

YOTHU YINDI  
FOUNDATION



Garma

4 - 7 AUGUST



2017  
REPORT

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Garma2017



TheGarmaFestival

# MESSAGE FROM THE GARMA DIRECTOR

This, my 7th official Garma for the Yothu Yindi Foundation (YYF) was programmed with a different and nationally unique flavour. The broader nation wide attention on the Makarrata theme led to a nationally-relevant conversation around key debates such as Constitutional Recognition, and Indigenous Education, during a period where both Commonwealth and State governments are focussed on challenges surrounding remote and regional Indigenous curriculums .

Garma this year placed a high value on education with a bold vision to weave a national Indigenous education curriculum into the mainstream Western syllabus. The grounds of the bunggul again were an interesting place to watch and learn what that may look like, and the Yolngu matha, kinship and history classrooms showcased the type of content that might be included.

From a four-day program richly laced with Indigenous content, we've had the opportunity to introduce new aspects of programing, two of which were a new-look Gapan Art Gallery and the second being a night of poetry and a pilot poetry slam. It has been quite a privilege to find space for new concepts, and by all regards each of the new programing components have been relatively well received by our guests this year.

In the years since my involvement in Garma, it has taken us 7 years to feel confident in introducing innovative program changes, and I am thanking all of our guests and supporters for giving us the drive to turn this corner, make change happen, and have it received so warmly in this, our 19th annual Garma event.

I would like to acknowledge the generosity of our sponsors, both financial and in-kind. Our team are hard workers, and with significant support behind us, we are being equipped with the tools to ensure the values of community-minded organisations are reflected well through program platforms within Garma.

I close in thanking the Yothu Yindi Foundation Board of Directors and our crew who are never too far away from finding answers to ongoing challenges to ensure our event is well produced and delivered with a rounded professional edge. I do hope you've enjoyed your time in Arnhem Land, whether it be in person or through the various beamed media broadcasts from Gulkula and we look forward to you joining us again next year for the our significant 20th anniversary.



Denise Bowden,

Director of Garma 2010 - 2018

CEO, Yothu Yindi Foundation

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SPONSORS

The Chairman, Board of Directors and management of the Yothu Yindi Foundation extend sincere thanks to those that have supported our many projects currently being undertaken in the North East Arnhem region.

We take the opportunity now to say thank you to those that have shared our vision and made the many positive outcomes and memories from Garma 2017. To our colleagues that work tirelessly behind the scenes to make it all happen, we acknowledge your hard work, and enjoy the inspiration, the passion and the intensity, we value your efforts whether financial or in-kind.

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## About this report

The annual Garma Festival spans four days and combines Yolngu culture with political and policy debate. Garma's arts and education elements create a full program of events in which guests can immerse themselves according to their own choice. This report aims to capture the richness of the 2017 Garma Festival and to summarise the key themes, debates and learnings from the event.

This report is structured into five sections (set out in the diagram below) that cover the key elements of the 2017 Garma Festival. The last section, From The Grounds, provides a snapshot of the experience of Garma's guests and the volunteer crew that made the event possible.





## 1. DEBATING THE FUTURE THROUGH THE GARMA KEY FORUM

Garma's Key Forum is a platform where issues of great importance to Australia's future are discussed, debated and contested. It is also a place where Indigenous Australia can express itself in a forum where politicians, captains of industry, senior bureaucrats and non-Indigenous thinkers are the listeners and the observers, and only occasionally the participants.

Constitutional reform and Makarrata was the principal topic of debate under the roof of the Key Forum's Garrtjambal Auditorium. Garma's major theme, written in Yolngu matha



*Gundamulk Marawili*

Go! Bukulungdhun Makarrata wu' spoke of getting down to business, taking stock of the plight of Indigenous Affairs, focusing on a brighter future ahead and ultimately settling the differences between black and white within our nation. Indigenous health and wellbeing, economic development, and government funding aligned with Indigenous disadvantage were also the subject of great discussion among some of the nation's leading thinkers.

Garma's official opening was a grand occasion, with YYF's Chairman Galarrwuy Yunupingu arriving in a wheelchair after suffering the amputation of a leg in the months leading up to Garma. Emotional tributes were given as a remembrance to Dr G Yunupingu, the singer who passed away just prior to Garma taking place.

