

# Mediaportal Report

05/11/2007

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▶ **Some of the changes are good and some are bad'**

Australian, 05/11/07, General News, Page 18  
By: None

It's (the intervention) sudden, and it should have proper planning. In a way it's really hard to understand them they just came by force.

**Keywords:** Aboriginal(1), abuse(1), child(1), kids(1), Yuendumu(2)

Clip Ref: **00031002018**

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Type: News Item  
Photo: No

▶ **They have stripped our council of any power'**

Australian, 05/11/07, General News, Page 18  
By: None

I want kids to come to school every day so they can learn, and when they finish maybe they should do a little bit of training and maybe study too, like, plumbing, electrician. Maybe planting trees around the community and clean up **Yuendumu**, so they can be properly trained to look after everything.

**Keywords:** Aboriginal(1), CDEP(4), childcare(3), houses(4), housing(1), Yuendumu(4)

Clip Ref: **00031002015**

1114 words  
Type: News Item  
Photo: No

▶ **Those doctors and nurses. . . they really helped out'**

Australian, 05/11/07, General News, Page 18  
By: None

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

**Keywords:** Aboriginal(1), families(1), Government(4), Welfare(2), Yuendumu(5)

Clip Ref: **00031002014**

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Type: News Item  
Photo: Yes

▶ **Parents are confused and sad... left out, betrayed'**

Australian, 05/11/07, General News, Page 18  
By: None

When things are working with kardiya and yapa it's done respectfully, respecting the yapa and doing the right thing. Not for yapa, or kardiya to kardiya, to not listen to yapa and just do their own thing.

**Keywords:** Yuendumu(3)

Clip Ref: **00031002019**

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Type: News Item  
Photo: No

▶ **Pollies told of intervention concerns**

Australian, 05/11/07, General News, Page 18

By: Jessica Jeeves

Clip Ref: 00031002013

603 words

Type: News Item

Photo: Yes

Yuendumu has been subject to the attentions of federal politicians over recent weeks, with separate visits from Labor member for Lingiari **Warren Snowdon** and the Coalition's **Senator Nigel Scullion**. **Snowdon** visited on October 24, attending a meeting of Warlpin elders from Yuendumu and surrounding areas.

**Keywords:** Aboriginal(2), Aboriginals(1), Communities(1), community(3), Families(1), Indigenous(4), Nigel(1), Scullion(2), Senator(1), Snowdon(3), Warren(1)



NEVILLE JAPANGARDI POULSON (COBRA)

## 'Some of the changes are good and some are bad'

NEVILLE Poulson has over 30 years' experience as a teacher and is known locally as Cobra for his love of the Cobra car. Poulson has been a co-ordinator for the Warlukurlangu Aboriginal Artists Gallery at Yuendumu, as well as a park ranger in the Tanami area and at Telegraph Station in Alice Springs. He is a member of the Baptist Church congregation and was recently the President of the Baptist Union of NT.

IT'S (the intervention) sudden, and it should have proper planning. In a way it's really hard to understand them — they just came by force. Like when Captain Cook came into this land of Australia he just forced himself in. This intervention thing is really the same thing. They just came in and did what they want to do. This Government didn't have organisation and didn't have planning of how to do it. Some (changes) are good and some are bad.

Bad side is the money side — Centrelink will hold some money for yapa. Half of their money will go towards purchase orders. It's a funny idea, it goes back — way back — to the '60s where people used to go not with money but with tickets to get their rations — flour, tea and sugar. Aboriginal people, we are going forward. We know all the banking side and to do it like Europeans. Some of the people — yapa from Yuendumu — they are living interstate and they live side-by-side with kardiya neighbours. They pay rent and water, and they go to the shop and save money and they're well off. Doing this — cutting the money half and half — is really bad because it goes back to blackfella. This Government should treat us

good — wisely you know.

Another part is, in a way, all the things came up because of child abuse problems. They're cutting money off and taking money off from yapa and putting leases on. You can't do that in pastoral lease — telling kardiya "I'm putting my lease here — you get off the land". You can't do that — you have to go to court for that. You have to do it properly.

I think they can't understand (connection to country). They think that we think like Europeans — but we're different people and we think different and we want to live like this. We don't want foreigners to push us around.

They shouldn't bring army. We never done anything and nothing happened here and we saw the army here. It's a good idea for kids to go to school and learn more and more education and give us more money and more work — jobs — that's a good idea. Developing communities proper way, that's good. I think this Government has done good, too. They want to see yapa get a proper job, like anyone else — I agree on that. When I look at bad way and good way, I look at balance good way — this Government is focused on yapa because they want to help, which is good. But they've come in force.

