

**STATUTORY DECLARATION**

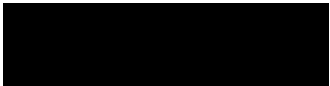
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I, Warren Williams of Yuendumu solemnly and sincerely declare as follows:

**Introduction**

1. My name is Warren Williams. I was born and raised in Yuendumu. I went to school here until year 5, and then went to Darwin to attend Kormilda High School for 3 years. I then completed years 10 and 11 at Darwin High School before returning to Yuendumu.
2. Apart from the years that I went away for schooling, I have lived in Yuendumu all my life.
3. When I was young, I married Pamela Walker. When I was about 21 I separated from her and married Alice Walker. Pamela and Alice were sisters of Mary Walker, who was Kumanjayi Walker's grandmother. In western terms I am his great uncle by marriage. Culturally I was his grandfather.
4. When Kumanjayi was growing up in Yuendumu with Leanne Brown he would come over to visit often. My family and the Brown family are traditional owners of the same area, Mt Theo. Culturally we are brothers and sisters.

**Work in Yuendumu**

5. When I returned from Darwin as a young fella in the 1970's I got a job as a truck driver through the old Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA). I did lots of things for them, but mainly I was working for them as a truck driver. I would live in Yuendumu but would drive out to communities. We had three communities outside Yuendumu that we were dealing with: Jili, Nginyirrpalangu, and Nyirripi. The old superintendent of the DAA who was a white fella Roger Style told me that he saw potential in me. He told me that the DAA was not for me and that I should get a job at the school.
  6. In the early 1980's I started working as a teacher at the Yuendumu school where I began as a teacher's assistant. Over the next few years I obtained my Bachelor of Teaching from Batchelor College and became a full teacher with the Department of Education. I stayed working in the school for the next 30 years. I taught all sorts of things to the students and during most of that time every class had an aboriginal teacher in it. When I finished in 2000, I was the assistant principal.
  7. After I left the school, I was employed as a Corrections Officer looking after people that were based here in the community, and had parole or home detention orders. My job was to make sure that they complied with their orders, and that they stayed out of trouble.
  8. Because I was in community and knew them and their families, I would see them a lot and could speak to them to see if they needed any help. If they were not doing well, I could also get involved to help them and their families before things got really bad and they got in trouble again.
  9. A lot of the young fellas I was supervising had work orders, and had to go out doing work that was arranged by the Community Council. They could be doing all sorts of things like clearing up rubbish, watering trees or working in the community garage. I didn't have any real trouble with them, and lots of them stayed on in their jobs even once their court orders were finished.
  10. After that I worked with the Central Land Council. I was a field officer based in Yuendumu. I was in this position for about three years. I serviced Yuendumu, Nyirripi, Willowra and Mount Dennison. It was a great job.
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11. I am a current Deputy Chair of the Central Land Council, a Councillor on the Central Desert Regional Council and a member of the Southern Tanami Kurdiji Mediation team. As a mediator, my role is to help resolve conflict between community members.

### **Issues and solutions**

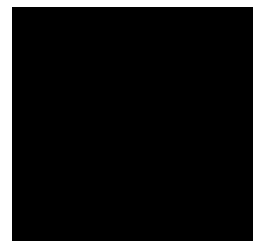
12. I want to talk a bit about some issues in Yuendumu and some things that I think we could do to fix those issues. We need to bring this community up again. We need to put something in place so there is safety. We need to bring institutions into community.

### **Empowering Yuendumu to deliver basic services**

13. One big issue is that all the services and skilled tradespeople are brought in from outside Yuendumu, most of the time from Alice Springs.
14. When I worked for the Council, it was actually working by itself. The Council was run by people in Yuendumu, not people far away. We had our own rubbish service to pick up the rubbish. We had firewood collectors. The Council ran a housing company called 'Yuendumu Housing' which owned a lot of the houses in the community. It employed a lot of people. It did repairs. So if a window got broken or someone broke in and damaged a door, a local person could come and fix it. As long as you were paying your rent, there would be no charge. If someone had issues with too many people being in a house, they could go to the Council to talk about it.
15. Because the Council could do these little things in Yuendumu, there were local Yapa people who were trained and who had good skills. That meant that Yapa people were working in Yuendumu and fixing problems in Yuendumu for themselves. It meant that people had good jobs. It meant that Yapa people felt strong and had authority.
16. In around 2008 they got rid of the Council and replaced it with a "Super Shire", the Central Desert Regional Council. That Super Shire is too big. It goes all the way from Western Australia to Queensland. Since they got rid of the Council, it seems like every time something breaks, they need to bring in someone from town to fix it. We wait and wait. We don't have our own equipment anymore. We don't have our own rubbish truck. Because we don't have our own equipment there are less Yapa people with skills in Yuendumu who can fix things in Yuendumu.

