



Tjuwanpa Outstation Resources Centre Aboriginal Corporation

Introduction to History and Culture of Tjuwanpa Outstation Resources Centre Aboriginal Corporation *(largely sourced and adapted from Annie Kennedy's 2008 submission to the NT Govt Outstations Policy)*

The 37 outstations serviced by Tjuwanpa are home to Western Aranda kin groups. They are scattered across some 4500 square kilometres of ranges and plains that surround Ntaria Community, which was established as the Hermannsburg mission settlement. Although six of the outstations in the western region require travel of an hour or more, 31 are within a 20 to 40 minute drive to the Tjuwanpa Resource Centre which is situated approximately 2km from Ntaria.

Despite the encroachment of pastoral leases, Western Aranda families have maintained constant occupation of their lands, in large part as a result of the granting of a lease to the Finke River Mission in the late 1800s. The combination of Government policy and mission interventions over the next 100 years resulted in the settlement of Western Aranda families in and around the Hermannsburg Mission. In 1974, changes in both mission philosophy and Federal Government arrangements for Indigenous people resulted in the movement of large numbers of people from Hermannsburg back to their traditional land. Between 1974 and 1977 this movement saw 27 outstations settled, with the population of Hermannsburg over that time dropping dramatically from around 650 to 150 residents.

Western Aranda is spoken as the first language throughout the lands. Traditional cultural and spiritual practices linked to the land are a part of everyday life and outstation land is fundamental to Aboriginal identity. Family relationships and responsibilities also underpin every daily interaction. People talk of the peace and quiet on the outstation. For some the outstation is a place where they feel free to be who they are. For others, particularly women, the outstation is a safe and healthy place for themselves and their families; where they can avoid the risks of alcohol, drugs and gambling that they encounter in Hermannsburg and Alice Springs.

Since the incorporation of the Resource Centre in 1984, government grants for outstation housing, water reticulation, and electricity and employment services have been channelled through Tjuwanpa. Government revenues underpin the local economy and service delivery arrangements.

While 42 outstations have been registered as members of the Corporation at various times, At the time of writing there were 39 members, with 37 serviced from Tjuwanpa. Of the 37 serviced outstations, 30 are permanently occupied, 5 are not occupied and two are inhabited intermittently. This figures vary from time to time.

The outstations are accessed by a 600 kilometre network of dirt roads which are maintained by the Resource Centre as funding permits. Tjuwanpa also services 200 kilometres of water

lines and 15 major bore sites. Between 2004 and 2005, Federal Government funding enabled power to be reticulated to 19 outstations from the Hermannsburg solar grid. Eight bores reticulating water to more than 20 outstations were also electrified. Tjuwanpa also services 17 outstation diesel or solar energy systems which power both bores and domestic systems. In addition, Tjuwanpa is responsible for the repair and maintenance of outstation housing stock and the management of septic tanks and rubbish.

The division between Ntaria and the outstations has become increasingly arbitrary, as family members move between Ntaria and the outstations, and much of Tjuwanpa's service delivery extends to residents of Ntaria. The 2011 census puts the combined population of Ntaria and the Tjuwanpa outstations at 828. This population is highly mobile. Deaths, health needs, children's schooling, family disputes, work opportunities or imprisonment of a family member can mean that families move for weeks, months or in several cases, for many years. Funerals and cultural business, particularly the men's cultural business which takes place in the hot summer months, can see the area's population swell by hundreds of people as families travel in from surrounding areas.

For many years Tjuwanpa managed a large Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) of between 100 to 300 participants, resident on outstations and in Ntaria. CDEP has been central to the outstation economy and has underpinned Tjuwanpa's service delivery arrangements. In 2013, the Federal Government introduced changes to the way CDEP and Job Services were delivered, and Tjuwanpa was successful in gaining the contract for delivery of the Remote Jobs and Communities Program (RJCP) – now known as the Community Development Program (CDP). The footprint for this program extends beyond Tjuwanpa and Ntaria to include Wallace Rockhole, Areyonga, King's Canyon and Iwuputaka Outstations.

The Tjuwanpa Men Rangers group is managed by the Central Land Council, and developed from Tjuwanpa's CDEP program into a fully funded project. Similarly a Women Rangers group developed from a CDEP project to a fully funded project. This group has been managed by Tjuwanpa since 2013.

During 2012, CDEP extension funding enabled the construction of a Women's Centre in Tjuwanpa which incorporates many facilities including a commercial kitchen, a crèche, classroom and office space, a well-equipped gym and accommodation. The Centre provides many training and development opportunities for women from Hermannsburg and the outstations.

Tjuwanpa funded the building of a camp on its lease during 2012, to accommodate workers brought in for a twelve-month period to upgrade housing at Hermannsburg as part of the Federal Government's SIHIP program. This provided an opportunity for Tjuwanpa to develop its commercial activities in delivering food and cleaning services. The camp continues to be upgraded and provides an opportunity for Tjuwanpa to provide accommodation for workers completing short term contracts, jobseekers and students from other communities to undertake training and work experience at Tjuwanpa and Ntaria, and possibly school groups and other groups requiring accommodation into the future. This social enterprise has the potential to develop Tjuwanpa's capacity to become less dependant on government funding into the future.

During 2013, Tjuwanpa was successful in being nominated as the Facilitating Partner for

implementation of the Stronger Communities for Children (SCfC) program for Ntaria. This program seeks to engage and work with the local community to improve the wellbeing and safety of children, youth and families, and to build community capacity in this area.

Tjuwanpa hosts a Centrelink agency for Commonwealth Government income and family support payments, and prepares and administers a range of small government project grants for community activities and has a computer room that is available for residents to access internet services.

Tjuwanpa plays a critical role in the daily life of residents that is unfunded by governments. It acts as the distribution point for mail; manages utilities payments on behalf of households; assists individuals with police and court matters; provides emergency support to families in times of illness or death; brokers contact for residents with government agencies; provides Western Aranda interpreter assistance and deals with the host of requests and grievances characteristic of a small community. Government, business and non-government agencies with business in the area rely on Tjuwanpa as an essential contact point for the outstations. It hosts visiting researchers and official government visitors, provides data and information to a range of government agencies and disseminates information about upcoming events, meetings and consultations.

Tjuwanpa continues to be driven by the Western Aranda community to grow and respond to ongoing changes in the government policy environment, in such a way that enables the organisation to play a pivotal role in meeting the needs of its members.