

Garma



2008

YOTHU YINDI
FOUNDATION



Report

GARMA 2008

Gulkula, Gove Peninsula, Arnhem Land, Australia
August 7th – 12th 2008

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Dear Garma supporters,

Every year at the Garma Festival of Traditional Culture, we celebrate! We celebrate Yolŋu culture; we celebrate the bringing together of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians for the sharing of knowledge and culture, and in doing so we celebrate and continue the success and practical, positive outcomes of the Yothu Yindi Foundation's social, cultural, economic, health and education programs.

In 2008, we also celebrated the tenth anniversary of Garma - now the nation's leading Indigenous cultural exchange event and a scene of genuine "two way" learning and we marked this milestone with an expanded set of major activities, including several important workshops and conferences in addition to the nationally significant annual Key Forum, and a major program of music performance and cultural presentations.

With those extra features and an extensive Cultural Tourism Program featuring unique men's and women's programs, a record number of Njapaki (non-Indigenous people) participated in Garma 2008. And with more than 200 Yolŋu being employed at Garma, and more Yolŋu youth than ever participating in the very important "Yuŋa Yolŋu – Young Hearts, Strong Culture" Miwatj Youth Forum and in music and multimedia training programs, the 10th Garma was the most successful ever.

We are especially proud of that, as just before Garma the local communities had suffered the tragic loss of several leaders and significant figures, But the communities maintained strength and commitment for Garma and the importance of Garma for them and for Australia, given its unique role and we were yet again able to achieve major outcomes and keep fulfilling the mission of the Yothu Yindi Foundation: "For Yolŋu and other Indigenous Australians to have the same level of wellbeing and life opportunities and choices as non-Indigenous Australians".

Garma is continuing to make a real difference, and to have more and more positive influence and on-the-ground results in communities. We were especially pleased to again have stay with us many community and corporate and governmental leaders, including Jenny Macklin, the Federal Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs; Warren Snowdon, Federal Minister for Defence Science and Personnel; the members of the Federal Government's NT Emergency Response Review Panel; and, once again a group of women brought together by Reconciliation Australia and its CEO Barbara Livesey, and a group of educators and influential supporters brought together by Andrea Harms the Professional Officer of Dare to Lead from the Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council (APAPDC).

I would like to thank all our participants, staff, volunteers, supporters and partners, especially our four 2008 Principal Partners - Rio Tinto Alcan; The Christensen Fund; the Australian Government; and the Northern Territory Government and our major Sponsors for specific programs The Telstra Foundation, Sodexo, the National Museum of Australia and the John T Reid Charitable Trusts, for their valuable contributions to the operations and outcomes of Garma and its associated programs. Every year, we need to raise more and more money to put on Garma and the other programs, so this support is vital for our on-going success.

Special thanks must go to Charles Rue and Darryl Isberg of Rio Tinto Alcan, and to Matt James, Garma Festival Production Manager for their invaluable support throughout the planning and production of Garma 2008.

I hope the unique experience and role of Garma is described in this report, and that the learnings from Garma will again spread far and wide to create greater understanding, knowledge and economic opportunities. Please make a note of the dates for Garma 2009 (7-11 August). I hope to see you there.

Yours sincerely,

Mandawuy Yunupingu
Deputy Chairman Yothu Yindi Foundation

Introduction

The 10th Garma Festival of Traditional Culture was held at Gulḱuḱa, North East Arnhem Land from 7-12 August 2008 with a record of more than 2850 people – more than 1,400 Yolḱu and other Indigenous people, and about 1,450 non-Yolḱu visitors participating.

Garma, with its unique line-up of entertainment, education and real cross-cultural interaction including the Key Forum, other major discussion groups, and youth and training programs, is now one of Australia's most significant cultural exchange events and gatherings; an intimate, spectacular celebration and presentation of cultural traditions and practices, and sharing of ideas and knowledge, leading to a plethora of real practical outcomes.

Garma is a unique gathering for bringing Yolḱu – and other Indigenous people – and Nḱapaki (non-Indigenous people) together; for the sharing of knowledge and culture (fostering greater understanding); for the practice, nurturing, preservation and delivery of traditional knowledge systems and cultural traditions and practices – so vital for social cohesion, cultural identity and community wellbeing; and for the creation of sustainable economic opportunities for Yolḱu and other Indigenous Australians.

This year, the very important Key Forum, again coordinated by Charles Darwin University, had as its theme “Indigenous Knowledge: Caring for Culture and Country”.

The Festival is now a huge annual undertaking, involving more than 130 staff and volunteers onsite in its management and operations. More than 200 Yolḱu are employed at Garma in various capacities, including in on-the-job training programs. The Yothu Yindi Foundation, an Indigenous charitable organisation with full tax deductibility status, raises more than \$2.5 million annually to put on Garma and its other programs, though our costs also continue to rise significantly.

As Garma 2008 was the tenth Garma, there was a major “anniversary” expansion of the formal discussions program and also an expanded set of music performances. As always, Garma comprised a large number of features, activities, and programs, providing a remarkable depth and breadth of direct, practical outcomes and benefits beyond the Festival site to the regional community and even nationally. The features included:

- The famous daily Bungul, or dance ceremony – the ritual performance of dance, music and song on the ceremonial ground at Gulḱuḱa, involving ceremony specialists and artists from across the region
- The Key Forum on “Indigenous Knowledge: Caring for Culture and Country”, coordinated by Charles Darwin University. Featuring many Indigenous presenters and community, corporate and governmental leaders and with more than 500 people attending, the Forum identified many key issues and actions which can and must be pursued in regard to this issue of fundamental social and economic importance, and again proved its national worth and importance
- The Indigenous Economic Development Conference, coordinated by YFF
- The major role of the *Dilthan Yolḱunha: The Healing Place*, a ground-breaking Indigenous health respite and rehabilitation centre, particularly in the Garma Women's program
- Garma Expo – stalls and displays by Indigenous organizations, and government and non-government agencies
- The unique Indigenous Cultural Tourism Program including separate Men's Program Goḱ-Galpu (involving workshops on spear-making and hunting) and Women's Programs (an integral part of Goḱ-Wapitja: the Women's Program, involving field trips with interpretive walks, women's workshops on healing, ethno-botany, and basket-weaving)
- Tourism training program prior to and throughout Garma for a group of Yolḱu men and women training as tourism operators and guides
- Garma Panel Collaborative Art Project 2008 – linoblock printing studio project involving about 80 artists, and gallery exhibiting the 2003, 2004 and 2005 Garma panels and prints
- The Indigenous Water Knowledge, Indigenous Water Interests Expert Exchange, coordinated by the United Nations University and the North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance NAILSMA
- The Indigenous Climate Change and Land Use Management Conference, coordinated by YFF
- The Dugong and Marine Turtle Project meeting, coordinated by NAILSMA
- The “remoteFOCUS: Revitalising Remote Australia” Research Workshop, coordinated by Desert Knowledge Australia and YFF
- A security training program for Yolḱu in the lead-up to Garma and involving on-the-job training at Garma, using qualified security trainers and experts
- The Garma Miwatj Youth Forum: Strong Knowledge = Strong Culture, presented in collaboration with Anglicare, part of the YFF Indigenous Youth Community Leadership program
- The Contemporary Music Training Program for Indigenous Students - Music training workshops for young, emerging bands from the Top End of the Northern Territory (NT) for the week prior, and for Garma, with bands performing on stage and elsewhere at Gulḱuḱa throughout the

Festival. The workshops, teaching song writing, recording, and performing skills are presented by NT School of Music and Charles Darwin University

- Multimedia workshops involving students enrolled at NT Open Education Centre and a display of student digital photography promoting the Certificate II in Multimedia
- The continuation of the Multimedia Training Program for Indigenous Students, an integral part of the Foundation's Indigenous Recording and Multimedia Training Project, now also involving and supporting the Mulka Project (Multimedia Centre) at the Buku-Larrngay Mulka Art Centre in Yirrkala
- Open-day at Yirrkala Community Education Centre
- Gapan Gallery: A spectacular open-air exhibition of Yolŋu prints among the stringy barks on site at Gulḵula, curated by the print workshop at Buku-Larrngay Mulka Art Centre, Yirrkala
- For the first time at Garma, the wonderful food and cooking of Mark Olive "The Black Olive", with meals and presentations to several groups, including the more than 100 - strong Cultural Tourism group
- Information area staffed by John Greatorex and other staff from the Charles Darwin University Yolŋu Studies program with computer resources, video and poster presentations on aspects of Yolŋu life, land and culture
- Miwatj Health wellness checks and information area
- Garma Fieldwork and Fieldwork Research Project subjects being undertaken on-site by University of Melbourne and Charles Darwin University student programs
- Film screening program
- A range of other activities, such as major music and stage performances including Jimmy Little, the Chooky Dancers, Saltwater Band, B2M, South East, Ben Lee, Andrew Farriss and Morganics - and other presentations



Bunḡul dancers at Garma 2008.

©YYF/Garma Festival. Photographer Wayne Quilliam

Bungul: The Heart of Garma

The bungul forms the heart of Garma and is emphasised as a core expression of Yolŋu intellectual and spiritual life, an important part of the learning experiences of visitors, and a key element of the Yothu Yindi Foundation's achievements in sharing knowledge and culture, and nurturing, maintaining and protecting cultural traditions and practices.

What are Manikay, Bungul and Miny'tji?

In addition to ownership in country, each Yolŋu *mala* possesses its own hereditary canon of *yäku* (names), *manikay* (songs), *bungul* (dances) and *miny'tji* (designs) which stands as a permanent record of the original observations made by *waŋarr* (ancestral progenitors) as they named, shaped, founded and populated the Yolŋu *wäŋa* (homelands) for their human descendants. *Manikay* are performed in lengthy series of brief items that are organised in canonical sequences of the sacred subjects that are also owned by each *mala*. There is a *manikay* series for each of the *wäŋa* that a *mala* owns with its own distinctive sequence of subjects that expounds in fine detail the ecological and sacred qualities that are specific to it.

Manikay series are typically performed by men with *bilma* (paired clap sticks) singing and *yidaki* (didgeridu) accompaniment, and can be performed on their own in their *luku* (root) format. In ceremonies, however, men, women and children dance *bungul* items that accompany each *manikay* item, and wear costumes and *miny'tji* drawn from their subjects. Ceremonial processes traditionally include funerals, initiations, purifications, dispute settlements and diplomatic exchanges. Ceremonial highlights at the Garma Festival of Traditional Culture in past years include: the erection of the *Jarrakitj* (hollow log coffin) on the ceremony ground at Guḷkuḷa in 1999; the performance of a *manikay* series owned by the extinct Burarrŋu *mala* by their descendants in 2002; a ceremonial exchange between the Gupapuyŋu and Gumatj *mala* in 2005; the presentation by the Maringa Dancers from Milingimbi of rare Gamalaŋga, Mälarra and Gurryindi repertoires that had not been performed for two decades in 2006; the Mimih Spirit Dancers from Maningrida participated again after some years of absence and the Warnindilyakwa Dancers from Groote Eylandt participated for the first time in the Bungul in 2007; and this year, for the first time, dancers from the Wadeye community attended Garma, opening proceedings in the famous nightly Bungul.

The most obvious identifiers of a *manikay* series as the property of a particular *mala* are its *dämbu* (head) which is its overarching melodic structure, and the approximate length and pitch of the *yidaki* that accompanies it. It is important to note here that *manikay* is one of the very few Australian musical traditions that employ both the fundamental and overblown pitches of the didgeridu.

The lyrics of each brief *manikay* item are known as its *yutungurr* (thigh) and are predominately drawn from cryptic lexicons of sacred *yäku* that each *mala* possesses. Each *manikay* item has an "ABA" form which comprises (A) an unaccompanied hummed introduction, (B) an accompanied full rendition of the *yutungurr* lyrics and (A) an unaccompanied sung coda with the possibility of either A section being tacit.

The *manikay* tradition also extends to the *milkarri* (crying) songs performed in ceremonies by women which share the same melodic and lyrical content as the fuller *manikay* series performed by men. It also allows for the rotational augmentation of *manikay* series with composed *yuta* (new) items in formal performance contexts. Both *yuta manikay* items and women's *milkarri* typically incorporate semi-improvised expressions of *warwu* (grief, sorrow) for those who have gone before which capture the aesthetic essence of the *manikay* tradition as a whole. The albums of Yothu Yindi Band feature entirely traditional settings of both individual and chained *manikay* items as well as more contemporised songs such as "Djäpana: Sunset Dreaming", "Timeless Land" and "Ghost Spirits" that draw heavily on *manikay* repertoires owned by the Gumatj and Rirratjinu *mala*.



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Adapted from a paper by Dr Aaron Corn
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Indigenous Cultural Tourism

Tourism Training Program

Goḥ-Galpu: Men's Program

Goḥ-Wapitja: Women's Program

In 2008, we continued and further improved the unique Indigenous Cultural Tourism Program at Garma, incorporating Women's Program and Men's Program activities and structured along traditional Yolḷu lines. We retained the very important Ranger Tourism Training Program, and increased markedly the number of indigenous guides and presenters and also the range of specific activities. The improved structure and operations facilitated an expanded role for Yolḷu and, importantly, more assistance for Yolḷu in on-going work-skills and economic opportunities in tourism.

104 guests (57 women, 24 men and their 22 children), along with another group of 22 school children and their supervisors, participated in the Cultural Tourism Program.

Of course, all non-Yolḷu guests at Garma – approximately 1450 of them in 2008 – are really “tourists”, but in addition to the Key Forum, other conferences, and the Youth categories of registration, in the Cultural Tourism Program we offer the special, world-leading Cultural Tourism program for visitors which features a unique level of intimate, substantive cultural interaction with Yolḷu through special activities, Yolḷu guiding, field trips and presentations as well as allowing guests to enjoy and experience the regular and general highlights of Garma like the Bungul, art presentations, music performances, film screenings, and astronomy sessions.

