

Mediaportal Report

08/10/2007

► **Land is important because it's like my father's spirit is still there**

Australian, 08/10/07, General News, Page 15

By: None

Cecil was born in his country at Mt Theo (near Yuendumu) around 1940. An elder of the Warlpiri community, he spent years working as a drover, stockman and labourer in Alice Springs, Darwin and Mt isa.

Keywords: Aboriginal(4), houses(1), Yuendumu(2)

Clip Ref: 00030509547

766 words

Type: News Item

Photo: No

► **Don't forget our elders'**

Australian, 08/10/07, General News, Page 15

By: None

Cherylyn lives in **Yuendumu** with her young daughter. Cherytyn is training to become a counsellor. She has been involved in remote area video production and radio broadcasting, and has worked with a number of **Yuendumu** organisations including the **Yuendumu** Otd Peopte's Program and the MtTheo Youth Program.

Keywords: Aboriginal(1), families(1), family(1), Yuendumu(3)

Clip Ref: 00030509545

340 words

Type: News Item

Photo: Yes

► **'Children must know our culture'**

Australian, 08/10/07, General News, Page 15

By: None

Connie Nakamarra Fisherwas born in **Yuendumu** in 1954 and has lived here all her life. Connie has three children, six grandchildren and one great-grand daughter. She lives with her husband, daughter, granddaughter and great grand-daughter.

Keywords: Yuendumu(5)

Clip Ref: 00030509542

567 words

Type: News Item

Photo: Yes

► **Changes will truly hurt us**

Australian, 08/10/07, General News, Page 15

By: None

Sebastian is a young Warlpiri man who has been an **Aboriginal** community police officer for the past year. He is also a leader of the football team and lives in **Yuendumu** with his wife and two children. What's strong in yapa way is our culture and the freedom of our life. There's a million things that are strong.

Keywords: Aboriginal(5), family(2), Lajamanu(1), Papunya(1), Yuendumu(2)

Clip Ref: 00030509544

314 words

Type: News Item

Photo: Yes

► **Reaching mainstream the yapa way**

Australian, 08/10/07, General News, Page 15

By: Jessica Jeeves

On-the-ground implications of the intervention are yet to have a noticeable impact in Yuendumu. While a house has been installed for the community's government business manager, he is employed on a fly-in, fly-out basis and is often away from the **community**.

Keywords: Aboriginal(2), communities(1), community(9), Howard(1), indigenous(3), John(1)

Clip Ref: 00030509536

551 words

Type: News Item

Photo: No



VOICES FROM THE HEART OF THE NATION

CECIL 'CROCODILE' JOHNSON

'Land is important because it's like my father's spirit is still there'

CECIL was born in his country at Mt Theo (near Yuendumu) around 1940. An elder of the Warlpiri community, he spent years working as a drover, stockman and labourer in Alice Springs, Darwin and Mt Isa. He now lives in Yuendumu where he works as a mental health worker and counsellor for WYN Health and the Mt Theo Program. He was recently seen in the documentary *Aboriginal Rules* teaching children how to play the traditional Warlpiri game of purlja.

IN yapa culture, I'd like to see young kids enjoy the life of yapa. Like getting them out there to the homelands and teach them how to hunt for themselves and live for themselves and their family, and grow up themselves as they become a Warlpiri tribe.

I used to sit down with old people when I was young, going out hunting. Where my family used to live at Mt Theo I stayed with my people, that gave me more experience to live at homelands and for my ownership of the land. We used to get around places in the whole area around Mt Theo; soakages and undergrounds, we go out and dig up yams or get kangaroo, porcupine or goanna, blue tongue lizards.

Every time I walk around (Yuendumu) it makes me feel like being out bush. Even when I go out to Mt Theo to visit those kids, it just opens my heart when I get out of here. Yuwayi, I feel like being back out there, in the bush, walking around free or doing things like making boomerangs.

My father and mother and uncle and everybody used to

travel around to other places, like to other soakages where there was a big mob. They might have had a corroboree there — purlapa. My father used to go, "we've got to go". He liked to join the old people, that's what he was like.

