



NORTHERN  
LAND COUNCIL

Northern Edition

# LAND RIGHTS NEWS

*Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life*

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## COVID-19: VOICES FROM OUR MOB



*Australia's oldest Aboriginal newspaper. Since 1973.*

## EDITORIAL

Land Rights News Northern Edition is published by Samuel Bush-Blanasi for the Northern Land Council.

## Contributions

Land Rights News welcomes stories and photos about Aboriginal people and organisations.

## Editors

Leah McLennan

Robert Gosford

## Contact

media@nlc.org.au

## Cover photos

Glenn Campbell

## Back cover

Chips Mackinoltz

## Layout

jenda27

## NLC CONTACT DETAILS

## Northern Land Council

45 Mitchell St  
Darwin NT 0820

08 8920 5100

www.nlc.org.au

Facebook

@northernlandcouncil

Twitter

@NLC\_74

Instagram

@northernlandcouncil

YouTube

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# We are (still) all in this together



NLC CEO Marion Scrymgour

## A message from the NLC Chairman Samuel Bush-Blanasi and CEO Marion Scrymgour

FOR us the past few months have been pretty tough. And we know it has been even tougher for our mob out bush.

While it is good to know that we can all move around inside the NT and travel to see family we've been kept away from for months and go to town for long overdue shopping for our families, now is not the time to get slack about the coronavirus and the disease that it causes, COVID-19.

The big issue overshadowing Reconciliation Week for 2020 was the international focus on deaths in custody, radiating out from Minneapolis to countries outside the USA, including Australia.

We should all remember that the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC) were extremely broad-ranging and were not restricted to police and prisons but were meant to try and address the underlying causes of the high rate of Indigenous arrest and incarceration, including dispossession of land.

For many years after the RCIADIC report was handed down in 1991, State and Territory governments used to routinely assess all kinds of policies and actions against the RCIADIC recommendations checklist.

The recent death in police custody of a young Aboriginal man in Yuendumu highlighted that there is too much unfinished business in this space for the Territory, but the focus should not be just on how police interact with Aboriginal people and communities.

In the Territory we need to take into account the valuable (although limited) autonomy which many Aboriginal Territorians enjoy due to the Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act ('ALRA').

The enactment of ALRA, as part of what was in the late seventies a push for a national system of land rights was the high point in a process which has for the most part been underwhelming in terms of what it has delivered for Aboriginal people in other parts of the country.

At the heart of ALRA is the capacity to grant or deny entry onto Aboriginal land. The significance of this property right underpins the High Court's Blue Mud Bay decision, and the method of implementing that property right is via the permit system (established under a piece of NT legislation – the Aboriginal Land Act ('ALA')).

Only Aboriginal people with traditional interests in

ALRA land do not require ALA permits. The permit system provides a clear and documented mechanism for checking authorisation to be on land, but at the end of the day is essentially a formalisation of rights that private landowners everywhere have to exclude trespassers.

When it became clear that Australia was facing a coronavirus pandemic, and that the NT was at risk along with everyone else, the NLC made a decision to stop issuing non-essential permits. This was before the internal travel restrictions in the NT commenced.

When the internal travel restrictions kicked in, the NLC (and the other three land councils) worked closely with the NT government and the police to make sure that the health protections provided for under the Commonwealth Health Minister's Biosecurity Determination were effective. This included assessing applications for exemptions.

NLC staff worked tirelessly - many from home, many from their offices out bush - to help more than 800 Aboriginal remote residents travel to and from their communities and outstations during the lockdown to sort out urgent family or medical business.

Those NLC staff also issued more than 3,000 emergency worker ALA permits to make sure that doctors, nurses, health workers, police officers, Council workers and other essential service providers could keep our remote communities running and our communities safe from COVID-19.

This was particularly important in the early weeks of the Biosecurity restrictions, when the NT government had not yet developed its own essential worker form for processing access applications.

## 'Remember, stay on country, care for family.'

At that time it fell to the Land Councils to ensure that our internal documentation ticked both the ALA permit and Biosecurity screening 'boxes'. It was the Land Councils who were vetting and facilitating essential travel and protecting communities from COVID-19 infection.

The NLC's Regional Development teams based in Nhulunbuy, Tennant Creek, Katherine, Timber Creek, Borroloola, Jabiru and Ngukurr and at our main office in Darwin have processed more than 3,000 Remote Emergency Worker permits for essential workers to travel out bush and between Biosecurity Act declaration areas to provide community safety, medical and essential services work to keep our communities and outstations operating.

We want to thank Chief Minister Michael Gunner for listening to and working with all of the land councils and to also thank staff in his office - deputy CEO Andy Cowan, Bridgette Bellenger and Bo Carne in particular - that did fantastic work with us and our NLC staff and members. We also thank Dr Christine Connors and her staff at the Top End Health Service.

The NT Police, with assistance from reinforcements from the AFP, manned checkpoints throughout the Territory and ensured compliance with both the Biosecurity Determination and the ALA permit system.

Finally, we want to thank you, our mob, especially the traditional owners and custodians of Aboriginal land.

We were and always will all be in this together and for some time yet. And remember, stay on country, care for family.

# COVID-19 and quotes from the bush: 'We're waiting it out in paradise'



## Samuel Bush-Blanasi, NLC Chairman, told NLC Full Council Members on 3 April:

"This coronavirus is very dangerous. We've got to listen and follow the rules. Stay put in your community to protect yourself and family from the virus. Don't travel out of your community.

"So you mob, keep a distance of a few steps away from other people. No hugging or handshakes. And no sharing drinks or smokes. Stay on country, care for family."

## Lisa Mumbin, NLC Full Council Member, told NLC TV on 27 April:

"Being home, being on country, living on our traditional food makes us safe and healthy always, so I'd like to pass on my message to be safe. We are doing well but for the safe side family, we need to look after our health."

Jawoyn leader Ms Mumbin has been working for decades advocating for Indigenous Territorians. She was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) on 8 June 2020.



## Witiyana Marika, NLC Full Council Member, told *The Guardian* on 8 May:

"We are all just waiting, waiting. The homelands are maybe two or three hours' drive away. It's very, very nice. And clean. And beautiful. We are just waiting, just living in paradise. We are away from distraction. People are fishing, catching mud crabs, oysters, stingray, mangrove worms - yummy! It's their season now. We don't need Woolies any more. Being there brings peace and power. We can feel freedom there, peace and power. Whenever you feel tired from the day to day, that's where the power is to regenerate your spirituality. We might not come back to Yirrkala."

## Esther Bulumbara, Beswick Traditional Owner, told *The Conversation* on 24 April:

"Suddenly everything stopped. It was a great shock to the NT. We thought only that overseas mob would get that. But police said everything had to close. Government mob, shire.

"It was lucky it was quick. If they didn't know about it, it would have gone through the NT."

Pictured here are Crystal Bulumbara, Esther Bulumbara, Claire Smith and Nell Brown at Barunga. The women were interviewed for an article in *The Conversation* called Friday essay: voices from the bush - how lockdown affects remote Indigenous communities different. Search for it online.



## Aboriginal Territorians are 'significantly represented' in disease outbreaks, but not COVID-19

While residents of the NT are 'extremely lucky' to have avoided community spread of the virus, the Territory's challenge now is to avoid becoming complacent, say NT health experts.

IN the Northern Territory, Aboriginal people are often over-represented in the health system — but it's a different story for COVID-19, with official data indicating there have been no Aboriginal coronavirus patients in the NT to date.

NT Chief Health Officer Hugh Heggie said Aboriginal Territorians were usually "significantly represented" in most disease outbreaks.

"Aboriginal people have a high risk of chronic disease and make up a high proportion of patients in the health system in the NT," he told ABC News.

"It is not unreasonable to assume these patients are significantly represented in statistical evidence in most disease outbreaks."

Health groups have warned those rates of disease make COVID-19 a higher risk for Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander people, who make up 30 per cent of the NT's population.

Dr Heggie explained strict border controls, restriction of non-essential movement into remote communities, mandatory quarantine and physical-distancing requirements had been "highly effective" so far in slowing the spread of COVID-19 in the NT.

But, "most significantly", Dr Heggie said there had been no cases of community transmission of COVID-19 in the NT.

Danila Dilba Health Service chief executive officer Olga Havnen said the Territory's challenge now was to avoid becoming complacent and to remain ready for any future COVID-19 cases.

"We consider that the NT and our community are extremely lucky to

have avoided widespread community transmission and are enormously relieved and grateful," she told ABC News.

"The great concern at this point is whether there is a likelihood of a second wave of infection and whether this is a matter of 'when, not if'. That is a major fear."

Commonwealth Biosecurity Act restrictions applying to the Territory's remote communities were lifted on 5 June. Strict social distancing rules and hygiene protocols remain in place.

The NLC and Central

**'The great concern at this point is whether there is a likelihood of a second wave of infection and whether this is a matter of 'when, not if'. That is a major fear.'**

Land Council backed the NT Government's proposal to lift coronavirus travel restrictions for remote communities on June 5, instead of June 18 as originally scheduled.

NLC CEO Marion Scrymgour said in mid-May she wanted the Biosecurity Act to be lifted on June 5, a date that coincided



The ADF and police check cars at NT crossing points. Picture: Defence Media

with stage 3 of COVID-19 restrictions easing in the NT.

"Our mob living in remote

Aboriginal people living on homelands and outstations in comparison to non-Aboriginal people.

"Despite the fact that the intent of the biosecurity measures was to protect Aboriginal people — and this was made clear by both the Prime Minister and the NT Chief Minister from the start — there were elements of the process that were unfair to some Aboriginal people, particularly those living on Community Living Areas — those small areas of land excised for the benefit of Aboriginal people from very large pastoral stations," she said.

communities want to come into major centres to get food, other essential items and medical treatment they cannot get out bush. We want to move about with our kids and family members without having to quarantine for 14 days," she said.

Ms Scrymgour said the act "adversely affected" the movement of

## US Navajo Nation loses elders and tradition to COVID-19



The Navajo Nation has been hit hard by coronavirus. Picture: National Guard

IN Navajo culture to speak of death is taboo. But since the tribe's coronavirus infection rate has become the highest in the United States, they can't help but talk about it.

"It's killing every day,"

medicine man Ty Davis, who knows at least five traditional practitioners who have died from COVID-19, told US media organisation NPR.

"It put me into shock," he

says. "How do we retrieve that knowledge that these elders once knew now that they have died with those ceremonies?"

The Navajo Nation is facing a unique set of challenges amid the coronavirus outbreak. The nation, which straddles the borders of Arizona, Utah and New Mexico, is home to about 175,000 people - and yet it has more cases of COVID-19 than eight states, according to *The New York Times* data.

Navajo Nation's first positive case was reported on March 17, and as of May 30, there have been 5,145 cases with 231 deaths.

The area has just 12

health care facilities across 70,000 square kilometres and many Navajo citizens suffer chronic health issues like diabetes and heart disease, according to the

**'You're telling people 'Wash your hands for 20 seconds multiple times a day' and they don't have running water.'**

outlet, which puts those who contract coronavirus at a higher risk of severe illness, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has said.

Considering many residents have underlying health conditions and lack basic necessities such as running water, Dr Loretta

Christensen, Chief Medical Officer of Navajo Area Indian Health Service, says they're a particularly "vulnerable nation" unable to heed basic warnings.

"You're telling people 'Wash your hands for 20 seconds and they don't have running water,'" said Dr Christensen. "Or you're saying 'Go buy groceries for two and shelter in place and don't come out,' but people can't afford groceries for two weeks. So it's just a setup for frustration and concern."

## 'COVID-19 is a reminder of how vulnerable we are': Patricia Turner

Now more than ever we need a new national agreement in place to address the needs of Indigenous people, writes Patricia Turner.



## Coalition of Peaks

ONLY three months ago, the Prime Minister stood up in Parliament to report that the gap in mortality rates between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous Australians increased last year. Now, COVID-19 is an immediate reminder of just how vulnerable we are.