THE permit system must stay. I'm strong about that one. Without land we're just lost. We need the land. It's like in Burma, their Government is taking up all the forest trees, rainforest trees, and those monkeys — orangutan ones — in a few years time orangutan never have those trees anymore to live on. It's like that, if they take

land away - we'll have nothing.

RECONCILIATION is walking together forward. You don't look at the bad things about it, this world is spinning — we go forward. We don't look at the bad things. Let's be friends, people make mistakes, we're just people and we can fix it up by smiling and working together I believe.

I reckon it's (reconciliation) happening, I can see it. In my experience, when I go to hospital I look at kardiya nurses, I reckon they're gentle, helpful — why would you hate people for that? When you go to the shop you got smiling kardiya wanting to serve you when you buy things. On this planet you got nice people, kardiya or whatever — I don't have a thing against them.

Working together — respecting one another, you know. If you in an office you don't look at him "he's a blackfella" or whitefella, he don't talk about it — you know. Sharing together, live together — not only white people, I'm talking about Chinese, Japanese, Spanish, French, African — live together, happy. That's what I believe, strongly.



**Togetherness:** Neville Poulson believes in harmony



# 'They have stripped our council of any power'

NANCY NAPURRULA OLDFIELD AND WENDY BAARDA

NANCY Oldfield has been a teacher at Yuendumu CEC for nearly 30 years. She teaches grades 1 and 2. Nancy was involved in the development of the Warlpiri language program and was born at Mt Allen, near Yuendumu. Wendy Baarda has lived in Yuendumu since 1973 and worked as a teacher for 30 years. She's now retired. Her children attended Yuendumu school and now her grandchildren do.

OLDFIELD: I want kids to come to school every day so they can learn, and when they finish maybe they should do a little bit of training and maybe study too, like, plumbing, electrician. Maybe planting trees around the community and clean up Yuendumu, so they can be properly trained to look after everything.

BAARDA: People used to work here, a long time ago — they did all the building and the plumbing and looked after the community and worked for the cattle project and mining company and the shops — they worked in everything. Now, nearly all the work is done by outside contractors. People have been pushed aside, they haven't had any role in managing or running or working in their own community. If they could change that pattern, that would be really good. Centrelink has interviewed everybody and asked them what jobs they would like to do or what training they would like, what their interests are. Most people here, no one's ever asked them that before, they just fill in their forms for them and expect everyone here to do nothing. So maybe they're starting on a bit of change.

They've postponed Centrelink closing down until next March so that's good, because CDEP employs 60 people here and there's not 60 jobs straightaway to put those people into. I think CDEP here is working pretty well and it's a stupid idea to stop it, when there is something for people to do. CDEP is the one thing that does employ people. A lot of organisations depend on CDEP workers too, like childcare. The intervention people went to childcare and said "how many workers have you got?". They've got 11 yapa workers, and they said "oh, you can only have six".

And that made people upset because some people have got to lose their job. And, also, not so many children can come, they'll have to turn mothers and children away. They want people to work — well how can those girls work if there's not enough places? So that's a backward one.

The housing one: they're putting up eight new houses, but they haven't asked people where they want those houses, and they haven't asked what sort of house do they want, and they haven't asked which way they should face — or anything about them.

OLDFIELD: They should ask the person who is getting the house which area do you want your house to be in? Maybe north, south, west or east. They should ask those people which side of Yuendumu town. It's not yapa people (installing the houses) — it's kardiya.

Maybe we should have yapa, or someone to train yapa people to look after houses. Mildred wants to have a house because she's been living with her parents for a long time and she's got three kids, so she wants to move. Kardiya people, kardiya kids, they move out when they're 18.

OLDFIELD: Mt Theo's working well, with yapa and kardiya working together, it's really good.

BAARDA: (They've got) lots of yapa employed, more yapa than white people and Warlukurlangu (art centre) — same, lots of yapa, only a few white people.

OLDFIELD: But at school, only a few yapa working there.

BAARDA: Mostly white people. It used to be the other way around. The same at the clinic, they used to have lots of yapa, now they only have a few. It's because they have made the courses too hard — and the literacy-based courses are all in English and people have to pass those courses to stay employed.

But those people have other skills that are really important. The clinic struggles with no yapa people, when there's old ladies who hardly speak English, they (non-yapa staff) can't explain to them how they've got to take this medicine or why they take it — so they have a much bigger role than just what you learn on a literacy-based course, and it's the same in

school.

The communication between Nancy and her kids is so much better than between a white teacher and those young kids. But the people who do the accreditations or make the hurdles for what you can do — they're not valuing yapa skills, they're not valuing their language and their cultural knowledge and their knowledge of the people and the community and all the families of all the people who are the clients for those institutions.