Garma now brings more tourists into the Northern Territory (NT) than any other single NT event, apart from the Darwin Cup, and holds a prominent place on the Australian Indigenous tourism and cultural calendars. It has a high-profile international reputation, every year attracting a high level of international and domestic media coverage.

The set of Women's activities, including seminars, workshops and special sessions, was an integral part of Garma's **Goḥ-Wapitja: The Women's Program**, which nurtures and supports Indigenous women's cultural traditions; strengthens women's networks and organisations; addresses issues identified by Indigenous women as priorities in their communities; and assists women in training and skills-development to undertake leadership, representative and management roles.

Assisting the Yothu Yindi Foundation in the coordination and delivery of the Garma 2008 Indigenous Cultural Tourism program were the Regional Operations Division of the NT Department of Education Employment and Training (DEET), Dhimurru Land Management, Yirralka Rangers, Indigenous Economic Development Pty Ltd, and Two-way Tours.

The Program also directly involved two emerging leaders in the field of Indigenous Cultural Tourism *Dilthan Yolḷunha; The Healing Place*, (also conducted by YYF) and *Bawaka Cultural Experiences - and* Yolḷu professional tourism guides and cultural leaders, a Women's Program facilitator (Tashidawa Eyles), and professional Nḷapaki tourism guides. Leading the Program operations was Trent Wilkinson, assisted by John Morse.

Yothu Yindi Foundation also wants to thank the Indigenous Land Corporation of the Federal Government for supporting the Garma Indigenous Cultural Tourism Program.

The special field excursions to various locations, and other sessions of the Garma forum program, were tailored especially for the Indigenous Cultural Tourism Program, which is unique in supporting community projects and working with traditional owners and Yolḷu people, Dhimurru Land Management, and a Charles Darwin University trainer, enabling local Indigenous people to become involved and educated, reaching certificate levels in accordance with national competency training guidelines.

As mentioned above, the Indigenous Cultural Tourism Program is designed to be compatible with Yolḷu culture, so the group was sometimes split into separate women's and men's sessions, with appropriate Yolḷu guides and presenters. Guests also came together as one group for a Cultural Induction session and daily talks on specific topics (presented by guest speakers/talkers), and of course, general Garma activities and performances, including the famous nightly Bungul (dance ceremony) and interpretation of dance and song.

This year's program also featured a special interactive cooking presentation and meal, featuring kangaroo and barramundi and other bush food, prepared by Indigenous chef Mark Olive “The Black Olive” for all Cultural Tourism Program participants.

The Garma Festival is a Yolḷu event and all guests are invited to share, learn and observe, and participate in some of the activities. The schedule is set in Yolḷu time to allow visitors the opportunity to open their eyes to the Yolḷu world view, which is both challenging and rewarding. While we put together a comprehensive program with many features, it should be noted that there is always a spontaneous, flexible element to Garma operations and presentations, and the order or times of various sessions may change, sometimes at very short notice. Flexibility and awareness are key successful elements of Indigenous culture and working together on this unique Indigenous Cultural Tourism Program.

All proceeds from the Garma Indigenous Cultural Tourism Program go to the operations of the social, cultural and economic programs of the Yothu Yindi Foundation. Many aims were again achieved by and through the Indigenous Cultural Tourism Program:

- Sharing of knowledge and culture (thereby fostering greater understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples)
- Maintenance, nurturing and celebration of cultural traditions and practices
- Specific *Gor-Wapitja: the Women's Program* and *Gor-Galpu: the Men's program* objectives
- Creation of economic opportunities for Yolŋu through education, training, employment and enterprise, community and personal development
- Yolŋu participation, learning and education
- Inspiration for future projects with Yolŋu people working together
- Education of guests in regard to Indigenous culture, dance, music, and arts
- Operational improvements on facilities for clients, eg tents/accommodation

Features and highlights of the Indigenous Cultural Tourism Program

Group sessions: Briefings and morning talks

- Cultural awareness and protocols
- Indigenous art
- Indigenous tourism
- Skin groups and kinship
- Introduction to culture and relationships
- *Bungul* (dances) and *manikay* (songs)

Trips and field excursions to surrounding areas and Bawaka

At the direction of senior Yolŋu men and women, excursions were taken to different inland and coastal locations, with specific links to the ongoing activities in the shelters. Trips were made into the forests to locate and obtain materials for dyes, string-making and weaving. Collections were then brought to the shelters and their uses demonstrated accordingly throughout the Festival. Bush tucker trips are made into the stringy-bark forests to find wild honey and into mangroves and tidal estuaries to find shellfish and mud crabs. Most food collections were prepared in the traditional manner and eaten "onsite".

Trips were also made into the rainforest and stringy-bark forest to collect medicines, with particular attention being paid to the tree or plant to be used. Medicinal plant collections were taken to the shelters. There, senior women conducted seminars on their classifications, uses, preparations, associated rituals and other associated desirable or compatible treatments. This was followed by some practical demonstrations of particular medicinal preparation and usage. The teaching, both formal and informal, followed traditional methods of instruction by expert senior and young middle-aged women and men.

Other highlights of the program were visits to the Yirrkala Community Centre, a guided tour of the Buku-Larrŋgay Mulka Arts and Multimedia Centres, and the opening of the Gapan Gallery at the Garma site

Workshops

There were educational workshops exploring Yolŋu approaches to health, bush medicine, land management, bilingual education, cultural tourism and women's and men's business. Workshops were conducted by representatives from the Yirrkala Community Education Centre, Dhimurru Land Management and the Charles Darwin University and local Northern Territory guides.

Afternoon and evening program

The Bungul (dance ceremony) each evening provided a cultural focus for the program. This famous feature of Garma is narrated by Elders and cultural interpreters, providing a unique experience for visitors who will hear descriptions of ceremonies that have been performed by Yolŋu clan groups for almost 40,000 years. These descriptions are supplemented by creation stories about the area – including that of the spirit man Ganbulabula who, at Gulḵuḷa (the site of Garma) brought forth the Yidaki among the Gumatj people.

As well as evening concerts, Indigenous films were screened nightly, providing interesting variety for guests.

Gonj-Galpu: Men's Program

As well as participating in many joint activities and general Garma and Cultural Tourism Program sessions, including very popular lessons and group performances in traditional dance, the male guests on the Cultural Tourism Program also participated in Men's only sessions and activities, including:

Men's shelters: Fire making, spear making and throwing

The workshop included traditional fire making techniques, the selection and crafting of wood for the shaft of the spear and throwing techniques for hunting on land and in water. Traditional spears can often take many days to create and complete.

Bark preparation and painting sessions were also held in the men's shelter.

As well, special sessions on story-telling and cultural traditional practices were held for the men participating in the Cultural Tourism Program.

Field trips

Special field trips were held for the male guests on the Cultural Tourism Program to go searching for food in the saltwater, and on collection trips for spears (gara), bark, fire sticks and garpu.

Gonj-Wapitja: the Women's Program

As part of the Women's Program in 2008 participants attended workshops, discussions and demonstrations of women's cultural activities specific to local Yolŋu women. The trained Yolŋu guides who facilitate the program have a wit and generosity that keeps spirits high, laughter and tears flow easily and stories and friendships are shared throughout the festival.

The program included three main areas of interest; Bush Craft including weaving, painting and woodcarving - Bush Food and Bush Medicine, all with expert guidance from senior Traditional Owners. Each day started with a walk through the surrounding bush land to collect plants and materials for the afternoon's activity, venturing into rainforest, mangrove and swamplands to gather the essential materials for craft, eating and healing.

A highlight in 2008 was again the Bush Medicine workshop that featured Yolŋu medicine women offering insight into their organisation, *Dilthan Yolŋunha: The Healing Place*. Senior Yolŋu women led groups into the bush to identify and collect medicinal leaves, roots and bark. They told personal stories about the land along the way demonstrating their ancestral connections to all that exists on the landscape.



Healing Place trainees © YYF/Garma Festival. Photographer Amy Jo Vickery

Once the materials were gathered the visitors were invited to witness the medicines in use. The gathering of visiting women showed great appreciation for the experience in these workshops, openly sharing their stories, hopes and visions for a greater recognition of the knowledge and expertise that exists in this region

Garma - a National Hub

While the sharing of knowledge and culture has always been one of the primary aims of Garma and the Yothu Yindi Foundation, Garma has also now become an annual national hub for substantive discussion – formal and informal - of important issues and challenges facing Indigenous Australians.

At Garma 2008, the bringing together of so many Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, including corporate, governmental and community leaders, educators and practitioners in relevant fields, again provided an important unifying influence, fostering greater understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

It also generated many formal and informal alliances, information exchanges and working relationships, whether through the formal leaders' meetings or plenary sessions of the Key Forum, or in the line at the main dining area! And of course, the bringing together, for such substantive exchange, of so many deeply-involved people brings positive results in its own right. It is an end in itself.

But importantly it also again generated results - practical policies and actions, across a range of social, education, health, economic and cultural fields, through those alliances; through policy formulation; through knowledge exchange on what is working, what isn't working, on how and what can be done better. These outcomes all help fulfil the mission and objectives of the Yothu Yindi Foundation and Garma itself.

This year, the Garma Key Forum was complemented by, and connected with, several other organised conferences, workshops and meetings at Garma – including those on Indigenous Economic Development, on Indigenous Water Knowledge and Interests, on Climate Change effects and opportunities, and on the set of challenges facing remote Australia.

For all those activities, the Yothu Yindi Foundation is working closely with other organisations, institutions and government departments, as more and more entities see Garma as an appropriate venue (including the fact it is on Aboriginal land, in an Indigenous cultural context) for such action-oriented knowledge-exchange and engagement processes, and an opportunity to get and have together so many of those interested, involved, assisting, partnering in, influencing, specialising in, and policy-formulating in the particular areas being discussed.

We are proud of the national, unique role Garma now plays in Australia as a co-ordinating hub bringing together people for important discussions and exchanges, and this year that role reached a major new level. We hope the positive, practical outcomes will continue to occur and expand - at a personal as well as a collective level as we continue to look at ways to extend further this particular role of Garma.



Alan Tietzel of Rio Tinto Alcan speaking at a Garma Forum © YYF/Garma Festival. Photographer Stephen Cherry

Key Forum - Indigenous Knowledge: Caring for Culture and Country

Executive Summary

This executive summary outlines the issues and sub-themes that emerged out of the Indigenous cultural framework formed by the Garma Key Forum theme: Indigenous Knowledge: Caring for Culture and Country.

The Garma Festival 2008 Key Forum marked the 10th anniversary of the most enduring platform of cross cultural understanding, information, and reconciliation of ideas and practices between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Australia. The spirit of Garma and its Key Forum has survived changes of government, opposing ideologies, radical policy developments, and institutional change and this is reflected in the unfolding direction of the theme at the Garma Key Forum at Gulkula, north east Arnhem Land 2008. The most significant feature of the Garma Key Forum is the light it throws on the remarkable achievements and successes of Indigenous people across the board.

In the Northern Territory alone, approximately 400 Aboriginal rangers were employed through a combination of funding sources – largely Commonwealth sourced and with the addition of the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP). Indigenous ranger programs cover everything related to caring for country from wildlife management, fire, land clearing, pastoral land use, feral animals, weeds, climate change, water management, coastal land and sea surveillance, through to traditional hunting.¹ Over the years, most land and sea care activities have become identified with ranger programs, strengthening traditional knowledge and providing the foundations for a more coordinated approach to activities.

The essence of the Key Forum confirmed the significance of Indigenous traditional cultural affairs for the future. A number of the issues and demands that were brought to the platform by the many participants who shaped proceedings at the three day event included the following Key Points.

INCREASE INVESTMENT IN SKILLS AND HUMAN RESOURCE:

- There must be greater investment in people, resources and infrastructure to meet the needs of people in regional and remote communities;
- Indigenous Rangers on Indigenous land ought to be equipped with the same powers as Commonwealth's Park Rangers. Indigenous people know their remote Country better than anyone. They have greater awareness and can act quickly;
- There should be greater incentives and less disincentives to expand economic business in Indigenous areas;

WATER RESOURCES:

- There needs to be more discussion on the priorities and management of water with the North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAILSMA) and the variety of organisations involving Indigenous peoples in other parts of Australia;
- Indigenous knowledge should be incorporated into water management projects;

PARTNERSHIPS AND AGREEMENTS:

- State, Territory, Commonwealth and local governments should make greater commitment to long term relationships and partnerships with Indigenous people and communities;
- Partnerships between Indigenous peoples, governments and the corporate sector should be expanded within the Ranger's program;

IMPROVE WELFARE:

- A thorough review of the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) ought to be undertaken to bring it into line in with modern workplace practices;

STRENGTHEN CULTURE:

- Urgent need to record and maintain the Indigenous inheritance of music, ceremonies, dance and songs;
- Traditional knowledge must be incorporated into, and recognised by, mainstream society;
- Rethink learning techniques and practices in consultations with Indigenous people;
- Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples must communicate better to share each other's cultures;
- Documentation and recording of cultural mediums need to be taken seriously;
- Government's ought to invest resources in maintaining Indigenous languages;

IMPROVE DATA COLLECTION AND RESEARCH:

- More evidence based research should be encouraged and supported;

¹ These include Indigenous fisheries surveillance program such as One Arm Point (Bardi Jawi) WA, Maningrida NT and Arakun in Queensland.