### 1.1 Constitutional reform: Makarrata

Early on Saturday, Gumatj leader Ms Djapirri Mununggirritj recounted to the Garma audience her dream that the Prime Minister and Opposition Leader were in one canoe, balancing the boat and moving together downstream towards reconciliation. This analogy beautifully captured the hopes of many of the people who came together for this 19th Garma Festival to see how as a nation we can rise to the challenge of Makarrata. The concept of rowing the canoe together is integral for the canoe and its inhabitants to get to their planned destination, and indeed to steer its charter from dangerous currents. Relative to the Constitutional Reform conversation, Djapirri touched on the importance of the bi-partisan approach required for Australia as a nation, the need for all to work together towards the common goal.

This year's Garma occurred just over two months after the nation's Indigenous leaders gathered together at the Uluru National Constitutional Convention in May, which resulted in the momentous Uluru Statement from the Heart. The Statement was a stunning repudiation of the minimalist model of Indigenous Constitutional recognition, and a powerful expression of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander unity and consensus on the need for a serious

overhaul of Indigenous policy in Australia. It called for a First Nations Voice to be enshrined in the Constitution, for a Makarrata Commission to supervise agreement-making between governments and First Nations, and for a truth-telling commission to ensure Indigenous Australian history is recorded as it occurred. By referencing the need for a Makarrata, the Statement carried the imprimatur of the Yolngu people and built on the groundwork laid by YYF.



*From left, Director of Garma Denise Bowden and Chairman of the Yothu Yindi Foundation Dr Galarrwuy Yunupingu AM hosting Garma*



*From left, Djawa Yunupingu, Balupalu Yunupingu, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, Yananymul Mununggurr*



*Yirrkala School Principal Merrkiyawuy Ganambarr*



*Yalmay Yunupingu speaking at the Education Forum*



*Leader of the Opposition, Bil Shorten*



## 1.1 OFFICIAL GARMA OPENING

The 2017 Garma was opened with a fire dance, conveying the important message that to speak with fire means to speak the truth.

As senior Gumatj man Djunga Djunga Yunupingu explained:

“The fire that we have brought to you in our ceremony today has the energy and the power to show who we are and where we come from. The tongue of the fire speaks through us and the flames show us the way forward. It gives us the power and identity of who we are. It lights up the life that is in us. It is our wayayu – our pathway.

“It tells us that no matter what happens to us we are in ourselves strong and unbreakable.

“Prime Minister, our fire is an Australian fire, lit by our ancestors and it lives through our song and our dance and through us.

“Gurtha (fire) gives us power and we want you as the leader of the Australian people – as our leader – to have that power.

“And Mr Shorten we want you to have that power also so you can speak with the tongue of the fire.”

Serious sentiments were echoed by Chairman of the Yothu Yindi Foundation Dr Yunupingu during his opening remarks, which were also directed at the Prime Minister and Opposition Leader, urging them to show leadership and to carry the fire lit at Uluru back to Parliament House in Canberra.

“You will know that at Uluru we started a fire, a fire that we hope burns bright, because we have come for serious business.

“We live in the same land. We live side by side. But not yet united.

“The fire is our future and I have given the fire to you [Prime Minister and Mr Shorten].

The Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, who began his introductory remarks at Garma by addressing the crowd in Yolngu Matha, spoke of how he had come to Garma to listen, to learn, to participate and understand from the Gumatj people what makarrata means.

The Prime Minister told the Garma audience that there is a way to go in “our journey of reconciliation”, without directly addressing the requests in the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

Similarly, in his opening speech the Opposition Leader Mr Bill Shorten acknowledged that “people think politics have failed them” and that “people are frustrated with the lack of progress.” He also called for Australia’s political leaders to “swap talk for action”.

At a Makarrata forum later that night discussing the way ahead, Cape York Leader Noel Pearson concluded with a call for hope and vision:

“Our greatest leader [Dr Galarrwuy Yunupingu] is the bridge between an ancient past and a hopeful future.”

Yothu Yindi Foundation CEO Denise Bowden opened the Key Forum the following morning, echoing the sentiments of Dr Yunupingu the previous day and explaining how Garma was a place for respectful debate, encouraging the audience to listen with open minds and think carefully about the issues being discussed. These were sensitive moments for caution, and to be respectful of our language over the course of Garma.

