

# AN INTERVIEW WITH PETER MURRAY

## MEMBER OF THE NGURRARA, THE GREAT SANDY DESERT



**M**y name is Peter Murray and I come from Ngurrara, the Great Sandy Desert. Our PBC is Yanunijarra Aboriginal Corporation in Fitzroy Crossing, which mainly manages the Great Sandy Desert area. Our country is all native title claimed land within the Great Sandy Desert. Sand dunes, water holes, rock holes and a few creeks are the main source out there. It's all desert lands.

### Native Title

I was involved in native title at a very young age with my fathers and mothers out on country making negotiations to get our land back and to claim it. It really taught me a lot of things. At the same time I was learning my culture and the mainstream of negotiation. We all live in two worlds, a cultural world and a mainstream world of Australia, and we're trying to balance those two methods while trying to get along with life. It's been a hard road learning about land management and native title. It's been a long road and hard road for a lot of people fighting out there to get their land back.

### The determination

That was marked down as one of the most special days on the calendar to really celebrate land and for any native title group who gets their land back through native title. It's one of the biggest celebrations any group would even have on country; getting their country back and being able to celebrate with traditional owners, your elders and your younger generations there. It's real good.

### Now that we've started our PBC

Before you start a business you need to lay your foundation and by laying your foundation is the governance that we practise with making those good governance decisions at ground level. Then start putting in all your structures, putting in your form work, like building a house. We're now at that stage where we're building that house. We want to branch out and start looking at business opportunities where we take on a lot of those contracts within the land management of the Ranger Project, negotiations with mining companies and still branch out to other businesses within Ngurrara native title lands and all the other stakeholders involved. So

Above: Ngurrara country. Credit: Yanunijarra Aboriginal Corporation.

Left: Peter Murray, Member of the Ngurrara, the Great Sandy Desert.

we're channelling it through the PBCs to create more employment opportunities for our members.

### National Native Title Conference 2014

Networking is one of the biggest things these days — opportunities in having that network and looking at other groups around Australia that are having a similar struggle as we did and those who have done well economically. We can measure ourselves to try and reach those same aspirational goals that everyone else is trying to reach.

### It's AIATSIS's 50 birthday this year, do you want to say anything?

Happy birthday AIATSIS. It's been a privilege coming to these events and let's celebrate it together.