- Yolngu want to strengthen their relationship with scientists in gathering and interpreting data on the effects of climate change;

COLLABORATE AND ENGAGE:

- Governments ought to strengthen their ability to tailor programs to match the needs and strengths of communities. This must be a two-way process;
- Programs must be flexible enough to cope with Country and family obligations;
- Indigenous people must be part of the policy discourse;
- Greater emphasis should be placed on strengthening relationships between Traditional Owners and Governments in determining resource requirements;
- Culturally appropriate ways of working should be undertaken to encourage people to be more creative in the way they approach solutions to cultural differences;

ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

- Flexibility should be built into Indigenous programs to ensure that family obligations are recognised as the foundation of the Indigenous way of life, including wellbeing, mental health, land and resource rights;
- Those Indigenous people who have the cultural knowledge within their communities should be recognised and their stories heard. They can identify native plants and trees for the purpose of healing and their stories enable others to make sense of the Indigenous world and interpret issues that arise in urban settings;
- Government agencies ought to work in a more coordinated way to consolidate grants and other financial resources and minimise the number of funding and reporting lines encountered by Indigenous organisations and businesses;
- Greater attention should be paid to negotiating with ranger groups to reach agreement on achieving specific outcomes and monitoring those outcomes;

INCREASE ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE:

- Bureaucracies must increase accountability to Indigenous people and communities;
- Protocols for establishing partnerships with external agencies must be completely transparent;
- A whole of government strategy should be undertaken to increase coordination and minimise policy confusion and conflicting target-setting, and to facilitate reporting;
- More emphasis on the coordination of Indigenous organisations;
- There needs to be much greater awareness of the serious nature of the issues that confront people living in regional and remote Indigenous communities;

INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP:

- Young people need to learn from the ranger programs towards taking a more holistic approach to land management;
- Strong Indigenous leadership should be recognised as critical for the success of projects;
- Recognition of the need to identify potential Indigenous leaders from as early as preschool and primary years and encourage knowledge of cross-cultural governance;
- An emphasis on the role of Indigenous families and communities in the functions performed by Indigenous organisations;

CONTINUITY:

- There must be continuing commitment to build on successes in working with Indigenous communities by encouraging local strategies in economic and social development.

The Northern Territory has the highest proportion of Indigenous people living in discrete communities in Australia. Approximately 45 per cent of Indigenous Northern Territorians live in discrete communities, with 81 per cent of Indigenous society living in remote or very remote areas of the Territory.²

Participants at Garma 2008 made it clear that Indigenous traditions and culture need to be incorporated into the same planning process as community development and that means making a strong commitment to engage in ongoing consultations. Without engagement, decision makers simply cannot take into account the social and cultural realities facing Indigenous people. This was the message from the Commonwealth Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Jenny Macklin, particularly with reference to the High Court's Blue Mud Bay decision and more specifically, through financial support for entrepreneurial and organisational activities, research, and land management.

The land councils and other organisations, such as Laynhapuy, Dhimurru, and NAILSMA, have a major role in caring for country ranger programs, largely because of their broad based constituency of traditional owners. Economic independence, improvements to quality of life, and welfare related policies, are seen as powerful components of change in Indigenous affairs and, at a strategic level,

² Parliament of Australia, Senate Select Committee on Regional and Remote Indigenous *Communities, Regional and remote Indigenous communities: first report 2008*, Chapter 2, 2.6

there is now a serious attempt to reconcile policy and program development with the significance of traditional knowledge and Indigenous cultural traditions.

Galarrwuy Yunupingu reminded the Key Forum that there are significant mutual benefits from sharing knowledge and resources:

*Traditional people know how to use their local resources for themselves. Now they need to learn how to make those resources useful for someone else.*³

Likewise, Gulumbu Yunupingu⁴ defined the cultural history of *Yolngu*, providing passionate insight into *Yolngu* life. Like all *Yolngu*, Gulumbu derives her strength and spirituality from her ancestors and this inspired her to establish Dilthan Yolgunha: The Healing Place at Gulkula as an alternative to the unpleasant experience of hospitalisation. *Yolngu* have an ancestral and holistic view of the world shaped by the relationships of life, land, trees and plants.

In the tradition of Garma, the Key Forum regularly invites an international dimension from eminent Indigenous people from elsewhere in the world. One of the key 2008 guest speakers was Sir Tipene O'Regan, from across the Tasman. Sir Tipene presented a potted history of the Maori battle for legal rights spanning more than 149 years, including parliamentary representation through designating separate Maori constituencies as a consequence of the introduction of the mixed-member proportional electoral system in 1993. Maori sovereignty, subverted by the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 and reasserted throughout the 19th and 20th century, has been re-established over the past 25 years through *Tino Rangatiratanga* – absolute sovereignty and control through the return of ancestral lands and waters, recognition of Maori laws and cultural traditions.⁵ Graham Hingangaroa Smith⁶ also spoke of inheriting identity, and the inherent importance of language.

Culture is a living, organic and holistic way of thinking: even when Indigenous people are speaking in English, they are thinking and interpreting their world from the Indigenous paradigm. This involves a circular logic - a circular way of thinking and relating, something that remains fundamental. Culture is not something quaint and exotic, it is real, and it influences every part of our life: how you relate to a place; how you perceive yourself; language, as an intrinsic part of an ancient system of traditional cultural knowledge. Programs must incorporate knowledge systems.

There are also significant and substantial health benefits from Caring for Country; however, there are also challenges to living on country. Communities are thinly distributed and there is limited access to services and income earning.

The tropical savannahs and marine ecosystems are more intact here than anywhere else on the planet. Traditional owners play a pivotal role in management. There must be space for Indigenous people to have discourse to progress in this society, and the wider society, by applying traditional knowledge about the environment for the future.

Governance remained at the centre of debates on reforming relationships between governments and Indigenous communities. Presentations on governance took shape at two levels: first, the need to combine traditional cultural values with aspects of western management - this was the theme of some presentations – and second, successful examples of established governance programs producing some remarkable results. For example, the organisational success of the Balkanu Development Corporation within the NAILSMA, and land management and ranger programs.

The Key Forum was summed up by Tom Calma, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner and Race Discrimination Commissioner for the Australian Human Rights Commission, the authority mandated to report to the Federal government on indigenous matters. His summary focused on:

- The need to work with Indigenous people
- More investment into creative initiatives
- The ability to recognise and capitalise on success

The venue for the Key Forum on traditional land is, of itself, a symbol of the cultural strength of the *Yolngu* people of north east Arnhem Land. By the same token, the Forum incorporates a much more comprehensive Australia-wide view of Indigenous circumstances than those that influence the Indigenous peoples of north east Arnhem Land. However, the sheer strength of the cultural traditions of the peoples of that region and the significance of their country is never absent from the proceedings and this in itself had a distinctly positive effect on the directions and outcomes of the Forum.

³ Galarrwuy Yunupingu, AM, Gumatj clan, Yirrkala.

⁴ *Yolngu* artist and founder of the Healing Place, Gulkula.

⁵ Sir Tipene O'Regan, academic and professional company director, and best known for his role as chairman of the [Ngāi Tahu Maori Trust Board](#), where he led a successful land and sea fisheries claims before the [Waitangi Tribunal](#) - culminating in the Tribunal's reports in 1991 and 1992, and then claim settlement negotiations leading to the [1998 settlement](#) which made extensive provision for customary rights in fisheries and other natural resources.

⁶ CEO, Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangī, New Zealand.

The Indigenous Economic Development Conference

Summary Report⁷

'Whatever comes out of the 2008 Garma Festival must be absorbed in the minds of the people who make policy decisions. We need to make them listen.'

Galarrwuy Yunupingu

The purpose of the 2008 Garma Indigenous Economic Development Conference was to expose economic development issues at a regional level, following on from the previous Indigenous Economic Development Conference presented in Darwin in 2007 by the DBERD Indigenous Economic Development Unit. The success of the Garma Festival depends on maintaining the spirit of two way communications – a strong cultural bridge between Indigenous and non-Indigenous societies. The foundations for two way partnerships must begin, first, by recognising the parameters of traditional Indigenous culture; and second, with an understanding by non-Indigenous people that the position of Indigenous people is one of disadvantage, particularly social disadvantage. Djapirri Mununggirritj⁸ set the framework by reminding us that Indigenous peoples have a very short history of what non-Indigenous society refers to as *'development'*.

Djapirri's comments profiled two strategic issues that underpinned the three-day conference:

- First, economic development is closely aligned to land tenure, commercial opportunities and Government funded training and employment strategies
- Second, taking social, cultural and traditional life into consideration has a significant effect on processes, programs and outcomes

She asked that these issues serve as a serious reminder that Indigenous people have an ancient cultural history contrasted by a very short history of incorporation into western society: in some communities, this is only one or two generations. These were principled themes that shaped discussion in the Indigenous Economic Development Conference at the 2008, 10th Garma Festival at Gulkula, north east Arnhem Land.

With this in mind, balancing economic development with traditional Indigenous life can be a confusing concept for both *Yolngu* and non Indigenous decision makers alike.⁹ The involvement of traditional owners strengthens the foundations for economic development and Galarrwuy Yunupingu pleaded for the partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous decision-makers to be more balanced:

'We must achieve the best for our people. Unfair treatment and misery can be cured by economic development but to do that, we all need to balance our cultural differences. Take us out of our misery. We recognise benefits and we also know why we are missing out.'

Yolngu draw on their history in order to realise the economic potential of their land and, against this backdrop, discussion over the consequences of the High Court's Blue Mud Bay decision and impending changes to public and corporate employment and training activities underway significantly expanded people's understanding of the depth and breadth of Indigenous economic development.

The connection between economic potential and traditional knowledge was the cornerstone of the presentation by Minister for Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Jenny Macklin. The message she delivered is that the challenge will be met but we need to guarantee that Indigenous traditions and culture are incorporated into the same planning process as economic development and that means making a strong commitment to engage in ongoing consultations.

Decision makers have to take a balanced view of current social and cultural realities for the purpose of future planning.¹⁰ Kim Johnstone¹¹ pointed out that statistical data, such as population indicators and movements, are generally silent on cultural information. As the Indigenous population numbers increase, governments will need to cope with leaps in the demands for services such as education, health and housing. Her research shows that planning and development outcomes will be shaped, among other things, by births, deaths and migration.

'If we don't understand these three things then planning for the future can be very difficult – and I think one of the reasons so many policy initiatives fail is that they don't think about these things.'

This also has implications for the continuous roundabout between Indigenous disadvantage and government expenditure. Take a look at the recent Access Economics report on the Economic Impact of Indigenous Disadvantage:

⁷ Prepared by Dr Christine Fletcher for Yothu Yindi Foundation.

⁸ Yirrkala Women's Resource Centre.

⁹ Frank Djirrimbilpilwuy.

¹⁰ Banambi Wunungmurra and Damien Djerrkura.

¹¹ Kim Johnstone, PhD Student, North Australia Research Unit, The Australian National University

*'While improvements in Indigenous life expectancy, labour force participation and labour productivity over the next 20 years may enhance the budget bottom line in some key mainstream programs, such improvements are only likely to be achieved with additional government outlays on Indigenous-specific or other types of assistance.'*¹²

The sub-text is this: coordinating special programs within the broad parameters of mainstream development frameworks, overlapping jurisdiction, intergovernmental financial relations and budgetary pressures is a major challenge. The Northern Territory Department of Business, Economic Development and Regional Development had a strong positive role in shaping the parameters of this conference, largely through the involvement of the Indigenous Economic Development Taskforce.¹³ Their participation highlighted the significance of networks that connect organisations specifically established to support Indigenous employment, business, economic development, and reconciliation, with the corporate sector, mainstream government, and with Indigenous organisations, agencies, and communities.

Special agencies and organisations are designed to facilitate programs, offer support, and also amplify needs into wider, more mainstream public forums. As the conference progressed, the significance of this became clearer through presentations from organisations such as Indigenous Business Australia,¹⁴ Reconciliation Australia,¹⁵ the Indigenous Land Corporation,¹⁶ the Northern Land Council,¹⁷ Kimberley Land Council,¹⁸ the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs,¹⁹ Norforce,²⁰ Dhimurru,²¹ Miwatj Health²² and Laynhapuy. The role of Aboriginal land councils, homeland organisations and health services in housing, employment and infrastructure development is extensive and absolutely critical in the Northern Territory.

Mining companies admitted that they are regularly struggling to adequately address Indigenous employment. Also, employment is one thing but there are still some organisations that do not have the capacity to manage and retain indigenous workers. Argyle and Rio Tinto²³ are exceptions, finding that it is far more economic to invest in Indigenous local people and work and engage with them in a positive way. Several participants called for the pastoral industry, and also some Aboriginal organisations, to do the same.

The most prominent issue to surface over the three day conference was the value of the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP), and questions of *'training'*.

CDEP

CDEP was discussed and debated by both its supporters and its detractors, largely as a result of radical changes to community life brought about by the Federal Government's Northern Territory Emergency Response. According to Greg Wearne, the message from these debates is to consider how CDEP is applied in different regions and, at the end of the day, formulate the shape of CDEP through encouraging a national narrative.²⁴ According to Greg, CDEP is positioned somewhere between mainstream employment - real jobs - and the reality of *Yolŋu* life.

Coupled to the debate over CDEP were questions of organisational capacity and maturity. Barry Taylor, Executive Chairman of Ngarda Civil and Mining, focused on the company's Plant Operators training program which commenced late 2007 and now has a 95% success rate. Ngarda's experience with CDEP lies with its restrictiveness in training and Barry Taylor argued that CDEP does not necessarily deliver the figures that the mining industry requires. In his past experience, CDEP hindered progress. On the other hand, without CDEP the Caring for Country program would never have been viable.²⁵

¹² See Access Economics report for Reconciliation Australia's *'An overview of the economic impact of Indigenous disadvantage'*, 2008, pp. 1-53 and p.22.