The coronavirus is a pathogen, but it is also a diagnostic test being run on Australia — and the results are not good. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are at significant greater risk of being profoundly impacted.

The risk presented by COVID-19 reflects the structural inequality that already exists in Australia, the direct result of years of neglect, disinvestment and failed policies.

Thankfully, those three months ago in Parliament, the Prime Minister also talked about a circuit-breaker that he had championed and had been put in place. A formal

Partnership Agreement came into effect in March 2019 between Australian Governments and a coalition of nearly fifty Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled peaks (Coalition of Peaks). The Partnership Agreement sets out shared decision making on closing the gap for the first time between representatives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and Australian governments.

Through the formal partnership, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) is working with the Coalition of Peaks on a new National Agreement on Closing the Gap. The National Agreement will identify shared priorities and actions built around four priority reforms to accelerate improvements to the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Once in place, the National Agreement will be a platform to address the structural inequalities

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people face arising from years of unmet need. It will establish formal partnerships between governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives across the country; strengthen our community controlled organisations to deliver the services we need; make sure governments are changing the way they work with us; and ensure shared access to data and information so that our communities can make informed decisions about our lives.

This pandemic has shown just how important those reforms are. Where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations have strong existing partnerships with governments, we have been able to respond quickly to the threats of COVID-19.

The National Aboriginal Community Controlled

Health Organisation and community-controlled health organisations have a strong formal relationship with governments; our sector is well-established; we know our people and people feel safe to access our services. Together, we have been able to respond quickly and decisively to protect our people.

Likewise, the relationships between governments and Aboriginal Peaks Organisations in the NT and the Aboriginal

systemically work with us to re-build our organisations and communities and address the inequities our people face is stark.

This policy vacuum is why the Coalition of Peaks was formed and why we have been continuing our work, in partnership with Australian governments, to chart a meaningful way forward. The new National Agreement will be crucial to the post-crisis reconstruction. There will be long term social, economic, health and cultural costs

**'Our organisations are best placed to respond to this crisis and to drive progress towards closing of the gap. Yet, these are the same organisations that have borne the brunt of repeated funding cuts...'**

Advisory Council of WA has meant informed responses to the needs of our remote communities impacted by the swift travel restrictions. The NT Coalition of Aboriginal Peaks has supported our young people stay engaged in education; and the Victorian Aboriginal Executive Council is making sure our kids can continue to access early childhood services.

Our organisations are best placed to respond to this crisis and to drive progress towards closing of the gap. Yet, these are the same organisations that have borne the brunt of repeated funding cuts and a roller coaster of policy and administration changes.

In this time of crisis, the absence of a national policy platform for governments to

of the pandemic — all areas fundamental to closing the gap.

Governments must work in full partnership with the Coalition of Peaks to ensure that, as we emerge from this crisis, policies take account of the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, strengthen our community controlled organisations and that a backwards step is not taken on closing the gap.

This pandemic should galvanise our collective efforts and sharpen our focus to the task of closing the gap. Resolution from all governments for a new National Agreement on Closing the gap is needed now more than ever.



Patricia Turner is the Lead Convenor of the Coalition of Peaks.

# NLC works with Coles to provide essential items to remote community members

COLES teamed up with the Northern Land Council and other Aboriginal corporations and local charities in April to deliver and donate food and grocery essentials to remote Indigenous community members impacted by the COVID-19 crisis across the Territory.

Coles NT team members prepared the care packages, which included fresh and tinned produce, pasta, rice, biscuits and breakfast cereals. Spring water plus toilet paper, infant nappies and sanitary items were also delivered.

The deliveries were

provided to residents across Darwin, Alice Springs and to many remote communities such as Santa Teresa, Beswick and Elliott.

**'This action by Coles is exactly the right kind of corporate support for our remote communities and the NLC applauds Coles and its staff for this initiative.' - Marion Scrymgour**

In the NLC region, 240 boxes – seven pallets – were delivered to Beswick (Wugularr) and surrounding communities and a further 480 boxes – 14 pallets – were

delivered to Elliott. NLC CEO Marion Scrymgour said the organisation was proud to work with Coles to bring

these essential items to communities at Beswick (Wugularr) and Elliott.

"Making sure residents of Aboriginal communities stay on country and don't have to

leave biosecurity areas to shop in regional centres has been a priority for the NLC," Ms Scrymgour said.

"This action by Coles is exactly the right kind of corporate support for our remote communities and the NLC applauds Coles and its staff for this initiative."

Coles Regional Manager Daniel Clegg said his team was passionate about supporting remote Indigenous communities who were severely impacted by COVID-19.

"The current situation in remote parts of the NT is critical and we wanted

to do everything we could to provide some relief and support to those lacking essential supplies.

Unfortunately, we know that many in the communities have been unable to leave their homes to access essential food and groceries at these times," Mr Clegg said.

Coles is recognised as the largest corporate sector employer of Indigenous Australians, with a total Indigenous workforce of 4,800.



NLC's Ashleigh Yanner and Nathalia Wauchope. Picture: Charlie Bliss



NLC staff help out with boxes.



Daniel Clegg, Deanna Kennedy, Samuel Bush-Blanas, Brodie Little.



Coles Casuarina store manager Brodie Little.



Coles' Brodie Little, NLC CEO Marion Scrymgour and Coles Regional Manager Daniel Clegg. Picture: Charlie Bliss



Kelly Raymond, Kesley Nish, Anthony Nish and baby Carlina Cooper.



Packing up the Coles truck.



Peter Farrell Jr with a box of groceries.



Tony Sandy, Marrazita Bill and Taylan Liddle.

# Know your rights:

## Accessing pastoral leases and sacred sites in the NT



The law protects your rights to access your country in many ways. Picture: Bullo River Station, Tourism NT

BY CATH MCLEISH  
NLC SENIOR LAWYER

THIS time of year, you might think about getting back onto country and visiting your sites. What if your country is part of a pastoral station? Well, there's good news: the law protects your rights to access your country in many ways.

### The NT Pastoral Land Act

All pastoral stations ('pastoral leases') in the NT are governed by the Pastoral Land Act. Section 38 says that Aboriginal people have rights to access the station, to go anywhere that Aboriginal law allows.

This means that you can access any area where you are a traditional owner, jungayi / kulyungkulyungbi, or have other connections or permission from the right people under Aboriginal law.

The Act says you can do things including accessing natural water sources, hunting for food or ceremony and taking plants for food or ceremony. You're free to camp, swim and conduct ceremony.

The restrictions are that you leave a buffer of 2km to the homestead (unless the pastoralist agrees) and that you don't interfere with the cattle - so leave gates

as you find them, keep clear of mustering and cooperate with reasonable requests from the pastoralist.

Under s 38(5) and (6) of the Act, interfering with the 'full and free exercise' of your rights (such as telling you to change your plans, or locking you out, for example) is a criminal offence.

### Native Title

Do you have a Native Title claim or determination over your country on a pastoral station? Native Title law says that Aboriginal rights to country and pastoral leases 'co-exist', meaning both sides share the country.

'Native title holders' are legally entitled to enter the station, including to hunt native animals, look after sites, camp, have cooking fires and take plants, water and ochre.

Legally, you are free to enjoy the country in all the ways Aboriginal law allows.

Again, to co-exist with the pastoralist, make sure your visit doesn't interfere with the cattle and pastoral work. If you have questions, you can speak with NLC's native title team.

### The NT Sacred Sites Act

The Sacred Sites Act protects Sacred Sites and

Sacred Objects from damage and interference.

It is a criminal offence for someone to interfere with Sacred Sites or Sacred Objects, no matter who owns or leases the land. Interference can be by the person entering a Site, working at or using a Site, or damaging the Site or Sacred Object. Someone who breaks this law is at risk of a maximum penalty of 2 years' jail. If you want a Pastoralist to help you to protect a Site, you might discuss this with them first. It is also a good idea to put your request in writing. The NLC or AAPA can help with this.

### Top Tips for visiting country on a pastoral station:

📞 Call the station before you go, to let them know you're coming and check that gates won't be locked. This can help to build a good relationship. You can discuss any changes to the country and how to care for it, and if you have car trouble, someone will know you're there!

📖 If they don't know about your rights, tell them that you will bring this NLC article to explain the law, or they can call the NLC.



Know your rights. Picture: Tourism Australia/Nicholas Kavo

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or email us at  
AnthropologyRoyaltyDistribution@nlc.org.au

# New NLC permit system to be a win-win for traditional owners and permit applicants



Signs warn visitors that they need a valid permit.

BY MATT GREEN  
NLC  
PERMIT REFORM MANAGER

THE NLC is launching a new online permit system that will allow the NLC to manage permits to enter and remain on Aboriginal land more efficiently, while ensuring the privacy of communities, homelands and sensitive areas.

Since the late 1970s, when the Aboriginal Land Rights Act (NT) came in to force, any non-Aboriginal person accessing Aboriginal land for work or recreational purposes has had to possess a valid permit. The NLC administers the permit system for most of the Aboriginal land in the Top End of the NT, a process that involves checking applications, setting conditions and monitoring compliance.

The new permit system

will provide improved visibility for the NLC, traditional owners, rangers and police about who is coming onto Aboriginal land and waters, and more comprehensive rules about what visitors can do when they visit.

The new system also will allow the NLC to gather important information, such as trends in visitor numbers and compliance hotspots. This information will give traditional owners greater control in managing visitor numbers and their activities.

For permit applicants, the improved system will provide a clearer and more streamlined experience and in the future it will provide more information about directions, distances and points of interest, be they historic, geographic or cultural.

"By moving permits from paper form to a digital

process and streamlining access arrangements for permits, applicants will find the process faster and be properly informed about their obligations while on Aboriginal land," said NLC CEO Marion Scrymgour.

"At the same time, the permit reform undertaken by the NLC will allow traditional owners to have a greater say at the local level about setting conditions for access and activities and granting and revoking permits for their land and seas."

The permit reform team will be continuing the process of engaging with traditional owners to set the terms and conditions that will be applied to visitors accessing their country.

The global coronavirus pandemic quickly brought into focus the importance of the NLC's permit system as a means to know and control who is on Aboriginal land in the NLC's region.

"The coronavirus pandemic shone a spotlight on the need for traditional owners to know exactly who is accessing Aboriginal land, and for what purpose," said Ms Scrymgour.

"For the foreseeable future, the NLC will continue to impose specific COVID-19 permit requirements on anyone who applies for a permit to access Aboriginal

land in the NLC region. "We want to ensure our mob is kept safe from the risk of contracting coronavirus."

Tougher restrictions on access to remote communities took effect on 27 March when the Commonwealth Government's Biosecurity Declaration was introduced under powers in the Biosecurity Act. Under the

non-essential travel to remote communities to ensure the safety and protection of Aboriginal people in their communities who were very concerned about the spread of COVID-19.

Restrictions under the Biosecurity Act were lifted on 5 June. Despite this, the NLC continues to require anyone who needs or wishes to access Aboriginal land in

## 'The global coronavirus pandemic quickly brought into focus the importance of the NLC's permit system as a means to know and control who is on Aboriginal land.'

restrictions, anyone other than essential service workers wanting to enter a remote community had to self-isolate for 14 days prior, including residents wanting to return home.

On March 14 the NLC's Executive Council had already stopped

the NLC area to complete a COVID-19 declaration. For the foreseeable future, permits will be issued with specific conditions about hygiene, separation and what visitors should do if they have symptoms. For any questions: permit.project@nlc.org.au



A permit is required to access Aboriginal land in the NT.

# Inquiry into food pricing in remote communities

The Federal Parliament has launched an inquiry into food prices in remote NT communities.

"THERE have been significant reports of very high food and grocery prices in remote communities and issues around the secure supply of fresh food," said the Chair of the Indigenous Affairs Committee Julian Leeser MP.

"The inquiry will look at the situation in remote Indigenous communities,

and the effect of supply chains and local businesses on the cost of food. The inquiry will also look at the role of regulators in dealing with the situation."

"I strongly encourage Indigenous people and people in the food industry to make a submission."

The Committee will

consult with communities, community stores and supply chain businesses and Government agencies to determine if Indigenous communities have access to reasonably priced healthy food.

For more information visit [www.aph.gov.au/IndigenousAffairs](http://www.aph.gov.au/IndigenousAffairs).



Products in remote community shops can cost more than double the price of city supermarkets. Picture: Flickr

# University of Sydney seeks help with NT photos

The University of Sydney is seeking assistance in identifying the content of about 1200 images from NT.

THE photos are of individuals, landscapes and ceremonies from places such as Areyonga, Bagot, Beswick, Delissaville, Elsey, Goulburn Island, Haasts Bluff, Hermannsburg, Mainoru, Maranboy, Roper River, Tandandjal, Warrabri, Wave Hill and Yirrkala.

Many of the images have only their general location identified, for example, 'Arnhem Land' or 'NT'. Most of the images of people do not identify the individuals photographed.

The University of Sydney Archives intends to provide to the relevant communities a descriptive list and copies of any images claimed by them.

The photographs are within the personal archives

of the anthropologist, Professor Adolphus Peter (AP) Elkin. Elkin's field notes and research papers are included in the University's Anthropological Field research and Teaching Records 1926 - 1956, which are listed on the UNESCO Australian Memory of the World Register.

Other photographs within Elkin's papers, which have been described, are from the Kimberley and South Australia. There are also photographs from Queensland, NSW and certain Pacific Islands.

For more information please contact the University of Sydney Archives via the email: [university.archives@sydney.edu.au](mailto:university.archives@sydney.edu.au)



A group of Aboriginal and European women, men and children gathered outside a building, possibly a school. NT. University of Sydney Archives.



A group of women, men and children and one European man stand around a man wearing a breastplate / king plate / gorget. Elsey, NT. University of Sydney Archives



A group of men standing in a row. Tandandjal, NT. A version of this image featuring the same men is published in NWG Macintosh's March 1952 Oceania article as Plate I (A) with the caption, "Twenty natives at Tandandjal, of whom 15 are full Djauan; the remainder are Djauan-Ngalpun and Djauan-Yangman". University of Sydney Archives

# 'We live on our land, we love it, we are nothing without it': Galarrwuy Yunupingu's historic speech

On 10 November 1977, former Chairman of the Northern Land Council, [Galarrwuy Yunupingu](#), presented this speech to the National Press Club Luncheon in Canberra. The speech is historic. It possibly marks the first time that an Aboriginal Australian was accepted into a European Australian meeting place, where journalists listen to political and international leaders.

## Dh ruk Pressqu Canberra.

*Nh mirri, Dhuggarrayu 1963 yu, Land Right gurru nherrara Yirrkala, w ngayura Arnhem Land. Nunhi garrakala B paya, ga yolgu yolguyu garrakala Yirrkalayura, gan'thurruna Government'ha Canberra lili w ngawu. W nga gunhi ganapurrungu yolguwu.*

*Nunhi ganapurru ganthuruna, gunhiyi ganthurra ganapurrungu Governmenthu bukudupthurrana, ga biguru, dhuggarrayu 1971 thu, ganapurru ganthurruna Judge Blackburn gala Court gura. Ga gunhiliyu Judge Blackburnthu yaka gurrapara ganapurrungu w nga. Nunhi ganapurru ganthurruna w ngawu, yakawu yatjgunharawu, ga midigumarawu ganapurr- galawu w ngawu Nabalcowala.*



I spoke this in Gumaitj, in Australian, in one of the languages of Australia. I spoke it like this for my own people, the Gumaitj people and other people in Australia who will be listening today. Now let me speak it again in the English language, which is only my second language and it is difficult for us. Land Rights were born in 1963 at Yirrkala in Arnhem Land, where I too was born – and my father, Mungarrwuy, and other clan leaders lodged a claim on behalf of the Gumaitj people and our mother clan, the Rirratjingu people, whose leader was Milirrpum. It was a petition, written on bark, to the Parliament in Canberra.

It was rejected at that time, and so in 1971 was our appeal in court before Justice Blackburn, when we claimed the minerals under our land, as well as our land, and tried to stop the mining and spoiling of our land by Nabalco. So that was in English for our European Australian brothers and sisters who have given us so much of our land at last.

The Parliament's Aboriginal Land Rights Act of

1976 gave us more land in the NT than the whole State of Victoria. It was a big advance in our Government's thinking. But now, as Chairman of the NLC, I must tell you that the Government has failed to do what the Parliament told it to do almost 12 months ago. In law, we still have no land. We have no title to any land. People we don't like come onto our land and stay on our land, and we cannot get them off.

How would you feel if your home was invaded by strangers and you couldn't get rid of them?

We are bitterly disappointed by the Government's laziness and inefficiency. More than three years ago Judge Woodward said that Aboriginal land should be owned and looked after by Land Trusts. He said he accepted our Council's advice.

More than six months ago Judge Fox said the Land Rights Act should be amended to allow Aborigines registered title to their land, even though its boundaries were not surveyed. But the Parliament has risen and the Act has not been

amended. More than six months ago we wrote to the Minister about it.

Four months ago in Darwin the Minister said he would act within two months.

He still hasn't acted. The land is still not ours. If the Government will not act, the NLC demands money from the Government to hire surveyors to get on with the job.

For example, I took two

**'How would you feel if your home was invaded by strangers and you couldn't get rid of them?'**

land owners of the Ranger country where uranium is being mined, or will be mined, the two brothers, Toby Majandi and Jimmy Gangali, across to Gove where bauxite is being mined already, to show them what mining is all about, because they were told that mining will take place in their country, which involved uranium. I took them across to Gove and here when they actually saw the damage that Nabalco

has done to the land, and the holes and the pollution, and the big buildings and the noise of the heavy vehicles, they were shocked. They thought that the hole was going to be small, but when they actually saw it it was too big.

Last month helicopters from Tipperary Station, which is owned by Sir Frederick Sutton, a motor car dealer who lives in Sydney, trespassed on Aboriginal land at Daly River, and took away several thousand head of cattle which belong to an Aboriginal company call UNIA.

I would call that stealing and so would you, I'm sure. But the land is not yet legally ours, so it is not stealing. The law cannot help us, only our friends in the Darwin Trades and Labour Council who have put a ban on Sutton Motors and all cattle from Tipperary.

So the laziness and inefficiency of the Government is damaging a vigorous company of Aborigines, led by Aboriginal Harry Wilson, who left Daly River Mission about five years ago to set up

an outstation called Peppimenarti. So far this Aboriginal company has branded 9,000 cattle, trucked hundreds to the meat works in Darwin and Katherine, and exported 400 live to Hong Kong.

I have told you this story because you must understand how we feel when our efforts are being frustrated by the Government which can act with vigour to meet the needs of Darwin people after Cyclone Tracy and to meet the needs of miners on our land. Why can't it act with vigour to meet our needs?

Of course, we will get the titles eventually. But remember how much our people have suffered over the years from betrayal and broken promises. Is it any wonder that they are anxious and fearful now, still with no land? So families and clans suffer. But now I can feel the rising spirit of our people, the same spirit, which moved the Gurindji to walk off Wave Hill in 1966. We are patient people. But we are determined. \*To be cont. in the next *Land Rights News*.

STORY PROJECTS

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# Strong start to the year for Learning on Country (LoC) Program

CORONAVIRUS restrictions meant students in the LoC Program spent more time in the class room. Now everyone is looking forward to getting back out on country, writes LoC Program Coordinator [Shane Bailey](#).

Before the coronavirus turned the world upside down, the new school year saw a strong start to Learning on Country (LoC) activities across all of our program sites.

During term one LoC students were engaged in a wide range of cross cultural educational activities, Vocational Education and

Training (VET), Conservation and Land Management (CLM) training, first aid courses and cultural bush-craft workshops all proudly supported and delivered by rangers, school cultural staff, teachers and traditional owners.

Specific activities included: plant identification surveys on the Yirrkala

Homelands and at Barunga; feral animal management works with exclusion fencing installation at Maningrida; and marine debris collection and identification at Umbakumba and wetland and horticulture studies at Milingimbi.

From mid-March up until now, coronavirus travel restrictions have

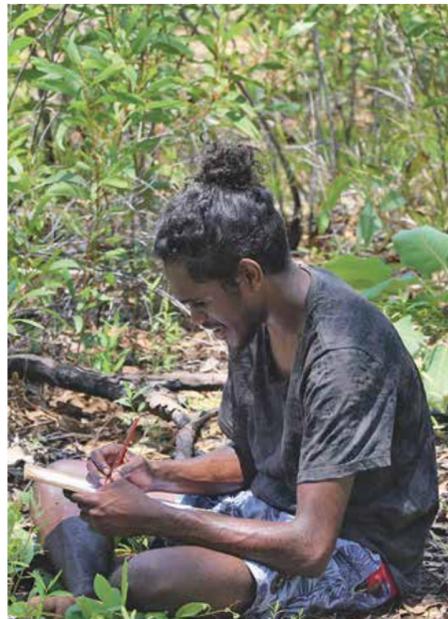
significantly affected the on-country delivery of LoC Program activities. Coordinators' travel to some sites was impossible and all site camps and day trips were postponed.

Where possible coordinators have adapted their program to focus on class room activities and CLM studies, doing their

best to engage students and maintain some stability amid the anxiety that all communities have felt during the coronavirus lockdown. During the first term holidays, instead of taking leave, the LoC coordinators chose to stay put to ensure community wellbeing and the continuation of the program.



Barunga School student identifying plants.



In nature's classroom studying plants.



Students from Barunga School studying outdoors.



LoC Program Coordinator Harry Thorman with students on the Yirrkala Laynhapuy Homelands.



Senior students from Yirrkala Homelands working in class.

# Bawinanga Djelk internship program growing the next generation of rangers through Learning on Country

The LoC Program is unique in that it defines a pathway to employment in Indigenous land and sea management thereby 'growing' the next generation of rangers and traditional custodians to work and care for their country, writes LoC program coordinator [Shane Bailey](#).



Cedric Ankin celebrates his year 12 graduation at Maningrida with LoC program coordinator Alex Ernst.

The LoC Program is unique in that it defines a pathway in Indigenous land and sea management. A great example of this is in Maningrida, where the Bawinanga Djelk Ranger internship program supports LoC students transition into full time ranger work.

Last year, Cedric Ankin celebrated his year 12 graduation at Maningrida and he is now employed as an intern with the Bawinanga Djelk Rangers. Grestina Wilson is currently in her senior year at Maningrida school is also on the internship program working with the Women Rangers. For Grestina, daughter of long-time Senior Ranger Greg Wilson, working and caring for country was

always her passion.

Both Cedric and Grestina have participated in the LoC Program since middle school, where their passion to be rangers was apparent in their participation in LoC activities and completion of Certificate I in Conservation and Land Management (CLM). Their commitment to the LoC Program has never wavered, as both Cedric and Grestina commenced their Certificate II in CLM and the Bawinanga Djelk internship program.

Cedric and Grestina have been well supported by the LoC coordinator, rangers and their school teachers. They are also mentored by former student Jonah Ryan, who two years ago transitioned from Maningrida

School into a career with Bawinanga Djelk Rangers.

Jonah is amongst a group of eight 'Maningrida LoC graduates' who over the last

## 'Last year Cedric completed Year 12 and he is now employed as a ranger intern.'

two years have completed their Cert II CLM, first aid qualification and got their learner drivers' licence. Maningrida has another four senior students currently participating in the ranger internship, however Cedric and Grestina are hoping to transition into full-time ranger employment within the next month or so.

The integration of classroom and on-country activities, supported

by teachers, rangers, cultural advisors, trainers and LoC coordinators, ensures participating LoC students are able to

complete their Year 12 NT Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET).

