

# Mediaportal Report

27/08/2007

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▶ **We don't know who's running the show. . . this place is just a bit of a mess at the moment'**

Australian, 27/08/07, General News, Page 15  
By: None

Clip Ref: **00029765126**

524 words  
Type:  
Photo: Yes

The things I like about Yuendumu is sports and the CDEP [Community Development Employment Projects] program, which employs a lot of our young people and older people. And we've got a good night patrol running men and women's.

**Keywords:** Community(3), Howard(1), John(1)

▶ **Mainly I like music - Gospel and country'**

Australian, 27/08/07, General News, Page 15  
By: None

Clip Ref: **00029765125**

252 words  
Type:  
Photo: Yes

Sherman, 24, is a radio broadcaster and a star of the Yuendumu Magpies AFL team. He is married with a young daughter.

▶ **I like to go hunting with my family**

Australian, 27/08/07, General News, Page 15  
By: None

Clip Ref: **00029765124**

334 words  
Type:  
Photo: Yes

Louanna, 25, is a Warlpiri woman who has lived in Yuendumu all her life. Louanna works as an administrative assistant. She has completed a business studies certificate, and wants to complete her training to be a potter.

▶ **Maybe the kids will start attending school**

Australian, 27/08/07, General News, Page 15  
By: None

Clip Ref: **00029765123**

340 words  
Type:  
Photo: Yes

Shaurita, 18, is a Warlpiri woman who has also lived in Yuendumu all her life. She is an office worker with a 19-month-old daughter.

▶ **Yuendumu keen to tackle its issues**

Australian, 27/08/07, General News, Page 15

By: Jessica Jeeves

Once again change is in the air in the township of Yuendumu, and once again the hope is it will be a change for the better. In six decades the Tanami desert settlement has moved from ration station to church mission to self-governance .

**Keywords:** Aboriginal(7), Brough(1), communities(1), Community(6), Indigenous(1), Mal(1), Minister(2)

Clip Ref: **00029765122**

735 words

Type:

Photo: Yes

▶ **'How are we going to manage our young people?'**

Australian, 27/08/07, General News, Page 15

By: None

Cecil, 56, is a mental health worker working for WYN Health. He was born at Mt Theo. I see a lot of these young people pulling efforts in their jobs, and they do big things and good things for this community.

**Keywords:** Aboriginal(3), family(1)

Clip Ref: **00029765127**

399 words

Type:

Photo: Yes

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**‘We don’t know who’s running the show . . . this place is just a bit of a mess at the moment’**

NED, 46, is a Warlpiri man and traditional owner. He works as a receptionist at the Yuendumu health clinic and also on the men’s night patrol. He has lived in Yuendumu all his life and is a father to five children.

THE things I like about Yuendumu is sports and the CDEP [Community Development Employment Projects] program, which employs a lot of our young people and older people. And we’ve got a good night patrol running — men and women’s. And we’ve got a good clinic here.

The Mt Theo program is running pretty good. It’s got a lot of support from a lot of individuals like me. Like we work in different organisations here, but we all always help Mt Theo because we’ve got a lot of youth problems in this community.

We stopped petrol sniffing. Mostly all the property damage is all going down and all the stealing mostly stopped. So if they offend here or re-offend, instead of sending them to jail, we send them out to Mt Theo for a couple of months.

THE task force promised us that things will be done but

nothing’s been done around here. After I’ve finished doing my job in the clinic from 8am through to 5pm I do another 3-4 hours at night on night patrol, this community patrol. When we get in some serious trouble and then we try and get the police, the police don’t respond and that’s really frustrating for us night patrol workers because we haven’t got the authority to search cars or to hold any offenders or nothing, so we usually rely on them to do all that and we can’t get in touch with them most of the nights. Only when something goes really bad they come out.

Well look, they spend thousands of dollars on advertising on television, y’know. Woman domestic violence — that’s what mostly happens out here, and when they advertise they say you’ve got to ring 000 and you’ll be safe or something. But as far as we’re concerned out here there’s no such thing. You only see ads on television but you see no action taken here. So we’re just frustrated with the police sometimes, and it’s not helping us a lot out here.