### **Local Community Corrections Officers**

17. Another issue is that I think Corrections should have someone in community. When I was a corrections officer, I lived in Yuendumu. I had to go around town and check on people on orders. Because I knew people, and people knew me, I knew what was going on in their lives and they would talk to me. There was a relationship and trust. Now I think the Corrections Officers come from Alice Springs. They come in for Court but otherwise we don't really see them. People on orders don't see them much, and don't have a relationship with them. The young fellas have WYDAC to help them when they get in trouble, but there isn't anything much to help the adults.



## **Treatment and Rehab**

18. We need institutions in community to help people who get in trouble but who also need help with things, like drinking. We have been asking for a rehab here. That way people can stay away from drinking, but also can be closer to family.

## **CDEP**

19. I also think that CDEP should be brought back. I thought CDEP was good for the community. It meant people got paid for doing jobs in Yuendumu. CDEP workers used to clean the streets in Yuendumu. We had a truck and a front-end loader. The place was really clean back then. CDEP also had a relationship with Corrections. The Court could make you do that work. They could make you work with any organisation in town.

## **Policing**

20. In terms of policing, I think we would all prefer police who live and work in the community. We don't want that IRT or other police who have trained in the army. We want police who want to be a part of the community and to make it better. Not just come in to arrest people. I think that the local police in Yuendumu are good people, and they make an effort to get to know the people and do the right thing. But I do think that there could be more communication with the Elders, which I think would be better for the community and the police.
21. I remember that there was a police officer here in the 1980s who would take some of the big drinkers out bush hunting. He would bring each of them just 2 or 3 confiscated beers, and would try to show them how to drink in moderation. I also remember another police officer in the 1990s who was the coach of the local basketball team. These things helped to build trust and relationships between police and the community.
22. When new police start, I think that police should be taught cultural awareness and about Yuendumu in particular. In the old days, when we had police who came out the the community they would come and look for the old people. They would introduce themselves and explain that they were the new police officers. Then from time to time they would drop by and say hello. This created respect and trust. This doesn't seem to happen as much anymore.

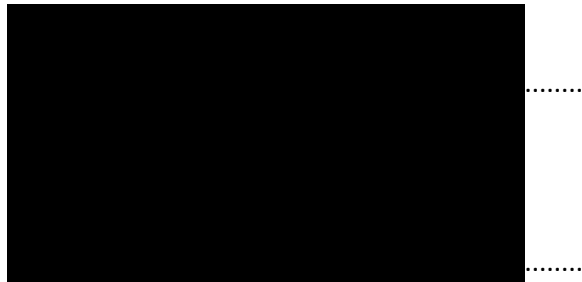
## **Activities and programs for kids**

23. I think we need more activities for kids. We need to keep these kids occupied, to stop them getting bored. It's easy for us old fellas. I've got my books and can sit and read. I can go hunting. But kids don't seem to go hunting. Some parents don't have their own vehicles. So some of those old bush skills are being lost. We need people to teach them these traditions and customs.
24. I think that if you had things in place for the kids, maybe it would settle them down. It's in the early hours (dark) when they act up. So you've go to do things then. Maybe you could do a cinema, or more sports. Or a swimming carnival. Maybe you could do a BMX track. Or more music programs. We've asked the Granite Mines Affected Areas Aboriginal Corporation (GMAAAC) if we can have a studio for music here because there's lots of talent. That way we could start to train kids up in music early and get interested in doing something.
25. Whatever it is, it's got to start when the kids are young and they need good teachers, encouragement and resources.

This declaration is true and I know it is an offence to make a statutory declaration knowing it is false in a material particular.

Declared at Yuendumu this 9<sup>th</sup> day of August 2022 by Warren Williams

Witnessed by:



Christian Hearn

Solicitor