The LoC Program is now being delivered at 15 remote Indigenous community schools in partnership with local ranger groups. The Program has almost 1000 student participants who are engaging in culturally responsive learning activities that develop their skills, knowledge and confidence to walk strong and proud

in both the Western and Aboriginal society.

The LoC Program operates on the primacy of Indigenous ownership and is guided by the governance of an Indigenous Steering Committee. It employs over 150 part-time Indigenous cultural staff in the delivery of local activities.

The LoC Program is funded by the National Indigenous Australians' Agency (NIAA) and is managed by the NLC. LoC funding ceases in December 2020 and the NLC's LoC team is working closely with NIAA to ensure timely advice about ongoing funding for the program.

For information contact LoC Program Manager Anna Morgan, [MorgA@nlc.org.au](mailto:MorgA@nlc.org.au)

# Five year strategy for Community Planning and Development Program



Benigna Bunduck Dooling (in yellow) and NLC's Anna Yeo.

THE NLC's Community Planning and Development (CP&D) Program is just over three years old. It started in 2016 when NLC's Full Council set the direction to work with Aboriginal groups interested in planning and managing their own development using income from their land use agreements.

The Program uses an eight step process that builds group capacity in delivering projects that support their local aspirations into the future. Since starting, the CP&D Program now works with Aboriginal groups in eight locations across the NLC region. Those groups have committed over \$7 million

of their own income to community projects. Over a quarter of that money has been planned and will deliver 32 community-led projects. A third of those have been completed, and the remainder are at various stages of delivery.

Projects are strongly focused on sustaining language and culture, increasing local job opportunities, connecting elders with youth and getting family out on country by making outstations liveable with running water and shelter.

"A huge amount has been achieved in a short time. The value of our work is being realised by groups, the

proof of that is traditional owners choosing to invest more money and committing to more community development," said Dr Lorrae McArthur, Manager of the CP&D Program.

"We have learnt a lot along the way. So, it is timely to reflect on some of the challenges and gaps that we have faced along the way, as well as build on the Program's strengths and opportunities."

The NLC has engaged independent consultancy firm Social Ventures Australia to develop a strategic plan, it will be ready later this year.

# Galiwin'ku elders hard at work for the community

HAVE you noticed more support for young people around Galiwin'ku in the last few years? Have you seen extra raypirri camps, youth diversion activities, and law and justice work happening?

All of these activities are a result of traditional owners coming together to do projects that support young people. Using 'community benefit' money from the Top and Bottom Shop leases, traditional owners have planned and funded projects that are making a difference.

Since 2017, Galiwin'ku traditional owners have

funded six community benefit projects, pouring about \$1.3 million into their community – what a contribution.

"This is maymak way using money for community... one mind, one djama. We are working and benefiting the community," one traditional owner explained.

In February, the representative Traditional Owner Working Group - Galiwin'ku Community Gungayunamirr Mala – had a meeting in Galiwin'ku. They looked at how all the

projects are going.

"It's important to hear how things are going, what has been done," said Working Group member Geoffrey Gurwanawuy.

The group gave feedback to each of the partners who deliver the projects. Galiwin'ku traditional owners want to make sure the projects continue to deliver important outcomes.

They are already looking forward to planning the next series of projects so together they can continue to drive positive outcomes in their community.



Galiwin'ku children participating in the funded youth program.

# 'We're happy with the project': New ablution block at Ngukurr Church

THE Ngukurr Church has a new addition that traditional owners are proud to say they made happen.

"We did the planning and its happening," said a Milwarapara-Yutpundji traditional owner.

Ngukurr Church is a popular place that often hosts big events. Milwarapara-Yutpundji

traditional owners identified the need for an ablution block so that public amenities were available for these important occasions.

Traditional owners decided to work through the NLC's Community Planning and Development Program. They used their own income from land use agreements to plan the public amenities

project and they chose partners to construct the facilities. Now their plans have become reality and the toilet block can be used for years to come.

Traditional owners are satisfied with their work. "The toilet project is good," said one traditional owner.



The new loo at the Ngukurr Church is ready for action.

# Tech key to keeping ancient Malak Malak tongue alive

Traditional owners have funded the development of a language app containing over 300 words and phrases. It's now available on the Google Play and App store.

MANY years ago visitors to the NT's Daly River region may have heard the Malak Malak language being spoken. These days that would be a rare experience, given native speakers are in short supply. You can count the number of fluent Malak Malak speakers on one hand.

Besides some grammar work undertaken by a researcher in the 1970s, there has been limited focus on preserving and revitalising the language. Then in 2012, Dr Dorothea Hoffmann, a linguist with nonprofit organisation The Language Conservancy, began working on documenting and recording the Malak Malak language.

For four years Malak Malak traditional owners have been working with the NLC's Community Planning and Development Program, allocating a portion of their income from NT Government

fishing value payments to community development.

Early in this journey the Malak Malak group identified their priorities as preserving culture and language, and increasing recognition of

**'We needed to capture the language while the Aunties are still alive, to keep the language and Malak Malak clan strong, and to pass it on to our children.'**

their belonging in the region. Projects undertaken so far include culture camps and an interpretive sign project for the Daly River region.

The group also set a goal of developing a language learning mobile app, in order to inspire the production of teaching and learning materials to help preserve and revitalise their language.

Malak Malak traditional owner Joy Cardona, who is closely involved in

the group's community development work, said it's so important to preserve the language and hand it on to the next generation.

"We needed to capture the language while the Aunties are still alive, to keep the language and Malak Malak clan strong, and to pass it on to our children," said Joy Cardona.

Dr Hoffmann began working on a vocabulary

The app is now available for access by the Malak Malak traditional owners.

Matthew Shields, a Malak Malak traditional owner and Working Group member, was one of the first to download the app when it was released.

"This is the first time we've seen our language on websites ... I feel really happy, I can hear it over and over."

The app is organised into 22 lesson categories, including my family, animals and useful words and so on. It contains around

300 words and phrases, such as conversational phrases like 'what's your name?' (Wari ni eyiny?) and region specific words, like Banyan tree (puenyu).

Over 200 new illustrations were created for the app to reflect the people and culture, as well as the flora and fauna of the region.

Dr Hoffmann said she's delighted to see the app come to life.

"I hope it will help this beautiful language to thrive and gain new interest," she said.



Nicole Brown, Joy Cardona and Jamie Damaso show young Josh Brown how to use the Malak Malak app.

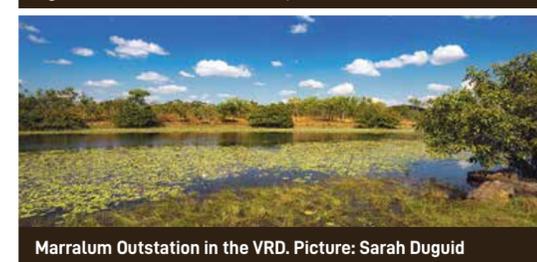
builder app, using existing technology from The Language Conservancy. Her work involved visiting Wooliana to meet with the native speakers.

With project support from the NLC's Community Planning and Development team, two trips were made to Wooliana between September and December 2019, to review words and images, ensuring accuracy in the app's development.

# Native title holders take refuge at Marralum



Ngaliwurra Wuli's Keith Mutton, Marralum resident Marcus Hall.



Marralum Outstation in the VRD. Picture: Sarah Duguid

THE last issue Land Rights News reported on the upgrade of Marralum Outstation in the Victoria River District, just on the border of Legune Station.

The upgrade was funded through the Project Sea Dragon Land Use Agreement with native title holders and managed by NLC's Community Planning and Development team.

The upgrade of the outstation included new solar power, water supply, air conditioning, kitchen and wash house facilities. Following the repairs, the Simon family moved back to Marralum last year.

After a few months

the water supply to the outstation dried up. Fortunately, the water supply could be fixed through the NT Government's outstation essential services program.

check the water filters.

Once the water was flowing, family members came from town and back to the outstation. They got out of town just before

**'I brought all my family out here to stay until the virus has passed and everything is back to normal.' - Maurice Simon Snr.**

Outstation resource centre Ngaliwurru Wuli sent a team from Timber Creek, who found the bore was silted up. After blowing the silt out of the bore the water flowed again. The team completed repairs on the outstation and showed Marralum residents how to

the coronavirus pandemic started to close in.

"I brought my mother and my sister and all my family out here and we will stay out here until the virus is passed and everything is back to normal," said Marralum community leader Maurice Simon Senior.



South East Arnhem Land IPA planning community development projects.

# Community Planning and Development Program in action

Traditional owners planning and doing projects



Minjin family members at their new outstation.



Walter Rogers workshops community development projects in Ngukurr.



Diminin traditional owners on country sharing stories.



The traditional owner funded painting crew at Gapuwiyak take a break from their day of paid work.



Nyomba Gandaru and Gaylene Garruwiwi, Community of Practice Forum Alice Springs.



Gapuwiyak traditional owner Thomas Marrkula and waku (nephew).



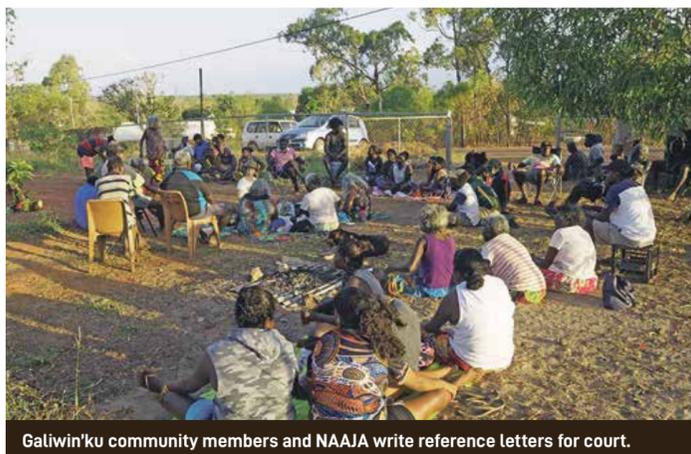
On country at Rak Papangala, east of Palumpa.



Ngukurr Community Planning and Development Working Group: Eddie Tapau, Damien Sailor (observer), Callus Tapau, Janita Ponto (proxy), Rayleen Woods, Samantha Woods (observer).



Malak Malak traditional owners, Pulima 2019 Indigenous Language Conference.



Galiwin'ku community members and NAAJA write reference letters for court.

## Outstation can serve as safe haven from virus threat



The Minjin family's outstation near Palumpa community.

outstation project, east of Palumpa community.

Early this year, the NLC's Community Planning and Development Program (CP&D) team visited the outstation with the traditional owners to see how the house had fared over the wet season.

"Whilst there are a few minor issues needing to be fixed, the outstation itself is in good order for the family to live there over the dry season," said Senior CP&D Officer Anna Yeo.

The family have also set aside money for ongoing repairs and maintenance, partnering with West Daly Regional Council so they

can continue to look after their outstation.

The outstation also now serves an additional purpose – as a safe haven for the Minjin family with the current threat of coronavirus, or any future viruses that might pose a risk to residents of remote communities.

Current homelands residents living in Wadeye have been encouraged in recent months to return to their outstations to help with social distancing and isolation measures; and so the Minjin family outstation is all set up to help serve this purpose now too.

**'Coronavirus has highlighted an unexpected perk of having a family outstation - a place to wait out a health crisis.'**

THE Minjin family have realised their dream – to live on country, in their new home, completed last October. Now coronavirus has highlighted an unexpected perk of having a family outstation – a place to wait out a health crisis, where you can keep your mob safe.

The family outstation project included constructing a new bush

track, bore, tank, and a house. By setting aside income from their gravel extraction agreement the Minjin family from the Rak Papangala traditional owner group created outcomes they want and value, a home

base for the family for many generations to come.

"Before we used to spend on other things that don't last... it's a good thing to have Land Council help," Wally Minjin said as he reflected on the



An outstation can serve as a place to wait out a health crisis.

## NLC's housing team pushes for housing wins



A recently upgraded home. Picture: NTG

**DID you know the Northern Land Council has a Remote Housing Engagement Unit?**

The team, made up of three officers, was established to monitor the implementation of the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Housing NT.

The Agreement, between the NT and Commonwealth

governments, commits \$1.1 billion of funding over five years to the 73 remote NT communities and 17 Alice Springs Town Camps.

Over the life of the agreement, the total capital works to be completed is equivalent to 650 three bedroom homes – through either additional or replacement houses. In total, this equals an additional 1,950 bedrooms split between extension of existing houses and construction of new houses.

The agreement commits the two governments to working together with Aboriginal people to improve health and physical outcomes through increasing the supply

and standard of remote housing and aims to reduce overcrowding in Aboriginal communities across the Territory by a combined 22 per cent.

It also intends to increase Aboriginal employment and participation of Aboriginal business in the construction and maintenance of community housing by 40 to 42 per cent over the life of the agreement.

The four NT Land Councils (Northern, Tiwi, Anindilyakwa and Central) each have a function on the Joint Steering Committee to ensure housing is delivered in line with the frameworks developed under the agreement and to monitor the outcomes

and investment.

Land Councils are responsible for engagement between the NT and Commonwealth Government agencies and Aboriginal residents in their regions regarding housing needs and reforms, this includes a review of the housing and leasing models.

Our Engagement Officers will be back on the ground soon to talk with and support traditional owners and Aboriginal organisations in communities and homelands, which will better place the NLC to inform policy reform and monitor the implementation of the National Partnership Agreements on Remote Housing and Closing the Gap.

## 'I haven't been there since I was a kid': Diminin traditional owners visit sacred sites

DIMININ traditional owners from the Thamarrurr Region have been visiting important cultural sites – some of which they haven't been to for decades. The traditional owners have used their own money to make the trips happen, and are collecting information that will be stored in a database for future generations.

The NLC's Community Planning & Development Program has been working with Diminin traditional owners to help them plan and coordinate

the project. Traditional owners decided to partner with indigenous owned Thamarrurr Development Corporation (TDC) and the Thamarrurr Rangers who have been coordinating the visits and assisting with documentation.

Thamarrurr ranger Peter Sheldon and six traditional owners - Patricia, Geraldine, and Norma Kolumboort, Anna and Concepta Karui, and Loretta Tunmuck - travelled to several sites near Wadeye last November. Traditional owner

Geraldine Kolumboort said she hasn't visited certain sacred sites near her Wadeye home since she was a girl.

"We went up to Mimal where that dreaming pandanus. We went up there and up to where milky way

my father was alive was a long, long time, maybe I was 15 years old."

"My father and I went up there and see where the honey bee mother bee dreaming site. It's good to go back there. See the country

sacred sites project.

"This work aligns with what we as an indigenous development corporation have made a commitment to," said TDC CEO Tobias Nganbe.

"TDC works to support healthy country through the Thamarrurr ranger program, which provides local jobs and meaningful work on country and the support of traditional land owners in the expression, engagement and conservation of Thamarrurr culture."

**'Make you feel like happy' - Geraldine Kloumboort**

dreaming start, and we went up to another place to see the honeybee mother bee," she said.

"I haven't been to this place for long time. When

up in the hill, something like spirit country.

"Make you feel like happy," she said.

TDC said they are proud to be supporting the Diminin



Geraldine Kolumboort (third from left) and family are visiting important sites.



Diminin traditional owners visit sacred sites.

## Unique camps are supporting young Yolŋu people

GALIWIN'KU traditional owners have funded a series of on-country camps that teach kids the Yolŋu way and culture.

Raypirri camps (respect and discipline camps) that aim to help young people connect with elders, country and Yolŋu culture have been held on Murrunga Island, part

rightful dreaming. Reminding the kids of the real Mälarra dreaming, leave it where it is. On the island teaching how to hunt and cut it and eat it. The kids come back very healthy," said traditional owner Jonathon Roy.

During the raypirri camps young people learnt language and practical life

know that being on country presents opportunities to pass knowledge onto the next generation.

"What we're doing in

Murrunga, that's the best way," said Jonathon. "Those children get healthier, the country gets healthier and I feel healthier too."

NLC's CP&D team is supporting traditional owners with project planning so Aboriginal-led development projects become a reality.

**'Those children get healthier, the country gets healthier and I feel healthier too.'**

of the Crocodile Islands.

Traditional owners partnered with Milingimbi Outstations Progress Association for logistical support to deliver six camps involving 45 young people between July and October last year.

"We are lifting up the

skills, he said.

"I'm taking kids to family islands and lands, and teaching the names [for places]... they're really happy. Teaching them when you in the islands you will survive with fire, fish, collecting, making a fire, making shade."

Traditional owners



Gerald, Jonathan and Millie Roy. Picture: Michaela Spencer

# Wagiman Rangers carbon abatement journey

THE savannah fire and carbon story in the western Top End region of the NT is hotting up.

Wagiman rangers recently entered the fray, with the NLC signing an agreement with the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC) to start a savannah fire management project on the Upper Daly and Wagiman Aboriginal Land Trusts. Pine Creek region traditional owners have been burning country for a long time. Now, under the guidance of elders, such as Jabul Huddleston, a new crop of rangers have started their asset protection burns. Wagiman Coordinator Kathrine Carver, aka KC, and her Sunshine Band of rangers are excited at

the prospect of deriving increased resources from the fire management income, and also future opportunities. Due to the vast expanses of land they manage, helicopter pilots work with the Wagiman ranger groups to drop incendiaries as part of what is known as Aerial Prescribed Burns (APBs). It's hoped that aerial operations will lessen to be replaced by paying countrymen and women, either on foot or in vehicles, to cover areas that are currently out of reach. **Thamarrurr Rangers start fire project** Recently the Thamarrurr Rangers commenced the operations phase of their savannah fire management project. Also funded through the ILSC, ultimately provided by oil and gas company INPEX, these additional

funds to the Wagiman, Thamarrurr and other ranger groups assist with acquiring valuable resources, fixing up access roads to remote areas and increasing the ability to employ traditional owners to get out on country to look after it. Twice yearly, rangers from Wagiman, Fish River, Thamarrurr, Wudicupildiyerr, Malak Malak, Peppimenarti and other communities get together to plan regional fire management activities in the WTE with Bushfires NT and other partner agencies. The increasing bond between these ranger groups, with fire as the magnet, will hopefully result in a much more collaborative regional approach to not just fire management, but other aspects of land management and protection of biodiversity and cultural knowledge.



Wagiman Rangers having a laugh. Picture: Kathrine Carver



Wagiman Rangers are 'excited' about carbon journey.

# Protecting rock art on Wardaman country

WARDAMAN country holds more than 200 recorded rock art sites, containing 6,000 individual paintings and 41,000 engravings. These rock art sites hold important dreaming stories and history of Wardaman land, which tie in significantly to Wardaman traditional knowledge and culture. Many of these rock art sites are susceptible to damage. Long grass growing up against the rocks

can act as fuel during the wildfire season, causing fire and smoke damage to the paintings. A lack of fencing around the sites can allow animals, such as cattle, to rub up against the paintings. Access can also be a problem when tracks are washed away by heavy rain, making it difficult for Wardaman traditional owners to visit the sites for cultural enrichment and sharing of stories.

Fortunately, the Wardaman Rangers were successful in their application for a NT Government's Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program to help maintain 11 of these sites. Extra funding has enabled rangers to get out on country and slash the grass around the sites before wildfire season.

Rangers have also been able to clear trees and branches that have fallen on fences, and repair the fences, which are now at a standard that will keep large livestock out. Pre-existing roads have been graded making it easier for rangers to access the sites for repair and maintenance. The Wardaman Rangers are proud that their

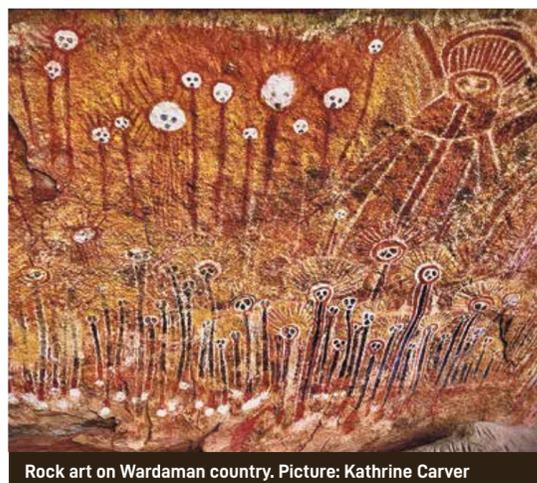
work enables traditional owners to access the sites, providing opportunities for the older generation to share dreaming stories and traditional knowledge to

their kids and grandkids. Many Wardaman now live in town so it can be difficult to regularly get out bush and visit these sites. One of the ways rangers are helping to preserve their elders' knowledge is by recording many of their stories, with the aim of creating a video library that would be accessible for all Wardaman traditional owners.

**'Wardaman country has more than 200 recorded rock art sites that rangers are working to protect.'**



Wardaman rangers clean up around important sites.



Rock art on Wardaman country. Picture: Kathrine Carver

# Rangers inspire women prisoners in Darwin

THREE NLC senior rangers visited the female section of Darwin prison for a great yarn about ranger work in February. Karen Noble, Eva Nungumajbarr and Elizabeth Hogan and Penny Mules, NLC's Women and Youth Engagement Coordinator, talked and answered lots of questions about how you become a ranger. During the visit one of the women inside the Darwin Correctional Centre stood up and thanked the rangers for coming. "You ranger ladies make me so proud, seeing strong black women. It makes me feel really happy inside," said one of the women at the Darwin Correctional Centre.

**'You ranger ladies make me so proud, seeing strong black women. It makes me feel really happy inside.'**

The women also had long discussions about controlled burning, conducting animal surveys and weed control. The visit was part of the Women of Worth program, run by YWCA Australia. Thank you to Women of Worth and the Darwin Correctional Centre.



Karen Noble, Elizabeth Hogan and Eva Nungumajbarr.

# Yugul Mangi fire calendar details the changing seasons

The Yugul Mangi Rangers' knowledge of the land and how it changes has been put into a seasonal calendar with the help of Michelle McKemey, a PhD student at the University of New England. Shortly after the South East Arnhem Land Indigenous Protected Area (SEAL IPA) was declared in 2016, Mrs McKemey visited the rangers and interviewed them and the traditional owners about how they use traditional burning, and what seasonal changes they look for. "We talked about bio-cultural indicators — so when the seasons are changing, what

lighting fires." Travelling on country to take photos of the important animals and plants for the calendar, Mrs McKemey collated all the stories and information shared with her by the Yugul Mangi Rangers and the traditional owners. "We can bring in some of the Western science when we talk about all the different plants and animals that are there and provide that scientific knowledge for fire management as well," she said. The calendar contains seven Indigenous languages from the different tribes in the South-East Arnhem Land Indigenous Protected Area (SEAL IPA), as well as

**'A fire calendar like this has never been done before.' - Winston Thompson**

things they notice in the environment that are important," Mrs McKemey told the ABC News. "All these little things that they notice in the environment that might not be directly related to fire management, but indicate that it's either a good time or bad time to start

# Fire forum shows Indigenous people in north Australia are leading the world in fire management

The success of Indigenous fire management in the north has gained renewed attention, writes Indigenous Carbon Industry Network (ICIN) coordinator **Anna Boustead**.

AS Australia grapples with unprecedented wildfires that have caused widespread devastation over summer, the success of indigenous fire management in the north has gained renewed attention.

Over 320 people from across Australia attended the North Australia Savanna Fire Forum held in Darwin from 18-19 February. Following the success of the 2019 forum and the Bushfires Crisis, the 2020 forum was highly anticipated and tickets sold out well in advance. Building on the 2019 forum, Indigenous-led discussions and presentations by Indigenous fire managers gave proper context to knowledge sharing, and were a key highlight for many participants.

The forum heard that by bringing together their traditional knowledge with modern science and technology Indigenous fire managers have cut uncontrolled bushfires by half, reduced the nation's greenhouse gas emissions and provided much-needed employment in some of the remotest parts of the country.

Scientists, Indigenous land managers, government representatives and carbon industry experts discussed key issues affecting fire management, including: the impacts of climate change

driving worsening fire weather; the challenges of measuring and monitoring landscape scale changes to biodiversity under different types of burning; how to ensure Traditional Owners are recognized for their knowledge and cultural protocols are respected by scientists and other land managers; the opportunity to share for north Australian fire managers to share their experience around Australia and around the world; the opportunity to enable more fire management by engaging in the carbon market; and how to promote better understanding of savanna carbon farming.

Networking is a key driver for participation.

ICIN steering committee member and Tiwi Land Council senior ranger Willie Rioli said the forum is an opportunity for the groups to get together to share experiences, lessons and discuss the future.

"Our fire management is a big success story and one that Aboriginal people feel strong and proud about," Mr Rioli said. "We know how to manage fire to look after country and it's good our cultural knowledge of the land and our work with scientists is being recognised and keeps growing every year... we're happy to share our knowledge with people."



CDU's Rohan Fisher and Tiwi Land Ranger Willie Rioli interviewed at the recent Savanna Fire Forum.



Karen Noble and Crystal Burgher at the forum. Picture: ICIN



Mimal Rangers. Picture: RIEL/Veronica Toral-Granda

## MEET OUR RANGERS

**Natalie Blitner**  
Wardaman IPA Ranger



"I have been working as a ranger for nearly 12 months now. I love getting out bush, learning about our country from the old people and it feels good to tell family about the work we are doing and what is happening out on country. We work hard as a team and have a lot of fun doing it, I hope more of our young ones step up and can work out on country too."

# Meet NLC's female leaders of tomorrow

BY PENNY MULES  
CFC BRANCH  
WOMEN AND  
YOUTH COORDINATOR

INDIGENOUS women's workforce participation in the ranger sector across northern Australia has taken a huge step forward in recent years, but there's still more to be achieved when it comes to Indigenous women rangers stepping into leadership roles.

In February, 14 Indigenous women rangers took part in leadership training, organised by the NLC's Caring for Country branch.

The ranger sector offers a mass of career opportunities for both men and women and comes with the major draw card of caring for country.

Women now make up 43 per cent of the Caring for Country branch's ranger workforce, but just under half of the 13 ranger groups have Indigenous women in leadership roles.

Caring for Country's Women's Employment

Strategy states that a goal for the branch is to have Indigenous women in leadership positions across all ranger groups.

During the day-long workshop, rangers honed their skills in supervising staff and mentoring.

The participants had the

**'Women now make up 43 per cent of the Caring for Country Branch's ranger workforce.'**

opportunity to contribute to the development of a Caring for Country mentoring program and networked with Indigenous women leaders, including Deputy Treaty Commissioner Ursula Raymond, Member for Karama Ngaree Ah Kit and Paperbark Woman business operator Lenore Dembski.

As part of a panel session, the Indigenous women leaders answered questions from the rangers, allowing diverse conversations around challenges, motivation and dealing with the many issues faced by Indigenous women

in the workplace.

Lenore Dembski ran a mentoring session and the rangers identified their own mentoring needs. This information will be used to develop the branch's mentor help program over the next 12 months.

As part of the workshop,

rangers were given an insight into the complexities and issues around organising on-country land management activities, such as fire burning or culture camps.

Caring for Country support staff also delivered training on 12 different aspects of administration tasks required by ranger groups. To test their administration abilities, the inaugural Admin Olympics were held! The Arnhem Land region took home this year's Women Rangers' Olympics Trophy.



Rangers undertake leadership training in Darwin.



Kylie Burn, Natalie Blitner, Mayleen Frederick, Cindy Archie and Kathrine Carver at fire training.

# Aboriginal rangers leading the way on progressive fire management

BY ANTHONY KERR  
CFC BRANCH  
WOC PROGRAM COORDINATOR

IN northern Australia, fire management operations conducted by the many Aboriginal ranger groups, such as the Bulgul, Wudicupildiyerr and

Wagiman Rangers located in the Darwin Daly region of the NT, is about using fire to sensitively nurture and clean the landscapes.

We hear stories of southern visitors making calls to Bushfires NT or the police in May to report that wildfires are 'blazing out

of control'. But the reality is that the early dry season fires lit by rangers, Park Rangers and other land managers are on the whole, well prepared, well planned and calmly conducted.

All concerned have a good understanding of fuel loads and timing of burning activities as the practice of burning country has occurred for thousands of years.

Today's burning practices are based on that knowledge, which has been passed down by those with a keen understanding of what a symbiotic existence with the land really means. Now it is May, and despite the challenges posed by the coronavirus, Aboriginal ranger groups in the Darwin

Daly region have started their asset protection burns, burning off grass fuel loads around properties and creating vital fire breaks around communities and cultural sites of significance, which would otherwise be at great risk from late season wild-fires were these measures not put in place. Armed with a box of matches or a drip torch they walk, or drive at the right time of day and light slow trickling "cool" burns that are easier to manage than the fires that occur later in the year.

Due to the vast expanses of land that they need to manage, experienced chopper operators work with the ranger groups to drop incendiaries in what is known as Aerial Prescribed

Burns (APBs). In time, it is hoped that aerial operations will lessen to be replaced by paid countrymen and women to cover regions that are currently out of reach. It's all about getting people back on country to manage it the right way. Savannah fire/carbon abatement agreements are the way forward in providing alternative sources of income for ranger groups to expand their operations. Rangers in West Arnhem Land led the way in 2006 with the West Arnhem Land Fire Abatement project, an agreement with the NT Government and Conocco-Phillips. Now many groups are following their example of how people, land and fire can work together.



Wagiman Rangers light up. Picture: Kathrine Carver

# Progressing Indigenous careers with new workforce development plan

STEPHEN VAN DER MARK  
CFC BRANCH  
TRAINING & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

NORTHERN Land Council's Caring for Country branch employs 116 people across 12 ranger groups and three Indigenous Protected Areas. In addition, Caring for Country employs many seasonally engaged casual rangers and a small support team in Darwin.

and activities that ensure Aboriginal staff members are positioned to make the best use of future opportunities. As rangers comprise the largest part of the Caring for Country workforce, the team's initial focus has been on the ranger workforce.

## New skills to maximise opportunities

Indigenous ranger groups are facing evolving workforce challenges as they adapt to different social, economic and political drivers – such as the impacts of climate change, opportunities to gain ranger compliance powers and new enterprise opportunities, like carbon abatement projects.

For the ranger workforce this means developing new skills and working in new ways to make the most of the changes.

Almost 75 per cent of our staff are Aboriginal and the Caring for Country Branch is committed to employing more Aboriginal people, especially in specialised and leadership positions.

With this in mind, the branch put in place a Training and Workforce Development Program, supported by Rachael Thurlow, Penny Mules, myself (Stephen van der Mark) and an Indigenous identified vacant Training and Administration Officer role.

Our aim is to develop and implement strategies



Rangers undertake weed spraying on the Cox Peninsula.

Rangers must be supported to build the competencies and capabilities required to thrive in this new environment.

The Caring for Country Branch is developing NLC's Ranger Workforce Development Strategy. This new strategy sets out recommendations and actions that aim to encourage Indigenous people to become a part of the ranger workforce and to progress their careers in ranger work or beyond.

One of the main structural changes to how rangers work is that the strategy proposes a new workforce structure. This new structure offers multiple career pathway options to rangers, compared to the previous approach which involved a more linear career path for rangers. The new strategy also makes Work Health & Safety and Conservation Land Management training compulsory for all rangers so that rangers can be safe on Country.

To find a way to make all this fit into ranger groups' annual work plans, the Branch developed a tool to assess the work loads of individual ranger teams. When we understand if ranger teams are 'overcommitted', 'right on track' or 'need additional work' we can have a more informed discussion about

how we can integrate further work requirements or streamline the work load.

The tool will also enable ranger groups to share with Traditional Owners how they divide their time across fire management, traditional owner engagement, ferals and weeds, youth engagement and so on.

## Indigenous trainee plan to provide new opportunities

The Branch has also been working on the development of a new NLC Traineeship Strategy. Traineeships will form a key part of NLC's Learning and Development drive. The aim of the traineeship plan is to offer Aboriginal people a structured training and on-the-job work experience.

## Making the most of COVID-19 lockdown

The COVID-19 pandemic has obviously impacted the ability of the Branch to deliver training to remote ranger teams.

The team has explored ways to deliver training electronically – in some cases this has been possible. We have released a poster with information about free online courses, which cover a wide range of topics.

One of the positive outcomes of these challenging times is that the Training and Workforce Development team has negotiated with one of our donors and we will now be able to deliver Cert IV qualifications in Training & Assessment to selected staff. This qualification will equip staff with the skills to deliver better and stronger mentoring support to rangers so that rangers can work towards stepping into leadership positions.



Rangers undertake fire training. Pictures: Shane Eecen

# Another step taken to restore Kakadu with handing over of Jabiru

A big step has been to return the Kakadu town of Jabiru to Aboriginal control.

The Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Amendment (Jabiru) Bill 2020 has been introduced into Federal Parliament.

NLC chair Samuel Bush-Blanas and CEO Marion Scrymgour welcomed the move on 13 May.

The legislation provides for the return of Jabiru through a township lease.

The lease will allow for the transition of the township from a mining town to a regional service centre and tourism hub which will hopefully drive economic activity throughout the west Arnhem region.

While Jabiru was built by Energy Resources Australia in 1982 to service the Ranger mine it is still intended the town's school, health centre, fire station and police station will remain.

The Federal Government

has signed off on \$216.2 million in funding over 10 years and the NT Government another \$135.5 million to improve infrastructure in the town and world heritage-listed Kakadu National Park.

While Kakadu has seen a steady decline in tourism, well before coronavirus came along, the Ranger uranium mine is also being

wealth of the region.

Ms Scrymgour welcomed the introduction of the Bill into Federal Parliament.

"On the passage of this Bill later in the year, these amendments to the Land Rights Act will return land to the control of the Mirarr traditional owners. This will allow for a long-term township lease of the town area that will provide future

## 'The Mirrar people have put up with uranium mining on their country for too long.' - Samuel Bush-Blanas

shut down next year.

The Mirrar people have been planning for the shutdown for many years and have developed a plan to allow for the transformation from an economy focussed on mining and ancillary services to one based on the social, cultural and natural resource

opportunities and economic and social certainty for businesses and residents at Jabiru," she said.

"I am pleased that both the Federal and Territory governments have made substantial financial commitments to the Jabiru revitalisation plan.

"It is important to



A Jabiru takes off in Kakadu. Picture: Tourism NT/Steve Strike

recognise the collaboration between the NT government and the traditional owners to develop Jabiru Kabolmakmen Ltd, a company that will work closely with the NLC, other local agencies and ERA, the operator of the Ranger mine, to set the economic future of the township," she said.

NLC Chairman Samuel Bush-Blanas praised the commitment of the Mirarr

traditional owners.

"The Mirrar people have put up with uranium mining on their country for too long. It is a tribute to their strong cultural ties to country that they will now have a bright future for themselves, their kids and grandkids – not through mining on their land but by relying on their culture and tradition," he said.

# New ferry unlocks opportunities on Tiwi Islands



Tiwi Islands have a new ferry. Picture: NTG

DURING the 2017 Top End dry season the ageing ferry that had plied the often-turbulent waters of the Apsley Strait between Bathurst and Melville islands for 17 years was becoming increasingly costly to operate, with frequent breakdowns.

The hull had been reskinned three times and it was due for a major

maintenance overhaul costing the operator, Tiwi Islands Regional Council, tens of thousands of dollars.

Marion Scrymgour, then the council's Chief Executive Officer, wrote a letter in June that year to NT Government Minister Gerry McCarthy, asking the NT Government to help replace the ferry, saying it was a "critical

piece of public transport infrastructure"

Since 2008 the council had largely borne the cost of running the ferry, which could carry up to 24 people and one vehicle, preventing it providing other important services to Tiwi islanders. In 2017 the ferry was operating on a \$205,000 loss.

Ms Scrymgour told Mr McCarthy the ferry "keeps families connected, enables affordable transport to sorry business and access to cultural obligations, transports tradespeople providing essential services to remote communities and facilitates business and tourism opportunities".

Mr McCarthy, the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Community Development, quickly replied to Ms Scrymgour, saying the Government recognised the "importance of a reliable

inter-island transport in contributing to the economic and social development and community life on the Tiwi Islands."

On 24 February this year traditional dance and song and ceremony marked the official launch of a new 14.4 X 5.5 metre ferry called Murantingala 1 that is now providing a reliable and vital link across the Apsley Strait for Tiwi islanders.

Karen Tipiloura, who

## 'It's good to have a big ferry like this one.' - Karen Tipiloura

witnessed the official launch, said the new ferry has much more space and can carry two vehicles.

"It's good to have a big ferry like this one. The other one was too small...it got pretty full sometimes," she said.

Funded by the NT Government through a \$500,000 grant to the Tiwi Islands Regional Council, the ferry was built by Territory business, Custom Works NT at its workshop in the Darwin suburb of Winnellie, and comes with a custom-built trailer that will be stored at Wurrumiyanga.

NT Chief Minister Michael Gunner, who presided over the launch with Tiwi Islands Regional Council Mayor

Leslie Tungutalum, said his Government "always looks at the best investments for communities which is why we swung our support behind a new ferry". Murantingala 1 means "Morning Star".

# Ways to track community development projects

BY HAYLEY BARICH  
CP&D MONITORING  
AND EVALUATION  
PROJECT OFFICER

MONITORING is like doing a check-up of your car – you need to make sure the tyres and engine are good so you can keep driving. Monitoring helps the NLC keep on track and heading towards goals set by traditional owners. The NLC committed to establishing a Community Planning and Development (CP&D) monitoring system in 2018 to strengthen the process and track progress of the Program. Right now the NLC is trialling three monitoring approaches. These trials help traditional owners and the NLC work out the best way to measure the success and value of community

development projects. The three monitoring approaches are shown in the table.

## Checking-up to keep on track with DjarranDjarrany native title holders

Wellbeing for DjarranDjarrany native title holders of Legune Station means strong lives and futures. This includes: healthy and happy; teach country and culture to young people; kids looking after country in the future; living on country; education and schooling; running the community ourselves – strong leadership; running our own business; employment; and to be recognized as native title holders.

NLC and researchers from La Trobe University are working with DjarranDjarrany

members to check-up on their wellbeing on an ongoing basis to see the long-term impact of Project Sea Dragon.

The next step is to train DjarranDjarrany in community research so local people can do the checking-up.

## Participatory monitoring with Galiwin'ku and Gapuwiyak traditional owners

Traditional owners in Galiwin'ku and Gapuwiyak are working with researchers from Charles Darwin University's Northern Institute (CDU) to develop a system for monitoring

and evaluating projects that takes seriously the authority and sovereignty of Aboriginal knowledge authorities and elders and their various places.

Over the last 12 months community based and CDU researchers have worked together to monitor the CP&D projects.

Monitoring approach	Region	Location	Research project partner
<b>Checking-up to keep on track</b> Looking at social and wellbeing measures	Victoria River District	Legune (Project Sea Dragon)	La Trobe University
<b>Participatory monitoring</b> Working with traditional owners to find good ways to tell the community development story	East Arnhem	Galiwin'ku, Gapuwiyak	Charles Darwin University's Northern Institute
<b>Expanded community development process</b> Using traditional project monitoring processes	Darwin Daly Wagait, East Arnhem, Ngukurr, Victoria River District	Daly River, Palumpa, Wadeye, South East Arnhem Land IPA, Ngukurr	La Trobe University

# A Yolŋu approach to monitoring and evaluation

NYOMBA Gandarju, a community based researcher describes a distinctly Yolŋu approach to monitoring and evaluation at Galiwin'ku.

"Monitoring is a practice that Yolŋu are always engaged in as part of everyday collective life, assessing and caring for children, helping ceremony to happen and working together in various different ways.

"Nhaltjan ngali dhu djäga ga marngithirri ga wangany-manapan, litjalangal wänangur?" (How will we [you

and I] act with care, and learn, and come together, in our place?)"

Ms Gandarju explains: "I'm looking at monitoring is the way that how we monitor our environment, in ceremony, in workplaces, in family and also in the community. That's how I understand for monitoring, like in three ways like safety, learning and education, and wellbeing."

Monitoring is an ongoing practice of finding out and checking up with work that is happening. Evaluation is to do with a moment where what has been done is also

seen by a broader Yolŋu group and is known as having been achieved.

Ms Gandarju describes evaluation as involving not just Balanda seeing and recognising something has been done, but also having this recognised by Yolŋu.

"Nhaltjan nhe ga nhäma nhokal communityjurr Yolŋuny ngalapalha ga djamarrkuli, worrujunny miyalknha, worrujunny dirramuny, even ngunha bungguljurr.

(How do you see within your community [not what do you see in your community, but how do you do the work of seeing] senior Yolŋu and children, old women and old men, and even in the ceremonial practice?)"

## Yolŋu evaluation of raypirri camps

Jonathan Roy helped with monitoring and evaluating of some raypirri (respect and discipline) camps held on Murrunga by participating in an interview with community based researcher



Nyomba Gandarju, Community Based Researcher, Galiwin'ku, Samantha Togni from NPY Women's Council and NLC's Hayley Barich.

Nyomba Gandarju. He points out that homelands like Murrunga are places where raypirri camps can be conducted in such a way that they

when people are out on country, using for example the right "clay, rock, ochre for lifting up the rightful dreaming – reminding the kids of the real Mälarra

## 'Learning the right way to cut up and share a turtle makes the kids come back very healthy.' - Jonathon Roy

conform to, support and strengthen traditional ties to land and to its elders and ancestral connections.

In the large communities, people are often mixed up with each other. Community development works well

dreaming, leave it where it is. Learning the right way to cut up and share a turtle (with all the right kinfolk being given the right parts) makes the kids come back very healthy".



Nyomba Gandarju, Community Based Researcher, Galiwin'ku.

# 'Strong for young people and for future': Gapuwiyak traditional owners creating own opportunities



Gapuwiyak traditional owners have set up a trust called Milintji.

GAPUWIYAK traditional owners have a story to tell about how they have set up their own development trust and are now working hard to help it grow.

It's also an example of a broader movement among traditional owners across the NT who are choosing to

allocate portions of their income from land use and leasing agreements to projects that benefit to the wider community.

For Gapuwiyak traditional owners, their community development journey with NLC's Community Planning and Development Program

started in April 2017.

Their first project was to fund the establishment of their own development trust, called Milintji Development. Arnhem Land Progress Aboriginal Corporation (ALPA) helped traditional owners to complete the establishment of the trust last year.

One of the trust's directors Margaret Marrkula said creating opportunities for the next generation is important for Milintji.

"Milintji is for the next generation. We put our heart, our mind, our vision, our dream for Milintji ... to make Gapuwiyak manyamak ['good'], strong for young people and for the future."

Margaret said the trust fund will help to create learning and training opportunities, jobs and

small businesses. It's also about young people sharing the knowledge of Milintji. The group invite the young people to attend their meetings so they can

coming months, developing governance and looking into some business ideas.

"The group is working very carefully through all the things to consider when

## 'Milintji is for the next generation. We put our heart, our mind, our vision, our dream for Milintji' - Margaret Marrkula

learn, she said.

The group has funded Matrix on Board Training to partner with them and deliver a governance project. Since starting their governance project, the group have had board meetings, worked on a strategic plan, discussed business ideas, and learnt a lot about running and developing a trust.

Matrix will continue to work with the group for the

making business decisions," said Matrix's Sally Clifford.

"There have been lots of long discussions. The paperwork and processes are frustrating and sometimes it's hard to see progress but setting up a solid base to the business, understanding how they work as a group and making sure everyone is coming along together is important."

# Are you ready for the election?

You must register on the electoral roll by 31 July 2020

It's easy! Fill out an enrolment form at your local council office or visit the website [www.ntec.nt.gov.au](http://www.ntec.nt.gov.au)



Don't forget to put a number in every square on the ballot paper to make your vote count!

[ntec.nt.gov.au](http://ntec.nt.gov.au)

1800 698 683

[ntec@nt.gov.au](mailto:ntec@nt.gov.au)

Authorised by Jain Loganathan, Northern Territory Electoral Commission, 80 Mitchell St Darwin NT 0800

# 'It was the biggest honour to film at Hawk Dreaming in Kakadu': Miranda Tapsell

IN this extract from her new book, *Top End Girl*, **MIRANDA TAPSELL** shares her feelings on returning to Jabiru.

Travelling with Gwilym and the crew was fabulous. One of the many stops we made along the Arnhem Highway was at a visitors' centre called Window on

pulled over on the side of the road to shoot some buffalo. With the camera, that is. Still, the poor things all huddled together and looked up at the drone fearfully it

announced, 'That's my niece!' Not too subtle, Aunty. Even though Jabiru had changed quite significantly since I was a kid, I was still touched to be back on the streets where I'd grown up and gone to school.

One of the greatest honours of this journey was when we were formally invited to shoot out at a place called Hawk Dreaming. It is a very special and sacred place, and tourists are restricted. The fact that we were offered this opportunity is an incredible privilege that was not lost on any of us.

We were in stone country, now. We had left all of the aqua blue coastline, and were surrounded by ancient limestone rock formations and incredible floodplains that stretched as far as

the eye could see.

It was the biggest honour to film at Hawk Dreaming and First Rock in Kakadu. Tourists do not come to these sites as you can only visit if you are formally invited by the Traditional Owners, and rightly so. Sometimes only nice people should have nice things.

Sean Neidjie, grandson of 'the Kakadu Man' Big Bill Neidjie, had looked after us out there with two other Traditional Owners. They knew how to look after us on country.

It had been a beautiful dry season morning, with clear blue skies and soft breezes. The sky had been so clear that you could see the Whistling Kites soaring above us—just like Josh had written in the script.

**'At one point, we had pulled over on the side of the road to shoot some buffalo. With the camera, that is.'**

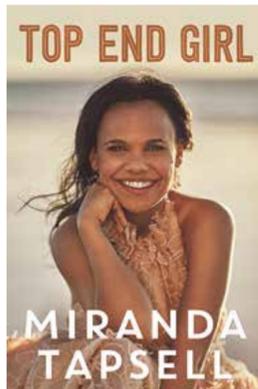
the Wetlands, where we pulled over to shoot on Limilngan-Wulna country.

We had a drone following our car as we drove to capture the incredible backdrop of floodplains. It was very green at the time, thanks to the monsoonal rain that had fallen in the lead-up to the shoot. This was the Territory at its most lush and beautiful.

At one point, we had

seemed to me. They were making little noises, as if having a conversation to figure out what this little buzzing thing around their heads might be. I guess we were the talk of the town everywhere.

As we arrived in Kakadu, my Aunty Yvonne's sister, Aunty Annie welcomed us to country. She didn't hold anything back as she pointed me out in the crowd and



# Together we rise: East Arnhem Land artists respond to COVID-19 with music

By University of Adelaide's Professor **AARON CORN**, published in *The Conversation*.

Recent weeks have been a blur of livestreams as politicians and chief medical officers have taken to Facebook and YouTube to announce Australia's emergency measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic.

But on Saturday evening, I eagerly logged onto Facebook, along with more than 50,000 others, to enjoy a livestream of an entirely different kind. It was the first in a series of four East Arnhem Live music concerts to be streamed weekly.

