

RESIDENT THEN & NOW

THEN NOW PEARLERS

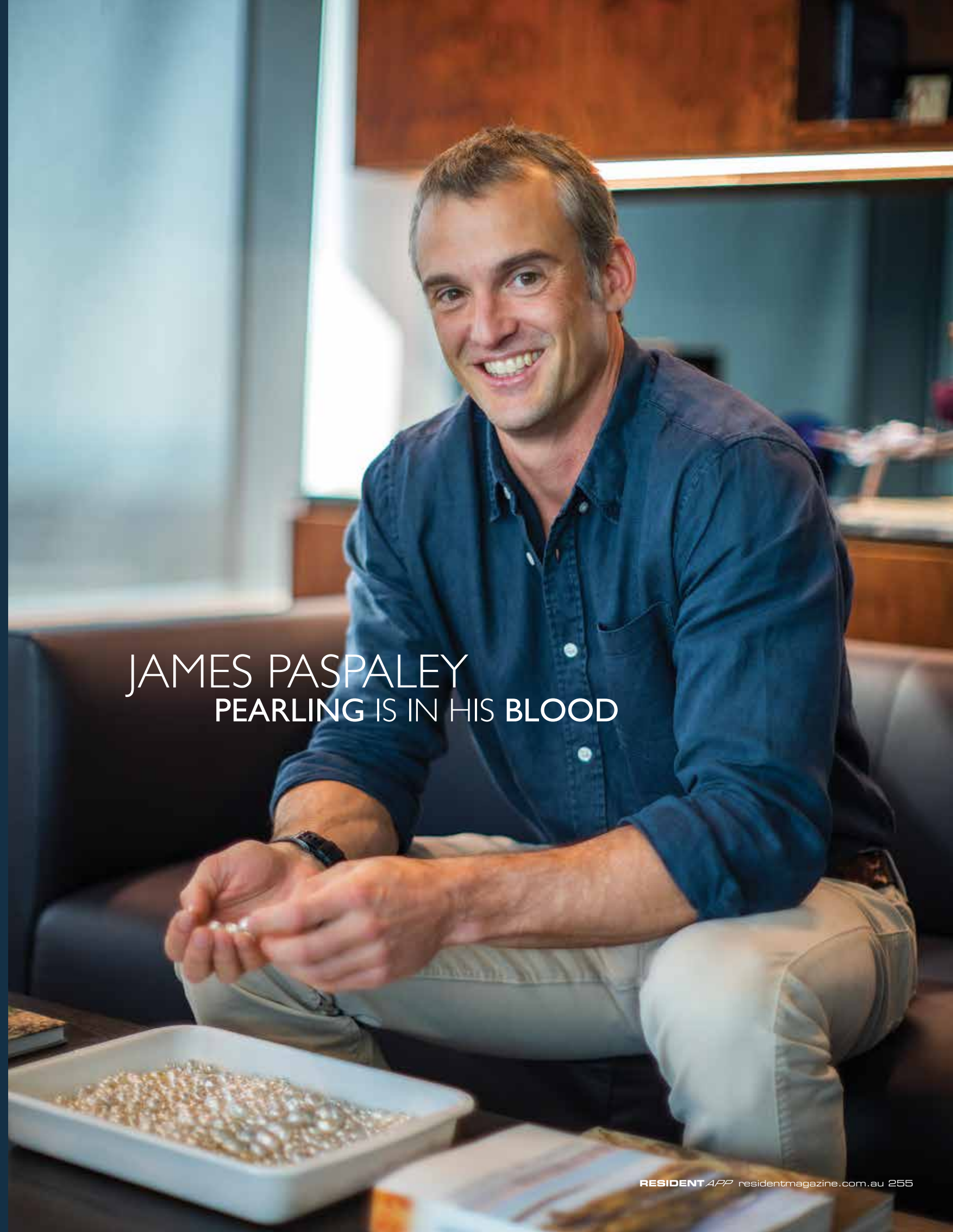
PHOTOGRAPHY MARK AND TIM WORDS NANNETTE HOLLIDAY

Master pearlers were influential colonial entrepreneurs who drove the growth of the pearling industry. They spearheaded northern Australia's expansion and the characters that dominated these centres. From then on, any Australian who did something impressive or excellent was called a 'pearler'. For Resident's 30th pearl edition, Nannette Holliday talks with some real-life master pearlers and pearlers about their astounding and sometimes extraordinary achievements, then & now.

Even though he was born into Australia's largest and oldest family-owned and operated pearling company, when he was young James Paspaley wanted to be a policeman or fireman. He is now a member of the third generation of Paspaleys working in the business, initially because it was his birthright, then later because he wanted to.