Dr Yunupingu then delivered the Keynote Address, spelling out the challenges ahead and imploring the nation’s political leadership to listen to the strong message being conveyed.

“This country has to listen to the Aborigines once and for all,” he said.

“They have to listen to the proposals we make, for those proposals are good ones.

“I want the PM to take with him the words that he’s gathered at this camp, and Mr Shorten, you beside him carry that weight all the way to Canberra to deliver to the rest of the politicians.

“Makarrata is a very important word to a big gathering of people who are celebrating peace-making.

“We trust the Prime Minister to put the Makarrata to the Government.

“A solution that says ‘yes’, there shall be a Makarrata, for the sake of the Aboriginal people.

“We have to be together. We have to make a noise together. We have to sing out to the Parliament together. We will carry the name Makarrata together, as one people.”

His speech drew a standing ovation from the audience.

To provide some context to subsequent discussions, Professor Marcia Langton outlined for the Garma audience the history of the campaign for Constitutional recognition, taking in the work of the Expert Panel convened by then Prime Minister Julia Gillard, the Joint Parliamentary Committee, the Recognise Campaign, the Referendum Council and the First Nations National Constitutional Convention at Uluru.

Professor Langton then cautioned, before introducing the Prime Minister, that:

“Makarrata was never easy. It was always difficult. Let us not be naïve. We have the task of finding a settlement.”

Before an expectant crowd, Mr Turnbull deferred any official response to the Referendum Council’s recommendation of constitutionally enshrining a First Nations Voice to the Parliament. The Prime Minister said:

“I respect deeply the work of the Referendum Council, and I respect it by considering [their report] very carefully.”

“Djapirri said Bill and I are in the same canoe and on this issue, we certainly are – but we are not alone, we are not alone in the canoe. We are in the same canoe with all of you as well and we need to steer it wisely to achieve our goal, to achieve that goal of Makarrata.”

The Prime Minister also said he had learned from his involvement in the failed 1999 referendum on whether to make Australia a republic.

“Many people talk about referendums, but few people have knowledge in running one... how much harder is the road for the advocate for change than that of those who resist change.”

“One of the toughest lessons I learnt from the Referendum campaign of ‘99 was that an ‘all or nothing’ approach sometimes results in nothing.”

“To win, we must all work together to build a high level of interest and familiarity with the concept of a Voice, and how this would be different, or the same, as iterations of the past like the National Aboriginal Conference or the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission.”

The Prime Minister concluded by suggesting to the audience that despite many setbacks in the long road to Makarrata, there are some achievements worth celebrating and cause for optimism.

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and all Australians, continue to connect with pride and optimism, and the well-being that comes with a reconciled harmony with you, our First Australians, our shared history truthfully told and a deeper understanding of the most ancient human cultures on earth.”

The Opposition Leader Bill Shorten was more forthright than the Prime Minister, telling the Key Forum:



"I cannot be any more clear than this: Labor supports a Voice for Aboriginal people in our Constitution, we support a declaration by all parliaments, we support a truth-telling commission. We are not confronted by the notion of treaties with our first Australians. For us the question is not whether we do these things, the question is not if we should do these things but when and how."

Mr Shorten said agreeing on a referendum question should be the very next step and there was "no reason why that can't be done by the end of this year".

The Opposition Leader also used his speech to respond to the cynicism about his proposal for a joint parliamentary committee:

"This is not a committee for the sake of a committee, it's not another mechanism for delay. It is the necessary process of engagement of the Parliament."

However, in suggesting that the Committee be responsible for advising the Parliament on how to set-up a Makarrata Commission, creating a framework for truth-telling and agreement making, and deciding what a Voice to Parliament would look like.

"The definition of the Voice should be deferred until after the referendum...leave it for Parliament to determine. This is a common technique [for achieving constitutional change]"

When Noel Pearson spoke to the Key Forum on Saturday, he sought to heed his own calls from the evening before for Indigenous leaders to articulate a 'deep logic' for constitutional change. He said, quoting an editorial from *The Australian*:

"There is a compelling logic that if parliament has jurisdiction over Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples it should hear their voice... Forget other changes, mandate an Indigenous Voice and deal with recognition later in a document that can be endorsed by all Australian Parliaments."