¹³ Leeanne Caton, Indigenous Economic Development, NT Department of Business, Economic and Regional Development; Klaus Helms, Department of Families, Housing and Community Affairs; (also, Philip Roberts, ACIL Tasman).

¹⁴ The IBA was set up as an independent statutory authority to build assets and businesses for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Finance has grown from 50 to 300 million dollars. New investments and opportunities are now the aim: tourism, mining, supermarkets, and so on (Ron Marony, General Manager, IBA).

¹⁵ Barbara Livesey, CEO, Reconciliation Australia.

¹⁶ Shirley McPherson, ILC Chairperson.

¹⁷ Wali Wunurmurra, Chairman NLC; Kim Hill, EO, NLC; and Ron Levy, Senior Legal Officer, NLC.

¹⁸ Frank Davey, Deputy Chairman, KLC; Wayne Bergman, CEO, KLC.

¹⁹ Joe Martin-Jard.

²⁰ Major Dan Gosling, OC Arnhem Squadron; Corporal Norman Daymirriju, Gapuwiyak, Patrol Commander.

²¹ Djawa Yunupirju, Director.

²² John Morgan, Chairman.

²³ John Graham, Rio Tinto.

²⁴ Greg Wearne's comment in his summary on the second day of the IEDC, 2008.

²⁵ There are now more than 400 Indigenous people working on managing land and sea, through caring for country. They learn their skills from experts, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. Indigenous knowledge provides the lynch pin and the basis for the work. The knowledge provides the basis of an emerging service sector. One example can be seen in the Hodgeson Downs/Minyeri Cattle station, purchased through the Aboriginal land fund.

According to Galarrwuy,

“CDEP can be a weapon against poverty – turn CDEP into something positive and call it by another name - build training centres and give skills to your people, to drive machines, control their lives, gain skills, and get an economic life.”

Training

The question of ‘training’ emerged as a contentious issue. There were strong views expressed about training and several people asserted that the training sector is not fully geared to service remote communities. Indigenous leaders described training as a two way process. In short, non-Indigenous people need to be educated as much within the parameters of Indigenous cultural necessities as do Aboriginal people wanting to participate in western-style development, a view expressed across the three day Conference.

Yalmay Yunupingu and Rarriwuy Marika, for example, argued that changing the way things work takes time, particularly in education and training.

- First, finding the right people to conduct the training is often difficult
- Second, when the training is complete, people want the right to choose their own destiny
- Third, training for the sake of training, if there is no job at the end of it, is misguided
- Fourth, both non-Indigenous and Indigenous people need to change the way we think

The Commonwealth Intervention has made an impact on *Yolngu*, particularly if the paucity of consultation processes diminishes the autonomy, the strength, and the rights of Indigenous individuals.²⁶ Yalmay said people want the right to own the decisions and she cited the night patrol as a serious *Yolngu* initiative. She asked people to consider establishing a *Yolngu* cultural foundation with ‘*Yolngu academics*’ to support training for non-Indigenous people.

This was consistent with the Norforce presentation showcasing the Indigenous special army unit, the Indigenous leadership program, and the two way learning process which encourages cultural appreciation for non-Indigenous soldiers.²⁷ Warren Snowdon, Commonwealth Minister for Defence Science and Personnel, launched a new defence employment and training initiative – the Indigenous development program - based on cultural and economic partnerships which will enable recruits to transfer their skills learned during the 9 month military program to other industries, such as the new ranger program and the mining industry.

Indigenous economic development ranges from Indigenous consulting companies, such as Origin Communications,²⁸ through to representatives from international corporations in the resource industry, and the banking sector, such as Rio Tinto and the National Australia Bank.²⁹ One startling success story came from the Aboriginal Investment Group.³⁰ AIG’s investments grew from less than one million dollars to over twenty million in 5 years, largely through housing construction in the Northern Territory and the establishment of illegal fishing processing facilities for Australian Customs in Weipa and Gove.³¹

There are several levels of success in Indigenous economic development. The foundations for almost all rely on community and family support and the strength of Indigenous culture. This is undeniably a large part of the backdrop for success. One example is Laynhapuy: an organisation that gauges success by improving the quality of life through social infrastructure, expanding *Yolngu* employment programs, mentoring, training, and education infrastructure. These are very much community based programs, for example, the school, and the secondary education pilot program, rely directly on parents contributing portions of their allowance, and on maintaining sound working relationships between teachers and parents.

Economic development means different things to different people. They mostly all produce outcomes with the potential to give people the economic freedom necessary for survival. Some initiatives are established as entrepreneurial cultural experiences: for instance, Bawaka, run by Timmy Djawa Burarrwanga. Others are small family and community-based industries aimed at providing foundations for a welfare-free future for the children. The Arnhem Weavers at Mäpuru, for example, have created meaningful employment as well as financial independence for the women and their families, without having to leave their traditional lands. Mäpuru is the ancestral country of Roslyn Malngumb from the Arnhem Weavers and she describes it as ‘*our land, our heaven, where we want to stay.*’ At Mäpuru, the women spin and weave articles that they need for themselves, their relatives, for ceremonies and for sale. The business forms the cultural basis for *Yolngu* traditions to be passed onto the children, and from which other non-Indigenous people can learn.³²

²⁶ Rarriwuy Marika and Yalmay Yunupingu, Yirrkala.

²⁷ Norforce is the largest single employer of Indigenous people in Australia. The army squadron engages in reconnaissance and surveillance covers 1.8 million square kilometres across the Kimberley, Maningrida, through to the Queensland border.

²⁸ Seven of the eight people employed by Origin Communications are Indigenous, Toby Adams and PJ Anne Aguilar.

²⁹ Glen Brennan, Community Finance, NAB.

³⁰ Djuwalpi Marika, Bakamumu Marika, and John Hofmeyer.

³¹ See also Centrecorp Aboriginal investments (Tracker Tilmouth).

³² Language translator, John Greatorex, Charles Darwin University, Darwin

Education is the primary factor in economic development, improving the prospects for individuals, families, and communities and this is an enormous challenge for *Yolngu*, Government and the business sector. There are serious social and economic dividends in education but the social and cultural quality of education ought to be guaranteed.³³

RECOMMENDATIONS AND THE FUTURE

Economic development in Indigenous communities is commonly seen through the portal of western style development and, while the relationship between the two societies reflects economic benefits in terms that are universally recognised, cultural realities have, and continue to have, a powerful effect on both the process, and the outcome of economic development.

As some participants in the Indigenous Economic Development Conference reminded us, history is littered with the terms of, 'the underlying issues', 'from the ground up', 'self-determination', and so on and, more recently, 'closing the gap'³⁴. Now, more than ever before, the cultural differences between contemporary Australian society and Indigenous societies must be taken into account in the process toward positive change.

Indigenous people who presented at the IEDC came from all walks of life. All of them made it clear that:

- First, the traditional value of Indigenous resources must be built into partnerships and agreements in an equitable and balanced way.
- Second, and equally important, negotiations and engagement has to undergo a transformation so that the decision-making process is acceptable to Indigenous people. When transformation involves the *Big End* of town, then the scope for corporate cultural change might be constrained. If it involves small, more traditional enterprises, then Indigenous people want ownership of the economic product – the end result. But we should not lose sight of the role of government: progress must include improvements to the sometimes one sided approach seen to be taken by government and administration. The capacity of governments to design relevant policies, programs and strategies, and the adequacy of their coordinating mechanisms, was a major issue at the IEDC. This is a challenge that governments are trying to resolve.
- Third, perceptions of the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) were divergent and, at times, polarised. CDEP was seen by some as a major constraint to progress and, by others, as a critically important support system for Indigenous economic life. There was, however, broad based agreement that CDEP needs to be reshaped and revived in a more equitable, flexible, and practical form – one that leads to genuine employment and training. There were calls for a national narrative on CDEP and, to a large extent, the IED conference itself is a platform for positively contributing to that national narrative.
- Finally, and probably of most significance, creativity and enterprise development – in keeping with the maintenance of cultural frameworks and heritage - is fundamental to the future of Indigenous communities. Nobody doubts the difficulties, both cultural and social, facing the future. The way forward lies in maintaining a sharp focus on monitoring advances, policies, strategies, opportunities, community development, the agencies, governments, and the corporate sector, over a period of time.

It bears remembering that knowledge has the potential to transform enterprises whether they are from, seemingly, the smallest, to the largest. Sections of the resource industry already know this. Examples can be seen in the Indigenous support systems encouraged by resource corporations and networked throughout certain regions with the purpose of strengthening and enabling Indigenous recruits to survive employment demands from the resource sector without compromising their cultural needs.

At a strategic level, the most fruitful, and challenging, way to move forward is for the Yothu Yindi Foundation to continue to present a platform for Indigenous economic development at forthcoming Garma Festivals and within themes planned for future Key Forums.

Indigenous Economic Development will be absorbed into the Garma Key Forum as a regular stream within the framework of each future Garma theme, running concurrent with all Key Forum sub-themes. This organisational change will present opportunities to participants at the Key Forum to benefit from the Indigenous Economic Development stream in a way that enriches sectoral debates while, at the same time, infusing Economic Development with a strong Indigenous cultural dimension.

In 2009, the IEDC will focus specifically on Indigenous Creative Industries within the framework and theme of the Garma Key Forum. Economic success is grounded in cultural strength, and the protection of cultural heritage. The 2010 IEDC will complement the Key Forum's debates on Indigenous Education. Economic strength also underpins and contributes to Indigenous Health and well-being and showcasing this is the aim of the IEDC in 2011. In 2012, the Key Forum, and the IEDC will have come full circle, with Indigenous Knowledge as the theme for that year.

³³ This was a key point to emerge from the IEDC, Garma 2008

³⁴ See the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, *National Report*, Vol 2, 1991, AGPS; Mick Miller, (Chairman), 1985, *Report of the Committee of Review of Aboriginal Employment and Training Program*, AGPS.

Indigenous Water Knowledge, Indigenous Water Interests

An International Indigenous Expert Exchange on Issues and Opportunities arising from Emerging Trends in Mainstream Water Management

On August 7-8, 2008 a group of Indigenous representatives from Canada, USA, Guatemala, the Andes and many parts of Australia met in Gulkula, Australia at the site of the Garma Festival in north east Arnhem Land to exchange perspectives on Indigenous Peoples' knowledge and interests in water. This expert exchange was convened by the United Nations University Traditional Knowledge Initiative (UNU TKI) in collaboration with the North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAILSMA) and the welcome and support of the Yothu Yindi Foundation and the Gumatj people of north east Arnhem Land.

The concept for this meeting arose from the discussions of the Indigenous Water Policy Group (IWPG), a regular group convened through NAILSMA, and the UNU TKI. The IWPG identified that access to international experience and perspectives on Indigenous water knowledge and interests would broaden the frame of reference for the group in such a way that would enhance its capacity to identify and advocate Indigenous interests in water as well as benefiting participants from across Australia and around the world.

There were several objectives of the exchange, including to:

- Reflect on the relationship between Indigenous water knowledge and Indigenous water interests, and provide an avenue for the international sharing of experiences on issues and opportunities arising from emerging trends in mainstream water management systems, with particular attention to issues arising from emerging water trading and water property rights regimes, as well as the increasing recognition by western science of the value of Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous science for natural resource management
- Develop a statement and a set of recommendations and/or a declaration on Indigenous water knowledge and interests for the World Water Forum in Turkey, 2009 and other international forums
- Support ongoing informal international networks of Indigenous experts engaged in Indigenous knowledge and interests in water

On the first day of the exchange, representatives presented case studies on Indigenous Water Knowledge and interests in their communities. Several of the case studies will be compiled as a single publication that will be available for the 2009 World Water Forum and the Eighth session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. During the North Australian panel session, the IWPG had the opportunity to premiere its first proposed policy statement.

On the second day of the exchange, discussions revolved around the process for drafting a declaration on Indigenous water knowledge and interests and the guiding principles that this declaration would follow. Representatives formed working groups to discuss important issues to be included in the declaration. These robust and fruitful discussions benefited from the wisdom of the international and Australian participants as well as from Sir Tipene O'Regan of the University of Canterbury (NZ), Marcia Langton of the University of Melbourne, and Tom Calma of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. A small working party was convened to continue the drafting process on behalf of the group.

This meeting was not only a great opportunity to exchange international perspectives but also served as a platform for northern and southern Australians to come together and discuss a common way forward on what is one of the great challenges of this time – water. At the meeting, Australian participants agreed to continue this regional collaboration. A meeting was planned for later in the year in southern Australia to discuss a national approach to Indigenous water policy on interests and issues and toward Indigenous integrated water planning and management strategies for Australia.

Charles Darwin University hosts both UNU TKI and NAILSMA, proving instrumental in fostering collaboration between these organisations and thus linking international policy with national concerns here in Australia. The support of the Government of the Northern Territory and The Christensen Fund were crucial in the establishment of the UNU TKI and this forum, as too was the support from the Australian National Water Commission for the IWPG.

Dugong and Marine Turtle Project

North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance

The NAILSMA Dugong and Marine Turtle Project (DMTP) brings together Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders and scientists from across northern Australia to better manage and protect marine turtles and dugong.

Australia is a last great stronghold for these migratory species and Indigenous people are the 'front-line' managers of the north Australian coast where dugong and turtle remain abundant.

Driven by Indigenous people, the DMTP has created new Indigenous Ranger programs and supported communities to combine Traditional Knowledge with modern research and training to undertake management activities such as mapping and monitoring populations and habitats, tracking turtle migrations by satellite, and developing turtle and dugong management plans.

