

Ntaria youth get their place for the future

AFTER seven years of planning and preparation, the young people of Ntaria can now enjoy sports, music and regular discos at a new youth centre.

The community opened the facilities in May during the Ntaria sports weekend. An all-star band featuring Sammy Butcher from the Warumpi Band and Golden Guitarist Warren H Williams performed while Bayden Williams and Edward Rontji christened the new stage.

Youth program team member Nicholas Williams has worked in the space since it opened and said it has become a positive focal point in the town.

"It gives all the youth a space to hang out, they know they got this area that's theirs," said Nicholas.

"The youth activities were at the school before and closer to teacher's houses, they'd get bored and muck around there. It's good we've got the new hall near the oval to keep kids away from residential area and there's a disco every Friday if all the kids behave. We have after school care and children have to behave there or else they don't get rewarded with the discos."

Before the new youth centre was built, youth activities were run in a small building in the heritage precinct, which had poor ventilation and was run-down. The Central Australian Youth Link Up Service (CAYLUS) started working with people in Ntaria towards a new youth centre in 2005.



The community used a grant from the Aboriginals Benefit Account (ABA) to establish the site and resurface and cover the basketball court (pictured above) at the centre of the facility.

The federal government then committed the rest of the funding which paid for the construction of the hall, ablutions and change rooms.



CAYLUS holds a lease on the building and makes it available to the youth program and other agencies.

Importantly, the government also contributed 10 years of operational funding so that Ntaria can keep it in good working order well into the future.

To make the space feel even more like theirs, local school students designed metal panels with artist Alison Hittman that have been mounted around the building (pictured left and right).

They include a landscape sketch of the nearby ranges as the centrepiece, painted by teenage girls from the school.

The Hermannsburg Pottery have also been working



with Alice Springs designer Elliot Rich on installing durable outdoor cement seating.

Nicholas said everyone enjoys the activities on offer and even visitors take notice of the new space.

"A lot of the activities are sports based: basketball, football, softball and sometimes cricket," he said.

"We have movie nights and concerts often. Sometimes the muso's use the music studio, but a lot of people from other communities, even tourists are surprised at how flash the building is."

Healthy fun: sports weekends and coming together

FOOTBALL and softball teams from nine desert communities came together for Mount Liebig's sports weekend in August.

Families young and old travelled hundreds of kilometres to enjoy healthy fun and top quality football, with Kintore (Division One) and Hermannsburg (Division Two) winning their grand finals by a few points.

The softball games were also hard fought, with Laramba winning the A grade and the local girls from Warren Creek taking home the B grade trophy.

The evening entertainment was a great success,

including gospel singers, the famous Tjintu Desert Band and local young women skilfully playing the new musical instruments from the Mt Liebig music project.

"It was Palya Lingku!" said community lease money working group member Norma Kelly.

"It was great that we used our money for this weekend and shared it with the whole community. They have new equipment to play with. I felt really proud of our young people."

Mt Liebig community members devoted \$16,500 of their community lease money to fund the sports weekend. This project was managed by

the Animparrinpi Yututju Aboriginal Women's Corporation, which supported community members to buy uniforms, sports equipment, trophies and injury prevention equipment.

"We were really happy with our sports weekend," local resident and key sports weekend organiser Melvin Malbunka said.

"There were some very strong footballers out there playing, and the standard of the competition was high. The entertainment was fun, and the girls played great music!"

BELOW LEFT TO RIGHT: Eyes to the sky as Kintore and the Saints battle in the ruck. Jordan Marshall and Marcus Wheeler race to the ball first with Marcus McDonnald tailing on the right.

