

# LAND RIGHTS NEWS

NORTHERN EDITION



NORTHERN  
LAND COUNCIL

OCTOBER 2025 • NLC.ORG.AU



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AUSTRALIA'S OLDEST ABORIGINAL NEWSPAPER SINCE 1973



## EDITORIAL

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## FRONT COVER



Leslie Tungatalum, Chair Tiwi Land Council;  
Matthew Ryan, Chair Northern Land Council;  
Barbara Shaw, Deputy Chair Central Land; and  
Cherelle Wurrawilya Chair Anindilyakwa Land Council.

## DISCLAIMER

Please note that this newspaper may contain images of deceased persons. At the time of publishing, any such images are used only with the consent of the deceased's family

# United, and here to stay

Message from  
NLC Chair  
MATTHEW RYAN



Our mob must continue to stand united in light of NT government changes that targets Aboriginal rights.

As we move quickly through the year it's important to take the time to reflect on all that's happened in 2025 and the many political changes we have seen.

A year into the CLP Government's term and we have seen a number of attacks on our people – from all sides.

From taking Territory Treaty off the table to changing to the Sacred Sites Act, weakening the Aboriginal Water Rights Bill, rushing through an undemocratic Territory Coordinator, and bringing in community safety changes that target the rights of Aboriginal Territorians – these changes weaken Aboriginal rights and representation.

What's more, this government has refused to consult with Aboriginal Territorians. When feedback was an option, they didn't listen or gave us such little time to respond it was barely worth our while.

The changes demonstrate a lack of respect for lore, culture and the voices of Traditional Owners who for over 60,000 years have been custodians of this country.

Aboriginal peak bodies keep saying

'work with us', but the NT government won't listen. They won't even come to the discussion table.

At our most recent Full Council Meeting, held in Borroloola, not one NT elected representative turned up, painting a bleak picture for our communities.

It's for the good of all Territorians that we work together and figure out a way forward.

In July, the four Territory Land Councils met on Larrakia Country for a joint meeting in a show of unity and strength against the blatant and racist attacks on our people, culture and country.

It's the first time in years since the Land Councils have come together in this way.

The last time was to sign the Barunga Voice Declaration – a glimmer of hope for our people, a chance to be recognised in the Australian Constitution and given a voice in our Australian Parliament.

I hope the next time we all meet it is out of hope instead of anger and despair.

What this government doesn't understand is that we are not going anywhere. We have been here, the custodians of this Country for 60,000 years, and we will continue to stand strong despite it all.

We are watching, and we won't be silent.

# First Nations strength highlighted

Message from  
NLC CEO  
YUSEPH DEEN



Welcome to the second edition of *Land Rights News* for 2025.

It's been almost a year at the helm of the NLC, and what a year it's been. I have had the immense privilege of attending meetings, traveling to the regions, and getting to know Traditional Owners and constituents across the NLC. While much of the current NT politics around Aboriginal affairs landscape paints a bleak picture, there is still lots to celebrate. The strength, resilience and power of remote communities and the people who live in them never ceases to amaze me, and is something this issue of *Land Rights News* aims to shine a light on.

In this issue of *Land Rights News*, you'll find stories of unity – the four Territory land councils coming together to call out the current NT Government and its raft of changes that unfairly

target Aboriginal people. From changes to the sacred sites and water bills to funding cuts for the Aboriginal Ranger Grants program. On a show of strength, you'll find a great recap of the many festivals held across the seven regions celebrating First Nations culture, music, sport and art. A double page spread showcasing NAIDOC week across the regions is also in this issue, as well as a look at the re-opening of Gunlom Falls and the grand opening of Gapuwiyak Arts Centre. We take a look at some highlights from the Learning on Country Program in 2025, which as usual is producing great results for our young leaders on Country, as well as a feature on the successful business partnership between the NLC and the Arnhem Land Fire Abatement program.

There has never been a more important time for the voices of our First Nations brothers and sisters to be amplified. Telling and sharing the stories of our pain, strength and resistance is key in the fight for self-determination, something that we will continue to work on.



AIATSIS Conference.



Chair and CEO with AAPA.



Chair and Malarndarri McCarthy.



Four Land Councils unite.



July Full Council.



Learning on Country Summit.



# Larrakia cultural items make their way home

The 33 items will soon return home after decades in the Bristol Museum and Art Gallery in England.

THE objects – spears, spear throwers and a club – were collected in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and have been held in the museum's collection for decades.

This latest repatriation is part of the Australian Government's Return of Cultural Heritage program, led by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS).

The hand-back ceremony, held at Bristol Museum and Art Gallery in September, included speeches from Larrakia representatives, Bristol City Council and members of the Australian Government.

Among them were Larrakia representatives Nigel Browne and Mikayla Lee, Australia's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom the Hon Stephen Smith, the Right Honourable Lord Mayor of Bristol, Councillor Henry Michallat, and Leader of the Bristol City Council, Councillor Tony Dyer.

Mark Motlop, Chair of the Larrakia Development Corporation and Larrakia man, said that the event was an "extremely important" milestone for Larrakia people and culture.

"It has been a long and emotional journey for Larrakia people in the repatriation of these items to Larrakia Country – one that will facilitate healing and the intergenerational transfer of knowledge," Mr Motlop said.

The items will be temporarily stored at the Museum and Art Gallery NT, and moved for display at the Larrakia Cultural Centre, opening in 2026.



Larrakia representatives Nigel Browne and Mikayla Lee at the handback ceremony.



Repatriated Larrakia Spear. Photo credit: Bristol Museum & Art Gallery)



Signing the repatriation documents during the handback ceremony.



# July Full Council

In July, current full council members from the seven regions met in Borroloola to discuss local issues, hear from stakeholders and pass decisions. Check out some snaps from the week below:







NORTHERN  
LAND COUNCIL

*Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life*

## 2025-28 NLC FULL COUNCIL

**Nominations  
now OPEN**

### Who can be nominated?

Land Owners of Aboriginal land or  
Aboriginal residents in the NLC region.

### How can you be nominated?

Recognised Entities (selected and incorporated Aboriginal Corporations) can nominate a Council Member(s).

Where there is no recognised entity, the NLC will hold a community meeting and call for nominations.

Nominations from recognised entities must be submitted by  
24 October 2025.

Nominations from community meetings close on the day of the  
community meeting.

**For  
More  
Info**



Visit NLC website - [nlc.org.au](https://nlc.org.au)



Email - [nominations@nlc.org.au](mailto:nominations@nlc.org.au)



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# Standing with Yuendumu deaths in custody

On the edge of Tanami Desert, Yuendumu is a remote community dealing with not one but two cases of Aboriginal deaths in custody. The NLC stands with Warlpiri people in their demands for justice.

OVER the last few months, there have been vigils, rallies and protests in support of the Warlpiri people. The message has been clear, people stand with Warlpiri and there should be no more Aboriginal deaths in custody.

To live and re-live the circumstances is hard for the Yuendumu community. Another member of their mob has had their life taken and though it has been three months since the death of Kumanjayi White, the NT Police statement: "the cause of death remains undetermined" falls short of giving the family any sense of peace or justice.

The wait for the forensic pathologist report continues and the call for an independent inquiry ruled out, the police officers involved have yet to be charged with any offence and remain on duty.

Grandfather of both Kumanjayi Walker and Kumanjayi White, Warlpiri elder, Mr Ned Hargraves has been working tirelessly to get the message out across Australia.

Recently at Garma, he read out a letter directed to both the Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese and Deputy Acting Commissioner of the NT Police,

Travis Wurst.

"We need urgent help. Our communities are suffering. If we're truly the citizens of Australia, we demand independent investigation. This is really serious today. We need to be heard and to be encouraged," Mr Hargraves said.

