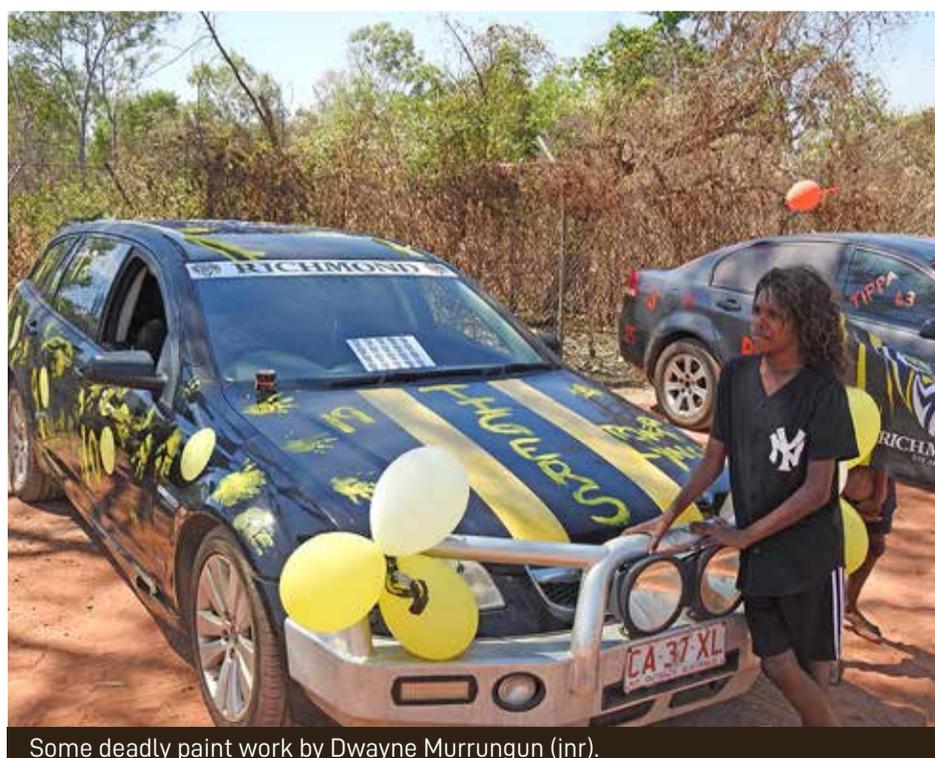
Thomas Simon is a proud Richmond Tigers supporter!



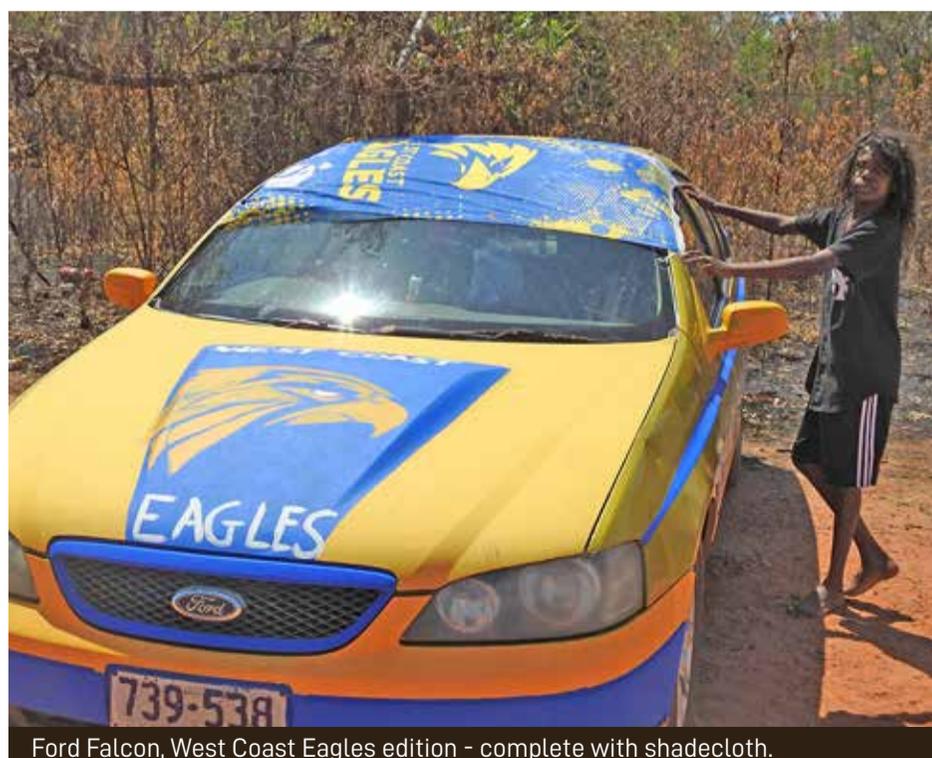
Brett Anderson is another loyal Tigers fan.



Peter and Jocelyn Anderson with their Collingwood Magpies hilux!



Some deadly paint work by Dwayne Murrungun (jnr).



Ford Falcon, West Coast Eagles edition - complete with shade cloth.

# Meet 'Nindi', the Bulgul Rangers' new boat

THE Bulgul Rangers launched their Healthy Country Plan and their new boat on October 27. A happy crowd gathered at the Bulgul Ranger Base, which is on the Wadjigan and Kiuk Traditional Lands.

NLC CEO Joe Martin-Jard said it was great to get an update on the activities of the Bulgul Land & Sea Rangers.

"It was good to hear the challenges, because we can turn them into opportunities, get more funding, more jobs, more resources for rangers," he said.

"Rangers are probably one of the best things that the NLC and the CLC does. You're not only doing the work for your own families, your own people and country, but you're doing it for Australians."

"I've read the plan 'Looking after Wadjigan and Kiuk Country 2021-2031', you've done an awesome job, and we'll be backing you guys in to follow that plan."

Bulgul Ranger Coordinator Timothy BurrBurr said Nindi will be a vital tool in helping the Bulgul Rangers look after their sea country and he explained to the crowd how the boat got its name.

"I've always thought I wanted to pay homage to my grandfather who was travelling through this country when I was a kid. I'm 42 now, so it wasn't that long ago," he said.

"They were still travelling in a canoe. They used to travel all through this area right up to Darwin in a canoe, and that canoe was named Nindi. That canoe took my family all through this country and I'm proud of it.

"Nindi will do us well, especially with our compliance, it's a boat to be proud of and it will stand out and put us on the map as well."



Bulgul dancers made an appearance at the Ranger Base to welcome the new boat.



Marion Scrymgour, Joy Cardona, Marjorie and Rosemary Morgan and Joe Martin-Jard catch up at the Bulgul Ranger Base.



Bulgul Ranger Coordinator Timothy BurrBurr.



Bulgul Ranger Theresa BurrBurr cooking up beef stew for lunch.

# Cobourg Peninsula land claim meeting takes place on-country

THE on-country hearing of Traditional Ownership evidence before the Aboriginal Land Commissioner for the Cobourg Peninsula Land Claim No. 6 took place at Djarradjin (Muirella Park) near Jabiru in late September.

The hearing had to be relocated at short notice due to sorry business on Madjunbalmi country.

The claim is over the entire Cobourg Peninsula but the inquiry before the Aboriginal Land Commissioner is restricted to a smaller disputed area near Vashon Head.

Fly-over site visits of the claim area were conducted by light aircraft and helicopter with claimants, the Aboriginal Land Commissioner, anthropologists and lawyers on 27 September.

A hearing of expert anthropological evidence was due to be heard in Darwin on 16-17 November.