'Even before finishing school and university, I knew I would go into the business,' James says. 'I was first employed by the company at 19 as a deckhand. While working through the various aspects, I never expected by the time I was 30 I'd be the executive in charge of everything except pearl production. In 2009 when the CEO left, I moved up and still sit here today.' While James was never a full-time drift diver, he still likes to do some diving. 'It's a young man's job. My youngest brother, Michael, has just completed his first full season as a drift diver and is now at harvest with Dad, who has been in the business since 1969. He is a wonderful, strong leader.' Now in his 40s, James is the son of Nick Paspaley AC and grandson of Greek immigrant Nicholas Paspaley OBE, who changed the family name from Paspalis to Paspaley after arriving in Cossack, Western Australia, with his family in 1919. Recognised as pioneers of the Australian South Sea pearling industry, today, 100 years on, the company has a diverse portfolio including pearling, retail, marine engineering, property, aviation, agriculture and wine. 'But first and foremost, we are pearlers,' James says. 'Our shipping and aircraft support our pearling operations. We operate completely differently to anywhere else in the world. Our farming production is more capital intensive than in other nations where labour is plentiful and much cheaper than here. Continually investing means our production is both better quality and more efficient.' Pearl production is seasonal, so many of the workers are as transient and diverse as the Territory's population. 'People manage to find their way to our office very quickly each year. They're looking for different experiences and adventure, and that's what they get,' James says. 'If I'd been born elsewhere, I know I'd work on a pearling ship for a few months rather than do bar work. Flying into the pristine surrounds of the Kimberley in a Mallard seaplane, working with a small group of 20; it's one of the world's last great wildernesses.' Paspaley still has its head office in Darwin. 'The weight of our retail business is on Australia's east coast, and our flagship retail store is in Sydney. But our core business is pearl production, and Darwin is the closest major city and safe cyclone port to our farms around the Top End coast and Broome,' James says. 'Plus, I love Darwin. It is my home. I did my studies in Sydney, and that was long enough.' The challenge for James and his children is to keep up with the world's most luxurious brands. They've done a great job so far, and will take this prestigious Australian luxury brand into the future.

JAMES PASPALEY PEARLING IS IN HIS BLOOD





On 1 April 2019, Jean Lovegrove celebrated her 90th birthday at Pee Wee's at the Point. 'I was born in Alice Springs and Pee Wee Camp is where my married life began in 1952 when my husband and I bought a Sidney Williams Hut for 70 pounds,' Jean says.

RESIDENT THEN & NOW

JEAN LOVEGROVE

WHAT SOME PEOPLE DO FOR LOVE

'There were six other huts nearby. Our furniture was minimal. Two different-sized wire hospital beds joined with more wire, no flyscreens, hot water, car or toilets, except communal toilets, and they were always full of frogs that I couldn't deal with. My husband's work took him to Arnhem Land for weeks at a time. Thankfully the Aboriginal people in the nearby camp looked after me and there were no daily Qantas flights, otherwise, I may have gone back to Alice Springs!' Thomas (Creed) Lovegrove was the love of Jean's life from their early days at Hartley Street School, when he sat behind her dipping her plaits in the inkpot. Before they married Jean became a nurse and theatre sister in Adelaide, against her father's wishes. 'Nursing was my second love. It turned out to be a useful profession, especially at the many obscure Territory destinations we lived in over the years,' she says. Creed worked for Aboriginal Affairs and was the Superintendent at Belyuen, Bagot, Alice Springs, Elliott and Ali Curung, to name a few. 'Naturally, I enjoyed our times in Alice, but other communities also had their pluses,' Jean remembers. 'At Elliott I'd sometimes make trips with Creed. One day coming back from Borroloolua an axle broke.' Leaving five-month pregnant Jean and their two children with Aboriginal Patrol Assistant Duncan, Creed walked to get help. 'It was death adder country. By morning, when he hadn't returned, I told Duncan to make sure "Boss" had made it to Elliott. A couple of days later I heard bells in the distance. People on horses from nearby Ucharonidge Station collected us. Near the homestead, someone rushed out with a wheelbarrow to carry me because I'd fainted off my horse twice during the 10-hour trip. But I wasn't going anywhere in a wheelbarrow, and I walked in unaided.' While stubborn, Jean is also adaptable. 'I had to be. We lived in a variety of communities, large and small, over the years. At the new, open-model Ali Curung settlement, we even entertained the Minister for Native Affairs, Paul Hasluck, and many other dignitaries. In most places, I also volunteered at the health centres.' Before returning to Darwin, they spent 10 more years in Alice Springs, another of Jean's loves. With all five children in school, she nursed at Alice Springs Hospital. 'We'd only just moved back to Darwin when Cyclone Tracy hit, destroying our new Wanguri home. Luckily, we were holidaying down south.' When Creed retired in 1987, they bought a home on acreage at Howard Springs. 'Once again, I had to contend with frogs in the toilet!' Jean laughs. 'Twenty-two years later we sold it and bought a villa in Tiwi Retirement Village. Unfortunately, in 2017 Creed needed additional care and moved to Pearl Supported Care in Fannie Bay. It's difficult living apart, but I drive to visit him every day.' While many long-term friends have passed away, Jean and Creed are still surrounded by their beautiful family of five children, 11 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren. Jean is also quite tech-savvy. 'I'm not getting old. I love my Netflix and email to keep in touch,' she says. 'Life's had its ups and downs, but I wouldn't swap mine for anything.'

Sometimes it's not what you know, but who you know. This saying was all too true for born-and-bred Territorian Tony Thiel. 'Growing up around boats, I loved being outdoors,' he says. 'While I knew I never wanted to go to university, I didn't know exactly what I wanted to do.'