"You have got the power to turn this around. Put a stop to it. We want you to say to CLP to say stop what you're doing and to work with us instead of against us."

Mr Hargraves is not alone in his fight for this urgent matter to be dealt with, across the Territory as well as Australia. The coroner inquest following the death of Kumanjayi Walker - which began in 2022 - was finally released in June 2025, just weeks after the death of Kumanjayi White.

This full report is over 650 pages long and made key statements on the

systemic racism within the police force. Judge Elisabeth Armitage delivered her report in Yuendumu with the hope that the findings would help to prevent a similar tragedy.

The NT Government is yet to respond to the report, despite 32 recommendations.

Warlpiri are hurting. But this is something that is hurting communities right across the NT, and the rest of the country.

It's not another headline, this is a story that will continue to bring grief for everyone until something changes within the Western legal system.

*The NLC pays its respect to the family and friends of both Kumanjayi Walker and Kumanjayi White who lost their lives in police custody.*



Justice for Kumanjayi White banner at the NAIDOC Day 2025 March in Darwin.



Demonstration of support for Yuendumu during the Barunga Festival 2025.



# Former chair recognised in this year's King's Birthday Honours

The late Dr Bush Blanasi has been named as a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) – General Division for his service to the Indigenous communities of the Northern Territory.

DR Bush Blanasi AM was a powerful leader who spent his life fighting for land rights and Aboriginal communities in the Top End.

Representing the Katherine region, he served as Deputy Chair for three terms and led the NLC as Chair for four consecutive terms.

He was never afraid to speak his mind, standing strong for his people whether he was talking to Countrymen in the bush or a big CEO in Canberra.

He was also passionate about strong Aboriginal women leaders, dedicating time and effort to making sure their voices and views were heard by everyone in the room.

NLC Chair, Matthew Ryan, thanked the Council for the Order of Australia for highlighting his incredible work.

"Dr Bush Blanasi was an incredible leader, colleague, friend and brother to many. Right across the seven NLC regions, he fought for mob and our traditional lands."

"This recognition only adds to his legacy."



Dr Bush Blanasi AM

## New Bill threatens Aboriginal water rights

Traditional owners stand strong against changes to Aboriginal Water Reserves.

IN April the Northern Territory Government rushed through changes that removes traditional owners from decisions about the Aboriginal water reserves, handing that power to the Territory water controller.

This bureaucrat would decide who is an "eligible" Aboriginal person to apply for water in the reserve or whether "eligible" Aboriginal people have given consent.

It is not clear how the water controller would do this.

These changes were made without talking to traditional owners.

The Northern and Central Land Councils are worried this will push Traditional

Chair Ryan said.

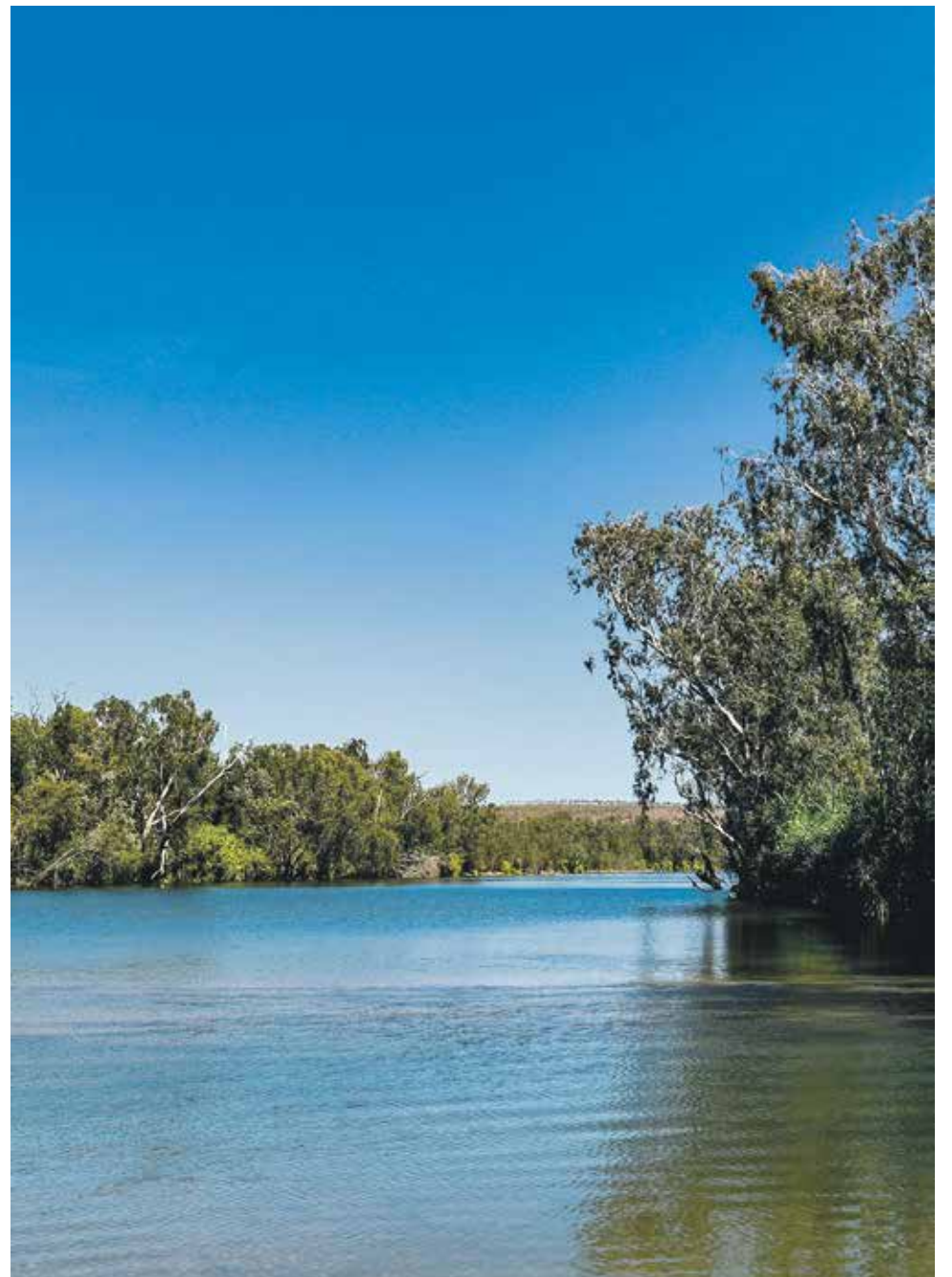
"The constant attacks on Aboriginal self-determination are exhausting and insulting. They need to stop."

CLC Chair Warren Williams said the proposed changes would not give industry the confidence to invest in the Territory, like the NTG was hoping it would.

"Instead of giving industry the confidence to invest in the Territory, the proposed changes will see traditional owners challenge dodgy decisions in court, development proposals embroiled in community conflict and investors fighting accusations of corruption," Chair Williams said.

The Country Liberal Party government has repeatedly let Aboriginal Territorians down.

From the rushed introduction and lack of consultation on the Territory Coordinator



Roper River.

### WHAT ARE ABORIGINAL WATER RESERVES?

**They are small portions of water set aside in water allocation plans for Aboriginal people to use for trade or economic development.**

Owners to the side, putting the interests of foreign and interstate developers instead.

Chair of the NLC, Matthew Ryan, described the changes as "divisive".

"The NT Government is opening the floodgates for industry to exploit the Aboriginal Water Reserve for profits,"

and Sacred Sites Amendment Bills to cutting funding to Aboriginal Ranger Grant Programs, and taking Territory Treaty off the table - the NLC will not stand for these continued attacks against Aboriginal people in the NT.