Mr Pearson also responded directly to the Opposition Leader's proposed approach to reform:

"Bill, we must stage the agenda. Get the Voice up first. Then we have the means for Makarrata."

Mr Pearson concluded with a call for hope and optimism:

"We must all talk up the cause. We have not done this enough. We all know the scale of the difficulty.... expectations. Talk up chances and give hope we can do this."

After the formal discussion on Constitutional Reform had concluded, guests at Garma were left to consider the words of Dr Yunupingu in his essay which appeared in *The Monthly*, Rom Watangu, where he explained Australia's First Peoples' desire for empowerment:

"What Aboriginal people ask is that the modern world now makes the sacrifices necessary to give us a real future. To relax its grip on us. To let us breathe, to let us be free of the determined control exerted on us to make us like you. And you should take that a step further and recognise us for who we are, and not who you want us to be. Let us be who we are — Aboriginal people in a modern world — and be proud of us. Acknowledge that we have survived the worst that the past had thrown at us, and we are here with our songs, our ceremonies, our land, our language and our people — our full identity. What a gift this is that we can give you, if you choose to accept us in a meaningful way."

## PRIME MINISTER, YOU HAD A DREAM RIGHT?

### DR GALARRWUY YUNUPINGU'S GRANDSON

#### SPEAKS FOR INDIGENOUS YOUTH

Dr Galarrwuy Yunupingu's grandson, 19 year old Mr Michael Yunupingu, delivered a striking speech on the opening day of the Key Forum. Michael shared with the Garma audience his dreams of representing Australia at the Olympics, becoming a sports scientist and also being a mentor to his people in education.

"My brother and I grew up most of our lives in Adelaide, taken care of single-handedly by our mother, who is also a foster carer. We were encouraged from a young age to go to school and make the most of our education. We were also encouraged to commit to sports, and experience a range of programs, which allowed us to gain connections and interests. It was hard for us to maintain and learn more about our own language and culture, as we lived on the other side of the country, but we always knew this land was part of us and who we are."

"As I grew older, I started to have ambitions on what I wanted to be and through the many opportunities my mother gave me, I have been able to chase them. My dream is to run in the Olympics, be a sports scientist, working in elite sporting faculties and also be a mentor in Indigenous health."

Michael also shared his frustration and disappointment that so many other Yolngu kids don't even dare to dream of such a life. In Mr Yunupingu's words:

"There are so many Yolngu kids outside of this room who want to be something when they grow up. Everyone has a dream. Prime Minister, you had a dream right? The only problem is they don't have the opportunities to get to that dream."

We all, Balanda and Yolngu, have to work together to figure out a way in which kids can carry on our culture, yet gain as much education as possible. Education allows kids to learn. Learning allows kids to gain ambitions. Ambitions allow kids to live and strive for something everyday. Too many times Yolngu have been let down by a lack of opportunities. But it is time this stops."

"Our family, for example, have been rejected by private housing rental in Adelaide more than 20 times. Yet we have seen other people being approved after us. I am not suggesting racism or discrimination. But why is it that under Yolngu we are allowed to be constantly rejected; yet other families are allowed to be approved after us?"

"We cannot sit here and say everything is fine, because at the end of the day it really isn't. We all have to focus on our future generation, these kids are our future, this country's future! Give them the opportunities they deserve to have. We need to work on building this pathway together with true commitment from all."





## 1.2 YOLNGU HEROES

The annual Yolngu Hero Awards have become an important feature of the Key Forum program, a chance to recognise the efforts of the champions of the communities of northeast Arnhem Land.

Highly coveted, the awards recognise Yolngu men and women who have displayed outstanding leadership, community service, a commitment to improve the health and wellbeing of those around them, and educational and other significant achievements.

The Yolngu Heroes aren't always the ones in the spotlight – many of them are doing their work quietly and diligently in the background, without seeking accolades, and the Yolngu Heroes Awards ceremony is the Yothu Yindi Foundation's way of acknowledging important work and to say thanks.

Prime Minister, Mr Turnbull, helped present this year's awards, along with Garma Ambassador Jack Thompson, and Garma guests were treated to a special bunggul as the family of the late Ms. Gurruwiwi celebrated her posthumous award.