RESIDENT THEN & NOW

TONY THIEL

FINDING PERFECTION



Mum and Dad knew the Paspaleys from before they were married, so when I said to Dad, "Could you find me a job with someone you know?" by chance he ran into Nick the next day and lined up a job on the pearling boats for me.' Some also say you should be careful what you ask for but, 35 years later, it has proved a fruitful experience for Tony. 'Pearling is a young person's paradise and physically very rewarding. Most people in the business are adventurous and capable,' he says. 'Being seasonal, we worked hard from late February to November/December, then I usually travelled overseas, often skiing. I was in my element.' Beginning as a deckhand at 18, Tony also did diving and obtained his skipper's tickets. Within nine years he was Fleet Master for the diving fleet and was James Paspaley's skipper during his gap year. By 32 he was head of Pearl Production. 'In 1999 I left Paspaley and took on a consultancy role to oversee the design and build of Paspaley 4 in Norway, bringing the ship back in 2001. I then took a year off to work with Dad and his prawn trawler fleet. Dad had always run his own business, and it seemed like a natural progression.' However, his sojourn was short lived. In June 2002 he re-joined Paspaley as their Shipyard General Manager, a position he held for seven years before becoming General Manager Pearl Production again. 'I still feel comfortable, energised and enthused about my work,' Tony says. 'I'm not totally office-bound, spending numerous occasions on the boats and pearl farms. Business is varied, and that's refreshing. This year we added a specialised tourist element to our pearl harvest season. It was so popular we have already set six tour dates for next year in July, August and September.' The five-day Kimberley Flying Boat Safari is the most luxurious experience available in such a remote wilderness area. 'A maximum of eight people each trip fly in our iconic Grumman Mallard to the pristine north-west Australian coast and Kimberley region,' Tony says. 'They cruise the rivers, waterfalls and ancient rock art, stay in top-class accommodation, see pearl harvesting first-hand and much more. It is unique, and it's wonderful to be able to share this.' Clearly, Tony loves his work. 'I've been fortunate and highly recommend to friends that working on the boats is a perfect way for their children to spend a gap year. It's a team environment, and as a family-owned and operated company, Paspaley is extremely family orientated,' he says. 'Pearling is the best industry in the world. While I've held the same position for 10 years, it is always changing and evolving. That's what keeps me interested. We have many employees who have been with us for more than 10, 20, 30 years. I never imagined I'd still be working for the same company, raising my family here or be involved in such a wonderful industry. I don't regret a moment.'

At just 27, Dr Mangatjay McGregor is the first Yolngu man ever to receive a medical degree. 'Apart from a short period when I wanted to be Kimberly, the pink Power Ranger, I always wanted to be a doctor,' he says. 'Being a doctor is the way to go if you want to reach out to people.'

RESIDENT THEN & NOW

MANGATJAY MCGREGOR

FIRST YOLNGU DOCTOR

Raised in Milingimbi by his father's parents, until age 11 Mangatjay enjoyed his barefooted lifestyle and primary schooling. 'My Momu was the Assistant Principal at the community school,' he says. 'I also valued learning about my mother's culture, language, traditional medicine and bush food. Both Momu and Märi are strong women, heavily involved in education, so I always recognised education was the way of the future.' Graduating from Flinders University in Adelaide with a degree in clinical science and a doctor of medicine in December 2018, Mangatjay is now undertaking his five terms of internship with Royal Darwin Hospital. He's chosen paediatrics and working in a remote location as his electives, and is doing his 10-week term at Gove District Hospital in Nhulunbuy. 'I missed Kakadu while studying, so I was really excited to come here,' he says. 'I love being out here. The hospital is slower-paced and smaller, meaning we have more time to spend with patients. I also get to use my first language, Yolngu Matha, with almost every patient every day. This was something I missed while studying in Adelaide. Patients are so much more comfortable when we can converse in their language.' But Dr McGregor isn't planning on settling back in the Territory just yet. After completing his internship he'll undertake another eight-year double training program specialising in paediatrics and child psychiatry (child and adolescent mental health). 'By the time I'm 30, I want to be undertaking the double training program and studying New Zealand's Maori population on the North Island,' he says. 'They have excellent models of care for their First People, especially when it comes to mental health. Hopefully, I can then better assist our people.' Mangatjay also wants to travel more and perhaps study Canada's First People and work with First Nations groups in other countries. 'For us to get the most out of ourselves, it's important to travel,' he says. 'You get to meet new people, share knowledge and different cultures. My family aren't huge travellers. But knowing what I wanted to do from an early age, I knew I had to leave home, travel, and live interstate to achieve it. So I prepared myself early on. Living away has taught me much about other people and even myself. It's inspired me to travel overseas and discover more.' Apart from family, Mangatjay misses fresh seafood the most. 'Delicious crabs and barramundi. Catching it fresh, cooking it up and eating it straight away. My favourite is mud crab. It's just not the same in restaurants down south.' Mangatjay achieved his dream thanks to his own stubbornness, and his strong Momu and Märi. His advice to others is: 'Know where you come from and where you want to go. Don't let anyone tell you you're not worthy of following your dreams. Believe in yourself and keep trying. It's what got me through.'

For someone who never had a burning desire to work in tourism, multi-award-winning businesswoman Angie Reidy has left her mark on the Territory's tourism industry. English born and raised in New Zealand from the age of four, Angie travelled the world before coming to Australia at 24.

