The Anangu people of South Australia

Anangu is the word Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people use to refer to themselves. Anangu are the Aboriginal people of the Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara language groups. Anangu live in a vast area of central Australia that covers parts of Western Australia, the Northern Territory and Western Australia. The Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands are in the north-west corner of South Australia and include a number of different communities and homelands. There are about 3100 Anangu people in this part of SA but a number live in cities and towns throughout Australia. Most people speak Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara as a first language. Many people have learned English in school or their workplace and speak English as a second, third or fourth language.

Anangu in SA were granted title of their land in 1981 after many years of struggle to be recognised as traditional owners. Many people still carry on cultural traditions. Anangu maintain a close family life as relationships are of central importance. Many people are involved in caring for traditional lands through the maintenance of songs and ceremonies related to the land. Although now Anangu people eat western food bought at local stores many still hunt and gather traditional food.

The climate in this arid area is very hot in summer. Winters are usually dry but can be very cold with overnight temperatures sometimes below zero. Transport and communication systems have improved over the last ten years and most people now have access to telephone services and other communication facilities.

Many Anangu travel overseas and to other parts of Australia to share their cultural knowledge and expertise and people travel to other parts of Australia for holidays. There are secondary school services available in all communities and some children choose to travel to Adelaide or Alice Springs for secondary schooling.