Fly-over site visits of the Cobourg Peninsula claim area were conducted by light aircraft with claimants in September.



A house on the remote Cobourg Peninsula, 350km east of Darwin.



Patrick and Steven Briston prepare a BBQ for everyone.

# Peron Islands land claim meeting held at Bulgul

THE on-country hearing of Traditional Ownership evidence before the Aboriginal Land Commissioner for the Peron Islands Area Land Claim

No. 190 took place at Bulgul nearby the ranger station from 15 to 18 June 2021.

The remainder of Traditional Ownership evidence was heard in

Darwin at the George Brown Botanic Gardens Visitor Centre on 22 to 23 June 2021.

The claim is over the inter-tidal zone stretching from Bulgul to the mouth of

the Daly River. Fly-over site visits of the claim area were conducted by helicopter with claimants, the Aboriginal Land Commissioner, anthropologists and lawyers

on 15 June 2021.

A hearing of expert anthropological evidence was heard in Darwin on 2-3 September 2021.

# Future proofing LoC Program on top of agenda

## Learning on Country

THE Learning on Country Program hosted its second formal Steering Committee Meeting for the year at Darwin's Mercure Airport Resort on 13 and 14 October.

Twenty three Indigenous delegates, including 14 Steering Committee members representing their local community LoC Program, attended the meeting. The addition of site coordinators, agency representatives and the LoC Program Management team took the total number of attendees to over 45.

During the meeting there were updates on the

development of special projects aimed at promoting and future proofing the LoC Program with the Steering Committee governing the direction and approval of the progress.

These projects include: the design of a Monitoring and Evaluation process, which is aimed at incorporating Indigenous values and aspirations as part of the LoC Programs Key Performance Indicators; the development of social media based platforms and a dedicated LoC website to connect the network and promote the LoC Program



Over 45 attendees got together to discuss the future of Indigenous learning in the Top End.

to a wider audience; and an evaluation process to ensure that the direction of the Program and the work of the LoC Program Management team align with the foundational principles that were defined by Bininj and Yolngu at

the inception of the LoC Program back in 2012.

Thank you to all our members, delegates and coordinators for their participation and contribution in both the meetings this year. We recognise the incredible

work they do in engaging remote Indigenous school students in a true "two ways" educational and employment pathways program that is developing the next generation of rangers and community leaders.

# Maningrida students at the forefront of conservation

THE success of the Learning on Country (LoC) Program in Maningrida can be measured in many ways. It can be seen in the growing number of students completing their year 12 NT Certificate of Education and Training, achieving Certificate II qualifications from current RTO TrainSafe NT, or participating in ranger internships and obtaining full time employment as the next generation of Bawinanga Rangers.

Project-based learning and innovation is popular with LoC students, and a perfect example is the CSIRO's Baited Remote Underwater Video Stations (BRUVS).

The BRUVS system was introduced to Maningrida LoC students this year and is a partnership between the CSIRO and North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAILSMA).

BRUVS uses high-definition cameras recording to hard drive, to survey marine biodiversity, fish type and size

measurements, abundance, distribution mapping, record species around reefs, and to detect changes in the

coastline environment.

Maningrida LoC Coordinator Alex 'Batman' Ernst said the 10 BRUVS

**"The Learning on Country students learnt how to drive and navigate various vessels, retrieve anchors and practiced deploying and retrieving the BRUVS so that the video data could be stored and chronicled by CSIRO."**

stations were constructed by LoC senior students undertaking their Cert 1 in Maritime Operations (Coxswain grade 2 near coastal) AMSA certificate training.

Of these students, 80 per cent are females and they plan to pursue work in conservation and land and sea management roles.

The BRUVS were built on

country using PVC pipes, glue and joiners and tied with ropes and buoys, which involved lots of maritime workplace skills.

The LoC students learnt how to splice the rope, which is required for sea and land rangers and to achieve their Coxswain qualifications. The LoC students learnt to drive and navigate various vessels, retrieve anchors, and practiced deploying and retrieving the BRUVS so that the video data could be stored and chronicled by the CSIRO.

LoC's two-way learning is well supported by the Traditional Owners, past graduates and family members, and enjoys a strong partnership between Maningrida College and the Bawinanga Rangers.

Maningrida LoC students benefit from VET training in Conservation, Land and Sea Management aligned with the rangers work program and cultural learning, which prepares them for various employment pathways.



LoC students deploy their BRUVs to survey marine biodiversity around Maningrida.

# Plant of the Week: Learning on Country students share bush medicine knowledge online

Students from each of the 15 Learning on Country Program sites have been busy investigating plants. Every week the groups have been sharing their plant research on their Facebook page, which you can find by searching [@LearningOnCountryProgram](#).

## ANGURUGU'S PLANT OF THE WEEK

**What plant? Australian pine tree**  
**What can it help with? Sore teeth**

*Casuarina equisetifolia* (Australian pine tree or whistling pine tree) grow near the beach and has a distinctive red bark. In Angurugu, these trees are used as bush medicine for sore teeth. The bark is soaked in water and then used as a mouth rinse, and the bark can also be applied directly to the sore tooth.



## GALIWIN'KU'S PLANT OF THE WEEK

**What plant is it? Screwpine**  
**What can it help with? Sore mouth**

Shepherdson College's Learning on Country students recently spent time learning how to prepare Gunga (in Djambarruyngu language) *Pandanus spiralis*, commonly called a screwpine or pandanus palm.

The fleshy, white/light green heart is removed and crushed, then mixed with cool water, then rinsed a couple of times before being placed in your mouth on the area of pain.



## GAPUWIYAK'S PLANT OF THE WEEK

**What plant is it? Green plum**  
**What does it help with? Toothache**

In the hot and humid season of Dhuludur, the build-up, djamarkuli (children) around Gapuwiyak keep their eyes peeled for the first ripe Mynydjutj (Yirritja moiety), *Buchanania obovata* or green plum.

The flesh of these tasty fruit, high in vitamin C, the size of a thumbnail and looking like mini mangoes are devoured when slightly soft but still green and the seeds spat out. The whole fruit, flesh and seeds can be pounded into a paste and eaten. For toothache the inner bark and some wood may be scraped off the trunk and mixed with a little water. This mixture is then pressed on the aching tooth to stop pain.



## MILINGIMBI'S PLANT OF THE WEEK

**What plant is it? Rotten cheese fruit**  
**What is it helpful for? Flu and fever**

The Guninyi (Yirritja) *Morinda citrifolia* or Rotten Cheese fruit (as it's commonly called) is found in Milingimbi. The fruit is eaten when it goes translucent and soft to touch - and when it looks, smells and tastes like rotten cheese! The fruit is used to help with colds, coughs, flu and fever.



## NGUKURR'S PLANT OF THE WEEK

**What plant is it? Milky Plum**  
**What is it useful for? Eyedrops**

The Gurlubirdamba (Marra), or Dhaggiritj (Ritharrngu/Wägilak or Milky Plum as its commonly called is a small woodland shrub/tree that grows in Ngukurr. The bark is used to make eyedrops and the fruit can be eaten.



## UMBAKUMBA'S PLANT OF THE WEEK

**What plant is it? Small-leaved paperbark**  
**What is it useful for? Aches and pains**

Learning on Country Umbakumba School students have been learning about bush medicine this term. The small-leaved paperbark, Mamarra in Anindilyakwa, is used to help with headaches or a cold, and aches and pains. The leaves are crushed by hand and soaked in hot water and rubbed on the part that is sore or aching. It can also be poured as the hot liquid over their head and body, and crushed leaves and the liquids can be smelt to also help relieve symptoms.