Accepting the award on her behalf, Ms. Gurruwiwi's grand-daughters moved the audience to tears as they recounted the special role she had played in their lives, and the lives of so many others. They also made an emotional tribute to another award recipient, Djapirri Mununggurririj, for her continued support, love and strength since Ms. Gurruwiwi's sad passing.

As Jack Thompson noted in his introductory remarks, the two women had achieved so much together, and were recognised as a 'dynamic duo' of Arnhem Land.

The 2017 Yolngu Heroes were:

Ms D. Gurruwiwi



Ms Djapirri Mununggurririj



Mr Nungki Yunupingu



Mr Balupalu Yunupingu

## Ms D Gurruwiwi – Our Official 2017 Yolngu Hero

We paid tribute to a woman that is being remembered for her leadership qualities, her ability to forge partnerships, her devoted focus on education and community development, as well as her loyalty to her family and mentorship and support to her children and grandchildren.

Her work through the Elders Visiting Program has been instrumental in Arnhem Land, and her role as a Director of the Yothu Yindi Foundation and a myriad of other responsibilities are the many reasons for why we honoured a matriarch, mother, grandmother, sister and friend to us all.

Ms D Gurruwiwi was honoured posthumously and was represented by her children and grandchildren.

One of Ms D Gurruwiwi's grandchildren said that to make a basket you have to connect two pandanus to create a whole. Ms D Gurruwiwi's pandanus were education and leadership.

## Ms Djapirri Mununggurririj

Djapirri is known as Ms Gurruwiwi's greatest friend, colleague and collaborator.

It was appropriate therefore to acknowledge the bipartisan balance that forged a dynamic force when the two women combined their talents and exercised the same will, the same drive, the same energy. Djapirri and Ms Gurruwiwi introduced the Elders Visiting Program in the region.

Djapirri is currently a Director of Reconciliation Australia, works at the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet regionally and works on the ground in her hometown on a daily basis.

## Mr Nungki Yunupingu

Mr Nungki Yunupingu is a historian, peace-maker and thinker who guides and stabilises the Yolngu clans of the region.

He is a Gumatj man, and a son of Munggurrawuy Yunupingu. His mother is an Ngaymil woman. Mayitja is his other name and he is a master hunter and skilful craftsman. His ceremonial knowledge is an anchor for the clans. Nungki has been an interpreter and translator and is a father and loving husband.

## Mr Balupalu Yunupingu

Mr Balupalu Yunupingu is a Gumatj man who has been a rock for his clan and a guardian of yirritja ceremonies. As well as being a ceremonial leader he is an organiser who is guiding the future for younger Yolngu men and women. As a founding director of Gumatj Corporation, Balupalu re-established the Garrathiya cattle station and started the Bay Bay Mi forestry project. Balupalu is a son of the Gumatj leader Munggurrawuy and his mother clan is Rirratjingu. He is a living representation of the concept of Yothu Yindi and is a true Yolngu Hero.

Denise Bowden, CEO of the Yothu Yindi Foundation said:

"The Garma Yolngu Heroes awards are always an emotional time, often a tear is shed. The Yothu Yindi Foundatin's simple gesture of extending ones thanks is valued highly here in Arnhem Land, as the daily life for many is very challenging. This acknowledgement ceremony matches the respect for our heroes on the ground.





# WHAT THEY SAID ABOUT GARMA.....

**Bill Burdett, Victoria**

Why Garma is important?

*"Garma is an excellent model which enables attendees to gain a broader and deeper knowledge of the issues involving indigenous Australians."*

Sharing my memories of Garma

*"Standing in the meal queue and sitting at the communal tables, chatting to other attendees and learning of their reasons for attending Garma; Enjoying the beautiful country in which Garma is located; Participating in group activities; Enjoying excellent coffee!"*

**Rod Reeve, Northern Territory**

Sharing my memories of Garma

*"The conversations, cultural events, dancing, music, art, friendly people, great food and sensational environment."*

**Kate Morgan, New South Wales**

Why Garma is important?

