



Napranum elder Mary Ann Coconut, left, at last year's opening of the library in Napranumm, which was named in her honour.

Napranum elder ready for the trip of a lifetime

A RESPECTED Napranum elder will travel to Canada in September to tell the world about her community.

Mary Ann Coconut will speak at the 2016 Cultural Transformation Tools International Conference in Toronto.

She will share the stage with Annalise Jennings from Dynamic Exchange and talk about Napranum's innovative path towards community ownership and self determination.

It's a big trip for Ms Coconut, who has never ventured further than the Pacific Islands.

But she said she was looking forward to the experience.

"It's going to be a positive trip and I hope I can share our story with as many people as possible," she said.

Ms Jennings said the conference in Toronto would bring leaders and practitioners together to further the journey towards conscious community evolution.



"It will cultivate authentic inquiry, curiosity, learning, and growth by providing both inspiration and practical tools for application," she said.

"The conference is an opportunity for world leaders and change agents to collaborate and innovate, linking real world challenges to universal wisdom and emergent best practice."

As a child, Ms Coconut (nee Hall) excelled in the arts and received an award for a state-wide art competition in 1952.

She became a teacher's aide in 1957 and has had a lifelong interest in education, completing a Bachelor of Community Management from Macquarie University in 2009.

She also studied theology in

the Northern Territory and is a committed Christian, having been raised in the Presbyterian Church.

"Mary Ann's Christian values are profound. She doesn't just talk it – a woman of grace and presence – she lives it," Ms Jennings said.

In 1963 she married Jerry Coconut and together they had seven children. Ms Coconut now has 10 grandchildren and nine great grandchildren.

"Mary Ann has contributed greatly to the life of her community and is passionate about her traditional culture," Ms Jennings said.

Her achievements are many and include:

- Several terms as an elected councillor of the Napranum Aboriginal Shire Council;
- Chair of the Napranum Justice Group;
- Long-term and active member of the WCCCA coordinating committee.