RESIDENT THEN & NOW

ANGIE REIDY

GIVING EVERYTHING HER BEST SHOT

Travel was her main ambition, even if she wasn't quite sure where she was going. 'While in Adelaide in 1977, as part of my Australian working holiday, I applied for a job as a waitress and housemaid at a country motel. It was in Ayers Rock!' she explains. 'It took several days to get there, but I loved the characters and feel of the Territory. Later I moved to Alice Springs as a motel receptionist, then ran a rent-a-car business and art gallery. It was buzzing.' Angie met her husband Peter after renting him a car. 'He loved travel too. In 1982 we moved to Townsville, built our home and started a family. By 1985 we longed for the NT and moved back to the Red Centre.' Angie's life was sweet. 'I had no expectations of grandeur,' she laughs. 'I had a loving husband, two children and a secure government job. When Peter mentioned starting our own tour business, I worried. I'd witnessed many failed tour operations. But Peter had a dream, and if we didn't try, he'd never be happy.' From Peter's experience as a tour driver and Angie's in hospitality, they visualised what people wanted and what they didn't. After doing their homework, watching for trends, examining the market and planning tours, Sahara 4WD Luxury Tours was born in 1988. 'I was Manager Administration and Marketing. Peter was everything else,' Angie says. 'Being small, personalised tours our timetables were flexible. I still worked for the Council and did tour bookings, marketing, catering, cleaning and washing for the tours, plus looked after two children from home.' They also owned a small freight

delivery business Angie had to take over when Peter was on tour. 'It all kept me physically fit!' she laughs. After a successful first year, Angie quit her job. 'Then the 1989 pilots' strike hit. It killed Alice Springs and our VIP market. We still had the freight business, but after a few months of no tours, I knew we had to diversify.' Low-budget travellers were still coming through the Red Centre. Leasing a 28-seater mini-bus, they set up Sahara Outback Tours camping safaris to Uluru and Kings Canyon. In business again, they employed staff, got more buses, added tours and won a variety of awards for their reliability, professionalism and innovation. Sahara Outback Tours was the first operator with tour rights to Ipolera Aboriginal outstation and an exclusive campsite with permanent facilities at Ayers Rock Resort. But Angie didn't stop there, purchasing Toddy's Backpackers in 1992 to capture the broader backpacker market. 'In 1994 we bought Desert Palms Resort to capitalise on the comfort market,' she says. 'We owned other hotels and restaurants from 1998 to 2005, but Desert Palms is my only property now. I maintain marketing control as it keeps me sane!' Aged 10, son Danny took up go-kart racing. 'In 2003 when APT bought Sahara Outback Tours, Danny started in sprint cars,' Angie says. 'I loved touring with him for the World Series. Although he does well, it keeps me poor, but the speedway community is wonderful. After witnessing tourism's ups and downs, this is easy and a good way to catch up with friends all over the country. Life's good.'

Today, Sean owns and operates Desert Sands Indoor Beach Volleyball Centre in Alice Springs. 'This version of indoor beach volleyball, with nets like indoor cricket, was developed in Alice Springs in 1967,' he says. 'When the outdoor volleyball court was washed out due to rains, the teams used the local squash courts and it grew from that. It expanded to Darwin and then Western Australia. It's now Australia-wide. More people play this version of volleyball rather than hardcourt or outside beach volleyball. It's more inclusive, which is what got me hooked.' Aged two, Sean came to Alice Springs with his family in 1985 and later attended Kooralbyn International School in Queensland. 'I had a scholarship for golf and athletics. Only 20 per cent of students are Australian,' he says. 'The rest come from all over the world. It was a fabulous experience and an excellent grounding for life.' Sean's grandfather is Kaurna Elder Lewis O'Brien. 'Both Dad and my uncle played for Port Adelaide, but my knees were never good enough for football,' he sighs. However, Sean has played State Championship indoor beach volleyball for more than nine years and reckons he can play this sport competitively for the rest of his life. 'On the court, you jump, twist, charge like you're 18.

It's easy to play and revitalising, until the game is over, maybe then I feel like I'm 50,' he laughs. Sean says buying the centre in 2014 was a good move. 'I never dreamt of owning any business, let alone an indoor sports centre, but it's going well. We have some amazing sponsors and we have 130 teams participating.' Sean's vision is for a larger complex that will include a range of indoor sports for the community to enjoy. 'Alice is a sporty town, and with more indoor facilities it would mean more sports could be played year-round,' he says. Every two years Desert Sands Indoor Beach Volleyball Centre hosts the Alice Springs Master Games and NT Titles. 'We're focusing on our juniors, all with different skills and backgrounds,' Sean says. 'We also work closely with the local schools too. It's gratifying to see young people grow and gain confidence. Indoor beach volleyball is for everyone. It's such an inclusive sport. People can easily find their place. We blend hardcourt and outdoor beach volleyball on a court that is surrounded by nets for a fast-paced and safe game. The people who play here make it such a great place to be and work. I'm not planning on giving up anytime soon. I want to continue helping people find their place.'

Sean O'Brien was good at multiple sports and couldn't decide which he wanted to master. When he did, his knees gave way. At six foot three, Sean certainly looks the part of a sporting ambassador of excellence. 'I've had five knee reconstructions, but thankfully after a friend suggested I try indoor beach volleyball because it is kinder on the body, I've found my place,' Sean says. 'I've been playing it for 11 years now. I couldn't imagine life without sport. It's an international language.'