*"Garma provides a platform for the voices of our Aboriginal population, and those that want the best for them, coming together for the protection of this country's true heritage and to unite with common passion, care and love of our country and its peoples. The lessons learnt and shared have the opportunity to filter out to a broader population and bring strength to the messages. And so I can come and sit on the side of the bunggul everyday from beginning to end. Bliss."*

**Patrick Forman, New South Wales**

Why Garma is important?

*"Vital role in healing a nation sick at its core."*

**Alistair Lee, South Australia**

Why I pledge my support to the Yothu Yindi Foundation?

*"This (Garma) festival should be on everyones bucket list."*

**Lisa Dhurrkay, Nhulunbuy Northern Territory (below)**

Why Garma is important?

*"I believe that Garma is important to ALL, Indigenous and non-Indigenous."*



**Bianca Williams, Sydney**

Why Garma is important?

Garma is an event that has the ability to change the way people think and feel about Aboriginal Australia. Set amongst the dropback of picturesque Yolngu country in the heart of East Arnhem Land, anyone fortunate enough to attend is encouraged to bring an open heart and mind. Garma will teach you and your organisations how to work better with Aboriginal people whilst also educating younger generations on actualities of our culture, righting the wrongs of fallacies that are so strong amongst mainstream Australia.

**Bob Gordon, Tasmania**

Why Garma is important?

It is very difficult for urban Australians to gain an appreciation of Indigenous culture and challenges without a forum like Garma where Yolngu share their culture. Challenging issues are discussed and debated in a spirit of openness and respect.

Why I pledge my support?

The bringing together of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians to discuss and resolve issues is vitally important to our society. The music, company and bunggul is also great. Spending some time out of the Tasmanian winter is a bonus.



## Official Opening of the Mine Training Centre



During the Key Forum on Saturday, Mr Klaus Helm, CEO of Gumatj Corporation, Mr Bruce Cox, Managing Director of Pacific Operations for Rio Tinto, Senator Nigel Scullion, Minister for Indigenous Affairs and Mr Ken Vowles, Northern Territory Minister for Resources, officially opened the Gulkula Mining Project and Mine Training Centre.

The signing ceremony was also attended by Gumatj Clan leader Dr. Galarrwuy Yunupingu, Senior Gumatj Traditional Owners and Gumatj Corporation Board Members Balupalu Yunupingu and Djawa Yunupingu, and the Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull. Rio Tinto committed to purchase bauxite produced from the new mine.

The Gulkula Regional Training Centre was also established with \$2.4 million in funding from Rio Tinto, the Gumatj Corporation and the Northern Territory and Australian Governments. An initial group of 15 Yolngu trainees is expected to be employed on the mine, which plans to produce 150,000t of bauxite in the first year.

Balupalu Yunupingu said it was a significant day for local Yolngu. "It is an example of Yolngu people developing our own land for our own purposes," he said. The operators, Gulkula Mining Ltd, are also the traditional owners of the land to be mined, the Gumatj clan, in what's believed to be one of the first such arrangements in the world.

Mr Klaus Helms, CEO of the Gumatj Corporation said "The commencement of a 100 per cent Indigenous-owned training centre and mining operation is a testament to what Indigenous people can achieve working in partnership with business and government – this a major step forward in building a sustainable future for our local people."

"With Rio Tinto's support, Yolngu people can now receive on-the-job training through Gumatj mining operations. The skills they develop will open up opportunities for them to build careers in the mining industry in the Northern Territory and beyond. "The bauxite sales agreement we signed with Rio Tinto today also signifies their commitment to ensuring the success of our new mine. We are very excited to begin production later this year and start generating economic benefits for our local region," Mr Helms said.

Rio Tinto Aluminium Pacific Operations managing director Bruce Cox said Rio Tinto was pleased to see these projects driven by local Yolngu people come to fruition:

"As a result of this training centre even more local Indigenous people will be able to build long-term careers in the mining industry. We hope to see increased Indigenous participation at our own Gove bauxite mine as participants move on from the centre and into the workforce....Rio Tinto is very pleased to see our local partnerships evolve as we take on a new role as a customer of the Gulkula mine."



## 2 Educating our children and hearing their voice

### 2.1 Education Forum

The Education Forum, held at the Gartjambal auditorium on the first day of the Garma Festival, considered how to improve the educational outcomes of current and future generations of Indigenous Australians.