# New Gapuwiyak Arts Centre opens its doors

The art centre supports more than 100 artists from Gapuwiyak and nearby homelands

A new \$10.5 million culture and arts centre in Gapuwiyak has officially opens its doors to First Nations artists, community members and visitors.

The art centre is best known for its weaving, taking out fashion and art awards nationally and globally.

The centre will serve as a place for artists to create, exhibit and sell their works, as well as a hub for the community to come together, according to the government.

It features a museum and gallery open to the public, along with a studio and workshop for artists, giving visitors the opportunity to learn directly from Yolŋu creators.

"The new Gapuwiyak Culture and Arts

Centre is a testament to the power of collaboration and the importance of cultural preservation," Minister for Indigenous Australians Malarndirri McCarthy said.

"The centre will be a fitting home for artists to come together, showcasing the incredible talent of Gapuwiyak and surrounding homelands. This is not just an investment in remote community infrastructure – it is an investment in economic empowerment."

The federal government contributed \$8.5 million, while the Northern Territory Government invested \$2 million towards the centre, which highlights the vibrant culture and traditions of the Yolŋu people.

The centre was built under the Army Aboriginal Community Assistance Programme (AACAP), delivered by Aboriginal-owned business Kennelly Constructions, with support from the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA).



The event was attended by Federal and NT Ministers.



Gapuwiyak artists weaving as part of the opening celebration.



Gapuwiyak community members and visitors celebrate the opening of the culture and arts centre.



# Land Councils stand strong and united



Delegates from the four land councils outside NT Parliament House.

**The four Northern Territory Land Councils are standing united against the NT Government making decisions about their land and people without them.**

MEETING on Larrakia Country for a joint Executive Council Meeting, the Northern, Central, Tiwi and Anindilyakwa land councils reminded decision makers that they are strong together and here to stay.

"Many people come and go. Our people are not going anywhere," NLC Chair Matthew Ryan said.

The July meeting was the first time all four land councils had met in over five years.

Executive councillors discussed the many pieces of justice, environment and social legislation that has been rushed through parliament without properly talking to Aboriginal leaders.

This legislation includes the rushed introduction of the Territory Coordinator, changes to the Sacred Sites and Aboriginal Water Acts, and changes to

youth justice laws.

Councillors said that these changes unfairly targeted vulnerable Aboriginal Territorians, making it harder to stand up for Country and culture.

## Working in genuine partnership

While a big focus of this NT Government is to grow the economy, Chair Ryan said the Country Liberal Party had to work in genuine partnership with Land Councils and Aboriginal people if they wanted to get close to achieving that.

"Federal funding for our people props up the NT's budget. The Australian government needs to hold the NT government accountable and make sure its laws and policies match the intent of that funding – to help our communities," Chair Ryan said.

Chair of Tiwi Land Council, Leslie Tungatalum, added that the NT Government seemed to forget that half of the Territory's land and 85 per cent of the coastline was Aboriginal land.

"Any government that ignores and harms our fast-growing population may win an election or two, but it has no future," Chair Leslie Tungatalum said.

In 1976 the federal government set

up the NT land councils with statutory powers and functions to support Aboriginal decision-making about land and waters.

They have a strong record of facilitating consensus and informed consent across groups that creates the certainty needed for all Territorians to thrive.

Anindilyakwa Land Council (ALC) chair Cherelle Wurrawilya said the land councils will not be sidelined.

"Everyone will suffer if governments keep punishing and neglecting our people, but we will all gain when governments work with us. Just look at the big drop in crime we achieved on Groote Island since we took control of delivering justice," Chair Wurrawilya said.

The NT's justice and police racism crisis were high on the agenda of the joint meeting.

The land councils called for an independent police misconduct body and for the publication of an implementation plan based on all the recommendations of the Kumanjayi Walker Coronial Inquest.

"The findings and recommendations of the inquest must inform the NT

Police Anti-racism Strategy, even if this delays the release of the strategy," Central Land Council Chair Warren Williams said.

"There must be full public consultation of the review of the Youth Justice Act."

Chair Ryan said the land councils want to co-design the terms of reference of an independent inquiry into structural racism in the NT police force, alongside other representative Aboriginal organisations.

"We want a working group of relevant agencies to develop and implement better procedures to address complaints by Aboriginal people about police racism and use of force – a group that consults with the land councils and affected families and communities."

The four executive committees also vowed to fight for Aboriginal water rights like their old people fought for land rights.

"We want the federal government to strengthen the National Water Agreement, extend the water trigger in federal environment laws to all thirsty industry proposals and keep funding remote community drinking water projects," Chair Williams said.

"Water rights is the new land rights."



# NLC Slams NT Government over rushed Sacred Sites law changes



Sacred sites amendment protest.

Traditional Owners say their voices are being ignored by the Government in these changes

THE Northern Land Council has condemned the NT Government for pushing through amendments to the Sacred Sites Act without proper consultation, describing the move as rushed, disrespectful, and out of step with the needs of Aboriginal custodians.

While the NLC acknowledges that the Act needs reform, it argues that the current Bill falls short of its purpose—protecting sacred sites—and disregards key input from Aboriginal stakeholders provided during previous rounds of consultation.

Only a week was given for submissions on the Bill, leaving the NLC without time to consult its Full Council or the Traditional Owners it represents.

NLC Chair Matthew Ryan slammed the decision to make the changes without

consultations with Aboriginal custodians.

"This Bill is a rush job that weakens the Sacred Sites Act to benefit developers," Chair Ryan said.

"Sacred sites are not commodities. They hold our identity, our history, and our responsibilities as custodians."

In its submission to the NT Government, the NLC highlighted a range of concerns, including:

- Lack of appeal or review rights for Traditional Owners;
- Powers to transfer Authority Certificates without custodians' consent;
- Inadequate processes for ministerial appointments to the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA).

"This is nothing short of an attack on our people," Chair Ryan said.

"The government must stop, listen, and consult. Custodians have the right to be heard."

The NLC has called on the Legislative Scrutiny Committee to halt the Bill until Traditional Owners are given a fair and respectful opportunity to be consulted.

## Aboriginal women rangers lead protest in Katherine

In late March, dozens of women Rangers, gathered in Katherine outside of CLP Member, Jo Hersey's office to protest the NT Government's proposed changes to the Sacred Sites Act, calling for respect, recognition, and real consultation.

THE protest made a bold statement: "No changes without us."

NLC Executive Council member Ms Joy Cardona was outraged at the disrespect to culture and country.

"We are proud Aboriginal women and we stand strong," Ms Cardona said.

"You can't understand our law and culture unless you talk to us. Sacred sites are not just land—they're our stories, our spirit, and our future."

The protest featured hand-painted signs with messages such as "Our Country, Our Identity", "Protect Sacred Sites for Future Generations", and "Respect Our Songlines".

Wardiman Ranger, Ms Acacia Nalyarri Lewis, said she was outraged at the changes.

"They didn't speak to us. It should be standard practice to consult. This Act helps protect how we live," Ms Nalyarri Lewis said.

The women also called for Minister Josh Burgoyne to meet with them directly.

"These places are not just rocks or trees," said Ms Verona Huddleston of the Wagiman Rangers.

"They are storylines. They are sacred. Minister, we invite you to sit with us."

The protest serves as a powerful reminder that Aboriginal voices remain at the heart of any meaningful reform to sacred sites legislation.



NLC women rangers protesting the new sacred site amendments.



Women rangers protesting in Katherine.



Protest placard in Katherine.



# DO YOU HAVE THE RIGHT PERMIT?



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# Garma 2025

The iconic Garma Festival celebrated 25 years in 2025, bringing together people from across the country and the world on beautiful Gumatj Country.

THIS year's theme, "Rom ga Waja Wataru" translates to "The Law of the Land, Standing Firm".

This theme acknowledges and pays homage to the Yolngu fight for empowerment and land rights, reflecting the enduring connection to Country and culture.

The four-day festival boasted a line-up of powerful Indigenous, non-Indigenous and international speakers, discussing the current state of Aboriginal affairs in the NT and the rest of the country, economic development and cultural empowerment.

During his opening address for the festival, Chair of the Yothu Yindi Foundation Yunupingu said that although Aboriginal people would "never forget" the broken promise of Treaty following the failed Voice

Referendum in 2023, it was important to keep moving forward.

"Even though we live with shattered dreams, we must move forward," Mr Yunupingu said.

"Yolngu are economic beings. We intend to use our land and waters for the benefit of our people."

Addressing Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, Mr Yunupingu said he wanted to do "serious business".

"Prime Minister, we want a real economy for Aboriginal people," he said.

"I offer my hand. Let's do serious business."

## A celebration of all cultures

Music, art and culture shone bright at this year's Garma. Yothu Yindi, Big Names no Blankets, Emily Wurramara, Drifting Clouds and more took to the stage

over the four nights, while many enjoyed workshops and tours run by Yolngu mob.

The nightly Bungul featured dancing and performances from clans across the Northern Territory as well as a special performance from First Nations Americans from Navajo, Comanche, Kiowa Sioux, Pueblo and Lakota nations.

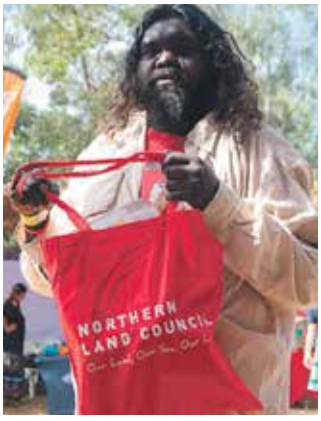
Northern Land Council Chair, Matthew Ryan, said this festival was a important opportunity for the rest of the country to stop and listen to what First Nations people had to say.

"The only way forward is by coming together, and working in genuine partnership with each other," Chair Ryan said.

"This festival shows that is possible."









# Fight for Sandy Flat continues

Native Title holders are standing strong in fight for the rehabilitation of Red Bank mine.



Garrwa native title holders after a presentation at the July Full Council meeting.



Native Title Holders are still waiting for the mine site to be rehabilitated.

THE Garrwa people have been fighting for their land since the mid-1990s for the proper rehabilitation of the Sandy Flat mine.

Traditional Owner Mr William Charlie, from Wollogorang station, tells a story of the struggle through generations.

"When my mum was alive, we had meeting out there, and the last government said to us that Redbank mine was the first priority," said Mr Charlie.

"My mum and the rest of the family were really happy. They were looking at the mess, and they just said, 'if we're going to go, at least the place going to be clean and it's already been done'. But my mum and family have passed on now, and the government didn't do it."

"It's still a mess."

In July, Garrwa family groups attended the Northern Land Council 129th Full Council Meeting to ask for support from members.

"We were hoping for support from the land Council and all of council members, and now we got it -they supported us," said Mr Charlie.

Meetings between Garrwa native title holders and the NT Legacy Mines Unit (LMU) is ongoing, with a working group established to facilitate engagement and communication between the LMU, native title holders and the NLC.

The reformed working group committee met for the first time in Borroloola in June and is planning to meet again in Robinson River in September.

The NLC is advocating on behalf of native title holders for heritage protection, engagement of cultural managers to accompany LMU and contractors to the site, and employment and contracting opportunities for Aboriginal businesses.

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# Rangers unite to tackle Gamba

Rangers across the Top End meet with one purpose at the first EXTRAVAGAMBA Forum

MORE than 80 Aboriginal rangers and participants from 27 ranger groups met at Batchelor Institute in March for the first Gamba Eradication and Biodiversity Conservation (GEBC) Forum, EXTRAVAGAMBA 2025.

The event was an important step in the fight against one of the most damaging environmental threats in the Top End

— Gamba grass.

Rangers and experts met to share knowledge and educational tools to empower remote Aboriginal rangers with the practical tools and expertise needed to identify, treat, and record gamba infestations.

The forum featured expert presentations and hands-on workshops covering herbicide application, data collection, GPS mapping, safe spray techniques, and the cultural and ecological impacts of Gamba invasion.

GEBC Project Manager Mr Tom Price said that workshops like these are vital to build the skills on the ground needed

for getting rid gamba grass.

"Time is of the essence with gamba control," Mr Price said.

"Forums like this teach rangers and other land managers how to identify gamba and begin to know where to look and stay ahead of the spread."

"The best time to treat gamba is between December and May, while its green and prior to seeding as gamba seeds only last a couple of seasons," he said.

The event also fostered collaboration and knowledge exchange across ranger groups, government bodies, and key stakeholders which is essential to

the project's success and will help to build long-term capacity and shared responsibility for Gamba control.

Originally introduced as pasture grass, gamba has spread rapidly, choking out native plants and fuelling intense fires up to ten times hotter than native grass fires.

Gamba grass threatens biodiversity, communities, infrastructure, and cultural heritage.

With gamba now pushing into new frontiers beyond Darwin and Katherine, the work of rangers are now more critical.



Rangers attending Extravagamba 2025.



Rangers surveying Gamba grass.

# Jawoyn Traditional Owners welcome public back to Gunlom Falls

Back in July, one of Kakadu National Park's most iconic spots re-opened to the public, marking a new chapter for Traditional Owners and Parks Australia.

TRADITIONAL Owners, local families, organisations and politicians gathered at the base of the falls for the opening ceremony.

Traditional dances were performed through the morning to celebrate the reopening, and a jumping castle was set up for kids.

"Come enjoy yourself, just have respect for the country itself and respect that the bottom pool is closed for safety reasons until further notice," Bernie Calma, a ranger and traditional owner of the Jawoyn people's Matjba clan, said.

In 2019, Traditional Owners closed the falls after discovering a new walking trail went right past a sacred men's site instead of a previously approved route.

Aboriginal Areas Protection

Authority (AAPA) then prosecuted the Director of National Parks for breaching sacred site laws. The case settled at the end of last year, resulting in Parks Australia receiving a \$200,000 fine, to be paid to AAPA.

Visitors can now explore new interpretive signage developed in partnership with Traditional Owners, which shares the deep cultural, environmental and historical significance of Gunlom to the Jawoyn people.

At the start of July, Traditional Owners, Parks Australia and invited guests gathered at the stunning Gunlom Falls for the sites official re-opening.

The re-opening marks a new chapter for Traditional Owner's and Parks Australia.



View from the top of Gunlom Falls.



Bungul dancers from Manmoyi Outstation performing at the opening ceremony.



# Hundreds of Aboriginal experts gather in Darwin for AIATSIS conference

AIATSIS conference shared lessons and knowledge on issues that matter to Aboriginal people.

HOSTED in collaboration with Larrakia Nation, this year's theme, "Voices of Empowerment: Strengthening our Future" paid tribute to a world in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' rights, knowledge, and voices are recognised, respected, and valued. Traditional Owners, young people, rangers, legal experts, academics and more attended the summit, listening to and presenting their work strengthening First Nations culture, governance and knowledge.

The Summit was a meeting place to

create new relationships, share lessons from on country work, and for families and friends to connect.

Throughout the week, attendees headed to talks and workshops on caring for land and sea country, native title and land rights, keeping culture and intergenerational knowledge alive, and using new technologies to support culture.

Uwiyinmil Traditional Owners, Ms Gayle Tambling and Ms Antonia Yates thought the summit was fantastic.