They’re supposed to give us more money for more rubbish cleaning up here. Our place is a

bit dirty and run down and they took most of our garbage trucks away. I don’t know why. And all our place is mostly in a mess, y’know, and we need a lot of machinery out here. We need a new dump to bury all the old rubbish and get rid of all the rubbish in the streets and that — y’know, street sweepers. Y’know, we don’t know who’s running the show out here. We don’t know who. We don’t know if it’s the CEO or this Canberra fellow or the task force or John Howard or we don’t know who.

As far as we’re concerned this place is just a mess at the moment.



**Support:** Ned Wilson says the night patrol needs police help



## ‘Mainly I like music — Gospel and country’

SHERMAN, 24, is a radio broadcaster and a star of the Yuendumu Magpies AFL team. He is married with a young daughter.

I LIKE everything, like listening to music, going around with JapaJarri [Brett, the youth worker], going hunting — but mainly I like music. Gospel and some country, but I don't like listening to rap. The young fellas like going out hunting with Brett, and have a joke around we go hunting for kangaroo or anything we see on the road — we cook them and we eat them. We do footy training this afternoon and all through the week we do training, and on Saturday we go to Alice Springs to play. Sometimes at night we go to the youth centre and play some soccer there. We've got everything. We've got games, kids' activities like soccer and video games. But mainly all those young fellas, they like to kick something around. I like to kick around too. Without football and soccer there's nothing here. It'll be boring.



**Violence:** Sherman Spencer believes fighting is bad for the community

GROG sometimes gives you a hard time — like fighting and all those things, even ganja. Fighting is bad for Yuendumu. If they don't fight, this place will be good. When people drink they do suicides, silly things y'know, and they fight. Sometime when they're drink driving they have accidents and all those things. But if you make trouble in Yuendumu they might send you to Mt Theo, which is good for young people to stay away from everything.



## ‘I like to go hunting with my family’

LOUANNA, 25, is a Warlpiri woman who has lived in Yuendumu all her life. Louanna works as an administrative assistant. She has completed a business studies certificate, and wants to complete her training to be a policewoman. She has a two-year-old son.

I LIKE things that the Mt Theo youth program does here, they put discos on every Thursday, Friday and Saturday and from Monday to Wednesday they do computer training. But I don't like when people, especially young people, when they get drunk or maybe they're trying to do a suicide for themselves. Brett from the youth program, he always helps out instead of them policemen. The youth program workers — it's like family to us because they're really close to Yapa, Yapa people and their family around this community. All these people know that youth workers are here.

I like to go hunting with my family, my grandmother, my mother and my grandmother's sisters. Sometimes we go near Yulyupungu, it's between Yuendumu and Mt Allan. That's where all the people go hunting for witchetty grubs. Because I like witchetty grubs — it tastes like egg. We make a little fire and put 'em in the hot ashes. I like



**Good things:** Louanna Williams approves of after-school games and discos

kangaroo, instead of buying meat at the shop. And bush potatoes.

I DON'T like when people get drunk and smoke ganja and all that, and graffiti on the walls. Some people go to town when they get paid, they go to town and buy ganja there and grog and come back and smoke ganja here and drink grog. I've seen people turn to suicide after getting drunk and smoking ganja. I feel sorry for that person who died, and I feel sorry for their family. It's a lot of stress, too, for families when they lose loved ones. I felt like this when I saw pictures of passed-away people when I was doing my police training. I couldn't eat, I couldn't sleep, all I can think of is that person in my mind and their family.



**Good things:** Shaurita Langdon likes people working together

## ‘Maybe the kids will start attending school’

SHAURITA, 18, is a Warlpiri woman who has also lived in Yuendumu all her life. She is an office worker with a 19-month-old daughter. She wants to start an apprenticeship next year in Business Studies.

THE good things here in Yuendumu are people that work together like Kardiya and Yapa people, sharing stuff. Kardiya people are helping a lot of Yapa people, and Yapa people are also helping Kardiya people — we all work together. Sometimes Kardiya people, they feel sorry for Yapa people when they’re in sorry, and that means that they share their sorrows with us and that’s really good. And some of the Kardiya people, they feel sorry for Yapa people when it comes to the permit system and all those other things. When the permit system will be taken away, other Kardiya people will come in and maybe, maybe they’ll make a camp here or something — anything like that. They’ll just take photos of people in their humpies or maybe bush camp or sacred

sites ... yeah, that’s what I’m really worried about.