You don't need any literacy to do yapa paintings, and you can't replace those people with white people! And Mt Theo, they know that communication between young people who are at risk is much better with yapa people than with white supervisors. And aged care realise that too, and childcare — they need people who speak the same language.

OLDFIELD: (Reconciliation is) recognising yapa people, Aboriginal people, because a long time ago they took yapa kids away and those kids don't know their parents and some, they passed away, and maybe their parents passed away here and didn't see their kids or grandkids. Government should say sorry to yapa people.

BAARDA: They're talking about putting it in the Constitution that yapa were the first people here in the country, that yapa have a special place, they can't be just pushed aside.

Baarda: They used to talk about a treaty and I think a treaty would be such a good idea. There's actually no real agreement ever been made between yapa and white people over this land, not over any of the land — people here have never agreed to give land away — they've just had it taken over.

BAARDA: I think it's important for the community to have their own council with real decision making power — as it used to be. But they have stripped our council of any power and it's white people making all the decisions, and when yapa don't have any say in it they don't engage in it — things don't work well. And also the men feel very bad when they just get pushed out like that.



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OLDFIELD: We want a really strong council, man and women together. People who are living here who don't go away.



**Spurned:** Nancy Oldfield, left, and Wendy Baarda say community views are not being sought



CONNIE NAKAMARRA FISHER AND M.

## ‘Those doctors and nurses . . . they really helped out’

CONNIE Fisher was born in Yuendumu in 1954 and has lived here all her life, she has three children, six grandchildren and one great-grand daughter. She lives with her husband, daughter, grand-daughter and great grand-daughter. Marlene Robertson is a media worker with skills in video and audio editing. She has also worked at the Yuendumu School. Marlene is Connie's daughter. She has two children and is grandmother to a two-year-old.

*Marlene translating for Connie*

CONNIE: When Government tries to change things around, yapa people — we're really worried about how they're going to do things. They came to Yuendumu and they talked about changing, they was trying to do it their way but people at Yuendumu kept saying 'No'.

For Government people to help yapa people better way, is to help sick kids and not to take them away. Yuwayi. Yapa and kardiya should work together and help yapa people to look after sick kids. That's how it should work.

When those doctors and nurses

from Government people came to Yuendumu they really helped out with kids with ear problems, sore throats and all that. But mothers were a bit concerned — a bit frightened, because they thought they were going to take their kids away. But they were here only to help little kids.

Mothers and fathers were really worried. What happened long ago back in the '60s and '70s, they didn't return the kids. That's why they were a bit frightened.

In the early days they took the kids away. Some they took them away for good, some they returned to their parents. I think that's a good way when they bring the children back. When they're adults now, it's good to know their families and their backgrounds — better for them.

Welfare days, long time back in '60s, they used to only have little bit of food, they used to get a little bit of rations from the ration store. That was a bit hard for them to get food, so welfare people had to take their kids away. This time Aboriginal people want to fight

for their kids and to look after them properly.

MARLENE: When this Government intervention started we got really scared, you know. I thought they was going to take the kids away. That's why yapa are going to start fighting for their own rights. It's been taken before but this time they're going to stand and fight for it now. Yuwayi. I think it's better to listen to yapa people — to hear what's coming from their heart, what really is good for them. I think it's good to listen to yapa people.



**Concerned:** Connie Fisher, standing, with daughter Marlene



DONOVAN JAMPIJINPA RICE

## ‘Parents are confused and sad . . . left out, betrayed’

DONOVAN Rice is 33 and has lived in Yuendumu all his life. He has four children and is a board member of the Mt Theo Substance Misuse Program. He is a leader of a Christian group in Yuendumu, a musician and music producer.

WHEN things are working with kardiya and yapa it's done respectfully, respecting the yapa and doing the right thing. Not for yapa, or kardiya to kardiya, to not listen to yapa and just do their own thing. In this, like in this intervention thing, it should have been worked out before — but it's come suddenly and we've got to deal with it. Most of the yapa in the community feel they haven't got a right to say about what changes have been made because it's already been done, passed down in Canberra. It's a bit of a rush really, yuwayi, like a big tidal wave coming over Yuendumu, sweeping things away.

People don't know what's going to happen next. It looks like the Government is just doing what they want to do. Parents are a bit confused and sad . . . they feel left out, betrayed, yuwa, because they haven't been asked first and told in the right way what's happening. This intervention, it came upon us quite rushed. Confusion, fear — specially for the old people. They have fears on how to feed their children and grandchildren, how to look after their family better because changes have been made to the

Centrelink payment system now, it looks like it's wound back 50 years.