"The whole event was inspiring.

The summit was all about voices of empowerment – and it empowers us to know we're not alone, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander," Ms Tambling said.

She said the presentation on repatriation of artefacts to Central Australia mob was very sad, but important to hear.

"The presentations came from our mob, especially of the return of artefacts to central mob."

With the Uwiyinmil Traditional Owners currently developing their own

Aboriginal Corporation, Ms Tambling said the summit was incredibly useful to make connections and chat to people about how they could go about it.

"Because everyone was there, the summit gave us ideas of where to get funding and sponsors," she said.

"At the moment our corporation is a blank canvas, so having these connections and learning from others gives us ideas on what to do."



NLC Executive Councillors Lorraine Jones and Chris Neade.



Wardaman Rangers.

## CLP Government backflips on Aboriginal rangers



Mutjung Rangers.

The CLP government has left NT Aboriginal rangers high and dry by scrapping important funding that supported practical land and sea management outcomes in the Territory.

SINCE 2023, the Mutjung Rangers have done the important job of looking after their land and sea country in the western Miyarrka area of north east Arnhem Land.

The group, managed by Gon-Dal Aboriginal Corporation, is completely self-funded and independent, running a number of programs that not only look after the land, but the people living in homelands and communities in the region.

Gon-Dal Aboriginal Corporation General Manager, Ms Juli Cathcart, said a big help to the program has been the NT Aboriginal Ranger Grants program.

"NT Aboriginal Ranger Grants have enormously helped us fund healthy country planning, cultural mapping, on country work and capital items and infrastructure," Ms Cathcart said.

"We would not have been able to establish and operate Mutjung Rangers to date without this funding.

### Future of funding uncertain

Despite the current NT Government pledging \$12 million to the successful Aboriginal Ranger Grants program, the 2025 NT budget revealed funding for the program had been cut.

NLC Chair Matthew Ryan said it was a betrayal of trust of all Territorians who want to see their land and sea country healthy and protected.

"Our Aboriginal rangers are outraged at this broken promise, that puts both jobs and our ability to manage country at risk," Chair Ryan said.

"After eight years of a program that has contributed to successful land and sea management, this government has revealed its plans to leave Aboriginal rangers behind.

"This puts at risk the work of all those who rely on our lands and seas, including Territorians and visitors who are here to enjoy the Territory lifestyle."

The NLC Chair calls NT Chief Minister and Ministers to honour their election promise.

Since its launch in 2017, the NT

Aboriginal Ranger Grants has contributed to the land and sea management across the Territory focused on practical outcomes through supporting rangers with their essential equipment, facilities, skills development to support important jobs on Country.

Although rangers play a big role on country, many Aboriginal ranger groups are very under-resourced to manage their land and sea Country.

Aboriginal Rangers take on key functions such as border protection, biosecurity surveillance, weed and feral control and actively managing the threat of fire in remote areas.

This budget silence on Aboriginal Rangers puts the NT behind other state governments such as the WA and QLD government, which have boosted Aboriginal Ranger grants to \$20 million and over.

The NLC remains hopeful that the NTG rethinks its decision and invests in the unique and rich Territory environment.

"We just want to work with NTG to redesign a program that supports rangers to manage country so the Territory lifestyle we all enjoy continues for years to come," Chair Ryan said.



# Top End celebrates NAIDOC

Communities across the top end of the Territory pulled out all the stops to celebrate 50 years of NAIDOC. This year's theme, 'The Next Generation: Strength, Vision and Legacy' celebrates the achievements of the past while looking ahead to a bright future.





# Learning on Country hits record participation



Learning on Country.

The Northern Land Council's (NLC) Learning on Country Program (LoCP) has recorded its highest-ever student participation rates in the first half of 2025, with more than 3,300 Indigenous students engaging in on-country education and vocational training across 14 remote community sites.

A total of 3,341 students participated in LoCP activities during the reporting period. This is an increase of 518 students from the previous semester, meaning more children are engaged in Indigenous knowledge and skills relevant for living on country.

Of these, 293 students were actively enrolled in VET programs—primarily in Conservation and Ecosystem Management, Maritime, and First Aid with 45 students attaining Certificate I, II, or III qualifications.

This milestone is a testament to the dedication and collaboration of our Cultural Educators, Rangers and Coordinators.

Learning on Country Steering Committee Member Bobby Wunungmurra highlights the significance of passing on cultural education for young people to learn the old ways.

"When kids take the time and go out bush, it teaches them how it was before, so they can learn Indigenous knowledge, keep the knowledge and educate their own children when they have children."

Mr Wunungmurra also said Learning on Country is important for kids to know

who they are and where they come from.

"It's important for kids to learn where their identity comes from, where they are from and how they are connected to the land," he said.

"It makes them get engaged with their own country. Then they become proud because they know where they originally come from."

Mr Wunungmurra said the strength of knowing Indigenous ways helps kids learn how to balance different knowledge systems.

"Even though non-Indigenous ways getting bigger, like new technology coming in, by learning from our Elders our kids will know how to balance it up. To take what is good for them, what is relevant from the Western side and keep Indigenous knowledge strong."

Learning on Country is empowering young people to learn in ways that are grounded in culture and connected to future employment opportunities.

#### **Additional highlights from last semester include:**

- 591 days of on-country learning delivered by Traditional Owners, Rangers, Coordinators, and educators.
- 76 students engaged in work experience or internships, and 19 transitioned into employment.
- 90 staff directly employed through LoCP this semester—80 of whom are Indigenous—delivering an 88% Indigenous employment outcome.
- 85 Rangers from partnering Indigenous Ranger groups and 136 school staff (including 85 Indigenous staff) contributed in-kind support to the program.

These outcomes show its role in fostering Indigenous employment, cultural knowledge for long-term work on country.

The NLC remains committed to strengthening the program and continuing to advocate for further investment in remote education initiatives.



# National Learning on Country Summit strengthens partnerships and sets a shared vision for the future

The inaugural Learning on Country Northern Australia Summit brought together more than 100 delegates from across Northern Australia, including Elders, rangers, educators, government representatives, researchers, and community leaders.

HOSTED over two days, the Summit highlighted the strength and impact of the Learning on Country (LoC) program, which connects culture and curriculum, creating meaningful pathways for young people from school to employment while maintaining strong ties to Country.

Day one opened with a Larrakia Smoking Ceremony and Welcome to Country, followed by keynote contributions from Co-Chairs Cindy and Danny, Program Manager Shane Bailey, and Associate Professor Bill Fogarty. Delegates participated in workshops and panels exploring Indigenous governance, cultural learning, policy, and partnerships each site sharing how local decision-making reflects community aspirations.

The day closed with the inspiring story of Jonah Ryan from Maningrida, who has grown from a Junior Ranger to qualified Djelk Ranger and now LoC Ranger Coordinator, embodying the next generation of leaders.

On day two, discussions focused on building strong governance and partnerships, creating clear pathways from Country to classroom and into employment, and embedding monitoring and evaluation systems grounded in Indigenous values. Delegates emphasised that success must be measured not only in numbers but also in outcomes that matter most to communities.

A key outcome of the Summit was the development of a Unity Statement—a shared commitment that



Learning on Country Program staff and NLC members at the National Summit.

captures the collective vision for the future of Learning on Country. This statement provides a strong foundation for the next phase of the program, ensuring young people gain the confidence, skills, and cultural strength to thrive in both worlds.

Over the two days, delegates celebrated 13 years of achievement, reflected on challenges, and looked to the future with renewed commitment. At its heart, the Summit highlighted that Learning on Country is about empowering young people giving them the confidence, skills, and cultural strength to succeed. With Elders, teachers, and communities walking alongside them, the program continues to build strong foundations for positive, lasting change.

