My name is John Thurtell and since August 2016, I am an Independent Director of the Ngaanyatjarra Council, Ngaanyatjarra Health Service and Ngaanyatjarra Services.

I have worked in Aboriginal Affairs in Western Australia and other parts of the country for 22 years now - firstly with Government, then as a consultant doing work for Aboriginal people and other groups and then I worked for a few years with Woodside and Chevron to roll out their Native Title Agreements. I finished up with Chevron in November 2016 and I’m working for myself again now in Aboriginal Affairs.

Over the years I have done a lot of work and spent a fair bit of time in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands. I am on the Board because I love the Ngaanyatjarra Lands and the Ngaanyatjarra people and I want to do what I can to speak up for them and make sure that Government people in Perth and Canberra know about the Ngaanyatjarra people and communities and what they want and need from Government.

I also want to do what I can to make sure that the Ngaanyatjarra Council and its businesses are working well and to make sure that the Clinics and other health services are providing good quality health care to the Ngaanyatjarra people.

There are a few different parts to being an Independent Director. One part involves listening to the staff who talk to all of the Directors at Board meetings about how things are going and what issues they are working on.

Another part involves working with the other Directors and the staff to make decisions about what the Council, the Health Service and Ngaanyatjarra Services should be doing now and in the future.

Being a Director is an important job - there’s lots of listening, lots of talking, lots of thinking, and lots of decisions to make. The Directors are responsible for making sure that the Ngaanyatjarra Council, the Ngaanyatjarra Health Service and Ngaanyatjarra Services are on the right track and making sure that the voices of the Ngaanyatjarra people are heard.

One more thing to know about me is that I’m a big Essendon Bombers fan. Hopefully Essendon are going to have a good year in 2017 after a few years in the wilderness!
I was born in Burra which is in country South Australia about 160kms north of Adelaide. I went to school in both Burra and Adelaide and then became a primary school teacher, working mainly in Whyalla and also SA’s Riverland and Mid North. Later I established my own Industry training company in Adelaide called “The Training Force”.

I relocated to Alice Springs in 1999 and worked in a variety of jobs including book shop manager, taxi driver and tour guide. I first came to Ngaanyatjarra Council as the Human Resource Manager and worked in this role from 2003-2005. Some of the people that were around in those days that are still here include Gerard Coffey, Damien McLean, John Thurtell and Clint Shaw.

I then spent over 11 years in the HR department at the Alice Springs Town Council, mainly as their Manager HR.

I enjoy living in Alice Springs and am involved in a number of community organisations such as Rotary, Henley on Todd, Friend of the Larapinta Trail and the Alice Springs Tennis Association. My hobbies include playing tennis, camping, bush walking and travelling. I follow the Adelaide Crows in the AFL competition and have a soft spot for the St George Dragon’s in the NRL. I am lucky enough to be visiting the USA for the first time in September/October this year to follow Route 66 from Chicago to California.

I am very pleased to return to Ngaanyatjarra Council to as the organisations’ Chief Operating Officer. I have been made very welcome on my return and have been impressed as to how much the organisation has grown. It was great to return to the lands recently and visit the Wingellina and Blackstone communities, met the Council board and attend the March Ngaanyatjarra Council meeting.

I have a strong commitment to Ngaanyatjarra Council and hope I can use my skills and experience to assist the organisation and its people in the key Chief Operating Officer role.

STAFF PROFILE: Tony Jennison

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EDUCATION

The Wingellina High School Class has experienced an exciting change this term with the introduction of ‘Big Picture’ education. Big Picture is all about making education relevant to a student’s life and the community in which they live. If a student is pursuing their own interests, whatever that may be, the student is more engaged in learning and more likely to attend school on a regular basis. A range of interests have already been identified among the High School Class. These include Parkour, Motorbike Mechanics, Radio Presenting, Drawing, Softball, Football and Music.

Big Picture education also facilitates work experience placements and internships in the local community and further afield. The school is in the process of organizing work placements and internships at the Community Store, Community Office and NG Media. The High School class is also embarking on a ‘Keep Wingellina Beautiful’ Campaign. Students are picking up rubbish around the community on a weekly basis and will be painting artworks on rubbish bins.
Ngaanyatjarra Council CEO, Gerard Coffey, visited Warakurna Community recently where he met with the Community Board and members to talk about NATS and the community money story. Mr Coffey talked about the story behind NATS and why its so important to the Ngaanyatjarra Communities.

The CEO also gave a detailed explanation of how the Ngaanyatjarra Agency and Transport Services (NATS) was established in Perth in 1984 to handle the requirements of all Ngaanyatjarra Community stores and to provide them with a regular bulk delivery service from the NATS Perth warehouse direct to each of the community stores.

NATS is a unit trust-based enterprise, owned by all Ngaanyatjarra Communities as unit holders. NATS owns a large warehouse complex at 254 Welshpool Road, Welshpool, in Perth, Western Australia. The warehouse stocks a vast range of wholesale items. From its Perth warehouse NATS operates a regular bulk truck freight service transporting all kinds of goods and equipment to the Ngaanyatjarra Community Stores and Warehouses. NATS’ primary function is to provide community stores with high quality, nutritious food at reasonable prices, including fruit, vegetables, dairy products and a full range of grocery items. The supply of these commodities is a major factor in improving community health standards on the Ngaanyatjarra Lands. Warehouse mark-ups are around 6%, except there is no mark-up on fruit and vegetables.

The Jameson Community Youth Centre has re-opened after extensive renovations and upgrades. There is a lot of new equipment available such as XBoxes, table tennis, table soccer, a pool table and a big screen TV. The Youth Centre is open every day and kids are welcome after school - but only if they’ve been to school that day.

On school days Jameson kids can use the Centre from 3pm until 5:30, and after dinner from 6:30 until 8pm. Then the adults get to take over until 10pm. On weekends the Centre is open from 12pm. The Community has future plans to extend the Centre to incorporate a Gym and Boxing ring in the old mechanics building next door.
Sharna Foster has an eye on the future. Sharna is a year 11 student at the Wingellina Campus of the Ngaanyatjarra Lands School who has recently started an internship with the Irrunytju Community Office.

The School and the Community Services Manager came up with the idea of the internship as a way of encouraging students to complete their schooling and develop work skills at the same time. Internships like this one are a great way to build capacity and expose young people to a work environment - helping to make young people in communities more employable. Congratulations Sharna and well done Irrunytju!

**IRRUNYTJY INTERNSHIP**

Peter Riley, the Executive Manager for the Empowered Communities Secretariat in the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjarra Yankunytjatjarra (NPY) region, is a Wiradjuri and Welwian man from western NSW. Growing up in Bathurst and Dubbo, Peter has had a long career in the corporate world as an analyst, project manager and business strategy consultant, before coming to work in the NPY Lands.

Peter came to the NPY region in 2014, as part of the Jawun Indigenous partnerships program, from his role as a senior business support manager in Westpac. Peter’s 3 month secondment was focussed on support of the emerging Empowered Communities (EC) initiative, which is a new aboriginal designed and led program to empower Aboriginal people across Australia and develop a new way of working with Government with Aboriginal people in the driver seat.

Believing in the importance and opportunity of EC, Peter decided to stay on after his secondment and resigned from his role with Westpac. Here in the NPY Lands Peter is now working with a number of aboriginal partner organisations on Empowered Communities. EC partners in the NPY Region include Ngaanyatjarra Council Aboriginal Corporation (NCAC), NPY Women’s Council and Western Desert Dialysis as well as other Anangu and Yarnangu organisations in the region.