RESIDENT THEN & NOW

SEAN O'BRIEN SPORTING AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE

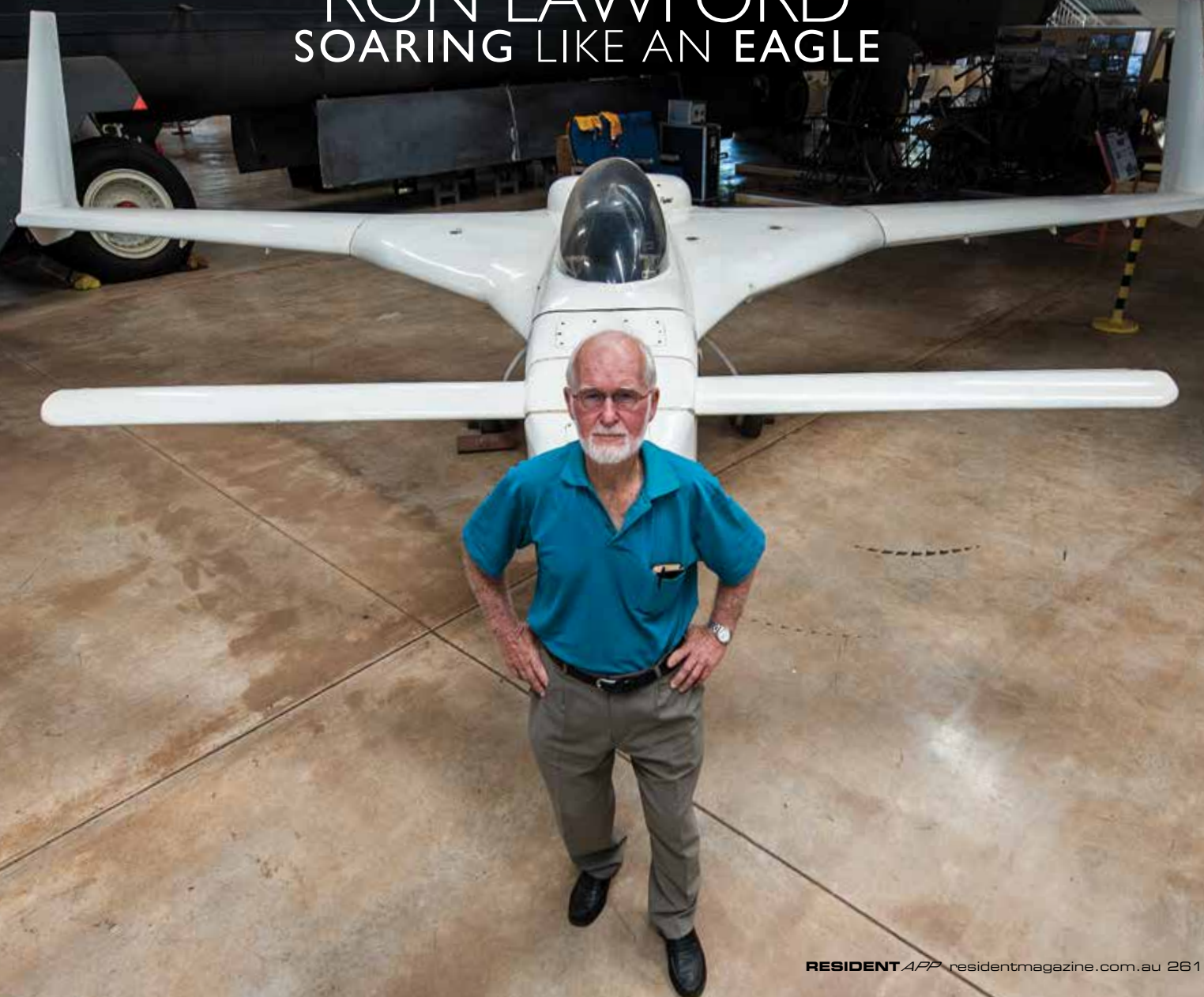
Making aerobatic loops above Coomalie Airfield, it's difficult to believe the pilot at the helm of the Vans RV6 aircraft is 81-year-old Ron Lawford. His wife of 54 years, Annabelle, is the passenger.

With more than 18,000 flying hours, mostly in the Territory, Ron is the NT's most experienced pilot and flying instructor. 'Becoming a pilot was never on my agenda. It was too expensive,' Ron says. 'However, in 1952 I joined Air Cadets. Within three years I'd earned a flying scholarship and become a Cadet Pilot Officer, flying more than 70 hours at Perth Aero Club. Tiger Moths, open-cockpit biplanes, a Chipmunk, then an Auster, a four-seater passenger plane.' Although a qualified teacher, his success at flying inspired him to join the RAAF in 1958. 'In the Air Force I flew a Winjeel, Vampire and Dakota DC-3s.' During 1961-62 in Darwin with the RAAF, Ron met Annabelle. 'I knew her father first. As the harbour and marine Superintendent and an honorary member at RAAF Base Darwin, I'd fly him around looking for missing yachts,' Ron remembers. In 1962 Ron also completed a civil flying instructor rating with Darwin Aero Club. Marrying in 1965, Ron was sent to Tindal in 1967 and completed the year before leaving the RAAF and moving to Darwin. 'I became Chief Pilot for NT Air Charter and Chief Flying Instructor at Darwin Aero Club. But when we lost our house in Cyclone Tracy, I rebuilt it and several other houses when I wasn't flying.' At Oshkosh in 1981, Ron saw a Rutan Longez fly and bought a kit form, constructing it under his Jingili home from 1981, then flying it around Australia between 1986 and 1999. 'I donated it to Darwin's Aviation Museum,' he says. 'I've also flown two other aircraft that are now at the museum; my 1976 ultralight Skycraft Scout and the Hovey Delta Bird. The Scout was like