The Learning on Country Northern Australia Summit was made possible through the collaboration and generosity of its partners, speakers, and participants, who continue to ensure that the program grows stronger into the future.

NLC Chair, Matthew Ryan, said the Summit was a powerful way to share the knowledge and experience gained from the Learning on Country Program (LoCP). It has allowed us to show other communities what is possible through two-way learning, when it is community led from strong cultural leaders.

"For 13 years, the Learning on Country Program has empowered young people to walk strong in two-worlds, in culture, education, experience and employment, drawing on traditional methods that have guided our people for generations. I thank the Steering Committee and the Program Team whose hard work has made this important gathering possible," Mr Ryan said.

"By sharing our stories from the LoCP, we hope to inspire and empower others to build programs through local decision making, that strengthens their young people and their communities from grass roots up."



LoC Co-Chairs, Cindy and Danny.



Smoking ceremony to open the Summit.



Question time at the Summit.



# Numbulwar Numburindi and Yugul Mangi rangers share seagrass protection stories

From Numbulwar and Ngukurr to Melbourne, rangers working on the proposed South East Arnhem Land (SEAL) Sea Country IPA brought their work on protecting seagrass to the Australian Marine Science Association conference.

IN the last two years, Rangers Clive Nunggarrgalu, Jana Daniels, Sarah and Roger, have mapped and monitored seagrass in South East Arnhem Land to make sure their country will be healthy for future generations.

In June, they presented to a crowd of 300 people who travelled across the country to learn about integrating Indigenous and Western knowledge systems.

Numbulwar Numburindi ranger Clive Nunggarrgalu said sharing how they are protecting seagrass was really important for how they care for country because it is part of their songlines.

"The seagrass is in our songlines – it's the tucker of dugong and sea turtles.

We want to protect the seagrass to keep the dugongs and sea turtles healthy and strong for future generations."

By protecting seagrass, they are also protecting dugongs and sea turtles that are also in their songlines.

Yugul Mangi ranger Jana Daniels said they learnt new ways of restoring seagrass and made great connections.

"It was really interesting. We learnt so much, many different ways of people protecting country."

Returning from the conference, she hopes to pass on the training to other rangers in the region and pass in on to the future leaders.

"Our job to step up now and be the leaders for our country, for our mob," Ms Daniels said.

"As soon as we learn to use all these technologies for monitoring, we want to bring in Learning on Country students, because they are our future generation. And hopefully we want to keep managing the seagrass, and protect it for them."

The project has been going on for two years now, and the next two year will see rangers trained to keep monitoring seagrass.

They hope the project is ongoing to keep the seagrass healthy and culture strong.



Rangers on the job.



Inspecting seagrass.



Rangers out at sea, ready to inspect seagrass.



Kristen Sierke, Clive Nunggarrgalu and Anna Gordon.



Inspecting seagrass.



SEAL IPA rangers and staff.



# FUNERAL FUND

**Did you know that you can access up to \$5,000 to help bury your beloved family member?**

The NLC Funeral Fund is available to help families in the NLC region that have recently lost a family member.

**The money can be used to help:**

- Pay for a coffin
- Pay for funeral parlour fees
- Transport the body of the deceased

Applications must be completed by the next of kin or family representative and given to the NLC before the funeral happens.

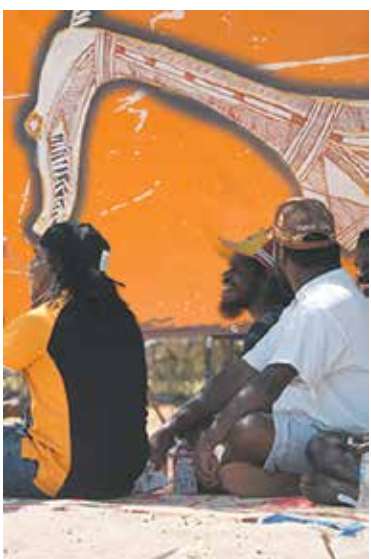
For more information and to apply, head into your local NLC Office or scan the QR code below:





# Stone Country Festival 2025

It was fantastic to be out in Gunbalanya for Stone Country Festival 2025! Lots of smiles, deadly music and culture – it was an unforgettable experience. Thank you to Kunwinjku and Injalak Arts for hosting us!





# West Arnhem conservationist honoured



Dean Mununggullumurr Yibarbuk.

Like many senior men, Dean Mununggullumurr Yibarbuk, a Traditional Owner of Djinkarr, has walked in two worlds his whole life.

DEDICATED to the conservation and protection of West Arnhem and beyond, for over 30 years he has worked side by side with Aboriginal Ranger groups, researchers and local and international organisations to bring western science and traditional burning techniques together.

His hard work was recognised at an on-Country graduation ceremony in Maningrida where he received an Honorary Doctorate from Charles Darwin University.

Reflecting on his journey, Dr Yibarbuk's said he hoped this would encourage other young Aboriginal people to become a ranger and protect Country.

"A lot of work, time and energy has been put into these ranger groups as well as research and I can say I am proud of the journey we have all been on," Dr Yibarbuk said.

"Receiving this on country offers an opportunity for my community to witness my footprints and to encourage more people to find ways for economic growth through traditional methods of land management and care," he said.

"These methods are important, and we need to keep showcasing how they are contributing to the biodiversity of the world."

# Traditional Owners unite to protect health of Roper River



Ropa Woda Governance Council meeting for the first time in Katherine.

In May, clan members from across the Roper River region came together to discuss the future of the Roper River.

THE group have called on the Federal Government to fund the "Ropa Woda Governance Council: Living Spirit, Living Water".

The groups said this Council, once properly set up, should be involved in all water decision-making.

In a statement released after the May meeting, the group said they spoke as "one voice, one people, in unity."

"We are the Mudburra, Yangman, Jawoyn, Manggarayi, Bin Bin.ga, Alawa, Ngalakgan, Ngandi, Ritthangu-Wagilak, Rembarranga, Marra, Warndarrang, and Nunggubuyu people," the statement said.

"We are the united traditional First Nations people from the Roper River, the rightful custodians of these waters. Today we have come together to form the Ropa Woda Governance Council: Living Spirit, Living Water."

In recent years, the Roper River has been at the centre of huge development pressures such as large-scale water extraction and fracking for gas.

Huge water licences have been granted to developers without the free, prior and informed consent of Traditional Owners.

The group called for a ban on all future water extraction licences and surface water harvesting in the Roper catchment

The Roper River is a waterway of extraordinary cultural and ecological significance, and has been governed

by the laws of the Mudburra, Yangman, Jawoyn, Manggarayi, Bin Bin.ga, Alawa, Ngalakgan, Ngandi, Ritthangu-Wagilak, Rembarranga, Marra, Warndarrang, and Nunggubuyu people for millennia.

Groundwater sustains not only the channel flows during the long dry, but large wetlands, rich forests, springs and thermal pools, including the famous Mataranka pools and Bitter Springs in Elsey National Park.

An interim working group has been established for 12 months to guide the creation of the Ropa Woda Governance Council.



# Obeying letter and spirit of the law



Garngi rangers conduct early sry season burning along the coast Stephanie King @ ALFA (NT) Limited.

Originally published in Issue 2 of Blak Business Magazine, we shine a spotlight on the Northern Land Council's successful business partnership with Aboriginal owned, Arnhem Land Fire Abatement (ALFA).

APPROXIMATELY 50 per cent of the Northern Territory's land mass under Aboriginal ownership, land use agreements are generating big business.