# 'Helping the sawfish survive': How an NLC ranger group is saving one of the most threatened shark species



Dr Peter Kyne from Charles Darwin University and Malak Malak Ranger Amos Shields bring a sawfish pup to safety. (All photos: ABC News/Che Chorley)

THE critically endangered sawfish of the Daly River are being given another chance to survive, thanks to a rescue mission undertaken by the NLC's Malak Malak ranger group in partnership with Charles Darwin University (CDU) and the Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS).

Ten years ago, senior Malak Malak Traditional Owners identified the danger that many sawfish juveniles (called "pups") were facing each dry season by becoming trapped in receding waterholes on the Daly River floodplain.

The Malak Malak Rangers have since been undertaking annual patrols of their floodplain country as flood waters recede and waterholes dry up. The sawfish they find trapped in the drying billabongs are carefully moved into the main river channel so they do not run out of water and die in the evaporating pools.

The rescued pups, usually between 1.1m and 1.3m long, are caught by

hand and measured before being placed in a tank for transportation to the Daly River. They are then tagged for future monitoring and have tissue samples taken for genetic studies.

AMCS scientist Dr Leonardo Guida, who accompanied the Rangers on a recent rescue operation, said the juvenile sawfish faced multiple threats from fishing,

water extraction, and the climate crisis. "Northern Australia is one of the last strongholds left on the planet for sawfish so we are proud and delighted to be partnering with the Rangers and CDU on these important missions," said Dr Guida.

"The Top End is a global 'lifeboat' for four of the world's five sawfish – dwarf,

green, largetooth and narrow – but even here they still face threats from fishing practices like gillnetting, water extraction from rivers to support industry, and the impacts of global heating."

According to *National Geographic*, largetooth sawfish were once present in 75 countries but are now only known to exist in 20. Many of the remaining

sawfish habitats lie within Aboriginal Land Trusts. Senior Malak Malak Ranger Aaron Green said 17 pups were successfully rescued this dry season. In total, the Malak Malak rangers have rescued 77 sawfish juveniles from receding waterholes.

"To help out as many as we can each year from dying in a stranded billabong is really good."

**"It is incredibly rewarding knowing that we're actually helping the sawfish survive, especially because they're an endangered species," said Senior Malak Malak Ranger Aaron Green.**



Mr Shields searches for stranded sawfish.



The pups are measured carefully.



Sawfish pups can easily become trapped in receding waterholes.



Many of the remaining sawfish habitats lie within Aboriginal Land Trusts.



The animals are measured and tagged before their release into the Daly River.



Without the work of the Malak Malak rangers, the endangered sawfish would be under even more threat.

# Galiwin'ku projects making a real difference

THE Galiwin'ku Community 'Gungayunamirr Mala' Working Group have been documenting their projects and now have a video to show for their efforts!

In the video, the group share their personal experiences and discuss how the projects have benefited their community. The group have funded community projects since 2017.

The 'Playground Project', which was jointly funded with Shepherdson College, has brought positive changes – it has given them somewhere to play and encouraged them to come to school.

The 'Law and Justice Project' is helping Yolngu access legal education workshops and navigate the Balanda justice system, with NAAJA funded to visit Galiwin'ku the week before every court week. This project has also supported the employment of the first Yolngu lawyer, Kenisha Gumbula.

The 'Youth Diversion and Engagement Project' has trained a Yolngu Coordinator, Evellena (Miliy) Wanambi, who is now full time with East Arnhem Regional Council Youth Sport and Rec. This project also funds extra Youth Diversion and two casual positions within the team.

Perhaps one of the most significant projects for Yolngu is ongoing support for raypirri camps. The group see raypirri as integral to strengthening culture and connection to country. So far, the group have funded camps around Galiwin'ku and on Maroonga Island, with support from Milingimbi Outstations Progress Resource Aboriginal Corporation (MOPRA) and Yalu Aboriginal Corporation.

They are now planning to run camps more independently, with the right people on the right country.



Children in Galiwin'ku enjoying the school playground, a project jointly funded by Traditional Owners and Shepherdson College.



Richard Gandhuwuy at a Community 'Gungayunamirr Mala Working Group' meeting talking about project outcomes.



NAAJA Legal Education Team - Kenisha Gumbula with Galiwin'ku Community Support Officers.



Garrutju Gandangu at her homeland Galawarra.



Youth Sport and Recreation Coordinator Evellena Wanambi.

# Milindji shapes cultural tourism vision

GAPUWIYAK Traditional Owner Corporation, Milindji, successfully secured an NT Aboriginal Tourism Grant in early 2021.

The grant was used to develop a Cultural Tourism Business Plan, which enabled the group to map out steps to grow cultural tourism opportunities in their community.

Since 2019 Gapuwiyak Traditional Owners have partnered with Matrix Consulting and Training to develop and progress strategic goals for their corporation, Milindji. One of these goals was to shape their vision for cultural tourism.

With the grant money the group was able to engage Indigenous Connections'

Brad Martin to work with them to develop the Cultural Knowledge Sharing Business Plan.

As part of their work with Mr Martin, the group undertook two multi-day workshops, which focused on the natural, community and cultural assets in the area, and the opportunities that lie within their community.

The group now have a plan that clearly outlines the path they need to take to make their tourism vision a reality.

The next step will be to work with Charles Darwin University to do some tourism training. This will commence after the wet season in 2022. But for now there is a solid plan – a great outcome!



Gapuwiyak Traditional Owners mapping their tourism vision.

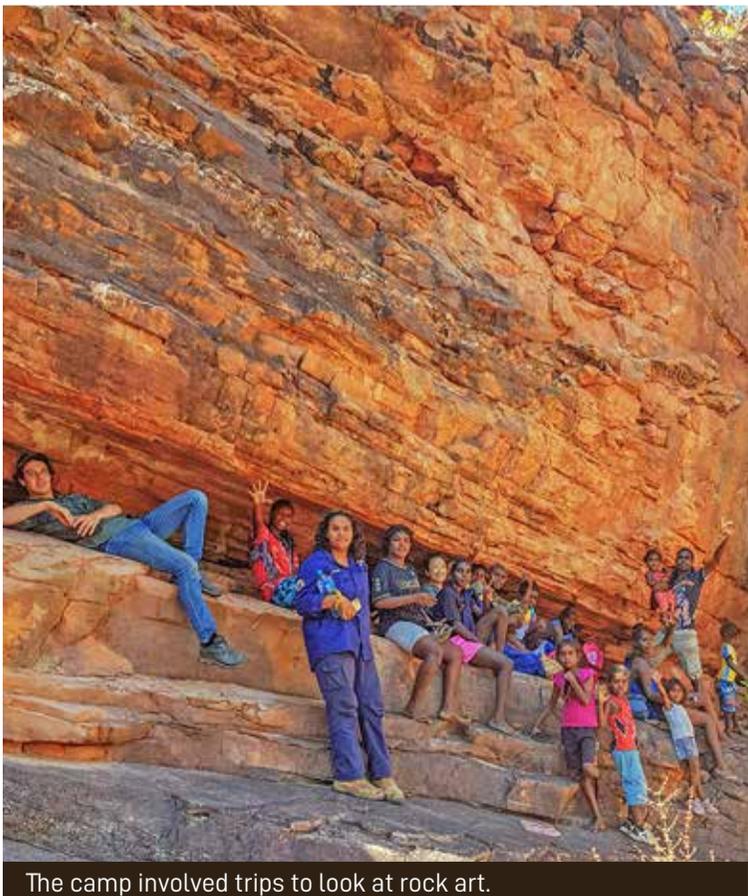
# Marralum bush camp brings young people together

DJARRANDJARRANY native title holders partnered with NLC Caring for Country to fund a five day bush camp in Marralum on Legune Station. About 40 young people and adults travelled to the camp from Kununurra, Wadeye and Katherine.