Professor Marcia Langton opened the Forum by expressing the importance of education in enabling Indigenous children and young people to live and walk in both worlds.

Before introducing the Youth Panel, Ms Yananyal Mununggurr, paid tribute to her mother, who passed recently. Ms M Mununggurr was a great Yolngu educator and leader, as well as a mentor and instructor to many other teachers.

The Youth Panel spoke of how they had been empowered through education and having a good education means “anything is possible.” They shared their insights into the challenges of leaving family and community to go to boarding school and university, and the importance of creating culturally safe environments at schools and universities to help young people thrive and retain their identity and connection to community.

They expressed a hope that in the future the Australian education system would have a better understanding of Indigenous culture and language, and that they would like to see an Indigenous owned and run higher education institution.

Ms June Oscar AO, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, delivered the keynote address at the Education Forum.

The Commissioner described her role as translating human rights into the daily reality of life; that human rights “need to be more than just words on a page.”

She emphasised the importance of a human rights based approach to education. Education is a fundamental human right and is essential for the exercise of all other human rights.

“We must lift our efforts to improve remote education statistics, including through improving early years learning and creating a better foundation for children as learners by engaging parents.” Echoing the statements of the Youth Panel members, Ms Oscar told the Garma audience that learning institutions need to find ways to deliver education that use Indigenous ways of knowing and learning and create culturally safe learning frameworks. This includes pedagogy, curricula and teachers that are equipped to deliver “two way” education. “The survival and teaching of our languages” is also critical.

Ms Oscar commented on the need to prepare children for the world outside the classroom. Contact between Indigenous people and the justice system is far too common, including the number of children with a family member in prison.

She said there has been a normalisation of this unjust situation and “the discourse of deficit” cannot continue. A First Nations Voice provides an opportunity to address powerlessness and change inadequate systems and institutions.

Northern Territory Minister for Education Eva Lawler presented the NT Government’s agenda for improving education outcomes. This includes moving from the current focus on attendance, to how to successfully engage young people in school and providing “second chance” education options for young people not engaged in mainstream schooling.

Minister Lawler emphasised the need to grow the number of Indigenous teachers, and for schools to be culturally aware and connected to part of the community. Young people should have a choice between attending a boarding school interstate or in the Northern Territory, or attending a local school.

As part of its Local Decision Making agenda, the NT Government is also working towards a “community-led schools” approach giving schools in the Northern Territory the power to decide on the curriculum they teach. This includes the introduction of Indigenous language and cultural curricula in 2018.

The Education Forum finished with a panel discussion with educational leaders from across Australia and New Zealand.

Ms Merrkiyawuy Ganambarr-Stubbs, a Yolngu woman and Honorary Associate at Macquarie University, highlighted the importance of schools addressing the health and wellbeing needs of children to help them learn.

Professor Elizabeth McKinley encouraged Australia to “think big” about education. In New Zealand, Maori people have taken back control of education, from early childhood through to tertiary education, including translating Indigenous knowledge into qualifications.

The Panel also touched on the experience of young people who attend boarding school interstate. Ms Marnie O’Bryan from the University of Melbourne spoke about her research showing that the lived experience of Indigenous students at boarding schools can be complicated, and schools need to ensure they are culturally competent and young people need to be supported to remain connected to their community.

This topic was a key theme throughout the Garma Festival and was also raised during Q&A, with a question on the boarding school that opened recently at Nhulunbuy High in North East Arnhem Land. Mr Noel Pearson’s response to the question was that boarding school “was the best years of my life” and enabled him and fellow students to “have the best of both worlds.”

### 2.2 Education Fair

The Education Fair, run on the first day of the Garma Festival at the Bunggul Grounds, provided a cultural curriculum for young people attending Garma. 160 young people from over 8 schools across the Northern Territory participated this year, including St Columbans based in QLD.

The four areas covered included:

- Yolngu Matha – a basic introduction to Yolngu language. Yolngu are proud of their language which dates back thousands of years. The lesson included basic words, phrases, greetings and sentences.