Across vast tracts of resource-rich land abundant in mining, agriculture, tourism and renewable energy opportunities, leases and licenses are the green light for governments, businesses, organisations, and individuals to conduct activities on Aboriginal land.

These agreements - which are negotiated in consultation with Traditional Owners by land councils through Section 19 of the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (ALRA) - create a stable source of revenue for land owners and contribute to broader economic development across the Territory.

However, this seemingly small element of law is often misunderstood.

Section 19 is seen by some - through ignorance or political mischief-making - as a way for the land councils to tell Traditional Owners what to do.

While the NLC undertakes assessments of all land use proposals, and negotiates to make sure they are fair and equitable, final decisions are made by Traditional Owner groups.

The NLC must make sure the right people are fully informed before making any decisions about activities on their land. This means overcoming significant challenges such receiving additional information from proponents in a timely way, and the tyranny of distance.

Northern Land Council Chair Matthew Ryan says despite the criticisms, consultation with Aboriginal owners is the most critical part of the Section 19 process.

"It is our obligation to Traditional Owners across our regions to ensure they know exactly what is proposed, so they can give their free, prior, and informed consent to projects," he says.

"If Traditional Owners feel good about a project, they'll say yes. If they are concerned, they'll say no. The land councils' obligation under ALRA is to make sure each group has all the information available to make that decision.

"Traditional Owners need to abide by their cultural obligations as well as protect their country and hard-won land rights. They have also made it clear that they want opportunities for economic and social development on their land so they can grow their communities and create a better future for generations to come.

"To those who don't understand our culture or traditional decision making the Section 19 process can seem lengthy, but it's important to do it properly without taking shortcuts.

"At the end of the day, once an agreement has been signed, proponents can have certainty that the processes have been followed correctly and they can get on with the job."

Chair Ryan said there were many Section 19 success stories, and many more to come.

A good example of how the Northern Land Council works is Arnhem Land Fire Abatement (ALFA), an Aboriginal-owned "carbon farming" business.

The not-for-profit organisation was set up by Aboriginal ranger groups and Traditional Owners in 2015 to support tropical savanna burning and use the payments for the carbon credits created by the burn-offs to fund proper fire management by Aboriginal rangers and community projects.

ALFA supports Aboriginal ranger groups to run six massive burning programs across 86,000 square kilometres of Arnhem Land - an area larger than Tasmania.

The organisation's 14-year land use agreement, which allowed it to operate on Indigenous land, expired at the end of 2024. It has now been renewed for a further 11 years.

For the renewal to go ahead hundreds of clans and families across Arnhem Land had to be consulted - not by public meetings and emails, as an urban authority would do, but face to face, so that everyone knows exactly what is being proposed.

Indigenous people have been managing the environment through annual dry season burn-offs for tens of thousands of years, particularly to maintain easy access and to support open grazing country suitable for prized food, such as wallabies.

Studies have shown that combining traditional Aboriginal knowledge and modern science is the most effective way to carry out burn-offs and preserve biodiversity.

The Northern Land Council spent two years consulting Indigenous people about renewing the ALFA fire abatement land use agreement.

The Northern Land Council completed a large-scale consultation process to ensure that people had all the information they needed" says ALFA chief executive Jennifer Ansell.



Jawoyn rangers operate the Raindance machine for aerial burning.



Smoke from aerial burning in the savanna woodlands of Arnhem Land Stephanie King @ ALFA (NT) Limited.





Wildfire response Stephanie King @ ALFA (NT) Limited.

"They did a very comprehensive job."

Traditional Owners are strongly in favour of the fire abatement program.

"One of the beautiful things about fire is that local people are fully engaged in it," says Dr Ansell.

"They are very passionate about the whole program and want to know all the details."

Aboriginal rangers and Traditional Owners carry out the burn-offs as part of their land management strategy.

ALFA is managed by an 18-strong board of Aboriginal directors.

The key elements of customary fire management are:

- Engage the right people for country in planning and delivery
- Burn early in the dry season and at times of heavy dew and little wind so fires go out overnight
- Burn strategically, adding to natural breaks such as moist ground along creeks, cliff lines and tracks to leave patches of unburnt country surrounded by burnt breaks
- Protect cultural sites, rock art, jungles, heaths and fire sensitive ecological communities by early-burned breaks.

Employing traditional fire management techniques preserves the knowledge of elderly people for younger generations and helps maintain Aboriginal language.



Smoking ceremony at fire planning meeting. Bawurrbarnda 2024 Stephanie King @ ALFA (NT) Limited.



# Barunga Festival shows strength in Aboriginal culture

Barunga Festival 2025 kicked off with arts, culture, sport and family fun for all.

THOUSANDS of people from across the Territory, Australia and the world travelled to Barunga on the long weekend of June to celebrate culture, dance, music and watch the best athletes of the region.

Headlining the weekend were Numbulwar artists Ngulmiya and Yilila, Yolngu songman Rrawun Maymuru, North East Arnhem rock stars East Journey, the J-Milla brothers, Gamilaraay singer-songwriter Thelma Plum, Jawoyn/Larrakia/TSI woman Kootsie Don and the fantastic performance of Big Name No Blankets.

Festival-goers tried their hand at Didgeridoo making and weaving and bush medicine with the Banatjral Strong Women.





# Voices from the bush on the national stage

In May, Executive Northern Land Councillors, Raymond Hector and Lorraine Jones travelled to Canberra to share their experience of surviving a natural disaster in remote NT with the rest of Australia.

WHILE many Territorians welcome the big rains of the wet season, over the last few years these big rains have meant big trouble for communities across the Top End.

At the start of 2023, big floods swept through Timber Creek and surrounding homelands, cutting off roads and damaging property.

Just a couple of months later and the small community of Nijtpurru almost went underwater, with the entire community evacuated to Howard Springs and then Yarralin, unable to return home for many months.

In 2024, Tropical Cyclone Megan swept across the Gulf of Carpentaria, causing big damage to Borroloola. Residents were evacuated to Darwin and weren't able to return home for some time.

Community leaders cried out for a better response to these traumatic disasters, saying that they felt left-behind and not-listened to by emergency services and government mob.

Leaders said more had to be done to disaster-proof the communities – calling for upgrades to emergency shelters and for better collaboration between Aboriginal ranger groups, Traditional Owners and the people on the ground and who knew how to handle these situations.

In May, Executive Councillor and Timber Creek Traditional Owner Lorraine Jones, and Executive Councillor and Nijtpurru Traditional Owner Raymond Hector travelled to Canberra to share their story with the nation at the National Emergency Management

Agency's Disaster convergence.

They spoke up strong for their communities – and the entire NLC region.

Ms Jones told the conference that it was time for the Northern Territory Government to listen and work with Aboriginal people when it came to natural disaster management, otherwise there would be big consequences.

"People living in our communities are incredibly vulnerable. We are far away from the town centres and don't have all the resources that cities down south have," Ms Jones said.

