



Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara

A.B.N. 77 261 612 162

PMB 227 Umuwa via Alice Springs NT 0872

Phone: (08) 8954 8101 Fax: (08) 8954 8170

www.anangu.com.au

MEDIA RELEASE: Festival for 40th Anniversary of APY Land Rights Act postponed

30 September 2022

Plans for a rescheduled festival to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the ground-breaking Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Land Rights Act have been paused due to cultural matters and logistical complications heightened by COVID-related delays, rising costs and shortages affecting all industries.

Planning had been underway for thousands to gather in the heart of Australia on Sunday, 30 October 2022.

The festival has twice been postponed due to health concerns around COVID-19, and the decision to postpone the event for a third time was not made lightly.

The APY Executive Board had agreed on a rescheduled one-day festival at Umuwa, the administrative and services centre of the APY Lands, on 30 October 2022 from 10am.

APY Executive Board Chairperson Bernard Singer said sensitive and confidential cultural matters along with staff shortages and rising costs for food, fuel, travel and freight meant that staging a festival in one of the most remote places on the planet required a reconsideration of timing.

“We have made the difficult but necessary decision to further delay this event,” Mr Singer said.

“We understand many Anangu will be very disappointed. We sincerely hope to be in a position in coming months to undertake a further review and decide on whether to proceed with a festival.”

The 40th anniversary festival was being planned to draw together the region’s population of 3000, along with artists and official guests from across the country, in a day of traditional and contemporary performances.

The event was designed to pay tribute to those who led the land rights campaign through the 1970s and provide an opportunity to reflect on the future of the land and its people.

On the day of the 40th anniversary, on 2 October 2021, indigenous leaders in the APY Lands said it was a special day for reflection. The Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Act 1981 (SA) remains unprecedented in Australian land rights history in that it granted inalienable freehold title to its traditional Aboriginal owners. It did this by creating Anangu Pitjantjatjara (renamed Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara in 2005) as a statutory authority in which title of the land in the far north west of South Australia is vested.

Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara’s members are the traditional owners who determine, collectively, how the land is to be managed. Funding support for the festival has been committed by the state and federal governments, along with corporate sponsors.

Media enquiries: Michael Owen | +61 400 042 214 | michael@owenmediarelations.com.au



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