The Project supports Indigenous people across the north to share knowledge and experience with each other and with other people around Australia and overseas through ranger exchanges and innovative communication tools like Message Disk - a DVD of audiovisual on-country stories by Indigenous rangers.

The Project has won national recognition through the award of a prestigious Banksia Environmental Foundation Award, an Australian Government Northern Territory Coast care Award and is a finalist in the 2008 National Landcare awards. NAILSMA DMTP has also been selected as one of 13 projects to participate in the Australian Governments Performance Story Evaluation national trial.

During Garma 2008, project participants held a workshop to discuss project progress including the outcomes of the Performance Story evaluation and to develop future directions post 2008. DMTP participants also presented on their turtle and dugong and sea country management programs in the Garma Key Forum and participated in plenary and session feedback presentations. For more details visit www.nailsma.org

Indigenous Climate Change and Land Management Conference

Living with climate change is arguably one of the biggest challenges to face the people of the world, and the planet, in living memory. It is non-discriminatory, inevitable and, as one participant said, Indigenous peoples are the least likely to contribute to its harmful effects and among the most likely to feel experience the consequences.³⁵ Against this background, a small group of concerned people dedicated to exploring the impact of climate change on Indigenous people and Country met over two days at the 2008 Garma Festival.

The framework for discussion on the first day of the conference focused attention on carbon offsetting; carbon trading; and carbon neutrality; and, what this means for Indigenous Australians, particularly those living in remote communities. For the Indigenous peoples of north east Arnhem Land, staying on Country is critical to the preservation of culture and language and for creating mechanisms to earn money through forestry, cultural tourism, horticulture and solar energy production.

Day one culminated in a proposal to establish 3-4 pilot forestry projects on Kyoto-compliant Indigenous northern Australian land. A key aim of the pilot projects is the production of timber, initially for biofuel and, then for veneer, and as the projects develop further, to explore the production of sawlogs. In this context, sales of carbon would help establish projects, while other production aspects would contribute to the provision of jobs. The pilot projects would be demonstrations and if they proved to be viable they could be replicated on a larger scale.

Discussions on day two focused on developing a proactive approach to reducing the impact of climate change, both direct and indirect. In order to create relevant models scientists need to understand the value of Indigenous knowledge of people on Country who have observed change over time. Strategies for Yolŋu to share their knowledge with scientists and policy makers were discussed in detail and there was consensus that community involvement is the key to advising, resourcing and planning culturally appropriate adaptation strategies and ensuring that policy actions actually materialize.

The Conference was concluded by Tom Calma, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner. The Commissioner spoke about climate change impacts for Indigenous people including dispossession from their lands, leading to environmental, cultural and spiritual impacts, and, in his view, there should be a much stronger focus on the maintenance of the social and cultural dimensions of climate change.

Commissioner Calma concluded the conference by reminding participants that:

³⁵ Renee Gurneau, Member of the Anishinaabe people and Leadership Fellow Consultant, Indigenous Women's Mercury Project, Minnesota, USA

“as the original custodians of our lands: we have a right to maintain and ensure that our lands and territories are healthy and protected; we have a right to ensure our natural resources are not squandered and used in ways that damage our environment; we have a right to maintain our cultures and world views that have ensured the health of our world for thousands of years; and we have a right to social, cultural, environmental and economic development arising from our lands.”

“These rights are currently under threat from climate change. We have a window of opportunity to get engaged in the development of strategies to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The stakes are high for us as Indigenous peoples and we should not sit back and watch this process unfold without our voices being loudly heard.”

The Garma Festival is a notable platform that enables Indigenous peoples to place serious issues into the national, and international, arena. The 2008 climate change conference highlighted the significance of taking a holistic approach towards the value of Indigenous knowledge.

Garma Miwatj Youth Forum

Anglicare East Arnhem and the Yothu Yindi Foundation staged the third successful Garma Miwatj Youth Forum from 9th to 11th August 2008, at the Garma Festival.

The Garma Miwatj Youth Forum was attended by more than 250 young people aged between 12 and 18 years from across the Northern Territory and interstate. Many of the participants had attended previous youth forums i.e. those from Wadeye, Jabiru and the East Arnhem region (including Galiwin'ku, Gapuwiyak, Nhulunbuy, Yirrkala, Gunyanjara, Milingimbi and homeland communities), and for the first time Indigenous youth from areas of Melbourne, Alice Springs and Gunbalanya also participated.

The Garma Miwatj Youth Forum creates opportunities for young people to explore cultural and personal growth in a youth-friendly environment. It is an opportunity for young people to focus their energy and attention on ways they can grow and contribute positively to their community.

Workshops organised throughout the Youth Forum included Drum Beat (a self-esteem building workshop using drums and music), Hip Hop (a dance program), Lino Printing (a visual art project), and the Leadership Program (a community strengthening workshop including drug and alcohol education, mental health and leadership). Traditional activities such as spear making for the young men and collecting local bush foods, bush walks and bush medicines for the young women were all included.

The activities allowed young people from different backgrounds to experience aspects of Yolŋu culture, language and law as well as allowing them opportunities to make new friends and contacts, expand skills and voice ideas and concerns about their environment, their community and their future. The Garma Miwatj Youth Forum creates access to exemplary mentors, local sporting stars and identities who attended the Garma Festival.



Some young people's feedback on the benefits of the Garma Youth Forum included:

“I stepped out of my comfort zone and it felt really good”

“All the activities taught us to be more confident”

“Because of the leadership program I am a stronger person”

“They encourage you and its awesome fun and they teach you heaps”

“It made me realise everyone is unique but we can still have so much fun together”.

remoteFOCUS; revitalising remote Australia Research workshop

Desert Knowledge Australia, in conjunction with the Yothu Yindi Foundation, held a highly successful *remoteFOCUS; Revitalising Remote Australia Research Workshop* at the 2008 Garma Festival, as part of the extensive community engagement process of the *remoteFOCUS* initiative.

remoteFOCUS aims to develop the momentum for change in the way remote Australia is governed, administered and how policy is developed, for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Remote Australians.

The workshop, held on the morning of Tuesday 12 August, the day after the major Key Forum and other workshop sessions had concluded, was an outstanding success, attracting 100 committed and energised Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal participants involved in research or who were residents of towns and communities in Remote Australia. It identified major research needs for driving institutional and social transformation in remote regions of Australia.

The Research Workshop was held at that time and at Garma particularly to engage all those registered for the Key Forum, the Indigenous Economic Development Conference, the Indigenous Climate Change and Land Use Management Conference and the Water Knowledge and Interests meeting at Garma 2008.

Given the form of Garma and its participants, the workshop discussion and outcomes concentrated on Indigenous issues, providing important input into the overall engagement and consultation processes of the Initiative. Of significance was the considerable convergence of matters raised in the workshop to address and endorse issues identified in the Prospectus.

Recurrent themes emerged including:

- Use of local knowledge, authority and responsibility for local solutions
- Use of partnerships and adopt programs that work across government agencies
- Recognising diversity in culture, leadership and development among communities and building of specific programs appropriate to those conditions

Major ideas for research included investigation of:

- How to reflect local governance in legal structures
- The barriers and support mechanisms that maintain existing mentality in Federal, State and local government
- Data from pilot projects and how to engineer their implementation
- Decision making processes with emphasis on building the participation of youth
- The many systems of Indigenous governance
- A framework for citizenship rights
- The “Anthropology” of bureaucracies and how they respond to remote Australia

The following principles were considered important in developing alternatives to research activities:

- Building cross-cultural competencies to enable Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to understand how their respective programs, policies, philosophies and organisational cultures impact on one another
- Building participatory research and strategic approaches for using on the ground knowledge
- Instead of the conventional western linear – single end-point approaches, considering an Indigenous interactive model where outcomes are distributed throughout the project and opportunities can be examined as they emerge

More information on the *remoteFOCUS* initiative (being coordinated by Desert Knowledge Australia, a supporter of the Yothu Yindi Foundation and the Garma Festival), Prospectus and the discussion at the research workshop can be found at www.desertknowledge.com.au/remotefocus.

Garma Panel Collaborative Art Project

In 2008, framed prints from the editions created from Garma Panel and Print Projects 2003 to 2005 were on display and offered for sale in the **Garmawuy Miny'tji: The Garma Panel Exhibition**. The display also included the 2003 Garma Panel, a large multi-print work created during the 2003 Garma Panel Collaborative Art Project, and colour images from the Garma Festival by photographers Mark Rogers and Eilish Markuniny, a multimedia student from Galiwin'ku.

The gallery space also provided a workshop for Indigenous artists who came to create linocuts and to have them proofed, ready for editioning later.

The Print Workshop and Panel Gallery was set up by Gary Single. The Gallery and Workshop were staffed by a team of volunteers. Printmaker Michael Roseth ran the printmaking studio, providing artists with technical information about cutting and printing their blocks. Trial proofs of the linocuts were created, providing each artist with the opportunity to view and refine, if necessary, the finished work to their satisfaction and to approve it for editioning.

Volunteers interviewed the artists, collecting information and stories about the meaning behind the prints. This information will be used to provide contextual information about the prints for buyers of these works once editioned. Volunteers also talked to visitors and prospective buyers about the works and the concept and history of the Garma Panel Collaborative Art Project.

Artists mostly cut their lino blocks inside the gallery space on tables. Some artists preferred to take the blocks away and carve them at their camps or at other locations on the Festival site. The blocks were proofed in the studio / gallery space, attracting a great deal of interest from passersby.

Some artists had participated in previous Garma print workshops; others were new to Garma and sometimes to printmaking. Those who were carvers found the process easy to adapt to. Some artists preferred to use razor blades rather than lino cutting tools and some tried their hand at printing. The process involved using the baren, a handheld burnishing tool traditionally used in Japanese printmaking. In the absence of a printing press, proofs are made using the baren or a wooden spoon to apply pressure to the back of the paper which transfers the ink from the block to the paper.

Artists who participated in 2008 were: Mal'numba Roslyn Guyula, Nyapanyapa Mununggurr, Barrupu Yunupiju, Djakanju Yunupiju, Josie Gurruwiwi, Jasmine Campbell, Johnny Shadforth, Ben Mamarika, Joel Carter, Bunna Lawrie, Richard Gandhuwuy (Bunumbirr 1), Nicholas Dhamarrandji Mudinymudiny, Raelene Dewar, Dindirrk, Laniyook, Yamarrawuy Munyarryun, Lucille Kinthari, Melanie Herdman, Joy Bonner, Margaret Yunupiju (Mununggurr), Betheny Yunupiju, Bernadette Gurruwiwi, Cynthia Coyne, Josie Guy, Nazareth Alfred, Ruth Ghee, Colleen Rosas, Dhargayil Yunupiju, Janice Bruny, Jeanie Bell, John Parfitt, Donna Odegaard, Raylene Singh, Lorretta Gandhurminy, Natasha Yunupiju, Magnolia Guwalilja Yunupiju, Estelle Walker, Shaun Fields, Lita Santo, Alice Eather, Tyson Kaawoppa Yunkaporta, Nypanyapa Mununggurr, Sophia Simon, Yalmay Yunupiju, Mary Kingsley, Lena Mamarika, Emannual Marawili, Seymour Ratani, Mandy Mununggurr, Charleston Reid, Dhanga! Gurruwiwi, Janet O'Brien, Heleana Wauchope, Kristi Chua, Leasol Stewart, Janice Bruny, Merrkiyawuy Ganambarr Stubbs, Barbara Laklak Burarrwanga, Banbapuy Ganambarr, Dipililja Marika, Sharon Haynes, Dhopiya Gurruwiwi, Susan Gurruwiwi, Ronyiwuy Djawundil Maymuru, Djakanju Yunupiju, Stuart Yunupiju, Sonia T Munyarryun, Kenneth Areagdead, John Clarke, Beryl Reuben, Marla Lewin-Billy, Greg Hauser, Cindy Singho, Bronwyn Munyarryun, Jesselyn Mamarika, Amethea Mamarika, Marenann Mamarika, Barry Cedric, Charles Passi, Shaun Fields, Ganunawuy and Jimmy Little.

The artists came from: Galiwin'ku, Yirrkala, Nhulunbuy, Gunyara, Katherine, Groote Eylandt, Yilpara, Jabiru, Darwin, Marjarr, Laynhapuy, Batchelor, Bathurst Island and Palmerston in the Northern Territory; Ingham, Thursday Island, Cairns, Vincent and Brisbane in Queensland; Asquith, Dulwich Hill, Rooty Hill, Cranebrook and Bourke in New South Wales; and Beckenham in Western Australia.

The exhibition hung in the Garma Gallery by Gary Single was later transferred to the **Garma Festival Gallery** at the Yothu Yindi Foundation office in Darwin as part of the Darwin Festival free Art Gallery Bus Tour that ran all day between some 15 galleries featuring Indigenous art exhibitions. Individual editioned prints, boxed sets and complete panels as well as a range of photographs were on sale.

Collectors may visit the **Garma Festival Gallery** by appointment: Phone 61 8 89412900



© YFF/Garma Festival. Photographer Cameron Herweyan

Reconciliation Australia - Garma works its magic

For the third successive year Reconciliation Australia, in partnership with the Yothu Yindi Foundation, hosted 20 influential women at the annual Garma Festival of Traditional Culture in north east Arnhem Land. It was a completely new experience for most of the women, more familiar with indoor gatherings in business board rooms, government departments, media or community organisations.

The aims of the Women's Program are:

- To find the common ground that we share as Indigenous and non-Indigenous women engaging in reconciliation
- To discuss the unique contributions that women in differing sectors can make to the reconciliation process
- To provide a cultural experience for women who are engaged in developing government and industry policy that affects Indigenous peoples
- To learn from each other in an environment that is stimulating, challenging and outside our normal meeting and working places

This year's group included senior women from Qantas, the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, the Federal Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, the Koori Mail, the Australian Financial Review and the National Australia Day Council.