The only way we can move forward is if we remove, revoke, this intervention altogether and start afresh on how to go about working things out properly, done in a respectful way with yapa instead of Government coming and showing us what needs to happen and changes, without us having a say in the changes that are being made.

It should have been done four years ago, gradually building up, getting this relationship happening between yapa and kardiya. Respect is the main thing for yapa — because if you don't have respect you can't make anything happen. You gotta win respect of yapa people first — that goes with yapa people and their relationships too. Respect is the main thing in yapa communities all over Australia. The way they're going now they don't care about what we say, how we feel. It's all done at the government level down in Canberra.

They're trying to help yapa people — but in their way, kardiya way, instead of sitting down building up a relationship, doing it respectfully — the way they've gone about doing things is just making people feel left out. Worthless and all that.

ALL yapa are still waiting for Mr Howard to say sorry to yapa but I don't think that's going to

happen. That's important, so relationships can be made right, bring healing towards yapa and kardiya and we can start back anew, afresh and start doing things the right way — with respect. It would make a big difference in every community — in the government and community levels. (They) just really need to spend some time together, yapa and kardiya.

(People need to) sit down here, maybe come and stay, spend time in the community for a couple of years. Walk a mile in our shoes, you know, take a walk. Feel how we feel, then they'll know what we're feeling and saying if they only spend time with the yapa people. But it's too late for all that now. If we're going to move forward we need to sit down together and work things out the proper way — the right way, with respect towards yapa people, that's what it's all about. Come in and spend some time with yapa.



**Progress:** Donovan Rice says only respect will bring results



# Pollies told of intervention concerns

Jessica Jeeves

**Y**UENDUMU has been subject to the attentions of federal politicians over recent weeks, with separate visits from Labor member for Lingiari Warren Snowden and the Coalition's Senator Nigel Scullion.

Snowden visited on October 24, attending a meeting of Warlpiri elders from Yuendumu and surrounding areas. The elders expressed concerns about aspects of the intervention, in particular about the newly drawn boundaries designating the area around Yuendumu as government land for the next five years.

They said that they had not been consulted about the Government's boundary and as a result sensitive areas, including a men's law area and a Sorry business camp, have been included inside the boundary and will now be exempt from permit regulation.

Their concerns come a week after taskforce chief Major-General Chalmers said that despite the permit changes "sacred sites remain off-limits".

Scullion, accusing Snowden of

"fear mongering", visited a few days later to say he was keen to allay concerns.

On October 30 Major Chalmers and senior public servant Brian Stacey visited the community and held a well-attended meeting.

Some transportable houses are going up in the community. However they are unrelated to the intervention — they were ordered some time ago.

A Department of Workplace Relations (DEWR) team has visited the childcare centre to assess transitioning some local staff off current CDEP positions into waged childcare worker positions to be funded by the Department of Families, Communities and Indigenous Affairs. The childcare centre caters has up to 60 children a day and has 11 local staff members, who often work up to 20 unpaid hours (on top of CDEP hours) each fortnight.

This week, community members talk about how they feel about the way the intervention has been rolled out so far. They

also speak about non-indigenous people and indigenous people working together, and the issue of reconciliation.

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.

All interviews conducted by PAW Media and Communications, Yuendumu

## WARLPIRI LEXICON

### Warlpiri and Warlpiri-English

**Yapa:** Aboriginal people

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

**Lawa:** Nothing.

**Welfare days:** The period before welfare payments were paid directly to individuals as cash, when instead individuals received rations such as flour, tobacco and blankets.

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





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**FACTFILE**

■ **The Northern Territory Aboriginals Act 1910** made the Chief Protector 'legal guardian of every Aboriginal and every half-caste child up to the age of 18 years', whether or not the child had parents or other living relatives.

■ **The Chief Protector** was also given power to confine 'any Aboriginal or

half-caste' to a reserve or Aboriginal institution.

■ **The Chief Protector** was further empowered to assume 'the care, custody or control of any Aboriginal or half caste if in his opinion it is necessary or desirable in the interests of the Aboriginal or half caste for him to do so'. These powers were retained until 1957.

■ **The Aborigines Ordinance 1918**

extended the Chief Protector's control over Aboriginal females, who were under total control from the moment they were born until they died unless married and living with a husband 'who is substantially of European origin'. To marry a non-indigenous man they had to obtain the permission of the Chief Protector. They could be taken from their families at any age and placed

in an institution. They could be sent out to work at a young age and never receive wages. They had no right of guardianship over their own children who could be similarly taken from them. Male Aborigines fared little better except that they could be released from guardianship at 18.

*Source: Bringing Them Home report, HREOC*

**HEART LAND**



Good sports: A game of football at a Yuendumu sport weekend

Picture: Renee Nowytarger