I work for young people because what they're doing now is just getting on sniffing and that, and I do counselling for them and coach them and talk to them and advise them not to do this type of thing. If you're going to grow up like that you won't last long. It's wearing your life out.

In the old days, they (the Government) brought us here and then brought the houses and made us stay here. So my family stayed here and old people got sick and passed away in the wrong area. They should've passed away in their own homelands to protect and to look after their homeland.

This is our culture. This is how old people taught us; we've got to stick to this law and ceremony. That's what makes us feel like being Aboriginal, and strong.

THIS Government that's changing the laws — that kills all the yapa. Especially Aboriginal people hurting — it's hurting. Nearly all this community here we've got this Sorry now — we feel sad for ourselves from now. Yuwayi.

Like when we went to this (CLC) meeting we felt no good. This area has got a map around it, the governments owning it. We don't want to live on that government lease — we want to live



Johnson

father and grandmother are still there.

The Government should've just left us alone. We can't leave our culture behind — it's just bringing sadness for us. Yuwayi. We can work both ways, with the good organisations and yapa here, we can go together. This, it's more like interfering.

We want to be free and live together, or work together. In that way everyone will come together and feel being Aboriginal, European — and both things will work. Like on cattle stations, we used to enjoy life with the station managers and the stockmen, even with the drovers we used to share, travelling, mustering and working together. That was good. Then after when work used to finish we used to come out on walk-about.

Yapa culture has been strong all the way. We can't just turn our back on our culture. We can't just leave and walk out without our culture. We'll be lost. Like when I went to Darwin, I lived there for 13 years working and talking in English and I said to myself, "too much, that's why I don't enjoy my city life, I don't enjoy my town life". It's all right out here — just here in this small community. It's more close to my area.



Australian
08/10/2007
Page: 15
General News
Region: National Circulation: 133000
Type: National
Size: 135.98 sq.cms
MTWTF

VOICES FROM THE HEART OF THE NATION

CHERYLYN NAPANGARDI GRANITES

‘Don’t forget our elders’

CHERYLYN lives in Yuendumu with her young daughter. Cherylyn is training to become a counsellor. She has been involved in remote area video production and radio broadcasting, and has worked with a number of Yuendumu organisations including the Yuendumu Old People’s Program and the Mt Theo Youth Program.

KEEPING our culture strong, it’s all about not forgetting our elders. Lots of young people out there, they forget their people because of drugs and alcohol. Drugs and alcohol don’t belong to yapa culture, to Aboriginal people — it’s from Europeans. They’re the ones that brought and made all those things, and that’s how people lose their culture and families. I want my people to keep their culture strong — not lose it.

I think of my family and I also think about my ancestors. That’s the main one — the main thing in our culture, it’s our ancestors. That is because they were the first ones who’ve been here for thousands and thousands of years. With ancestors it’s for yapa — we can feel it — it’s right here and it’s always there. It’s always inside you — you can feel it. That’s how I can feel my ancestors. It’s really amazing.

(Culture) is in language and painting, it’s in everything. It’s just there. I believed in my grandmother, she was the main woman — the most important woman for all women ways of culture, like ceremonies and Sorry. She was my role model.

(My daughter) Tanisha, she’s seven years old, I always talk to



Learning: Cherylyn Granites

her about Jukurrpa — Dream-times — and every year we go out on country visits and that’s the really main one for young kids, and even me, to learn more. I’m really interested about learning more culture, about my people and to know more how they used to live before Yuendumu.

Their life was so amazing. They had really good lives. They didn’t have any diabetics or stuff like that, sickness. When we have ceremonies, most of the time it makes me cry.