In keeping with the Festival theme – *Indigenous Knowledge: caring for country and culture* – the group participated in multiple cultural experiences with the local Yolŋu women. One of many highlights was the visit to the Women's Healing Centre or Healing Place on the last day. The Healing Place provides treatments using traditional Yolŋu healing practices in conjunction with prescribed long-term mainstream medicines.

Many women in the group made important personal connections over the five day Festival and the Garma experience touched each of the women in different ways. Sally Howland from APRA said,

'Garma's influence has been a very personal one. I was committed to reconciliation on a professional level prior to Garma but now feel personally deeply committed to the work of reconciliation. It is vital.'

Tristan Wills from the Commonwealth Bank of Australia said,

'Garma has given me valuable examples of success and provided a clearer articulation of many of the issues facing Indigenous Australians. I can now use these success stories and the clearer picture of the real issues to engage others, both in my organisation and at home.'

After the Festival, RA was inundated with donations from members of the group in support of The Healing Place. The Yothu Yindi Foundation will use the donations to support the ongoing running of the Centre.

Brooke Pettit, Project Manager RA

Dare to Lead at Garma 2008

For several years *Dare to Lead* and its parent organisation the Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council (now renamed Principals Australia Inc) has sent delegations to the Garma Festival. This reflects the belief that while Garma is a crucial event for Indigenous Australians and the wider community; it is also of specific importance to educators.

In 2008 a *Dare to Lead* group of 58 attended Garma. This number included 42 educators (including leaders of professional associations and numerous school principals) plus 16 representatives from the corporate sector. The rationale for including leading business figures was *Dare to Lead's* belief that first-hand experience is an invaluable learning tool, and that forging partnerships is essential. The feedback from the corporate delegates has been extremely positive, with some making plans as a direct response to what they heard and learned at Garma.

All of the school leaders reported that Garma was a valuable, moving and informative experience. There were obvious points of interest in the key forum on 'Indigenous Knowledge: Caring for country and culture' and it is strongly anticipated that learnings from Garma 2008 will inform the thinking and practice of these school leaders, as well as others within their networks with whom they share their experiences.

Contemporary Indigenous Music Training and Performance Program

Through the Indigenous Music Education Program (IMEP), facilitated by the Northern Territory Music School (NTMS), students are provided with access to professional music instruction. Programs offered include Vocational Education and Training (VET) Certificates I and II in Music Industry and Stage 1 and 2 Northern Territory Certificate of Education (NTCE) courses.

The usual platform for successful instruction is to assemble groups of students into one or other of the common formats of popular music bands (for example, guitar, bass, keyboards, drums and vocals) and to provide both individual and group tuition focused on specific performance targets. Another regular feature of the teaching/learning process is original composition, in both English and Indigenous languages using popular song formats.

Participation and success rates vary from community to community, affected by remoteness, degrees of disadvantage and access to professional instructors. However, the overall positive outcomes of the IMEP across the remote NT communities have been attested to by teachers, principals and community representatives on numerous occasions, and are documented comprehensively in student achievement records.

A critical ingredient in this success, particularly for the most remote schools such as those in Arnhem Land and Darwin over the last 6 years has been participation in the **Garma Festival: Contemporary Music Training Program. (CMTF)**

Participation in the festival has fostered the cross fertilisation of ideas, an opportunity to see and hear other bands performing, and the chance to work with professional sound production, engage with the latest in music technology and recording technicians, all invaluable components of the program.

Transporting the community bands and their equipment to and from the Garma site, and employing specialist technical personnel, appear relatively expensive if viewed as isolated activities related only to a single, annual event. However, the benefits of this interaction for remote community students are enormous. The Garma experience provides a platform for what can only be described as a quantum leap in performance skills and understandings for the students involved. Many are motivated by their experience at Garma to pursue their musical studies to higher levels. Many also become aware for the first time of career options and opportunities in the music and entertainment industries.

The Contemporary Music Training Program conducted by the NTMS

The NTMS constantly strives to improve the content and delivery of the Contemporary Music Training Program and performance program.

Student Participation

SCHOOL	MALE	FEMALE	SCHOOL TOTAL
Angurugu CEC	6	0	6
Borroloola CEC	6	6	12
Garthlala Homelands	10	10	20
Gunbalunya CEC	10	6	16
Numbulwar CEC	6	6	12
Yirrkala CEC	15	15	30
TOTAL	53	43	96

The number of participating schools this year has remained the same although some schools that had attended previously (Maningrida, Umbakumba) and were registered to come in 2008 were unable to attend due to ceremonial obligations in their respective communities. Students came from six communities across the Top End, as follows:

Female Participants 41%
Male Participants 59%

Staff Participation

Five full-time NTMS DET staff were involved in the delivery of the program along with 2 Staff employed through the Indigenous Music Education Program. The music workshops are delivered and staffed by NTMS staff from Darwin and remote areas. The workshops deliver training based on VET music competencies from the Music industry training package (CUS01). Stage 2 students from Yirrkala used the performance opportunities at GARMA for their 2nd summative assessment as well as Stage 2 Music Technology students using the recordings made for their minor works.

Specific outcomes and benefits for students:

Quantitative outcomes

Such outcomes can be expressed largely in terms of participation seen in the table above. Three of the six schools have to charter planes to get to GARMA. The other 3 schools drive to Gulkula. Registered students presented 12 performances during the Festival on the premises, either near the luncheon area, and/or on the Gulkula main stage. One or two ensembles from different schools by rotation performed in a lunch hour recital each day, and other bands performed evening concerts on the big stage.

Each group presented a performance of original material in their own language which was recorded, in preparation for a compilation CD of selections from each band. This concert program encouraged the young musicians to reach performance-level standards very quickly and maintain them throughout the Festival.

Qualitative outcomes.

Teachers and music instructors attest to the following specific benefits for students deriving from their attendance at the Garma Festival as performers:

- Enhanced confidence in performance situations resulting from experience with a larger and more diverse audience than is available in their home communities;
- Increased music performance understandings resulting from interaction with professional sound production personnel;
- Improved knowledge of and proficiency with industry standard sound production equipment (often not available in their home communities);
- More consistent performance outcomes resulting from intensive, supervised rehearsal and demanding performance schedules;
- Wider musical knowledge gained from seeing, hearing and interacting with other performers and industry professionals;
- Greater knowledge of career options in the music and wider entertainment industries, including technical production and support roles;
- Yirrkala School used the performances and studio recordings for assessment items for their Stage 2 students.
- Increased motivation to pursue musical studies to higher levels.
- Self esteem derived from successful achievement
- Respect of peer musicians from various tribal groups for each other, gained through observing, listening and reflecting on different cultural contributions.

Conclusion

The Yothu Yindi Foundation provides free entry, meals, accommodation, ground transport, marquees, generators, main stage, sound, lighting and a production crew for students, supervisors, mentors and trainers in the Contemporary Indigenous Training and Performance Program conducted at the Garma Festival by the Northern Territory School of Music and Charles Darwin University.

The Garma Festival provides a unique opportunity for young Indigenous musicians to focus on and celebrate their own culture. Its special significance includes the fact that while the forum is on traditional land, it invites observation and participation by non-Indigenous Australians, in front of whom Yolngu people are able to feel proud. This bi-cultural interaction has paved the way for increasingly close collaboration between teachers from the NT Music School and students, with both parties comfortably accepting and learning from each other. The ideal of such school and community partnership is clearly articulated in DEET's Indigenous Strategic Plan for 2006-9.

As the level of engagement in music workshops by Indigenous students has grown every year, so has their level of performance skill, engagement with music technology, effective expression through music, more healthy living practices, and general self-confidence.

The level of appreciation among the Indigenous students for the value of Music not only as a medium for personal and cultural expression and renewal, but as leading to potential industry pathways has

become an accepted outcome.

Success from the Music Workshop Program will be even greater when current students realise this potential by using their music skills in employment and teaching/mentoring younger students at Garma.

Brian Manning, Assistant Principal, Indigenous Music Education Project-Leader, GARMA Contemporary Music Workshop Coordinator, Northern Territory Music School



Ben Lee, Musician and Mentor© YYF/Garma Festival. Photographer Stephen Cherry

Remote Music Training Program - CDU

Garma is the culmination of Northern Territory Music School work that is done in communities and Gulkula is the site where this work is showcased to a wider indigenous audience. The Northern Territory Music School and CDU have been working concurrently at Garma delivering music programs for the past four festivals. It has been a cooperative relationship that has flourished under somewhat difficult circumstances. It is now time to formalise this relationship for the benefit of all stakeholders. By entering into an agreement where CDU acts as a Registered Training Organisation for the Northern Territory Music School we will see more students achieving certificates from CDU for VET competencies that will enable students to engage in education beyond their secondary schooling experience. A seamless transition to higher education should be our objective. This fits in with the outcomes of the DEET Indigenous Education Strategic Plan 2006-2009 launched at Garma in 2006.

Yilpara Musicians

Charles Darwin University continued working with the Yilpara musicians as part of their Certificate II Music training. Working with local musician and member of Yothu Yindi Band, Stuart Kellaway the 14 students attending, the course focused on preparing their songs and performance skills for the high profile concert nights at the Garma Festival. The musicians performed at the concerts throughout the festival, including the main concert, on the night of Saturday 9 August. Charles Darwin University intends to return to Yilpara in 2009 to finalise assessments and Certification of students. The Yilpara musicians went on after Garma with Stuart Kellaway (Yothu Yindi Band) supported by YYF to do a mini tour of North East Arnhem Land.

Maningrida Musicians

As a follow up, a Certificate II Music course was run in Maningrida community in May/June and selected musicians were invited to Garma. Comprising mainly members of the Liverpool River Sunset Band, they workshopped with their lecturer Les Foster to develop their songs and performances in readiness for a slot on the main Garma stage. The musicians also jammed with other Indigenous musicians in the CDU marquee. The remote musicians and CDU lecturers discussed how the modern contemporary music world can now include remote communities by tapping into the new digital networks and internet as way of getting their music seen and heard. CDU will follow up with a return to Maningrida in 2009 with plans to record a releasable CD for Liverpool River Band.

Santa Teresa Musicians

Again as a follow up to a Certificate II Music course run in Santa Teresa community in June, selected musicians were invited to Garma. Comprising members of the band South East, they workshopped with their lecturer Cain Gilmour to develop their songs and performances in readiness for performance on the Garma stage. The musicians also jammed with other Indigenous musicians in the CDU marquee. These remote musicians and CDU lecturers discussed how the modern contemporary music world can now include remote communities by tapping into the new digital networks and internet as way of getting their music seen and heard. Graham 'Buzz' Bidstrup (The Angels / Jimmy Little / GANGajang) also helped these students with industry and music advice and direction. The Garma experience has boosted these young musicians' understanding of and enthusiasm for Indigenous music. Since the Garma performance, South East has played in a number of concerts in Alice Springs with great success. CDU will follow up with a return to Santa Teresa in 2009 with plans to further the band's industry skills for a better understanding of the music arena and skills required to tap into the music industry.

Cal Williams, Contemporary Music Coordinator
& Cain Gilmour Creative Arts and Humanities Team Leader, Music Lecturer - Alice Springs
Charles Darwin University

Concert Program

The 10th anniversary Concert Program at Garma 2008 featured: the Chooky Dancers; Liverpool River Sunset Band from Maningrida; Galanggarri Band from Yilpara; Southeast Band from Santa Theresa, B2M; Saltwater Band; Soft Sands; Jimmy Little and James Henry; Northern Gentleman; Wild Honey; Dave Steel; Eylandt; Bunna Lawrie and the Whale Dreamers: Ben Lee, Morganics and East Journey.

CD Release

A Compilation CD, Garma Festival 2007 was released by YYF at Garma 2008. The CD features 12 tracks selected from the 2007 concert program performed by: Yirrkala CEC Band (YIRRKALA) – *Wild Thing*; Broken Vision (NUMBULWAR) – *Black Boy*; Lonely Lost Boys (UMBAKUMBA) – *Walking Down the Road*; Crazy Boys (MANINGRIDA) – *Anbarra Clan*; Soft Sands (ELCHO ISLAND) – *I Want to Walk with Thee*; Frontstreet Girls (MANINGRIDA) – *Love Song*; Wattle Creek Band (KALKARINGI / DARGARGU) – *Wave Hill*; Shep (GARRTHALALA) – *Eagle and the Sunset*; Groote Eylandt Band – (UMBAKUMBA) *Bara Bara*; Shellie Morris (DARWIN) - *Swept Away*; Galanggarri (YILPARA) – *Moodi Moodi*; and Freedom Road (HUMPTY DOO) – *Day After Day*. A compilation CD of Garma 2008 is planned for release at Garma 2009.

Indigenous Recording and Multimedia Training Program

Again this year at Garma, the Northern Territory Open Education Centre (NTOEC) collaborated with the Yothu Yindi Foundation (YYF) and Charles Darwin University (CDU) to offer VET Certificate II Multimedia training for Northern Territory-based Indigenous students at the Festival site, Gulkula. This initiative is an ongoing partnership between NTOEC, CDU and YYF, now in its fourth year that aims to make the Garma Festival a training ground for emerging Yolŋu multimedia students, seeking to provide them with continued involvement in professional media experiences, opportunities and training.

The program itself culminates a range of industry-based experiences which are difficult to emulate in many remote settings. Garma offers a fantastic opportunity for students to film cultural activities, as well as interact with media experts, to develop a greater understanding of the knowledge required by the industry.