It not only offers a welcome respite from the social isolation many Australians are now feeling,

but it is also an ingenious way for Arnhem Land's prolific musicians to share their music with audiences around the world.

The NT's Arnhem Land is home to dozens of remote Indigenous communities, including the Yolŋu communities in the far northeast. While there are presently no known cases of COVID-19 in Arnhem Land, the region's economic stability relies heavily on artists' income, which is greatly supported by local tourism during the dry season and international touring to festivals all year round.

Streamed on Saturday, April 24 and still available online, the first East Arnhem Live concert featured singer Yirriŋa Yunupingu, the current frontman of rock band Yothu Yindi, with Arian Pearson on acoustic guitar. To



Djakapurra Munyarryun performing at Bawaka. Picture: Ryley Heap

showcase Arnhem Land's natural beauty, the concert was filmed on location at Galaru (East Woody Beach) against the sun setting over the Arafura Sea, and incorporated stunning aerial cinematography

of Dhamitjinya (East Woody Island).

At a length of four songs over 14 minutes, it was a tantalisingly brief event that left me wanting more. It stirred deep nostalgia for my own experiences in Arnhem Land over the past 25 years

and long collaborations with local musicians there. Yirriŋa Yunupingu's four-song set exemplified the very best of Yolŋu songwriting, building significantly on the heavy traditional influences of the style developed by Yothu Yindi around 1990.

# Teaching program to increase Aboriginal educator numbers

A remote teaching program will be revived next year to inspire more Aboriginal people to become educators

THE NT Labor Government has revived a teaching program to boost the Territory's frontline Aboriginal workforce.

Under reintroduction of the Remote Aboriginal Teacher Education (RATE) program, remote Aboriginal residents will be helped pursue careers in teaching at remote schools and in early childhood care.

The RATE program was wound down in the 1990s after Commonwealth funding was withdrawn.

NT Education Minister Selena Uibo said: "As a former remote area teacher myself, making pathways for local Aboriginal educators is something I am passionate about".

Ms Uibo said Aboriginal

teachers are seen as role models and leaders, not only within schools, but within their communities.

She said significant numbers of locals who participated in the RATE program in the 1980s and

**'Got trained up with the RATE program after I left school. This is the best for our Indigenous educators. I'm so excited, fantastic news.' - Anita Camfoo Painter**

1990s continue to work in their community schools as assistant teachers and fully qualified and registered teachers.

"Many went on to become senior teachers and school principals, including my mother, Didamain Uibo, who studied on campus

at Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education," she said.

"I have spoken with community members across the Territory and there is a lot of interest in the program's reintroduction."

Ms Uibo said there are concerns among the Territory's older remote educators that it will be difficult to recruit young teachers for remote schools in the coming years.

"This program will inspire a new generation," she said. Barunga School language

and cultural advisor Anita Camfoo Painter wrote on Facebook that she was "so excited" about the reintroduction of the RATE program.

"Hooray! Got trained up with the RATE program after I left school. This is the best for our Indigenous educators. I'm so excited, fantastic news," wrote Anita Camfoo Painter.

Gapuwiyak Early Childhood teacher Alison Wunungmurra hoped the program would inspire indigenous youth to pursue a career in education.

"Creating strong and meaningful educational pathways for aspiring Aboriginal educators will only make our community that much

stronger," she said.

"Strong mentoring and support will help Aboriginal educators stay on the path to gaining further skills and experience to support our children in community."

A RATE pilot program will begin next year in partnership with Charles Darwin University and the Batchelor Institute.

Under the program remote residents will receive formal training while working in remote childcare centres and schools. Participants will be supported to take the next steps into higher education if they want to become fully qualified teachers or early childhood educators.



Professor Steve Larkin, CEO of the Batchelor Institute, Alison Wunungmurra, early childhood educator and Selena Uibo, NT Education Minister. Picture: supplied

# Learn Yolŋu Matha and Bininj Kunwok at university

CHARLES Darwin University (CDU) is offering courses in three Indigenous Australian languages. Students can choose from Yolŋu Matha from East Arnhem Land, Arrernte from Central Australia and Bininj Kunwok from West Arnhem Land.

All courses are available online and in a variety of formats, including short courses, undergraduate and postgraduate study options.

Indigenous Futures, Arts and Society College Dean Ruth Wallace said the Yolŋu Studies program had been

offered at CDU for more than 25 years, while Arrernte had recently relaunched and Bininj Kunwok would be offered for the second time after starting last year.

"CDU recognises the value of Indigenous knowledge and ensuring its place in academic life across a range of disciplines," Professor Wallace said.

Yolŋu Studies Lecturers, Gawura Wanambi and Joy Bulkanhawuy work closely with Yolŋu teachers and students, providing guidance, cultural

authority and education.

Mr Wanambi, a Marrarju man, said many different languages continued to be spoken by tribes across East Arnhem Land, as well as the more widely known form of common Yolŋu language taught in CDU's Yolŋu Studies program.

He said it was important to remember that every clan has its own language, which is central to identity, communication and culture.

"My language describes who I am and allows me to communicate with all

the other tribes around the East Arnhem Land region," Mr Wanambi said.

"Our language was given

to us by our ancestral beings; it is a part of who we are and our identity."



Brenda Muthamuluwuy, Joy Bulkanhawuy and Gawura Wanambi.

# COVID-19 highlights NT housing needs: AHNT

## AN UPDATE FROM ABORIGINAL HOUSING NT (AHNT)

THE Territory's first peak body of Aboriginal Community-Controlled Housing Organisations is now incorporated and was officially launched last August. Aboriginal Housing NT (AHNT) has continued to progress, held its first AGM and elected a Board of Directors. AHNT is working as a strong united Aboriginal voice to government to

**'How can you be protected from a highly contagious disease in overcrowded housing, or worse, living rough with no housing at all?'**

improve housing policy and outcomes for Aboriginal people in the NT.

COVID-19 has seen AHNT Members play a critical role responding in every region in the NT. This pandemic has highlighted again the entrenched failures in the Territory's housing system and the challenges of trying to be protected from a highly contagious disease in overcrowded housing, or worse, living rough in the Long grass with no housing at all.

AHNT Members and their staff worked really hard on multiple fronts to protect against a COVID outbreak and prepare and manage in the event of one.

Some things AHNT Members did included: facilitated Return to Country of 2000+ people across the NT; transported people onto their Homelands and provide increased support and services; convened regular Community Meetings to give updates on the latest public health advice, the Biosecurity Act and changes to restrictions; managed the compulsory two week quarantining in regional centres; and advocated to government for stimulus to fast track repairs and expand

the housing program.

AHNT Members Thamarrurr and Mabunji restricted access to public areas, as did Bawinanga, installed public wash-stations and had crews continually sanitise surfaces, hand rails and handles in public areas. Yilli installed 'No Visitors' signs at the entrance of Darwin Town Camps as requested by the residents.

ALPA worked hard trouble-shooting food security issues on the ground and the government's territory-wide response.

Kalano, Julalikari and Tangentyere managed the Return to Country in their regions. Kalano ran the quarantine program also, and Julalikari worked with Anyinginyi on COVID-19 public health education to all households in Tennant Creek.

Bawinanga, Laynhapuy and Ingkerreke increased their efforts on the Homelands keeping people well-informed, well-resourced, and well-fed, and went to battle on 'free' public phones that needed fixing so the most isolated Territorians were not cut-off from communications in a pandemic.

Tangentyere Council and Central Australian Affordable Housing,



joined forces to develop a COVID-19 protection and management resource with Health Habitat and Fulcrum Agency. The Department of Health are promoting this COVID-19 resource as a tool for Tenancy Managers, Housing and Maintenance Officers, Support Workers and Tenants. Covid-19 has highlighted

more than ever the dire need to expand the Housing program and address the legacy issues in the Territory. To make inroads in health, education, employment, we need to fix the housing system, and it isn't just about building more houses.

AHNT has assembled a great combination of a Membership with a lot of expertise in housing in the NT and a Board of Directors with deep knowledge of housing issues from lived-experiences in our Remote Communities, Homelands/Outstations and Town Camps. There is a lot of work to do and AHNT has a big vision to match. Development of AHNT Strategic Plan is in development and will build on a reform agenda to: devolve housing to Aboriginal controlled housing organisations,

with a regional model that provides local employment and career pathways; embed a Housing for Health approach, in partnership with Aboriginal controlled health services, to create better health outcomes; and apply culturally led, sustainable design principles that place Aboriginal people at the centre and respond to local environments and climate change.

The Council of Australian Governments has agreed to include a housing target in the new National Agreement on Closing the Gap, so there is important work ahead at a national level through the Coalition of Peaks, and here at home to ensure the AHNT agenda is also on the government's COVID Recovery plans.

Further information contact Louise Weber, AHNT Secretariat 08 8944 6676.

### AHNT inaugural AGM - Board of Directors elected:

Leeanne Caton, AHNT Chair - Yilli Rreung Housing CEO  
Barbara Shaw - Tangentyere Council  
Yananymul Mununggurr - Laynhapuy Homelands  
Alan Mole - Kalano  
Mickey Wunungmurra - ALPA  
Max Gillet - Mabunji Aboriginal Corp.  
Norman Frank - Julalikari Council  
Maria Thompson - Ingkerreke Resource Services  
Eileen Hoosan - Central Australian Affordable Housing Co.

\* Thamarrurr Development Corp., Bawinanga, Anindilyakwa Housing Aboriginal Corp. and Tangentyere Constructions will nominate for existing Board vacancies.

# Sound the siren; the return of NT footy is set

AFL Northern Territory (AFLNT) has announced that footy is returning to the Territory with the commencement of the 2020 TIO CAFL season in Alice Springs, along with the BAFL in Tennant Creek and BRFL in Katherine.

THE NT is the first place in Australia to welcome the return of Australian football at a community level since the COVID-19 pandemic put a stop to all activity in March.

The TIO CAFL Town competitions will commence on 19/20 June for a 10-round season plus three weeks of finals, culminating on Saturday 12 September.

The TIO CAFL Community competitions, that involves teams from remote communities in Central Australia, will stick to their traditional Sunday timeslots for the majority of the season, starting on 21 June. They will play nine regular-season games

before three rounds of finals, finishing on the weekend of the 19/20 September. The season also gives all teams two bye rounds to account for the Papunya and Yuendumu carnivals.

In Katherine, the BRFL has some exciting developments with three extra teams added to the mix on a provisional license. The Ngukurr Bulldogs will join the men's competition, which commences its nine-round season on 27 June. The proposed fixture framework includes a competition bye round plus three rounds of finals with the grand final scheduled to take place on 19 September.

It's the same timings for the new-look BRFL women's competition that expands from three teams in 2019 to five teams in 2020 with the re-introduction of the Tindal Magpies and the addition of a new team, the Arnhem Crows. The women will play 10 rounds from 27 June before crowning a premier on 19 September.

In what is the 30th year of the BAFL competition, Barkly footy has a tentative start date of 4 July and will conclude in late September/early October.

The return of NT community football comes earlier than first anticipated due to the NT Government's announcement that biosecurity measures lift on 5 June, thus permitting free movement between communities and regions, which is crucial to the success of AFLNT's competitions.

Over the past few weeks, AFLNT has been working on a 'return to play' strategy and

set of protocols. It takes into consideration the feedback harnesses by the clubs, as well as the health and safety advice issued by the NT

Government and AFL.

Clubs and players will be required to train and play in line with all advised hygiene measures and protocols.



Tiwi Islands School Carnival at the end of 2019. Picture: AFLNT



Players are looking forward to getting back on the field.



Tiwi Islands Grand Final. Picture: Tourism NT/Shana McNaught

**COVID-19?**

**Wi garra holot  
maindim mijal!**



Translation: Meigim Kriol Strongbala

**Wen turismob gu la komunidi, im meigim rong  
bla ebribodi wen bigwan siknis ebriweya**