During the week participants swam in

Marralum Billabong, carved boab nuts, visited rock art sites and went fishing at Sandy Creek, the Forsyth wetlands and 'croc crossing'.

The Timber Creek Rangers also joined in to have a yarn with future Gajerrong Rangers, while enjoying the neighbouring country.



The camp involved trips to look at rock art.



Carving boab nuts with NLC staff!

# Scrap metal masterpieces replace stringybark in 'revolutionary' Yolngu art movement



Gunybi Ganambarr is one of the pioneering artists of the Murrigny movement. (ABC News/Che Chorley)

AFTER working on construction sites for 12 years, Yolngu artist Gunybi Ganambarr decided to try something new. He disassembled an old water tank on his property and used the scrap metal as a blank canvas, using the electric tools he'd learnt to operate as a builder to etch intricate patterns which tell stories of his peoples' songlines, Dreaming and country.

Mr Ganambarr is from the Ngaymil clan and lives and works at Gangan, a riverside homeland about 200km from

the Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre in Yirrkala.

Also a ceremonial yidaki (didjeridu) player, Mr Ganambarr has become one of the most significant artists of his generation in Arnhem Land, known for his use of recycled materials and traditional Yolngu painting practices.

Pioneering this new method of scrap metal etchings, Mr Ganambarr consulted with elders to argue against the traditional Yolngu artistic teaching that "if you paint the land, you

use the land". He says the discarded materials he found on the land had become part of the land.

"At that time, I was operating all the big machinery," he said.

Drawing on his Yolngu culture as well as his time spent building homes in outstations around North East Arnhem Land for the Laynhapuy Homelands Resource Centre, Mr Ganambarr describes the evolution of his art from the first time he used an electric sander to sand a piece of

half-burnt Ironwood.

"A new way... it is changing. Change, change, change. From the Ironwood to the PVC pipe. From the PVC pipe to the rubber. From the rubber to the insulation. From insulation to doing the steel. Using the walls of my house made of Colorbond steel. Everything!"

Since then a new movement has taken off in North East Arnhem Land, with eight artists from the Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre working with power tools such as angle grinders to transfer their sacred designs onto a medium that, like stringybark, speaks powerfully for the living landscape.

The resulting scrap metal masterpieces were curated by Matt Ward and Paul Johnstone of Salon Art Projects with the Northern Centre for Contemporary Art (NCCA) and Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre into a collection known as Murrigny.

Murrigny is a Yolngu Matha word that means more than one thing – while it translates directly to English as "iron and steel" it also means the

steel-nosed spear, and in a more contemporary sense, deadly or awesome. The collection features artwork by Mr Ganambarr, Barayuwa Munungurr, Wanapati Yunupingu, Wukun Wanambi, Binygurr Wirrpanda, Ganbilpil "PJ" White, Wurrandan Marawili and Ishmael Marika.

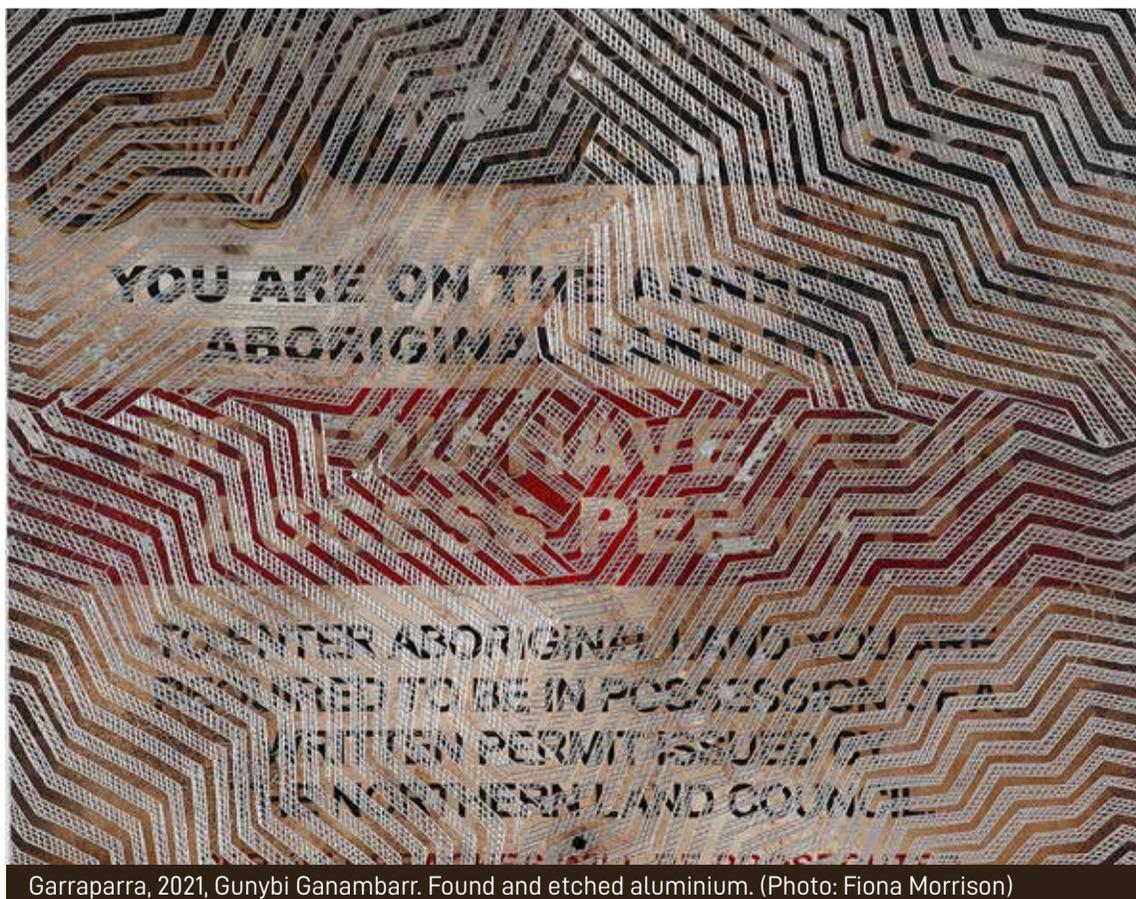
"It's very deadly, it's very sharp, it's very precise," Mr White told *ABC News*.

"We have done a bit of improvisation. We've collected materials off tracks, that has been damaged by people vandalising signs and also the age of it, getting old and then getting exposed. So we collected all the materials and got our artwork and started working on new ideas. So I've been using original traditional artwork but on a new style," said Mr White, who is a member of the Marrakulu clan.

One of the metal 'canvases' may look familiar – an old NLC sign advising visitors to Arnhem Land that they are on Aboriginal Land was found discarded on the side of the road by Mr Ganambarr, who re-purposed it into a multi-layered visual story of songlines – the blending of roads and rules, new and old.



Artist Ganbilpil (PJ) White.



Garraparra, 2021, Gunybi Ganambarr. Found and etched aluminium. (Photo: Fiona Morrison)

# How to fix enrolment in the bush

Requiring ID to vote will mean many remote communities will not have their voices heard, writes Northern Land Council Chairman Samuel Bush-Blanasi.

*\*This piece was published in The Sunday Territorian on the 21 November 2021. On 1 December 2021 the federal government confirmed the voter ID Bill would not proceed before the 2022 election.*

THE future of democracy in the Northern Territory will be decided in far-away Canberra over the next two weeks.

