

NINTIRINGTJAKU PROFILE

IRENE NANGALA WALUNGURRU (KINTORE) COMMUNITY



I was born at Haast Bluff, Ikuntji. I grew up at Papunya, and I went to school at Papunya. I used to play softball and basketball, and we travelled all around for sports games and sports weekends. My father took me to Docker River, and I kept going to school there until I was seventeen. When I came back from Docker River I went to Batchelor College in Darwin to do an Art and Craft training course. Then I worked in the old store at Papunya, and I worked a little bit in banking, keeping people's Commonwealth Bank accounts.

Then in 1972 I got married. We stayed at Papunya, then we moved to Docker River. We lived with my husband's family and my own family. Then later on we went to Tjukurla. It was a tiny place in those days, traditional life, no houses, no store, not many people. We didn't have water on tap, just rockhole water. They used to transfer stores from Docker River to Tjukurla.

Then in 1980 I heard that people were moving to Kintore. My grandmother and grandfather walked in from that country to Haast Bluff a long time ago. That is why we are staying at Kintore now. When I first moved to Kintore I was teaching in the wind-break school. The school started in 1981, the Aboriginal teachers were me and Narabri,

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with Neil Murray and Jeff Holcombe coming over from Papunya. It wasn't a proper school building. When it was raining we used to hide the books, cover up with groundsheets. It was hard for the kids to sit around, it was windy and dusty. When we built the school building my husband and I used to camp nearby to make sure everybody looked after it.

I was reading and writing English but I didn't know how to read my own language. Ken Hanson was teaching us to read the Pintupi-Luritja language for the Bible, from there I was one of the first people to learn to write my own language.

I had five sisters and one brother, it's sad there are only two of us left. I have one adopted daughter, and I look after all the family, young people and old ones.

I am a strong woman to be a councillor on Walungurru Community Council at Kintore. I was the first woman Chairperson for Walungurru Council, and the only woman to be chairperson. I was Ngintaka Women's Council chairperson, Ngintaka Council runs the Women's Centre for Kintore. I was ATSIC Regional Councillor for a long time. I was at the start up of Waltja Tjutanku Palyapayi and I am still Waltja Chairperson. I am on the Statehood Committee and Local Government committees. I got strong from listening to other people and it made me really proud, from listening and from talking up for other people, not only for my family or just for Kintore, but for Aboriginal people everywhere.

I was with Waltja at the start of planning for Nintiringtjaku work, to help get good training and research on communities. I come to all the training workshops for Nintiringtjaku workers. I will look after trainers and researchers if they come to Kintore. I will help them to do good work.

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