a lawnmower with wings, flying at 19 knots and a maximum height of 60 feet.' Knowing he'd have to cease commercial flying at 60, Ron looked for options to stop his brain rusting. His other qualifications, teaching and accountancy, didn't appeal. While teaching Judge John Nader how to fly, John suggested Ron try law. 'The Northern Territory University had just begun courses, so I started law in 1988 and completed my course in 1993,' Ron says. 'During my degree, the Act changed and compulsory retirement of commercial pilots at 60 was no longer necessary, provided one was physically and mentally fit. I was admitted as a lawyer in April 1995. Today, I mostly practice law during the week and teach flying on weekends. Both are useful for different reasons. I meet extraordinary people between legal clients and flight students. Law is intellectual and keeps the brain going, staving off Alzheimer's. Flying is physical and keeps my motor neurons active.' Ron teaches flying at Batchelor Aerodrome or on people's properties in their aeroplanes. Not surprisingly, both his sons are commercial pilots. In 2018 Ron received a Master Air Pilot British Aviation Award. Ron says the trick to flying is to recognise your limits. His is another 10 years. 'Annabelle and I recently flew to Perth and back in our RV6 for the 60th anniversary of my 34 Pilots Course Graduation. Ten of the 15 remain alive, but I'm the only one still flying,' he says. His life advice? 'Pick what you want to do, start doing it and don't be defeated by time. Take opportunities as they arise, but also plan ahead, and be careful in your choice of wife.'

RESIDENT THEN & NOW

RON LAWFORD SOARING LIKE AN EAGLE



'Although most of my friends and other people around Alice Springs think I'm nuts, they're all so supportive of my quests, I know I wouldn't be able to do them without their encouragement,' Jordyn smiles. 'No other town or community would provide the inspiration that Alice people do. I'm so lucky.' Jordyn celebrated her 17th birthday walking the entire 234-kilometre Larapinta Trail alone. 'Someone said I couldn't do it in a week, but I did. It was easy by myself. Getting up at sunrise and often making camp in the dark.' Most people cover one of the 12 sections of the Trail a day. Jordyn averaged two. 'I had pre-planned food drops, a satellite phone and tracker so my parents could see where I was at all times. But the Trail taught me so much. It was so peaceful with heaps of time for reflection. The scenery, nature, sunrises, sunsets — it was a life-changing experience. I became stronger in spirit and faced my fears, such as walking for hours in complete darkness. I have faith in

myself. Other trekkers were so friendly and helpful. They proved that no one's ever too old or too young to give something a go. I recently helped another Alice woman walk the Trail for her 60th birthday.' Born in Melbourne, Jordyn's family moved to Alice Springs in 2013. 'We'd previously lived in Melbourne, Canberra and Vietnam. But Alice is home for me and where I'd like to come back to after university.' Jordyn is hoping to study biomedical science or environmental science. Giving back to the community is also high on her list along with her crazy challenges. 'To improve yourself, you need to challenge yourself. My first 10-kilometre run was at age 10 in Vietnam. I came third in 50 minutes.' This year she completed the half marathon in Alice Springs also coming third and was the youngest competitor. 'Now that I'm 18, I can compete in an Ironman. My major challenge this year is the Busselton Ironman Triathlon in Western Australia on December 1.'

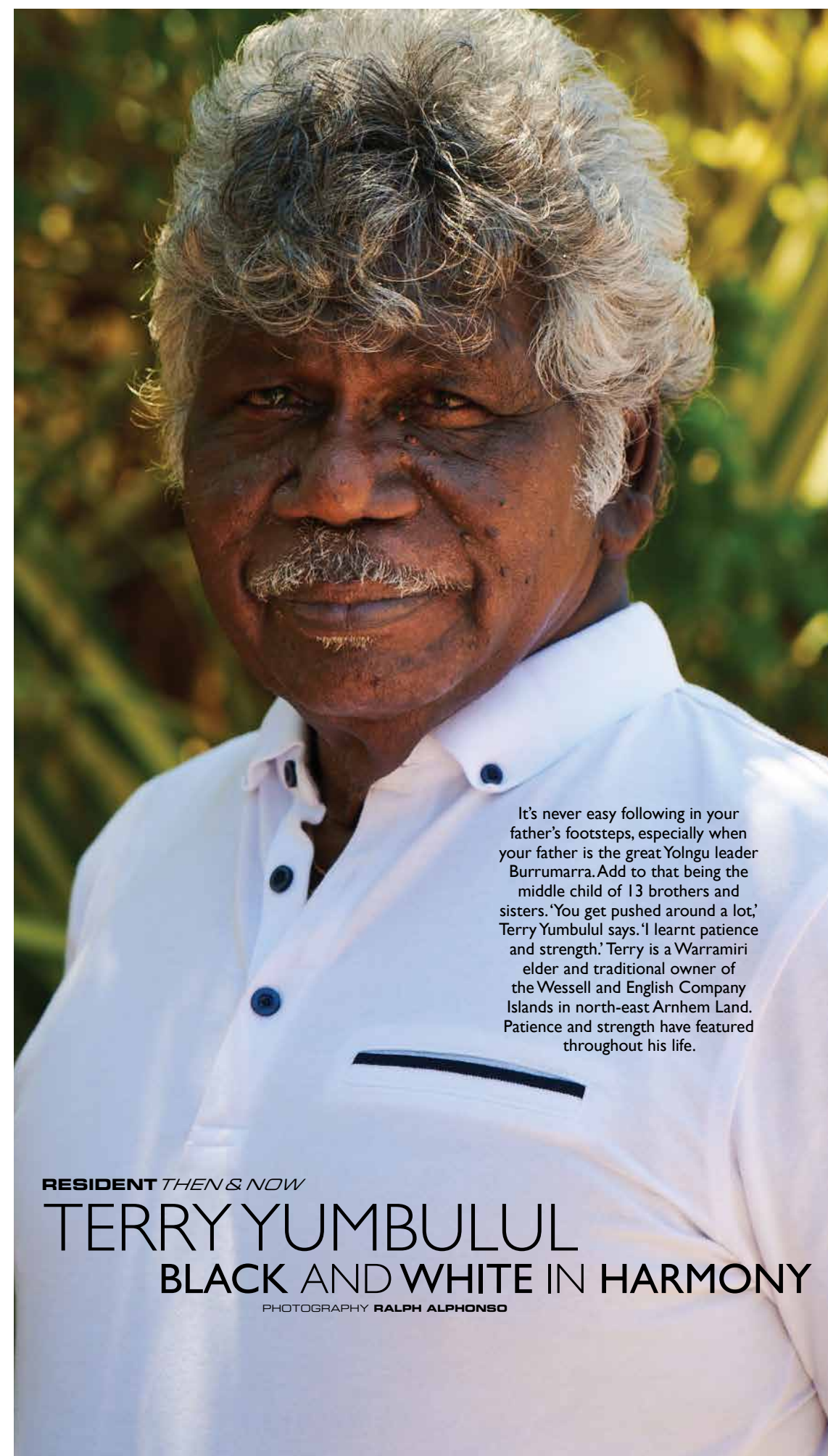
The course entails a 3.8-kilometre swim, a 180-kilometre bike ride and a 42.2-kilometre run. In between studying for her Year 12 finals Jordyn's undertaking a training regime beginning at 4am. 'Mum or Dad often train with me, and Alice Springs runner Emma Kraft has also been so supportive.' What's next on her list? 'Mongolia. I want to trek the Gobi Desert. Or perhaps an Ultra Marathon. There are so many things I can and want to do. I'm excited to give life a crack. Every year for my birthday, I'll choose a goal and complete it. Pushing myself each time to see how far I can improve myself as a person. 'The first time a woman ran a marathon was 1952, and she was pulled from the course. It's the 21st Century. Women have the freedom and independence to do what they wish now. The human body is incredible. You can do anything — it's all in the mind. Just believe and try your best. I hope to inspire other females to do the same.'