The federal government's Electoral Legislation Amendment (Voter Integrity) Bill 2021 is expected to move to the Senate before federal parliament rises for the long summer break.

The federal government wants the voter ID Bill to be in place for the next election, due to be held by next May.

The proposed voter ID Bill is based on the falsehood that election fraud is a problem in Australia. It is not. It is bad law.

There is no evidence of irregular voting or election fraud in the NT or anywhere else in the country.

On its face, the voter ID law seems reasonable enough. Just as you would in many other areas of day-to-day life, when you go to vote you would need to show some identification. A driver's licence, a passport, Medicare card etc.

But for many - if not most - Aboriginal Territorians that live in remote communities and homelands, the voter ID legislation will provide another barrier to them exercising their democratic rights and responsibilities.

Remote community enrolment is appallingly low. Why? One reason may be that the federal body charged with ensuring that Australians are enrolled hasn't done its job properly.

The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) maintains the commonwealth and NT electoral rolls. This means that the electoral rolls for

towns in the NT.

The nub of their complaint by is that the AEC has discriminated against them—and their communities—by failing to properly apply a policy called direct enrolment that was designed to lift enrolment rates for all Australians.

The implementation of direct enrolment has seen a welcome lift in enrolments to around 97 per cent nationally.

Everywhere that is, other than in the remote areas of the NT and Western Australia that languish in the lowest enrolment rate band of around 75 per cent to 80 per cent - substantially lower than the national rate.

The voter ID Bill won't fix the low enrolment rates in remote Australia before the next election.

But the following simple and straightforward suggestions will, both in the short-term - before the next election - and beyond.



NLC Chairman Samuel Bush-Blanasi.

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

Use local agencies and organisations that are already in place in remote communities. Post offices, local councils, associations and corporations, ranger group, not-for-profit organisations and CDP providers could be paid to provide enrolment services.

Apply the direct enrolment policy. There are affordable and effective ways to ensure that persons can be notified they are on the roll. The AEC should use automatic enrolment before the next election.

Giving people sufficient time to vote. Improvements must be made to how polling booths at larger communities and mobile polling for homelands and smaller communities operate.

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# 'It's a dream': Dr Grace Miguyie Daniels recognised by CDU



Dr Grace Miguyie Daniels receiving her honorary Doctor of Letters in Ngukurr.

**Congratulations to Dr Grace Miguyie Daniels on the award of an honorary doctorate from Charles Darwin University in recognition of her contribution to her community and the Northern Territory.**

THE Northern Land Council joins her family and friends in celebrating the award of an honorary doctorate from Charles Darwin University.

Dr Daniels is a member of the NLC, a board member of Yugul Mangi Development Aboriginal Corporation and a Remote Family Safety and Support Worker for the Department of Territory Families, Housing and Community.

She co-founded the Yugul Mangi Women's Rangers long before it was common to have women's groups active as rangers on country.

Having studied a Certificate IV in Natural Resource Management at CDU, Dr Daniels is a longstanding promoter of First Nations environmental and cultural rights, both in Arnhem Land communities

and internationally.

She has also held key leadership roles with the Tropical Savannas Cooperative Research Centre and in the development of the savanna burning emissions abatement industry.

Receiving the honorary CDU Doctor of Letter is "a dream come true", she said.

"It's a dream for me – my first time receiving an honorary doctorate.

"It's been so long for me since I've been working with community leaders, working out a plan to make things happen for our people.

"Working for my community gives me pride and carrying a role like this is a recognition from CDU and from the NT community."

Dr Daniels said her work would continue to focus on women and the younger generation.

"I look forward to getting more young people from the community to do more training to go for a degree or a diploma, so they can reach goals they aspire to.

"The focus is for them to upskill and get jobs locally. We want our young people to be speakers, leaders and representatives of their community, and talk about issues that need to be changed and be involved in project planning and development," she said.

Dr Daniels is one of the first CDU honorary doctorate recipients who have received the award on country in front of her family and community.

Network (ARPNet), which is hosted by CDU's Research Institute for the Environment and Livelihoods.

CDU Vice-Chancellor,

**"I look forward to getting more young people from the community to do more training, to go for a degree or a diploma."**

The on-country graduation ceremony for Dr Daniels was held in Ngukurr on October 22.

A proud Budal woman and a senior elder of the Marra clan, Dr Daniels has held key roles in the community, particularly as a founding member and co-chair of the Aboriginal Research Practitioners

Professor Scott Bowman AO, said the award highlighted Dr Daniels' significant contribution to the advancement of First Nations peoples and the University.

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# Local Decision Making: Creating better outcomes for remote Territorians

Four Local Decision Making agreements have recently been extended in remote communities across the Territory, boosting jobs and outcomes for Aboriginal Territorians.

IN October, the Northern Territory Government (NTG) signed the Jawoyn Association Aboriginal Corporation Implementation Plan stage 2 until 2023. The signing coincided with JAAC being awarded key contracts providing and improving remote housing in Barunga, Beswick and Manyallaluk.

Most recently, the NTG signed the Gurindji Aboriginal Corporation Implementation Plan stage 2, until 2023. GAC's commitment to Local Decision Making has seen the opening of the Kalkaringi Community and Family Centre, a 52 per cent increase in overall cash flow for GAC, and the successful completion of several upgrades including remote housing and Government employee housing contracts.

The Yugul Mangi Development Aboriginal Corporation and the

Anindilyakwa Land Council have also extended their Local Decision Making Agreements.

Minister for Treaty and Local Decision Making Selena Uibo said it was inspiring to see what these communities had achieved since signing their first implementation plans.

"Local Decision Making is delivering for Aboriginal Territorians by improving services for remote Territorians. It is also providing new opportunities for jobs on country, and strengthening capacity and leadership," she said.

Local Decision Making was first introduced by the Territory Labor Government in 2017. It has seen government agencies partner with Aboriginal communities to assist the transition of government services and programs to community control.



Minister for Treaty and Local Decision Making Selena Uibo.

## Law and Justice Group kicking goals in Walungurru

THE remote community of Walungurru (Kintore), 530km west from Alice Springs, will be the first in Central Australia to form a government supported Law and Justice Group following the launch of the Northern Territory's first Aboriginal Justice Agreement.

In October, the Territory Labor Government announced Walungurru would see establishment of the community-driven group which will support greater autonomy for Aboriginal Territorians.

Law and Justice Groups will also play a key role in



Walungurru Law and Justice Group members with Selena Uibo and Chansey Paech.

establishing Community Courts, as well as providing assistance to government agencies and service providers that deliver outside of the justice system in areas such as health,

housing, kinship care and child protection.

Other benefits of Law and Justice Groups include breaking down language and cultural barriers, improving the delivery of services to

communities, and partnering Aboriginal people as stakeholders in decisions made by Government.

NT Attorney-General Selena Uibo launched the historic Aboriginal Justice Agreement earlier this year to improve justice outcomes for Aboriginal Territorians.

"We know that if we keep doing the same things, we will keep getting the same result – and that is why we are delivering new initiatives based on what Aboriginal communities tell us will work to create better outcomes," she said.

"I congratulate

Walungurru on taking this important step forward – the community is leading the way for others in Central Australia and across the Territory."

"Together we can ensure Aboriginal Territorians who are in contact with the justice system are treated fairly, respectfully, and without discrimination. Together we can ensure the decisions are led by Territorians to make the changes needed across our communities and to reduce the high levels of reoffending experienced in the Territory."