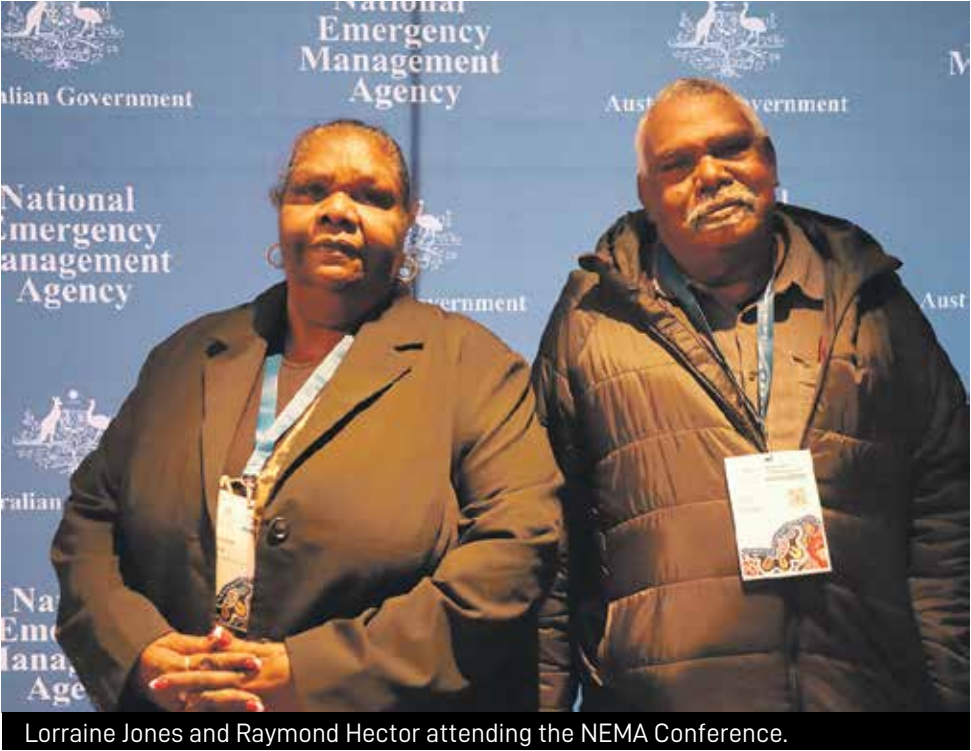
"During these scary disasters, emergency services need to work with our rangers and the senior decision makers – the ones that know the Country and understand what we need."

Their presentation was very well received by the conference, with follow up meetings planned between government agencies and community leaders.

Mr Hector said he wanted action soon. "There's been a lot of talking, a lot of promises, but now we want to see action. The wet season is only six months away and I worry a lot that we will be in the same position we were in last time them big rains came through," Mr Hector said.

Ms Jones said she felt a "big weight" lifted off her shoulders after the presentation.

"I've been keeping this story inside for three years. It feels good to tell everyone and share my experience up on the big stage. Thank you for listening to us," she said.





# Look who's been reading *Land Rights News*







## ARE YOUR SHOTS UP-TO-DATE?

Immunisations keep our community safe.  
They're important for everyone - no matter their age!

**IMPORTANT YEARLY VACCINES INCLUDE: THE FLU SHOT, COVID-19 & PNEUMOCOCCAL (50 YEARS+)**

The flu shot and COVID-19 Booster are safe for pregnant mums.  
RSV and Whooping Cough shots are also recommended to protect you and bub!

Not sure if you need a shot or not? Come in for your annual Health Check and our staff will let you know!  
Health Checks are available for everyone (6 months+). Call us on (08) 8942 5400 to book yours in!



# National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award winners 2025

## NATSIAAS Spotlight First Nations Art from Across Australia

WITH over 200 entries and 71 finalists, it was a big exhibition holding some of the First Nation's finest for the 42nd year of the NATSIAA's, who had their work displayed in the Museum and Art Gallery Northern Territory in Darwin.

The Awards Ceremony that took place during Darwin Festival was on everyone's calendar!

Taking home the top prize was Gaypalani Wa ambi from Yirrkala in Arnhem Land for her piece: **Burwu, blossom 2025**.

An extraordinary piece of two worlds; one side the Ancestral journey of Wuyal and the other discarded metal road signs. The collage collides on country storytelling with the past and present journeys on looking out for homeland.

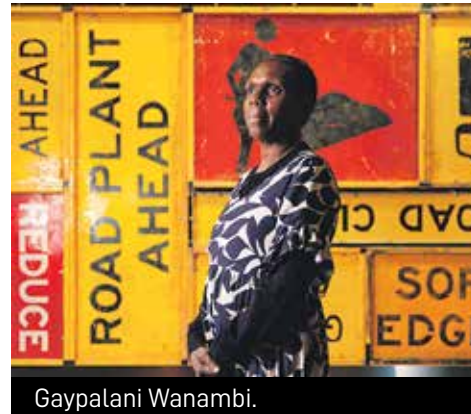
Other winners from our region include:

- Owen Yalandja (Maningrida) winner Wandjuk Marika Memorial 3D Award for their Ngalkodjek Yawkyawk.
- Lucy Yarrowanga (Maningrida) winner Bark Painting Award for their piece Bawáliba & Ngalyod
- Sonia Gurrpulan Guyula (Dhondji Homeland), winner Emerging Artist Award for their Mat.

If you're in Darwin you can still catch the exhibition until January.



Gaypalani Wanambi Burwu, Blossom.



Gaypalani Wanambi.



Lucy Yarrowanga.



Joanne Yindiri Guyula.

# NIMAS 2025

The National Indigenous Music Awards was back on Larrakia Country for its 21st year, with mob from across the Territory celebrating this year's music achievements in style.

EMILY Wurramarra took home Artist of the Year and Film Clip of the Year – her rise is making waves across the music scene.

"I've had a lot of people tell me I couldn't do what I've done, but I've gone and done it," Ms Wurramarra said during her acceptance speech.

With a career that has seen her recognised across the global stage and spanned over 20 years, Jessica Mauboy was inducted into the NIMA's Hall of Fame.

During the ceremony, she made a dedication true to her roots

"I'd like to dedicate this moment to my ancestors. You have paved the way for people like me. Music is a universal language and it has the power to heal, connect and inspire," she said.

Andrew Gurruwiwi Band kept it short and to the point on winning both Best New Talent and Song of the Year.

"Yo, thank you friends, family. It's



Hall of Fame - Jessica Mauboy.



Emma Donovan.



Red Flag Dancers.



Troy Cassar-Daley.

been a big year, a big road. Big things are coming," the band said.

Album of the Year winner, BARKAA, gave a shout-out to all her mob around her.

"That's how we do it! When one of us wins, we all win. I'm so proud to be a blackfella – I love you mob, to the dreamtime and back! I wouldn't be where I am without you."



Artist of the Year - Emily Wurramara.



# Deadly Cup Carnival shines a light on NRL talent and First Nations culture

The 2025 Deadly Cup was bigger and deadlier than ever before

SHINING a light on some of the Territory's best rugby league talent, the 2025 Deadly Cup Carnival brought together teams from across the Territory.

Now in its sixth year, the annual event drew over 3,000 spectators to the TRG stands on Larrakia Country for a day of knock-out matches and celebration of First Nations culture.

The Indigenous All Stars showed their passion with dominant results in the senior grades, while Gove fended off a late Darwin Barbarians claw back.

Check out some highlights from the day.



Photo credit - Courtney Jane Media.



Photo credit - Courtney Jane Media.



Photo credit - Courtney Jane Media.



Photo credit - Courtney Jane Media.



Photo credit - Courtney Jane Media.



Photo credit - Courtney Jane Media.

## Back cover artwork

*Land Rights News* showcases the work of artists from across the NLC's seven regions on its back cover. This edition features a painting by **Maria Pyro** from the Borroloola Barkly region.

Garrwa Yanyuwa woman, Maria Pyro, is a skilled multi-disciplinarian artist from Borroloola, represented by Waralungku Arts. As well as painting, Maria is in the band Arrkula Yinbayarra, which regularly performs alongside singer-songwriter Dr Shellie Morris AO.

The piece featured here represents the Gulf Country Maria comes from. Home to four language groups – Yanyuwa, Garrwa, Marra and Gudanyi – it's a place where the fresh water river flows out to the sea. The painting shows the bush tucker they eat and animals that live in the region. It also gives a nod to the long history between the four tribes and the Macassans who they traded peacefully with for many years before European colonisation.



Maria Pyro.