Keep an eye out for Peter over the coming months as he visits the Ngaanyatjarra Communities to meet with community leaders and to understand the best and proper way that people want to be engaged around Empowered Communities.
LAND AND CULTURE: Working on Country

After those weeks and months of heavy rain, the back tracks have been damaged around Warakurna. The North Rawlinson Ranges track (at Sladen Waters) is quite damaged in most creek crossings. Karrku outstation creek crossing is also quite bad due to extensive wash away and sandy deposits. The Gunbarrel Highway is the most severely damaged from Lake Christopher to Warakurna with extensive wash away and very soft sandy sections.

The Gunbarrel Highway will hopefully been made up by the Rangers’ work in the weeks to come with a new Feral animal dam at Karkubarra bore and a single water system with a tap at Lapaku for local visitors.

Warakurna Community helped the rangers to make up some of the tracks around Sladen Waters by providing us the Community front loader. Patrick Reid was operating it and the rest of the team (Devon Yates, Bernard Newberry) was helping locating the best spots for dropping loads.

The Rangers also wanted to thank Adrian Ward, the new Warakurna chairman, and the Warakurna MSO Robert Warner for helping us fixing the damaged loader back tyre as well as thanking elder Bernard Newberry from Wanarn who came to give us a hand at the start of the work.

BLACKSTONE POOL GETS A FACE LIFT

The wait is over! Months of hard work have finally paid off and the Blackstone Community Pool has been declared fit for opening.

Ngaanyatjarraku Shire youth worker, JD (pictured), has spent the last few months upgrading the pool, ensuring that it will be good to use for years to come.

Some of the upgrades include:
- A full repaint of the interior of the building including the walls and seating areas
- A non-slip coating on the floor for the safety of the kids
- The pool has been completely stripped and resurfaced with all cracks and joins sealed up.
- New underwater pool lights
CDP: Warakurna

CDP participants in Warakurna are clearly enjoying making pallet furniture. This week some men have built tables to go with the chairs they already had in their houses. All of them created their own individual designs. It’s great to see creativity taking over and some unique pieces being made, like a rocking chair made by one of our job seekers.

In Blackstone, participants have been focussing heavily on community maintenance and have spent a great deal of time cleaning up and maintaining the Church areas as well as taking on individual gardens and yards particularly for community elders.

Lance peck has been putting his welding skills to good use, building a large birdcage entirely from scrap metal. The birdcage will be used to house any injured birds that are found around the community, where they will be cared for until they are well enough to fly.
**CDP: Warakurna**

Continuing working with recycled materials the Warakurna CDP are now building massive flower pots out of old tires. The CDP participants went to the tip, collected some rims and tires and started to make pots. A lot of members of the community are jealous and there have been several requests from people wanting to get some pots to put outside of their houses.

![Image](Garrick Robinson and Deandra James)

**CDP: Warburton**

CDP Warburton Arts and Crafts were lucky enough to receive some training in watercolour from professional artist Ms Lester. It was a bright success! Thanks to Ms Lester and Playgroup for allowing a visit with the adults to show new techniques and skills. We really enjoyed it.

Alison Lester and Tina Rae travelled to Warburton with the Indigenous Literacy Foundation and provided educational sessions at the Warburton Playgroup and CDP Warburton Arts and Crafts activity.

![Image](Chantelle Green, Valdera Morgan, Tina Rae, Patrina Morgan, Claudia Green, Isobel Giles and Yvonne Green)

**CDP: Wanarn**

Wanarn CDP participants are continuing to work towards making the Wanarn Farm functional again. Participants have started pruning back the existing fruit trees, the irrigation system is back up and running and all the overgrown areas have been cleared to make way for new garden beds.

![Image](Wanarn Farm)
MEETING CALENDAR 2017

FEBRUARY
15th Council Members
16th Council Directors

MARCH
15th Council Members
16th Council Directors

APRIL

MAY
17th Council Members
18th Council Directors

JUNE

JULY

AUGUST
15th Council Members
16th Council Directors

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER
25th***Council AGM***
26th Directors/Services Finance SC

NOVEMBER
15th Council Members
16th Council Directors

COUNCIL (Aboriginal Corporation) ICN: 101