# Yothu Yindi's deadly story chronicled in new book

*Writing in the Sand*, by Yothu Yindi's authorised biographer Matt Garrick, is the epic story of one of Australia's most original bands and how 'Treaty' – released exactly 30 years ago – gave voice to Indigenous Australia's hard-fought struggle for recognition. The following is an edited extract from Chapter 2, 'Child and Mother' about the band's land rights lineage.

BY the mid-eighties, the future Yothu Yindi frontman Mandawuy Yunupingu had his eye on a young fella in Yirrkala community: a disciplined student of traditional knowledge, with a powerful lineage and a neat tuft of jet-black hair.

He was barely out of boyhood but he could already hold a crowd; his dances at ceremony were a blaze of movement, his yidaki playing a rumble of thunder across the landscape. He was bold, strong and proud. Slightly cheeky, but good-hearted. His name was Witiyana Marika, of the Rirratjingu clan. The son of *Dadaynga* 'Roy' Marika, the clan's leader. He was Mandawuy's sister's son, the musician's nephew. In *gurrutu* (Yolngu kinship) terms, he was the yothu to his uncle's yindi.

And, as Witiyana reflects now, 'He saw me, saw that I was something.' Mandawuy's judgement was on the money. Plenty of primed-up rock-and-rollers spend years carefully cultivating their image. But for Witiyana, the charismatic co-founder of Yothu Yindi, now sixty, rockstar swagger flows as naturally out of his being as fish swim along East Arnhem's Cato River.

With slack jeans, reflector sunnies and a ready, beaming smile, wherever he goes in the NT or across the world, he gets noticed. And so it was with his uncle, who Witiyana says 'chose' him for what would become a lifelong collaboration – at least for one of them – to take Yolngu knowledge from their isolated home community in Arnhem Land out to the world.

'He saw me as I was

growing up and learning all that powerful knowledge,' Witiyana says, motioning with his hands as if to physically summon up the recollection. 'One day he would choose me, because I'm ralpa; I do as I'm told what to do from my father in a disciplined way, because I had been disciplined in my mind, my spirit, to do ritual, culture. I was still a young boy when [Mandawuy] was in *Diamond Dogs*. He was older than me. He saw that I had lots of talent, and like, "This boy has got something," you know? Powerful. Power there.'

In the years to come, Witiyana would translate that cultural power onto the stage – striped in *gapan* (ceremonial clay) and bellowing out thousands-of-years-old songs to wide-eyed white suburban kids. He would become the captivating traditional showman of Yothu Yindi, the foil to Mandawuy's guitar-carrying troubadour.

'He would just stand there, beautiful, bold in his *gapan* and holding his *bilma*, just singing,' says Darwin musician Todd Williams, who was side of stage for some of Witiyana's earliest performances to southern audiences. 'Going into these Sydney pubs, and having these manikay sung in these places, you could just see people's jaws dropping.'

Yothu Yindi's former drummer Bart Willoughby, a stalwart of South Australia's music scene, says watching Witiyana's early performances was akin to watching a star soprano belt it out in an opera house. 'When Witiyana would sing, he knew how to fill

up the whole area with his voice, like an opera person,' Willoughby says. 'But that technique came from out in the bush. He'd be sitting out in the bush, and he'd have to train himself on how to fill up the whole area, from a young age. By the time he got to America and started singing, he had the same power as an opera singer. A technique of how to fill up the whole air.'

As well as a performer, songwriter, ceremonial leader and ARIA Hall of Fame entrant, in 2020 Witiyana added to his startlingly impressive CV the title of big-screen actor, pulling off a key role in a confronting film about the NT's frontier wars, *High Ground*. On this particular day, he's sitting out the back of the Rirratjingu Aboriginal Corporation office in Yirrkala, elbows propped against a scratched wooden tabletop and looking out over the view of the Arafura Sea. He reaches for a half-opened tobacco pouch to roll a cigarette. He shouldn't really be smoking; a tapering scar across his chest from an aortic valve replacement suggests this with severity. But drag away he does.

He's thinking back to the start of things, decades in the rear-view mirror, to times before Hollywood record deals, TV interviews, endless bus tours and backstage parties. He's recalling a time when it

was just him, his uncle and their families, trying to keep living the traditional way. Hunting magpie geese and spearing stingray. Cutting yidaki from stringybark trees. Trading stories, songs and secrets. Knowledge.

'My father stood for the land and sang for the land and managed the land at that time,' he says. 'So, as I was growing up, I became a part of that life. And growing up I got to a certain age, six, seven years old, I was learning manikay. I was singin' manikay along with Dad. Eight, I was getting stronger, nine, ten years old, learning dance.'

Witiyana's father, Roy, remains imprinted in NT folklore for taking on the mining industry when his people hardly had a voice. He was a serious ceremonial leader and a showman, with



L to R: Yothu Yindi co-founder Witiyana Marika, singer Yirnga Yunupingu and Mandawuy's grandson Guruwuk Mununggurr, June 2021. (Michael Franchi)



A mural in Yirrkala honouring the work of land rights pioneer and artist Roy Marika, father of Yothu Yindi co-founder Witiyana Marika. (Blue Douglas/mural by Mike Makatron and Cam Scale)

a chiselled face like a skull, as Witiyana describes it, and a central figure in the fight to attain Aboriginal land rights in Australia.

The bulldozers had come to East Arnhem Land with little warning in the 1960s. As had the dynamite. Some Yolŋu thought they were being bombed, and while this wasn't the case, it was the beginning of a kind of war. In 1962 the Australian Government granted mining exploration rights to a multinational consortium, Pechiney, for more than 300 square kilometres of traditional Yolŋu land. It planned to extract bauxite, a type of rock, red as Uluru, that contains the raw material needed to produce aluminium, a lucrative commodity used to construct most of the world's trains, cars and cans.

The consortium was preparing to dig up dirt that for tens of thousands of years had been home and hunting grounds of the area's Aboriginal custodians. The elders were livid. Rirratjŋu

and Gumatj leaders, Roy and Mandawuy's father Mungurrawuy among them, rallied the elders from all thirteen clans of the Gove Peninsula to rail against the mining. They soon took their fight to the nation's capital.

A teenage Galarrwuy Yunupinŋu, Mandawuy's older brother, helped their father and the clan leaders draft the Yirrkala bark petitions – signed, typewritten letters plastered on bark and bordered by traditional designs, which spelled out their inherited rights to the land 'from time immemorial'. They sent two petitions to the federal parliament and the House of Representatives tabled them in August 1963. '[The petitions were created] to try to help explain to the government and the mining company the spiritual relationship we have with our land,' says Mandawuy in the 1994 Yothu Yindi documentary, *Tribal Voice*. 'This was Australia's first land rights claim.'

Politicians noted the

grievances of the Yolŋu, and created a committee to travel to Arnhem Land to hear their concerns firsthand. The committee sat down in the scrub and gave the impression they'd listened. But, by and large, the clan leaders' voices were ignored by Canberra.

By 1968, the consortium Nabalco had been granted a special mineral lease to expand its operations, including the creation of a nearby town to house its workers. On one occasion, in 1969, senior clansmen gathered at the top of a sacred hill site named Nhulun, which had been partly bulldozed by the mining firm. Up there, gara (spears) in hand to demand an end to the desecration, they performed a special ceremony known as the 'Land Rights Galtha Burŋ gul', calling for respect. A photograph of the Yolŋu clutching their gara on the hillside hit newspapers as far south as Sydney's *Daily Telegraph*. In one concession to the elders,

the company agreed to keep the traditional name of Nhulunbuy for the township, in preference to its chosen name of Gove, after a World War II pilot.

But the mining operations still went forward at full tilt and, aghast, Roy and the Traditional Owners took their fight a step further. With prompting from supporters, they entered the balanda legal arena and waged a high-profile Supreme Court battle (*Milirrpum v Nabalco and the Commonwealth of Australia*) which, heartbreakingly, they lost in 1971. Justice Blackburn ruled that under Australian law, the Yolŋu had no claim to ownership of the land.

Witiyana was then just ten years old, but remembers clearly his father's and the elders' sorrow. 'They were devastated. We felt like we were nobody, like terra nullius, like they say. But we didn't let it beat us. We are survivors. It doesn't matter about that white man's case not recognising us, it doesn't matter. They only lived by

their law and their society – but they can't sing the land. [The clan leaders] didn't forget that ruling. But they always knew who they were.'

In the court case's aftermath, the elders finally had some success – albeit a far cry from their original goal. Although the mine forged ahead, their legal tussle had laid the groundwork for the Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act to be written into law in 1976. It was a watershed moment, an opening for other Aboriginal clan nations around Australia to follow suit and demand recognition – and royalties – of and for use of their traditional lands. The younger generation, including the future members of Yothu Yindi, took notice.

\*Name of deceased used with permission from family. *Writing in the Sand*, by Matt Garrick ABC Books - \$45 hard cover

# DEADLY KIDS

## FUN FACT

KANGAROOS ARE GOOD SWIMMERS! THEY USE THEIR TAIL, POWERFUL LEGS AND PAWS!

YOLNGU: djätja  
JAWOYN: kuppu  
NGARINYMAN: garriwama

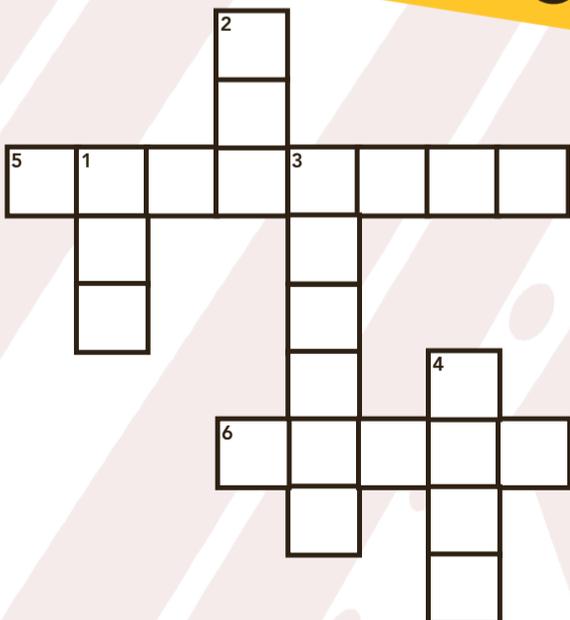
YOLNGU: bäpi  
JAWOYN: lungarrk  
NGARINYMAN: gulyjany

COLOUR US IN!

YOLNGU: bäru  
JAWOYN: kinga  
NGARINYMAN: jawinyin

WHAT TYPE OF MUSIC DO CROCODILES LISTEN TO?  
**CROC & ROLL!**

WHAT DO YOU CALL A SNAKE THAT BAKES?  
**A PIE-THON!**



## CROSSWORD

### DOWN

1. NIGHTIME BIRD (3)
2. SOMETHING YOU WEAR ON YOUR HEAD (3)
3. A LONG, YELLOW FRUIT (6) THESE LIVE IN THE OCEAN,
4. RIVERS AND HOMES (4)

### ACROSS

5. GAME PLAYED WITH GOALS, POINTS AND A RED BALL (8)
6. ANIMAL WITH A SHELL FOUND IN YOUR GARDEN (5)

### ANSWERS

1. Owl 2. Hat 3. Banana 4. Fish 5. Football 6. Snail

# Indigenous business network strengthened at forum

The Northern Territory Indigenous Business Network (NTIBN) delivered the 10th Aboriginal Economic Development Forum (AEDF10) on Arrernte Country, in October.

THE turnout of a record crowd, despite the current pandemic conditions, demonstrated the collective excitement about Aboriginal Leadership in Economic Development in the north.

The volume of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander presenters at the forum was 90 per cent of the program, with 80 per cent of those being Indigenous Territorians. Over 320 delegates from across the Territory and the nation attended the forum.

There were a number of standout sessions that tackled the tough and the complex issues, such as the 'Definition of Aboriginal Business: Black Cladding or Authentic Aboriginal Leadership and Game

Changers' and 'Unlocking the Aboriginal Estate'.

Bringing these issues to light in this forum allowed discussion, understanding, education and a call to action.

The launch of the NTIBN Aboriginal Export Strategy, combined with the keynote Potential for a \$100 billion Indigenous Economy by Darren Godwell and the interactive panel session with the Native American Business Sector about global trade, highlighted the determination of our Aboriginal-led economy to establish Indigenous to Indigenous opportunities.

**To find out more visit [ntibn.com.au](http://ntibn.com.au)**



Marion Scrymgour, Chair of Tiwi Partners, Andrew Laming, Federal MP for Bowman, Shaun Drabsch, CEO of NT Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade and Jason Jones, Chair of Northern Territory Indigenous Business Network discuss 'what is the definition of an Aboriginal business?'



Welcome to Country at the opening of the 10th Aboriginal Economic Development Forum in Alice Springs.

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FIRST  
YOUTH  
COUNCIL

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BEING TAKEN  
NOW

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PER REGION  
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1x FEMALE

MEETINGS  
START  
2022

1 WEEK  
TRAINING IN  
DARWIN

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CASUAL  
EMPLOYEES

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- Contacting Leigh Crossman at the NLC on [crossl@nlc.org.au](mailto:crossl@nlc.org.au) and **0428 556 775**
- Or call NLC reception on 1800 645 299

# A rising force: Australia's longest running Aboriginal newspaper



Rosetta Wayatja and Jennifer Yantarrnga at a Learning on Country meeting.



Susie and Deborah Jones catch up with the latest bush news.



Land Rights News is best enjoyed with a good cup of water, as enjoyed here by Brock Burgher.

**FOR decades Land Rights News has been sharing stories from Aboriginal lands from across the Northern Territory.**

Published quarterly, Land Rights News is a print and digital newspaper that focuses on news stories about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters.

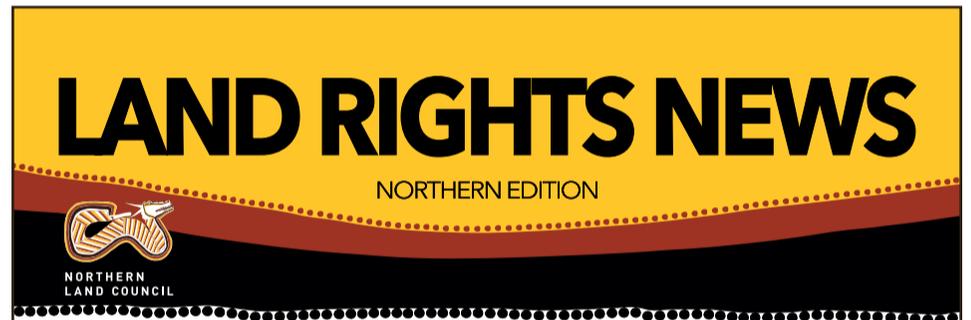
The newspaper also serves to update constituents on the latest actions of the Northern Land Council.

Land Rights News is the only publication distributed widely to towns, remote communities and homelands in the Top End of the NT.

