



Umpi Korumba office. **Below:** Umpi Korumba chairperson, Robert West, with ORIC's Lisa Hugg. **Photos:** ORIC



Finding a roof

Manager of ORIC's Communication and Research Section, Lisa Hugg, spent a week as a volunteer at Umpi Korumba Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Corporation for Housing in the outer Brisbane suburb of Zillmere. Here is her story:

I don't know the solution for homelessness but I know it's a daunting social issue and that it's about much more than not having a house.

Umpi Korumba chairperson, Robert West, explained to me that while the corporation provides crisis accommodation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, every case is different. Often people are in really dire circumstances. For example, there might be a woman with her children escaping from domestic violence, or a parent unable to hold down a job because of poor health, or a family may be struggling on a very low income.

Helping people who are—or who are about to become—homeless requires genuine engagement and a willingness to listen. It's not about statistics—it's about finding workable solutions for real people.

The staff at Umpi Korumba know this. It takes all their skill, expertise and patience. Not everyone can do it.

I was struck at the staff's detailed knowledge of crisis and community housing and, even with all this

knowledge, just how difficult it is to operate in the sector. And yet they do—they persevere. I was particularly impressed by the kind but firm way they interacted with clients—their manner always courteous and culturally appropriate.

And what did I do? I contributed my technology and design skills—for example, I set

up templates for newsletters, produced diagrams for the corporation's policy documents, and wrote and designed a general information brochure. I also put together a website design proposal for discussion at the next board meeting and created a new corporation logo. And on top of this there was the everyday business of answering phones and sorting through the clothing donations... a job that never ends!

Of Australia's homeless population about 27,000 people (25 per cent) are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



Helping out at YASS



ORIC prides itself on building strong ties with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations.

The 2013 NAIDOC event at Ngunnawal Aboriginal Corporation in Yass, New South Wales, was a great success. Seven staff from ORIC's Canberra office assisted with preparations and running the day's activities. Jobs included setting up tables and chairs, decorating the hall and helping to serve lunch to the scores of people who came through. Everyone enjoyed a great day.



Photos: ORIC

ORIC Oracle

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VOLUNTEERING

Over the years the Registrar, Anthony Beven, has lent his personal support to staff volunteering their time and skills to corporations that, from time to time, could use a helping hand.

'ORIC staff are encouraged to volunteer at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations, and many do,' says Anthony. 'They always come back with a much greater understanding of the real life challenges that corporations face each day. And in turn this helps ORIC learn how to provide better support.'



Lingarra

What's in store on the APY lands

In May 2011 the Registrar volunteered for a week at the Mimili Maku Store Aboriginal Corporation at Mimili on the APY lands. The store is managed by Outback Stores. 'I spent most of my time stacking shelves, cleaning floors and helping out with minor repairs,' says Anthony. 'It was hard work but a real insight into the challenges facing store managers and directors of a remote community store.'

In August last year Anthony spent another week on the APY lands volunteering at the Amata and Kanypi community stores, which are managed by the Mai Wiru Regional Stores Council Aboriginal Corporation. 'This time I worked in the take-away and, after some training, served customers and worked at the cash registers.'

The five APY lands stores managed by the Mai Wiru Regional Stores Council Aboriginal Corporation are owned by the communities and provide an essential service to the local Anangu people. In recent years the operation and governance of the stores have improved significantly and they now cope well with the ups and downs of doing business in a remote environment.

'Being on the APY lands has been for me a great opportunity to see first-hand the work of CATSI-registered corporations and to observe where ORIC may be able to provide extra support,' says Anthony. 'Volunteering has been personally rewarding and I would like to thank the directors and staff of the Amata and Kanypi stores for the experience.'

From go to woe

Lingarra-Ngaringman Aboriginal Corporation

Northern Territory: Lingarra is a remote homeland, 30 kilometres south of Yarralin and a little under 400 kilometres south of Katherine. During the dry season vegetation is sparse and the ground cracked and hard but during 'the wet' the surrounding creeks fill and the country is lush with new growth. Yet when the rains go on for too long flooding occurs and the small homeland is completely cut off. 'If supplies run too low the younger men have to swim the swollen creeks to get out,' says ORIC's Kerstin Styche. 'The nearest place to buy groceries is Yarralin but getting there and back, especially carrying food, is both difficult and dangerous.'

Top: The Styche family (L-R) Kerstin, Russell, Roz and Jordan. **Middle:** ORIC's Russell and Roz with TO Riley Young (and Riley's grandson). **Below:** This way Yarralin. Next stop Lingarra.



Owen Burton, chairperson of RASAC (Regional Anangu Services Aboriginal Corporation) and deputy chairperson of Amata Community Council with Anthony Beven, Registrar of Indigenous Corporations, at the Amata store and (right) at the Kanypi store.

Are your reports overdue?

Your 2012-13 reports should be lodged with the Registrar. Reports are due by 31 December each year.

DO NOT DELAY

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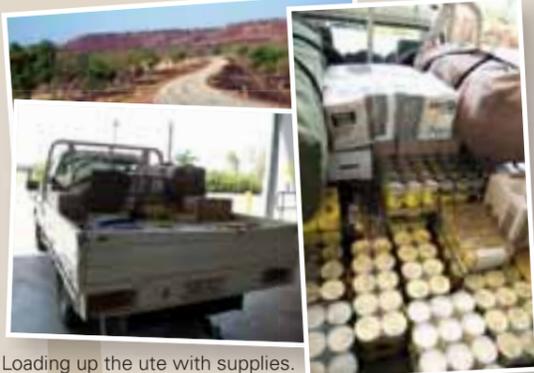
If you'd like some help just ring the Registrar's office on freecall **1800 622 431** (not free from mobiles).

Don't risk prosecution

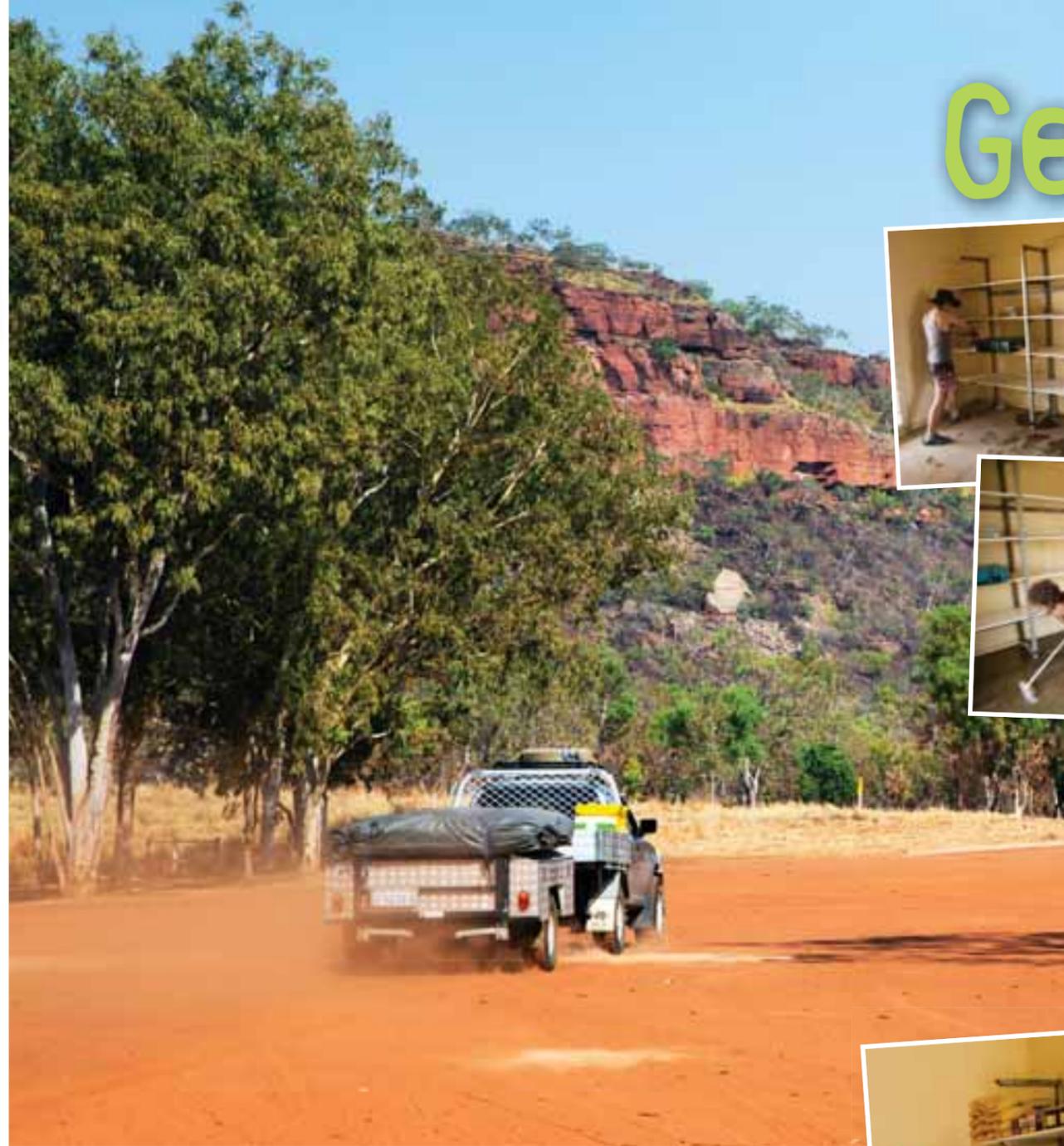
The Registrar may take legal action against your corporation if you don't lodge your reports.

Are you in breach? Make sure you are not on the **List of corporations in breach 2012-13 reporting requirements** on the ORIC website: www.oric.gov.au

Getting involved



Loading up the ute with supplies.



Sometimes choppers make food drops but more often than not families are forced to leave Lingarra during the wet to take up temporary residence at Yarralin. It's not ideal. Overcrowding can be a problem. 'And families just want to stay on the homelands,' says traditional owner Riley Young. 'We searched for another answer.'

And they found it.

Almost two years ago the traditional owners (TOs) decided to re-register their corporation under the CATSI Act and came to ORIC for help. 'We wanted to set up a "wet season only" community store,' says Riley. 'We had to get the corporation going again.'

When members of ORIC's training team visited the Northern Territory in 2012 they made a special point of meeting with the TOs on the Lingarra homelands. They helped with the re-registration process and also provided some corporate governance training.

All was on track until Lingarra-Ngaringman Aboriginal Corporation hit a roadblock common to many remote corporations—sourcing government funding. 'The problem in remote areas is that communities do not always have the know-how and means to apply for funding,' says Russell Styche from ORIC's training team. 'They're not set up with computers and such, English is rarely their first or even second language, and knowing how government funding bodies work is not easy.'

But without funding the corporation couldn't afford to stock the store.

At this point ORIC's training team took matters into its own hands. 'We knew the situation of the families on the homelands and felt we had to do something about it,' says Russell. 'We decided as a group we would do some fundraising and with the money buy the store supplies ourselves. We'd then donate them to the corporation and also arrange for their delivery. That way we could get the store started.'

With their own cash donations plus money raised through a NAIDOC trivia night, members of ORIC's training team collected \$2,600. This amount was immediately spent on food supplies (mainly canned items) and other daily essentials.

The next step was arranging to get the order to Lingarra before the 2013 wet season set in.

The training team considered various ways but they all turned out to be far too expensive.

In the end the problem was solved by the Styche family. 'It worked out that taking the supplies to Lingarra ourselves was the best option,' says Russell. 'Roz and I decided to make the road trip from Canberra to the

Northern Territory in October 2013 part of our annual family holiday.'

It's a huge distance. 'Over 8,000 kilometres from go to woe,' says ORIC's Roz Styche, 'but we loved it—the people we met and the country we travelled through were magnificent.'

In Katherine they joined daughter Kerstin and son Jordan (who'd flown to Darwin and had driven down with the pre-ordered supplies). In convoy the family headed to Lingarra.

And they made it! The community greeted them with great excitement and joy. And then it was down to work making the store ready. 'Everyone got involved—the elders, the young men, the mothers, the kids—and of course us!', says Roz.

ORIC's volunteer program allows ORIC employees up to three days leave to help out at a CATSI-registered corporation. Russell, Roz and Kerstin Styche used their leave to help re-establish the Lingarra-Ngaringman Aboriginal Corporation's community store.



Preparing the store—washing it out, building shelves, unloading supplies and stacking the goods.



Traditional owner Riley Young (in red t-shirt) with some of his family and the Styche family.

All photos: Kerstin Styche/ORIC