Just because Jordyn Kindness likes to challenge herself in different ways to other 18-year-olds, it doesn't mean she's crazy.

RESIDENT THEN & NOW

JORDYN KINDNESS

ONE CRAZY CHALLENGE EACH YEAR



It's never easy following in your father's footsteps, especially when your father is the great Yolngu leader Burrumarra. Add to that being the middle child of 13 brothers and sisters. 'You get pushed around a lot,' Terry Yumbulul says. 'I learnt patience and strength.' Terry is a Warramiri elder and traditional owner of the Wessell and English Company Islands in north-east Arnhem Land. Patience and strength have featured throughout his life.

RESIDENT THEN & NOW

TERRY YUMBULUL

BLACK AND WHITE IN HARMONY

PHOTOGRAPHY RALPH ALPHONSO

'Growing up, I wanted to see every nationality working together harmoniously,' he says. 'That's why I became an artist — to share Yolngu culture. I paint from stories I heard as a child. It keeps the stories alive for the generations to follow, both ours and non-Indigenous.' Born in 1950 on Wessell Island, Terry grew up at Elcho Island Mission. His artworks depict creation stories of the area. In 1983-84, he was commissioned by the NT Government to create 10 works for the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory. Terry was the first Aboriginal artist to have his work immortalised in television animation, when 18 of his ochre paintings formed a series of TV commercials for the NT Tourist Commission. Terry's sacred 'Morning Star Pole' sculpture from the collection of the Australian Museum and Art gallery of NSW was illustrated on the \$10 note to commemorate Australia's Bicentenary. But Terry is much more than an artist. He is a respected tribal elder and prominent community figure. He and his wife of more than 40 years, Clely from Trieste in northern Italy, have also shared their country and culture through a variety of tourism projects over the years. 'We had visitors from all around the world, even Japanese honeymooners,' Terry says. 'That was until the pilots' strikes killed tourism. It never recovered. We work casually with cruise companies now, but it's not the same.' Terry is articulate, but he continually makes subtle jokes so it's sometimes hard to take him seriously. 'As the town clown (Town Clerk) of Elcho Island, we started the first night patrols. The first in the Territory,' he says. A saltwater man, Terry is also chair of the Garngirr Fishing Aboriginal Corporation, which is heavily involved in the region's fishing and water management. 'Our people must look at the bigger picture and create employment and sustainable businesses for Yolngu,' he says. Terry's been a driving force behind Miwatj Health. Beginning in 1992, the organisation is owned and operated by the Yolngu people across Arnhem Land. 'Miwatj represents the needs of all Indigenous people, giving them access to highly-skilled medical care close to where they live,' he says. 'There's a huge emphasis on prevention and education. We've just opened our seventh clinic. There are four more to come. These should be operational within a year. I'll then go back to the island, kick my shoes off, put my feet up and fish every day.' Terry believes in and lives by the principles around when Matthew Flinders arrived in Arnhem Land and the local tribe welcomed him. The white man wanted water, and the black people knew how to find it. Together they worked to replenish the ship's supply. 'That story is a symbol of peace, of the uniting of black and white. They worked together then; we can do it now. I have a white car, Clely has a black one. Our black and white cat adopted us, the other cat is pure black. Everything is black and white, but it all lives in harmony.'