The newspaper is also posted out to several hundred subscribers that range from community members and people with a general interest in Aboriginal affairs to politicians and academics.

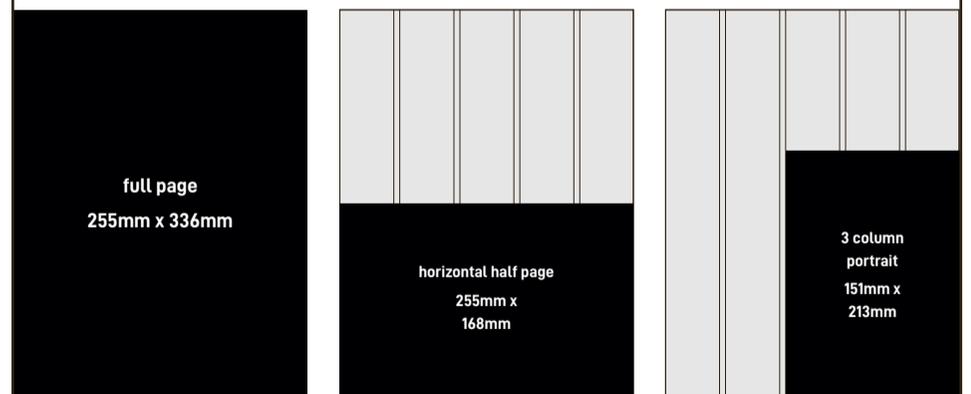
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**CALL (08) 8920 5209 or EMAIL [media@nlc.org.au](mailto:media@nlc.org.au) for deadlines**

- ✓ The only publication distributed widely to town camps, towns, and remote communities in the Northern Territory.
- ✓ Read by Aboriginal people in the bush and everybody interested in Aboriginal affairs.

**AUSTRALIA'S OLDEST ABORIGINAL NEWSPAPER. SINCE 1973**

# Kahlin Compound: Recognising and honouring a Site of Significance

By Charlie King

IT'S been a long road as we approach the 110th anniversary marking the establishment of the Kahlin Compound in Darwin. In June this year, descendants of Kahlin Compound residents unveiled a sign as a first step to commemorate happenings at the site from 1913 to 1939.

The history of Kahlin is a deeply troubling one: a place where Aboriginal people were effectively jailed every night for the simple reason they were Aboriginal. Taken from their homes and families over the best part of 35 years, it was specifically designed to "solve" the "half-caste problem". It was a source of free workers during daylight hours - as domestic staff and labourers

- then subject to night curfews for its residents.

Over the decades, it has been a history unknown to the general public, but one which lives in the memories of so many Aboriginal families. The contribution these "Kahlin families" have made over the last century has often been forgotten—or ignored.

The NT Government has agreed to recognise the history of the Kahlin Compound on the site. It's been a long time coming.

Planning with the descendants has begun and agreement has been reached that future work must: acknowledge the history of the wrongdoings that occurred at the site; recognise the significant

contributions Aboriginal people from the Kahlin Compound and their descendants have made to the NT, and; be a culturally appropriate place to meet, commemorate and remember.

You can become involved and have your say. An Expression of Interest is now open to descendants of Kahlin Compound residents to have their say on the project and assist in decision making to ensure that what is built on the site meets the needs of the descendants.

If you are a descendant and would like to be involved, please email and tell us the names of your relative or relatives who were in Kahlin via [friendsofkahlin@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofkahlin@gmail.com).



Di Koser and Barbara Raymond.



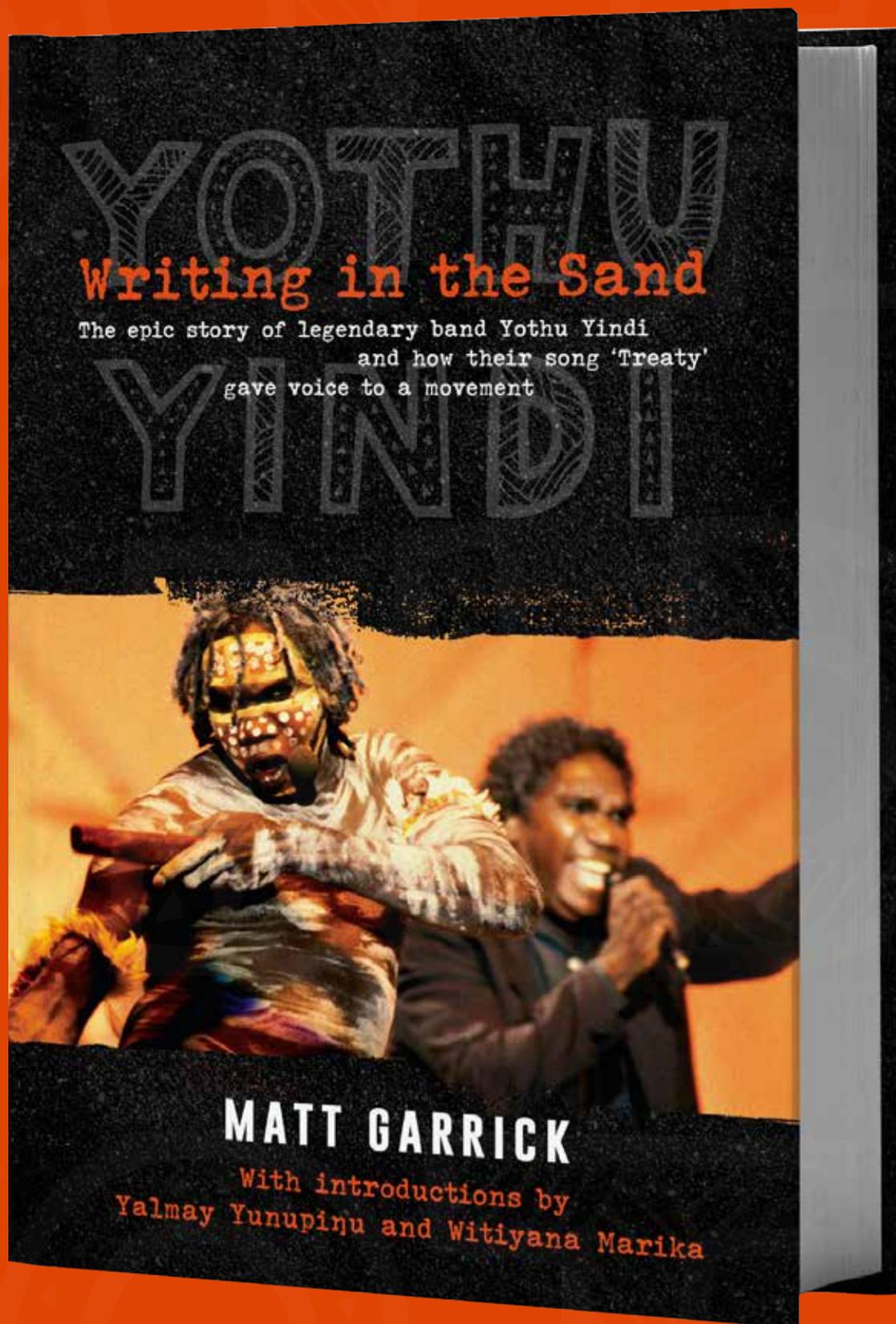
Unveiling the Kahlin Compound sign at Darwin's brand new Myilly Point playground.



Sam Wells, Bernie Shields and Dottie Daby.



Children at Kahlin, 1933. This year marks the 110th anniversary since the establishment of the Kahlin compound.



A song that gave voice to a  
movement, and the band behind  
it who rocked the  
world