VOICES FROM THE HEART OF THE NATION

CONNIE NAKAMARRA FISHER
VALERIE NAPALJARRI MARTIN

‘Children must know our culture’

CONNIE Nakamarra Fisher was born in Yuendumu in 1954 and has lived here all her life. Connie has three children, six grandchildren and one great-grand daughter. She lives with her husband, daughter, grand-daughter and great grand-daughter. Connie is a key and active community member and is a strong participant of Jardiwarnpa (men and women ceremony). Connie is a board member of PAW Media & Communications and on both the TMAAC and GMAAC committees responsible for distribution of royalty funds from the Granites and Tanami Gold Mines.

VALERIE Napaljarri Martin was born in 1955 and raised in Yuendumu. She has four children (including one foster child) and 10 grandchildren. Valerie is on the board for Yuendumu Council and PAW Media and Communications. She works at the Yuendumu Women’s Centre, spends her evenings on Night Patrol, and is president of Yuendumu Softball Club.

CONNIE (translated from Warlpiri by Valerie): Our culture is very strong and we want to keep it strong for our kids, and we want to keep it as it is for the future. Culture is like dances, and the ceremonies like Jardiwarnpa and all that. We want to keep on going, so we can teach our young kids so they can keep carrying it on and teach other generations.

My kids and my grandkids know where it (culture) came from, how to go about it. My grandchildren know how to go through the young men’s business way, and they also show the girls how to dance and to go about how to do the Dreamings and all that — Kuruwarri. They know about their great-great grandfather and great-grandfather and their histories, about the cultural way — who the Dreamings be-



Facing the challenges: Valerie, left, and Connie

long to, and who not. That’s the way that they can learn and teach one another as well and to keep it strong.

(The intervention) is very devastating for us. It’s going to be very sad — how are we going to teach them how to make young men and young women, how are they going to do that?

VALERIE: It’s going to be very hard about the changes that are coming in — into our community. It is going to break us. How are we going to go about teaching our young kids about our cultural side? It’s at breaking point at the moment now because of the laws that are being handed down to us; it’s very hard.

We need our kids and our great grandkids to go out and to know where they came from, where they’re really from, where their ancestors are from, which country, how they are connected to it. They need to know by visiting that country.

I can see, more or less, they want us to teach our kids the kardiya side, the white man’s side, instead of teaching our own. But we want our own kids to know about our culture as well as the white man’s.

They need to know where they stand too. For a start we need our rights not taken away from us. Without our cultural side; the country, the ceremony, the sacred sites that we are connected to the land - absolutely we are nothing. Our dignity is going to be taken away and our rights. We are nothing then.

I hope whoever’s listening can support us because this is not right for us. Somebody should come and support us.



VOICES FROM THE HEART OF THE NATION

SEBASTIAN JAMPIJINPA WATSON

‘Changes will truly hurt us’

SEBASTIAN is a young Warlpiri man who has been an Aboriginal community police officer for the past year. He is also a leader of the football team and lives in Yuendumu with his wife and two children.

WHAT’S strong in yapa way is our culture and the freedom of our life. There’s a million things that are strong.

What makes me strong as an Aboriginal person is . . . I mean, you can’t be too far away from your family and friends. So the support from family and friends is what makes us strong, and also living with strong relationships and speaking together as one, as Aboriginal people, and trying to fight for our rights.

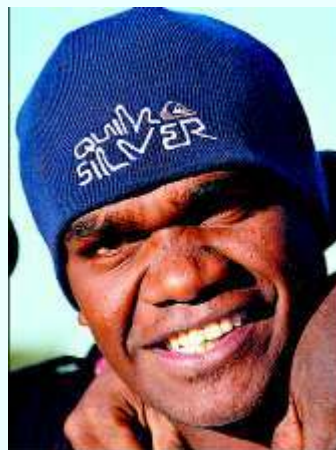
I hope we do fight for our rights. It (the intervention) will

make a big difference. I don’t know what they’re going to take away from us. Maybe they’ve already taken out the permit system, and I don’t know what’s next.

I don’t know what’s up ahead in the future. I don’t know what they’ll take. But if they do take something out, most of us Aboriginal people will talk for our rights to keep our culture.

These changes will affect us. I don’t know what we’re going to live on in the future. I don’t really know — a lot of changes will truly hurt us Aboriginal people in many different ways if they change things.

The things for them (my kids) to hold on to is the culture, and what we had before, and we want to share it on to them and to give it as a gift from the elders.



Freedom: Sebastian Watson

I hope they do.

I hope that people don’t push us away from the communities like Yuendumu or Lajamanu or Papunya. We just want to live normally. And to still live in the same way that we’re living today for our kids. I hope that happens.



VOICES FROM THE HEART OF THE NATION

Reaching mainstream the yapa way

Jessica Jeeves

ON-THE-GROUND implications of the intervention are yet to have a noticeable impact in Yuendumu.

While a house has been installed for the community's government business manager, he is employed on a fly-in, fly-out basis and is often away from the community.

His plan to have children collect rubbish to increase school attendance has not been put into place, and any welfare quarantining measures have yet to begin.

Child health checks were conducted a month ago; however, there has not been any official communication to the clinic about what the next step is regarding child health.

There is still no official information source for communities involved in the intervention, and rumours about what is to come and what is happening elsewhere are rife. There is confusion about the changes to the permit system

and CDEP.

The community has heard that the CDEP changes — transitioning participants into work for the dole, STEP or funded jobs — will be rolled out around the end of the year, but that is unconfirmed.

The Central Land Council (CLC) held a well-attended meeting in the community on October 3 to provide some clear information about the intervention, and to hear community views about what's happening.

In the Northern Territory community of Hermannsburg in late August John Howard laid out a vision.

“Whilst respecting the special place of indigenous people in the history and life of this country, their future can only be as part of the mainstream of the Australian community”, he said.

“Unless they can get a share of the bounty of this great and prosperous country, their future will be bleak.”

This statement raises many questions for indigenous people who live in places such as Yuen-

dumu.

What is the mainstream? What does it mean to be in the mainstream?

What are the implications of that statement for cultural practice and indigenous ways of life?

For Warlpiri people in Yuendumu, where their language remains the first language and where traditional ceremonies and practices still occur, what does joining the mainstream mean for their way, the yapa way?

This week in Voices from the Heart of the Nation we talk to the community about how members think and feel about their culture, and where it's going.

Jessica Jeeves works for Reconciliation Australia.

Every fortnight *Voices from the Heart of the Nation* will provide readers of *The Australian* with a unique insight into the hopes and concerns of people from Yuendumu.



HEART LAND



HARD YAKKA

- There are currently about 60 CDEP participants in Yuendumu.
- In the past eight months 27 CDEP participants from Yuendumu and Willowra have moved into full- or part-time funded positions in local organisations.
- CDEP pays for 30 hours a fortnight at \$15.70 per hour, meaning participants get paid approximately \$471 (gross) a fortnight.
- Work for the dole offers Newstart participants about \$429.80 a fortnight, and Youth Allowance participants who are over 18 and living at home \$229.10 a fortnight.



Sources: Yuendumu CDEP Co-ordinator, Centrelink, NT Emergency Response Hotline

Children learning: Norbett Spencer prepares for a community ceremony

WARLPIRI LEXICON

Warlpiri and Warlpiri-English

Yapa: Aboriginal people

Kardiya (Kar-dee-ya): non-Aboriginal people.

Skin groups/skins names:

Classificatory names assigned to people that determine how people are related and how they relate to each other (including who can marry) above and beyond biological kinship.

Jardiwarnpa: A traditional

conflict resolution ceremony involving dancing and singing that lasts about two weeks.

Purlapa: A type of ceremony performed by men for public entertainment (these aren't held any more).

Kuruwarri: The marks that Warlpiri people paint on their bodies, on material culture items or on canvas that represent the Dreaming.

Jukurrpa: Dreaming/the Dreamtime

Yuwayi: yes

Soakage/soak: A permanent underground water source in the desert that has to be dug out.

Sorry/Sorry business: Warlpiri English terms for the rituals performed after a death.

Jaru Pirrjirdi: Talking strong. Also the name of a program that runs through Mt Theo.