This year CDU multimedia students joined NTOEC students from Yirrkala, Gunbalanya and Wadeye to work on collaborative projects including: creating music video clips for the school bands participating in the Indigenous Contemporary Music Program; creating CD covers for the Garma 2008 compilation CD; and documenting the bunggul, and the Youth Forum.

The training program focuses on improving industry and production skills, and includes training and mentoring by NTOEC and CDU staff, YYF mentors and other industry professionals.

To complete these tasks, students photographed and filmed a variety of Festival events. They were then able to use the latest computer technology and industry professional software, to review their photos and footage, and create a variety of multimedia products. Students worked collaboratively as well as individually with their teachers to review as well as construct their work.

The Yothu Yindi Foundation provided access to mentors, free festival entry, meals, accommodation, facilities and ground transport, for students, teachers and trainers in the Indigenous Multimedia Training Program conducted at the Garma Festival.



© YYF/Garma Festival. Photographer Cameron Herweyan

The Mulka Project

This year, Yirrkala's multimedia centre, based at Buku-Larrngay Mulka, was involved in student filming and training throughout the Festival, but primarily focused on the evening bunggul performances. Every night of the Festival, Mulka Project staff and Yirrkala Community Education Centre secondary students did three-camera and four-camera high definition shoots, capturing the Yolŋu perspective on the song and dance. This allowed for multiple angles on the dancers and, for the first time, a dedicated camera for the singers. The footage will be edited so all the Aboriginal groups who travelled to perform at Gulkula will have a good quality DVD document, and other commercial uses may be considered. In the past, there have always been outside crews filming, usually with the goal of capturing sound bites for the news or promotional materials, or even their own film productions, and almost none of this footage is ever returned to the community. With a local crew, we finally have the local perspective on complete documents of the dances and songs, for local retention and hand back to the relevant communities.

This work was done with the assistance of mentors arranged by NTOEC, CDU and YYF as part of the larger Garma multimedia program. In addition to the bunggul recordings, Yirrkala students documented their school's open day and graduation ceremony, filmed some of the evening concerts, and conducted interviews with media industry professionals. This work forms part of the multimedia certificates the students are undertaking at school.

The Mulka Project also launched their DVD 'Nhama! Short Films from Yirrkala Northeast Arnhem Land' on Saturday night. It contains twelve films, many of which were created in Yothu Yindi Foundation-sponsored workshops at Garma 2007, plus Nyapanyapa Yunupingu's 'Gatapanawuy Dhawu' which along with the bark painting seen in the film won the Wandjuk Marika Memorial 3D work prize at the 2008 Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards. The screening was very well received

and the DVD sold well, putting money back into the Mulka Project for future film work.

With the combination of the DVD screening and the daily sight of young and old uniformed Yolŋu working together on multi-camera film shoots, the Mulka Project made a big impression at Garma 2008, attracting the attention of visiting media professionals who are now in negotiations to help develop the project into the future.

Randin Graves
Mulka Project Coordinator

Yirrkala Community Education Centre Open Day

The annual Yirrkala CEC open day provided an opportunity for students and teachers to showcase the wonderful work of the school and its bilingual program. The day was open to all clans and some registered Garma participants. The focus of this day was a graduation ceremony for two Year 12 students, Marrathindi Wunungmurra and Dhukururu Bidjinal, who completed their NTCE. The sharing of this ceremony, along with the displays of student work and the bunggul by students was considered extremely special by many of the Garma participants.

For Yirrkala CEC staff and students, participation in the Garma festival is not limited to the open day. The Garma Festival this year provided a wide range of activities that secondary students were engaged in. Many of these activities contributed to the students' completion of tasks related to subjects they are studying at school and to their personal development. These activities included:

- Senior secondary music students worked in the Virtual Studio which was a joint initiative of the Yothu Yindi Foundation and the NT School of Music. The studio allowed students to access industry standard recording equipment and to practise before band performances. The students from Middle Years and Senior Secondary also performed on the Garma Stage and gave lunchtime performances. The work done here is linked directly to the assessment tasks in Stage 2 Music Technology, Stage 2 Ensemble Performance and Stage 1 Music.
- Senior secondary multimedia students participated in multimedia workshops facilitated by NTOEC staff and completed units from Certificate II in Multimedia. Students worked as film crews identifying and interviewing multimedia and film industry professionals and about working in the Industry. The students then digitised and edited this footage. This work has created networks and support for the ongoing Multimedia program at Yirrkala CEC
- Students worked with Mulka Centre staff to film the bunggul each evening and the band performances. The students' skills and confidence to do this was developed during the Garma Festival in 2007 through training provided by 'Community Prophets', an initiative of Yothu Yindi Foundation supported by NTOEC. Other Garma activities were also filmed including the Gapan Gallery opening, the making of the Lipa Lipa and the Youth Forum activities
- Middle Years students participated in the Youth Forum. Feedback from students and the facilitators was extremely positive
- Middle Years Boys supported Dhimurru rangers in running the gara (spear making) workshops as part of the Garma Festival Cultural Tourism Program
- Middle Years Boys worked with Senior Yolŋu men on the making of the Lipa Lipa throughout the Festival

Haidee Dentith, Principal - Yirrkala CEC

Buku-Larrŋgay Mulka Community Art Centre

Buku-Larrŋgay's contribution to the 2008 Garma Festival artistic program was a two part exhibition titled "After Berndt 1947-2008 Crayon to Etching".

The first element of this exhibition was full size reproductions of 100 of the Berndt Crayon Drawings of 1947 produced by Yolŋu Elders and relations in 1947 for anthropologist Ronald Berndt. These were hung on either side of the Gapan Gallery along the edge of the escarpment.

The following is an extract from the explanatory text:

"The collection was obtained by anthropologist R.M. Berndt during fieldwork at Yirrkala, NT in 1947. Having assembled a large collection of bark paintings, he was concerned that they would not survive the trip out to Darwin. He arranged for his father to send him some crayons and butcher paper from Adelaide, which he gave to the men to draw on - he had earlier collected material this way at Birrindudu, NT on the advice of C.P. Mountford. The men had never used paper or crayons before. The Collector always regarded the crayon drawings as extensions of his field notebooks, since they contained key notations. RMB No.4"

The following is the Berndt Museum interpretative text:

“The resulting 365 crayon drawings have remained in the Berndt Museum in Perth since then. Apart from 18 drawings which were included in a national travelling exhibition through Visions Australia 1995-9, they have only been seen by appointment. After sixty years these images have returned to the place of their creation.

Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre’s philanthropically funded digital media archive and studio, The Mulka Project, has funded the reproduction of 100 of these historic works. They were made to convey sacred knowledge. Berndt annotated the drawings with numbers relating to the voluminous notes he recorded about each image. They appear here without those notes. Almost all of the original images are on paper which is 115cm x 75 cm. Therefore these reproductions are almost all the actual size of the originals.

Western culture focuses on the material object itself. As reproductions these images could be seen to lack the value of the originals. For Yolŋu the distinction is unimportant. It is the intellectual property in the designs that matter rather than the actual piece of paper they were rendered on originally.

The Elders of 1947 were sharing their knowledge as part of their ongoing task of renewing and enlivening the Law. Their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren inherit that Law and the task of celebrating it.



The second element of this exhibition - the **‘Berndt’ Etching Series 2008** - was a series of soft ground etchings by Indigenous artists that were editioned mainly by Buku-Larrngay’s Indigenous printmakers. This work was displayed in the Gapan Gallery and illuminated at night. Gapan Gallery at Garma was as exciting as every other year, with the spectacular opening night where you could hear the sound of a Yidaki, blowing North, South East and West, before the sounds of the Gumatj women performing “Milkarri”. This was a powerful performance by women who start a chain reaction of crying, for land, culture, family and history.

© YFF/Garma Festival. Photographer Cameron Herweyan

This set of Yolŋu artist’s works, which were all for sale, was directly inspired by the crayon drawings produced by their Elders and relations in 1947 for anthropologist Ronald Berndt.

In 2008, the printmakers of Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre at Yirrkala in collaboration with Basil Hall of Basil Hall Editions in Darwin mastered a technique for producing new work that honours the Berndt Crayon Drawings. The use of pencils on a soft ground etching plate captures the feel of the works from sixty years ago. It is as new a medium for the artists of today as the crayons were then.

The point of the pencil dislodges the wax which coats the zinc plate lying under the paper. Acid then etches the artist’s own line into that metal. The printers then laboriously rub ink into these crannies. Each new colour requires a new plate.

Printmakers Araluen Maymuru, Marrnyula Mununggurr and Dianne Blake with assistants Dindirrk Mununggurr, Whaiora Tukaki, Djuwakang Marika, Barayuwa Mununggurr, Rosie Njilapa Pearson, Ruby Djikarra Alderton produced the bulk of the 30 editions in the Yirrkala printshop of Buku-Larrngay. Basil Hall and Merran Sierakowski provided training in soft ground etching techniques through Northern Territory DEET Flexible Response Funding and produced some editions in Darwin.

As well as a visit to the school and the multimedia centre, many registered Garma participants visited the Buku-Larrngay Mulka Community Art Centre. The artists of the Centre have established a worldwide reputation for excellence, having won many of Australia’s major Indigenous art prizes. The sacred art of this region details the spiritual forces behind the creation and continuing identity of the fresh and saltwater country of the Miwatj region of northeast Arnhem Land. Buku-Larrngay Mulka supplies individuals and high range retail outlets nationally and internationally with artworks and shows solo and group exhibitions with prestigious private galleries worldwide.

Garma Festival Expo

The third year of EXPO saw 24 groups set up stall at Garma 2008. Expo participants included:

Aboriginal Interpreter Services (AIS), Rio Tinto Alcan, Aboriginal Interpreter Services (AIS), Australian Quarantine Inspection Services (AQIS), Gove Amateur Astronomy, Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE), Charles Darwin University (CDU), Dare to Lead, Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET), Dhimurru and Laynaphuy Rangers, East Arnhem Shire and Tourism, Indigenous Coordination Centre (FaCHSIA, Centrelink, DEWHA), Indigenous Policing Unit, North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAILSMA), Northern Land Council (NLC), Norforce. OLSH Thamarrurr School, Sharing Culture, Statehood Committee, Traditional Credit Union (TCU), Top End Aboriginal Conservation Alliance (TEACA), Miwatj Health Service and Flinders University, Royal Darwin and Gove District Hospitals and Menzies School of Health Research

Busy stalls were ones with a drawcard for the Yolŋu children, such as giveaways or a personality and those that used the opportunity to cross-promote their stand by giving a presentation as part of a Forum.

We are hoping for an even bigger and better EXPO at Garma 2009.

Email inquiries to garmafest@bigpond.com

Indigenous Film Program

FRIDAY 9 AUGUST

8:00pm – Why Me? (Stolen Generations SA Link-Up) discussion with Djapirri Munungirritj

9:00pm – Yarning Up/TEABBA Shorts:

Yolŋu Guya Djamamirr (6 mins), filmmaker's talk (10 mins)

Yothu Manda (6.30 mins), filmmaker's talk (10 mins)

One Man One Tree (6 mins)

One River All Rivers (6 mins)

SATURDAY 9 AUGUST

8.00pm – Mulka Shorts - Yirrkala Multimedia Project Short Films (100 mins)

9.40pm – Footprints in the Sand (26 mins)

10.00pm – Cheeky Dog (26 mins)

SUNDAY 10 AUGUST

7.45pm – Batchelor Institute Short Documentaries: Alcohol and the Brain (15 mins)

8.00pm – Gochan Jiny-Jirra Shorts:

Can I Have A Banana Please, Chris? (5 mins)

The Invisible Boy (7 mins) Director Q and A Session

8.20pm – Crocodile Dreaming – David Gulpilil and Tom E. Lewis, Dir. Darlene Johnson (26 mins)

8.50pm – The Thin Green Line (82 mins)

MONDAY 11 AUGUST

8.00pm – Milpirra – Lajamanu Community and Tracks Dance (30 mins)

8.30pm – Lore of Love (26 mins)

9.00pm – Bush Toys (26 mins)

9.30pm – Songlines to the Seine (52 mins)

10.30pm – 'Yarning Up' Shorts (28 mins) - R- 4 New Shorts by Indigenous First-Time Directors

TUESDAY 12 AUGUST

8.00pm – 'Yarning Up' Shorts (28 mins) - R- 4 New Shorts by Indigenous First-Time Directors

8.30pm – Crocodile Dreaming – David Gulpilil and Tom E. Lewis, Dir. Darlene Johnson (26 mins)

9.00pm – The Thin Green Line (82 mins)

Security Training

As part of its ongoing commitment to the YYF, Intelligent Risks (IR) deployed one of its senior consultants to the 2008 Garma Festival to provide security and safety advice to the festival management. IR's consultant also provided guidance and coordination on security and safety-related matters for Garma Festival management.

The short term objective of IR's involvement in Garma 2007 was to provide a safe and secure environment for all Festival participants. The longer term objectives are:

- To enhance the capability of the local Yolŋu community to manage the security and safety of the festival
- To develop the skills necessary for the Yolŋu community to independently manage the security of the festival

YYF and Intelligent Risks are working on a formal capacity-building program as an enduring component of the IR commitment to Garma and a more formalised legacy for the local population. This could involve the following:

- Transfer of security and safety management skills to at least two designated Yolŋu through relevant TAFE courses in security, crowd management and safety: They would be available to be the designated local Security Manager for the event.
- Discussions with local industries in the Gove-Nhulunbuy area who have a requirement for security personnel and who can provide employment and ongoing training for these individuals. YYF can advise on the availability of government or private sector agencies that can provide funding assistance.
- Embedded in any employment arrangements with the local industries should be the requirement for the successful Yolŋu candidates to control security and safety for the Festival. This may involve two weeks work for the designated security manager and a shorter period for their trained colleague/s, which will provide security coordination support to the security manager. Appropriate leave or other provisions should be documented to allow this.