There’s a program here called Mt Theo program, youth program. They share a lot of good things with youth mob — with all the kids. They put discos on and every afternoon after school around about three o’clock, all games — soccer, basketball and softball and sometimes they go hunting and swimming.

THE things that I don’t like here at Yuendumu is kids that doesn’t go to school in the morning but when it comes to night time they just turn up at discos. When we used to go to school we had really good principal and really good teachers who really cared about us. Yeah, they was really good schoolteachers who loved Yapa people. They even spoke a little bit of Warlpiri, too. We even played with their daughters and sons, had dinner at their places. If everything turns out to be okay, maybe the kids will start attending school if they get good teachers.



# Yuendumu keen to tackle its issues

Jessica Jeeves

ONCE again change is in the air in the township of Yuendumu, and once again the hope is it will be a change for the better. In six decades the Tanami desert settlement has moved from ration station to church mission to self-governance. Now, life is about to take another dramatic turn for the people of Yuendumu as the federal Government's intervention program comes into effect.

To monitor how these far-reaching measures will change the lives of people in the heart of the nation, *The Australian* is undertaking a unique project in conjunction with the Yuendumu-based media group Warlpiri Media and Reconciliation Australia.

*The Australian* will publish fortnightly reports from Yuendumu, and the voices of its people speaking openly and frankly about life in the community and how the federal Government's intervention is affecting them.

Yuendumu is a small, predominantly Warlpiri Aboriginal community of between 800 to 1000 people 290km north-west of Alice Springs. Almost since first contact when officials began discussing their future and welfare, where they could live and how they could be managed, the lives of Warlpiri people of Yuendumu have been shaped by the decisions of distant bureaucrats.

Yuendumu was established as a government ration depot in 1946 and the Baptist mission was invited to set up a ministry there. In 1952 an Aboriginal reserve of 200 sq km was proclaimed which became Aboriginal land in 1977, after the passing of the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976.

Pastoral and mining encroachment on their traditional hunting country, a devastating drought and fear created by incidents such as the 1928 massacre at Coniston

meant that many Warlpiri have moved on to cattle stations and away from their lands in the southern half of the Tanami desert, seeking protection.

When a bore was put down at Rock Hill (Waklupa) on a new stock route from Mt Doreen Station to Alice Springs and the border between Warlpiri and Anmatjirra country, dependants of Warlpiri people working on cattle stations and people from a ration depot near the Stuart Highway were moved there. A store, school, clinic and a kitchen for communal meals were soon added.

For more than 20 years, the daily affairs of people in Yuendumu was heavily controlled and regulated; the community was run like an institution with rules determining what and how much people ate and what they did for work. Warlpiri had no access to money until direct and full payment of social security entitlements came into effect in 1969, and communal meals and the issuing of blankets ceased.

In 1978 the first elected Yuendumu Council assumed responsibility for settlement administration after the withdrawal of Department of Aboriginal Affairs officials.

Today, the community council (reliant on government funding) remains in control of essential services of housing, power and water. Other key services such as the health clinic, school, police and welfare payments are controlled by government. Community organisations and services include the renowned Mt Theo Youth and substance misuse program, a men's and women's Night Patrol, Warlpiri Media, a women's centre and a successful art centre, Warlukurlangu Artists.

Warlpiri is the main language of Yuendumu with culture, hunting and ceremonies still playing an important role. Sport is a

passion in many central Australian communities and Yuendumu is no exception, home to the revered Yuendumu Magpies.

Substance abuse, welfare dependency and its attendant problems, unemployment, violence and poor school attendance are all real and present issues in Yuendumu. People who live there know and care about the issues, and are keen to address them.

Since the announcement in June of the Northern Territory Emergency Response by Indigenous Affairs Minister Mal Brough and the Prime Minister, the people of Yuendumu have been anxious for information about how their lives will be affected.

Over the next six months, *Voices from the Heart of the Nation* will provide readers with a unique insight into the hopes and concerns of people from Yuendumu. Interviewed on tape by staff from their own, local media organisation Warlpiri Media, a panel of people from the community will talk directly to readers of *The Australian* about important issues affecting them.

Jessica Jeeves works for Reconciliation Australia

## WARLPIRI LEXICON

Warlpiri and Warlpiri-English

**Yapa:** Aboriginal people.

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

**Sorry; sorry business:** rituals performed after a death.

**To be or to feel sorry:** Used to describe empathy, sympathy, worry, care or concern for another person/group.

**Business:** Describes activities associated with ceremony and traditional law.

**Bush camp:** The place where people stay/sleep when they are participating in business.



back



**HEART LAND**

**NT**

**YUENDUMU**

■ **Population:**

Indigenous	606
Non-Indigenous	85

■ **Share of population aged under 40:**

Indigenous male	75%
Indigenous female	72%
Non-Indigenous male	35%
Non-Indigenous female	36%

Entertainment: Sport is a big part of life for Yuendumu's children

Picture: Renee Nowyarger





## ‘How are we going to manage our young people?’

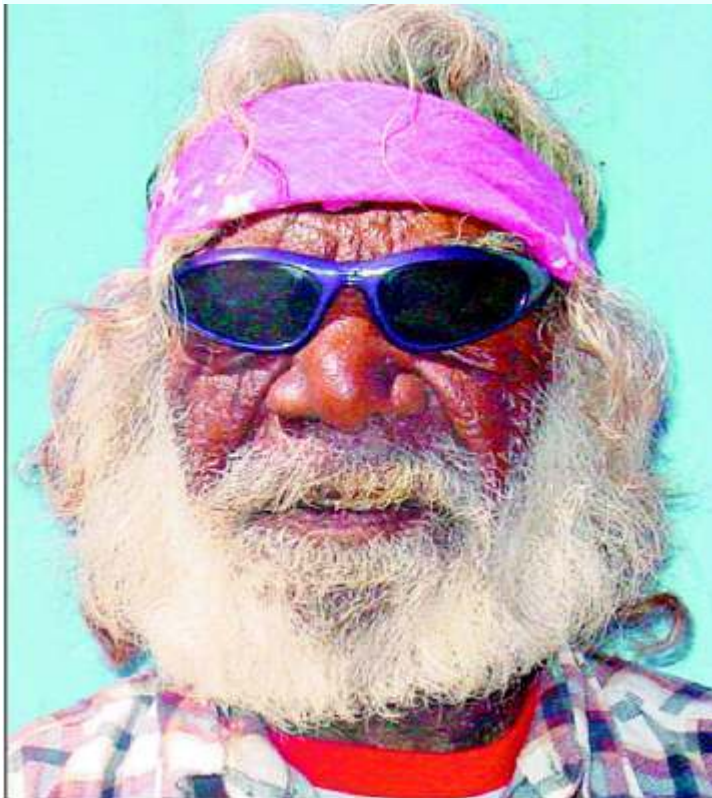
CECIL, 56, is a mental health worker working for WYN Health. He was born at Mt Theo.

I SEE a lot of these young people putting efforts in their jobs, and they do big things and good things for this community. They work with programs like Jaru Pirrjirdi, [strong voices, strong law] and with Warlpiri Media and with the Mt Theo Program. They used to be sniffing a lot, and then after that that's all changing and they're all working. They are looking forward to work more for Aboriginal communities, for ourselves and for old people and for the babies and the mothers and grandmothers, uncles and old grandfathers. In my young days it was different to what it is now. We had a hard time in our days. Now

it's been changing and changing.

IN Yuendumu we really don't get together as a family, as a Warlpiri group and start talking to ourselves. Like, especially a men's group don't come together, they always get out of community and go somewhere else. There's only a few of us that get together and talk about this community and how we're going to make it better ... how we're going to organise, y'know, bring our people back to talk about the land, the tribal and to become traditional. How are we going to bring Yuendumu back? And how are we going to look after Yuendumu? How are we going to manage our young people? Trying to start teaching them, looking after them, taking care of them and teach them the both

ways. They're getting more training from Europeans and they don't get much from their Aboriginal people, like from the cultural side. We don't talk to these young boys, young boys and probably young girls. The only time they get a chance is when they go out on bush trips. If Aboriginal people get together, then that might strengthen us. Get together as a whole tribe and, y'know, and sit out somewhere out in the business camp or wherever and start thinking about training young boys and girls. In my days my father took me everywhere. Not in the school days. He used to take me out bush maybe for one week out in the country. Some young people don't know their grandfather's land yet because they don't go out much.



**Missing out:** Cecil Johnson worries about young people losing touch