For someone who never wanted to follow in her mother's footsteps as a teacher, Jo Vandermark devoted more than 40 years to the profession. 'My mother persuaded me that a secondary studentship scholarship was the most lucrative way to get through university,' Jo explains. 'I not only discovered I loved teaching; I believe it is the most privileged profession and can wonderfully impact children's lives.'

RESIDENT THEN & NOW

JO VANDERMARK

CHANGING LIVES

Growing up in Melbourne, Jo always threw herself into every activity or committee available. Something she maintained throughout the years. By 21 she'd completed university, was married to a church minister, expecting her first child, been head of the English faculty and had written the curriculum for a new secondary school. As a Minister's wife, Jo was heavily involved in church and community activities. During their seven years in Moe, a town with a high proportion of migrant miners, she established a Young Wives Club. Membership reached 200, the largest women's group in the La Trobe Valley. 'Often deprived of education, these young women were amazingly successful as wives and mothers. I valued their friendship,' she says. Jo's husband, Elzo, then took a position at Canberra's ANU. With four children at or about to start school, Jo became deeply involved in education, natural history and conservation committees. She threw in photography and cordon bleu cooking for good measure. In 1974, when Elzo died, Jo was thankful they were living in Canberra. 'Life was full, and there were so many opportunities for the children,' she says. 'But I always proclaimed once my last child graduated (first degree only) I was heading to the Kimberley for a couple of years. At school I'd fallen in love with the region in Ian Idriess books.' Accordingly, in 1993 Jo bought a second-hand Toyota Troop Carrier with a Trakka camping conversion, the vehicle she still drives today and, despite not knowing anyone, headed to Kununurra, much to the concern of her children. 'They were so desperate for remote community relief teachers I should have started work the week I arrived,' she says. 'However, without my original marriage certificate the WVA Education Department refused to employ me. It took three months to resolve, so I volunteered at the Waringarri Aboriginal Corporation and did part-time Roy Morgan Gallup Poll interviewing. I certainly got to know the locals.' Although Jo enjoyed the Kimberley, it was expensive to visit the children and, later, grandchildren. 'To have more regular family contact, I moved to the Territory,' she says. 'In Kakadu National Park I taught both Bininj and balanda children. My passion for the bush and natural history knowledge provided common ground with the students. My snake-handling particularly appealed to the boys, and I proved I wasn't just another old white woman!' After leaving Kakadu, Jo worked for another seven years in distance education, often flying to schools to work with senior students on assignments or teachers on the curriculum. Teaching in more than 29 remote communities across the Kimberley and Northern Territory before retiring at 77, Jo knew she'd never return to an overpopulated southern metropolis. 'I love Darwin, my friends, the cosmopolitan community, my morning walks at East Point and sunset balcony drinks,' she laughs. 'I never thought losing Elzo would allow me to experience such an incredible second life journey. I'm extremely fortunate.'

RESIDENT THEN & NOW

BAKER BOY

EDUCATION THROUGH PERFORMANCE

Even in primary school, Danzal Baker wanted to be a performer, dancing on tables in free-time, telling teachers it was his stage. But he never imagined by age 22 he'd be 2019 National Indigenous Artist of the Year and 2019 Young Australian of the Year. Let alone have multiple awards for his writing, music and dance.

PHOTOGRAPHY KANE HIBBARD KEN LEANFORE



'It's amazing to be acknowledged, but it's not why I keep doing it,' Danzal, known as rapper Baker Boy, says. 'I love making music and dancing, but most of all I love making people smile. Having people sing my lyrics back in Yolngu Matha is humbling. It's a privilege to educate people about my language and culture.' Baker Boy first came to prominence in 2017 when his single 'Marryuna' was 17th in Triple J's Hottest 100. However, it was 'Cloud 9' that made him a sensation. 'When we recorded it we thought it would just be another community song with a few hundred views on YouTube, but it blew up!' Born and raised in the remote Arnhem Land communities of Milingimbi and Maningrida, Baker Boy has become a role model for Indigenous youth, encouraging them to embrace their culture and become leaders. 'It's not easy, but if you're passionate, keep working hard, keep happy and don't quit, you can do it,' he says. 'It's not about fame or money. It's about being the best version of yourself, being true to yourself and what you believe in, and not being afraid to put yourself out there.' Known as the Baker Boys, Danzal's father and uncle used to travel around remote communities dancing. 'It made sense for me to continue their story and legacy,' he says. 'They taught me so much about dance and have always inspired me.' While Danzal misses home, his family has always

supported him and cheered him on. 'My family's encouragement makes the hard work easier, knowing I'm making them proud,' he says. 'I get back to Darwin a few times a year, and the family always come from all over to see me. I also miss fishing and getting out on the water. It's so peaceful and calm. City life can get a bit much sometimes, so it's nice to feel the saltwater breeze, and catch and cook up some fish!' Baker Boy's new live show debuted at Melbourne's Red Bull Music Festival in October. 'I had a vision, but many people helped bring all the elements together,' he says. 'Three dance choreographers, an incredible UK-based visuals team, a stylist and my amazing band of talented musicians all collaborated.' His performance also includes a traditional yidaki, a family gift that features in all his songs. Audiences love it. Baker Boy's debut album should be out next year. 'I love working with so many different talented people and collaborating to make something special,' he says. In the meantime, he is excited to be performing at Lost Lands, Festival of the Sun and Falls Festival. 'I'd love to be still making music, touring and sharing my culture when I'm 30. But I'm always conscious of living in the moment and not taking any of this for granted,' he says. 'I'll keep rolling with the punches and enjoying this crazy ride for as long as I can.'