Media Report

Garma and now other Yothu Yindi Foundation programs such as *Dilthan Yolŋunha: The Healing Place* - enjoy widespread, positive media coverage across a range of themes. Garma is now one of Australia's highest profile Indigenous and cultural exchange events, with increasing interest from Indigenous affairs writers and travel writers, with the unique Cultural Tourism Program and the Healing Place, which has three day Healing Experience Tours for visitors during the dry season, being particular points of interest. Approximately 30 news and specialist journalists and travel writers, and three documentary film crews, attended Garma in 2008.

The coverage of Garma 2008 included articles on The Healing Place, culture, music, the Key Forum and other conferences and workshops, art, tourism, economic development, reconciliation and other issues, and general reporting of Garma.

And with Garma now being considered a model for insightful, authentic Indigenous tourism, there was again great media interest in the Festival and its aims from a tourism perspective, with several specialist travel writers attending and producing articles for travel magazines, and travel sections of the general media. Several of these articles and two mini-documentaries on this aspect of Garma will appear in the media in early 2009.

This year after Garma, we also put online, on our website www.garma.telstra.com recorded highlights of the proceedings and speeches from the key Forum and from other conferences and workshops at Garma, and we thank Arch Cuthbertson for his great work in organising that.

Garma also provided unique photographic opportunities, and many images of the Festival were also published in 2008. The Yothu Yindi Foundation was again fortunate to gain the services of professional photographers for the Festival, and the Foundation was able to provide newspapers, magazines, journalists (and the Foundation website) with superb imagery for publication. We would like to thank the photographers, Wayne Quilliam, Stephen Cherry, Cameron Herweynen and Eilish Markuniny for their hard work and brilliant photography, which is also featured on the Foundation website.

It was particularly good to have Cameron and Eilish professionally involved in 2008, as Cameron came to Garma for the first time in 2007 as the winner of the Worldnomads.com /YYF photography scholarship and returned this year to assist us, and Eilish was mentored at Garma by Mark Rogers in previous years under the YYF Multimedia Training Program for Indigenous Students and we were particularly pleased to assist her in furthering her career in photography at Garma 2008.

We also thank Jenny Hunter for her coordination and management of the news and photographs on the website and Jennie Begg for her work in producing a daily narrative of Garma activities for the website (and of course as the media liaison officer at Garma).

The electronic media coverage of Garma 2008 was also widespread and positive. The in-house production team produced news and background footage for use by all TV networks, and also assisted

in acting as a film crew for interviews and filming for TV news and current affairs reporters. David Lipson, from Sky News, provided extensive coverage of Garma for his network and on to other outlets. And Phillip Adams again recorded an extensive series of interviews and Forum proceedings for "Late Night Live" on ABC Radio National.

Three documentary film crews also filmed Garma in 2008. We thank Tourism NT and Tourism Australia for assistance they provided for those crews. It was particularly a pleasure to have at Garma a crew from the leading Chilean TV-show "Bitacora de Viage" and Australian documentary-maker Greg Grainger, making a five-minute piece for his "Travel Oz" series on ABC TV (it will be shown around March).

Of course, the Foundation continued to strictly enforce the "authority to record" conditions in regard to photography (and film footage) at Garma, on Aboriginal land, and all publishing of images, whether taken by our photographers or by the journalists themselves, was, and remains, subject to Foundation approval, to ensure cultural sensitivities are given full consideration and respect.

The Foundation also distributed several press releases nationally on Garma 2008, and was interviewed extensively before, during and after Garma by radio stations in particular, in lieu of the stations having journalists at Garma.

Media coverage of Garma 2008

Coverage of Garma 2008 and, importantly, its aims, messages and Key Forum, included articles or interviews in numerous media publications or programs, including:

Television

Seven National News
Sky News
Southern Cross TV
SBS News
Channel 10 News
Channel Nine National News

ABC 7:30 Report
ABC National News
ABC NT News
and Australia Network (across Asia)
Travel Oz (ABC Travel show)

Radio

ABC – Radio National, NT, News radio,
capital city stations
3RRR
TEABBA
KNR-Radio

Koori Radio Qld
Macquarie Network
Other commercial stations

Newspapers and magazines

The Melbourne Age
The Sunday Age
The Australian
The Weekend Australian (incl.
Magazine)
Sydney Morning Herald
The Sydney Daily Telegraph
The Sunday Telegraph
Australian Financial Review Boss
magazine
The Koori Mail
National Indigenous Times

The Northern Territory News
Arafura Times
Aboriginal Art Directory
Discovery Channel Magazine
Contact Guide
Reconciliation News
Common Ground
Northern Territory Scoop Traveller
Other newspapers using Reuters copy.
Australian Traveller
Origins magazine (CDU)

Agencies

AAP

Reuters

Websites

www.theaustralian.news.com.au
www.smh.com.au
www.abc.net.au

www.theage.com.au
www.news.com.au
www.crikey.com

Background: The Yothu Yindi Foundation, Education and the Garma Cultural Studies Institute (GCSI)

The Yothu Yindi Foundation is a community-based charitable organisation with a nationally significant, expanding set of cultural, health and economic programs. Incorporated in 1991, the Foundation was developed by Yolŋu leaders of North East Arnhem Land with the aim of protecting, maintaining and developing Yolŋu culture and creating economic and life opportunities for Yolŋu and other Indigenous Australians. YYF consists of representatives of five of the land owning Yolŋu clans - the Gumatj, Rirratjingu, Djapu, Gälpu and Wangurri - who are the traditional owners for the North East Arnhem Land region.

YYF's educational focus goes back to the work of Mandawuy Yunupingu and other Yolŋu colleagues in the 80's to transform the Yirrkala School and achieve community control of governance and curriculum. He and his Yolŋu colleagues wanted the curriculum, teaching, learning and literacy to be under the control and supervision of the leaders of Yolŋu culture, parents, Yolŋu teachers and linguists. With Njapaki (non-Indigenous people, colleagues and the support of the Northern Territory Department of Education and Training), they created a governance structure which allowed them to explore alternative visions of what it means to be educated and literate. The establishment of the Garma Cultural Studies Institute (GCSI) as a step towards a "Bush University" was a progression of these educational developments.

The GCSI is as much an idea, or concept, as a place, resting on the understanding that for Yolŋu education does not exist in isolation. The relationships between landscape, one's 'country' and kin, is the keystone of all learning. It is central to Indigenous law, culture and identity. YYF's mission through the GCSI is to sustain and extend Yolŋu intellectual traditions and knowledge systems; develop partnership and collaborative relationships with places of learning, other Indigenous peoples and the wider community; and expand human knowledge in a spirit of mutual respect and tolerance, fostering greater understanding.

Over ten years this concept of the Garma Cultural Studies Institute has guided YYF's educational initiatives. YYF now has an impressive educational record which includes:

- The Garma Key Educational Forum - Since 1999 this high-profile and respected 3-day forum has brought together Indigenous and non-Indigenous community, governmental and sectoral leaders, decision-makers and practitioners from the fields of education, politics, the arts, music, the law, environmental management and business to each year discuss and explore a particular issue of importance to Indigenous people across Australia
- Collaborative research partnerships with Melbourne University, Sydney University, RMIT, and Charles Darwin University in the fields of music, languages and linguistics and natural and cultural resource management (NCRM)
- Partnerships with Melbourne University and Charles Darwin university to deliver higher education courses in Indigenous studies and knowledge systems, NCRM, languages and linguistics
- Partnerships with the Yirrkala Community Education Centre and regional schools to extend music teaching and band development
- Supporting state and private schools to undertake student excursions to the Garma Festival
- Sponsoring PhD students working in cross cultural contexts
- Hosting alcohol and drug diversionary and rehabilitation programs
- Linking knowledge exchange, education and training to the major 'Healing Place' project
- Providing tourism training in partnership with Dhimurru and CDU concurrent with the development of eco and cultural tourism opportunities

The idea of a 'Bush University' is a developing idea that continues to take shape, with an expanding set of partners, as we continue to explore the best ways to contribute to the livelihood and well being of Yolŋu and Indigenous peoples across the nation. It has provided an avenue for removing ignorance and misunderstanding amongst Njapaki, and has brought Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians closer together through substantive sharing of knowledge and culture, and protecting and using Indigenous culture, which engenders social cohesion, cultural identity and community wellbeing.

GCSI has developed partnership arrangements to deliver components of Higher Education courses at Gulkuŋa, by Yolŋu Elders and teachers. The first of these partnerships was with the University of Melbourne and has now extended to other Universities, including Charles Darwin University, Sydney University and RMIT University. The Garma study units aim to introduce students to fieldwork and research in situ in North East Arnhem Land as guests of Yolŋu. Students from a range of disciplines can learn Yolŋu philosophy and culture, and contribute to the learning and research culture of the Yolŋu.

The ideas behind the GCSI and the concept has evolved to be part of YYF's broad agenda, celebrating

and affirming the Key Educational Forum as a major part of the annual Garma Festival, now a nationally significant Indigenous cultural exchange event. Garma is a central plank in the Foundation's overall GCSI effort and in practice is effectively the hub of the "bush university". Fittingly, it embraces the notion of "Garma" denoting "both ways" learning, implying balance and negotiation an integral element of the thinking and implementation of the GCSI program.

The Wellbeing Project

The Wellbeing Project is a set of community and culturally based projects for tackling poor health outcomes, drug and alcohol abuse, volatile substance misuse and the high rates of suicide in the Miwatj region.

The Project:

- Coordinates regular cultural activities to divert Yolŋu men and women from drug and alcohol abuse, volatile substance misuse and suicide
- Facilitates workshops and information sessions on issues associated with drug and alcohol abuse, volatile substances misuse and suicide prevention
- Increases awareness of, and access to, traditional healing in Yolŋu communities
- Facilitates the intergenerational transfer of cultural knowledge
- Strengthens linkages between local service providers and Yolŋu men and women in the north east Arnhem Region, including referrals and linkages with other programs and projects
- Develops pathways to training and employment for Yolŋu men and women

A key element of the Wellbeing Project is *Dilthan Yolŋunha: The Healing Place* now in its second year of operation. Yothu Yindi Foundation has worked with Senior Yolŋu women to establish a traditional practice healing initiative at Gulkula in north east Arnhem Land where marraŋtji (healers) treat their people with medicines from the bush pharmacy, ceremonies, songs and dances and teach this knowledge to their daughters.

Another key element of the Wellbeing Project is the *Alcohol and Substance Abuse Education, Rehabilitation and Diversionary* project that is engaging with at-risk men and women through: Health Promotion and Drug and Alcohol Education Sessions; Suicide Prevention Strategies; Crime Prevention Strategies; and Men's Alcohol and Substance Abuse Diversionary Activities. In 2008, YYF commenced a Wellbeing Project to divert men and young boys from alcohol and substance abuse and direct them to culture-based activities – spear making and hunting; fishing; and the very successful Lipa Lipa project. At Garma 2008, men and young boys continued to construct the Lipa Lipa (traditional dugout canoe), extending the wellbeing project through Garma into the public domain.



©YYF/Garma Festival. Photographer Stephen Cherry

Gove Amateur Astronomy

The Gove Amateur Astronomers (GAA) again presented tours of the night sky to approximately 400 Festival participants from all around the world over four nights. These presentations were a fusion of Yolŋu, ancient Greek and modern space science, and were well received with lots of questions from the visitors and involvement of Yolŋu people in the storytelling.

In the evening, Ian McLean, Astronomy/Science Presenter and Writer was joined by Professor Ray Norris and an audience of over 150 people, when they presented on our topics related to Aboriginal Astronomy. Professor Norris delivered a presentation that posed the question, "Aboriginal Australians - The First Astronomers?" Ian's presentation was titled "Aboriginal Astronomy - Teaching and Learning", describing his experience in teaching and learning Astronomy in the Yolŋu homelands. These sessions generated significant media interest with Professor Norris being interviewed by Phillip Adams for the Late Night Live show on ABC radio national.

Many Thanks to GAA members Tony, Eleonore, Ray and Cilia for their help at Garma and to the Yothu Yindi Foundation and the Yolŋu people for sharing their land and this great event with us.

Ian Maclean, GAA

Garma Volunteer Program

The Yothu Yindi Foundation is very grateful for the support of each and every individual who volunteers. Each provides their own transport to and from the Garma Festival, brings their own camping gear and works a minimum of 30 hours for the privilege and experience of being a part of and contributing to the Garma Festival of Traditional Culture.

This year a team of around 60 volunteers supported staff in the key areas of:

- reception
- production
- tent management
- dining facility logistics
- grounds management
- forum support
- tourism and hospitality
- information hub
- garma shop
- medical first aid
- garma panel and gallery

PRINCIPAL PARTNERS

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SPECIAL RELATIONSHIPS SUPPORTING GARMA 2008

North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance, Indigenous Economic Development Taskforce, Reconciliation Australia, Dare to Lead, Anglicare NT, NT School of Music, NT Open Education Centre, CDU School of Music, The Fred Hollows Foundation, Skar Foundation, The Annemarie & Arturo Gandioli Fumagalli Foundation

INDIGENOUS ORGANISATIONS SUPPORTING GARMA 2008

East Arnhem Shire, Gumatj Association Inc, Marngarr CDEP, Yirrkala Dhanbul Landcare Department, Dhimurru Land Management Aboriginal Corporation, Laynhapuy Homelands Association. Miwatj Health, Women's Resource Centre, Yirrkala CEC, Yirrkala Homeland Schools, Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre