

# Barkly Region welcomes Legal Resource Centre

By Fiona Hussin, NT Legal Aid Commission.

The Tennant Creek community welcomed the opening of the Tennant Creek Legal Resource Centre as part of Law Week in May.

The need for improved access to legal information and resources in Tennant Creek has long been identified in the Barkly Region.

The NT Legal Aid Commission undertook extensive consultation on the issue of how to address legal needs in the Region in the last few years. A report titled *Justice Too Far Away* was prepared for the Commission by Gordon Renouf in 2003. The report considered different models available to service the region. Renouf concluded that, for various reasons, the model most likely to be successful was the placement of a paralegal who would provide a range of support to the existing legal services and agencies servicing the area.

The Centre will provide a coordination point for

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people to obtain legal advice and assistance. The Centre will also conduct community legal education programs to raise awareness of legal rights and issues in Tennant Creek.

The Centre has been funded by the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department. It will initially operate on a pilot basis for two years and will then be evaluated to assess whether it is meeting community need.

The Centre is centrally located at 61 Paterson St, Tennant Creek, in the same building as the Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service. The Centre's Coordinator, Matthew Wickham, has been employed as the sole staff member of the Centre. Matthew has lived in Tennant Creek for over 10 years and as such, will be of enormous value to the Centre.

The Centre aims to provide quality legal information services to all residents of Tennant Creek and the Barkly Region. An outreach service will also be provided to outlying communities. Matthew will be in Elliott every second and fourth Monday of each month and at the Ali Curung Community every first and third Monday of each month.

To contact the Centre, call 89621985 or email [ntlac.telrc@bigpond.com](mailto:ntlac.telrc@bigpond.com)



*Jenny Hardy, David Farquar, Matthew Wickham and Suzan Cox, at the opening of the Centre in Tennant Creek*