- Yolngu Gurrutu – a basic introduction into how the Yolngu kinship system works. The lesson covered Gurrutu and how it governs aspects of Yolngu life and the two Yolngu moieties, Dhuwa and Yirritja.
- Yolngu Seasons – an introduction to the major seasons and the changes in climatic conditions and the natural environment. The lesson provided an overview of the six seasons: Dhuludur, Barra'mirri, Mayaltha, Midawarr, Dharatharramirri and Rrarrandharr.
- Makarrata – an introduction to Makarrata and its historical significance and relevance today, and an introduction to the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

### 2.3 Garma Youth Forum

The Youth Forum is a “mini-Garma” and involved four days of engaging and educative workshops and cultural activities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students from across Australia, aged between 12 and 18 years. The Youth Forum is aimed at building friendships and sharing knowledge between young people and across cultures, as well as developing leadership skills and confidence.

The University of Sydney sponsored the Youth Forum, and the workshops were hosted by the University of Sydney Conservatorium of Music, Faculty of Science, Sydney College of the Arts and the Sydney University Law Society. Other organisations that hosted workshops included the Department of Defence, the NT Music School, the Sydney Story Factory, R U OK? and Brainstorm Productions. The workshops included song writing, poetry, digital music production, art, science and technology, mental health and bullying and storytelling.

The Youth Forum ended with a presentation on the final day of the Garma Festival which gave the young people the chance to share their ideas and insights with other guests.

Youth Forum Panellists spoke about “being immersed in a culture that’s so different to ours”, “getting uncomfortable and learning new skills” and the Garma Youth Forum being “an opportunity to move into the future together”.

When asked what their life dreams were, the panellists spoke about wanting to see more Indigenous people on television, to help other young people with troubled backgrounds, to be a teacher in Indigenous schools, to go to university and to fight for a fair go and make a difference. One of the panellists commented that it is important to have an open mind and always take the opportunity to learn new skills as there will be new jobs in the future.

Members of the Youth Forum also performed three songs using a variety of musical instruments, led by the NT Music School. This included a song on Makarrata, a song originating from the Torres Strait and a song by Yothu Yindi. Two young women also shared poems that they had developed as part of the Sydney Story Factory workshop.

## 3. Celebrating leadership and showcasing successful programs

### 3.1 Leadership Through Employment

The presentation of the Yothu Yindi Foundation’s annual Yolngu Heroes award was an emotional celebration and an opportunity to recognise Yolngu leaders who work tirelessly for their families and communities.

The Yolngu Heroes ceremony weaves a story of local people doing, delivering and being the strong backbone for their community. Throughout the platform of Garma guests were able to draw from a wealth of cultural programming led by Yolngu people young and elderly, male and female.

The Yothu Yindi Foundation’s rate of employment of local Yolngu people to deliver Garma sits at just over 241 employees in the Garma 2017 year. These learnings tell us that the success of the event is due to the support of our local community, and the core cultural activities being managed by the Yolngu experts themselves. From site management to catering to key note speakers and more broadly across the site, families are engaging in ways where they are valued and are empowered with confidence to bring their expertise to the Garma programming. The Yothu Yindi Foundation has further substantial Indigenous employees as team members, and the opportunities for employment and training collaborations will continue in strength again next year.

### 3.2 Programs making a difference

Over the course of the Garma Festival a number of programs that are making a difference for Indigenous people were showcased and discussed. These included:

#### Learning on Country

The Learning on Country program is a grassroots initiative that has been designed and implemented by Yolngu people.

Guests at Garma learned about how Ranger groups, schools and local communities have partnered to deliver a culturally responsive curriculum that integrates Indigenous and Western knowledge systems in five Arnhem Land communities. The program aims to increase school attendance and completion rates, and successful transitions to further education and employment.

The program uses and values both knowledge systems. Indigenous students learn about western concepts and scientific methods, literacy and numeracy within the context of their own country. They also learn about themselves, their identity and culture. Many of the learning activities are conducted on country with senior Elders.

In Maningrida, if students complete Year 12 they are guaranteed a ranger job. The program also increases students’ readiness for other jobs, such as in tourism and arts centres.

# ATTENDANCE SNAPSHOT = 2650



The total number of ticket sales online reached 959. Ticket sales contained within this report do not capture Indigenous families based remotely in the north-east Arnhem Land region. Neither does this report include Yothu Yindi Foundation employee's, VIPs and service providers associated with the delivery of the event.

This report also includes 72 tickets where the locality given by the customer cannot be identified which makes up 7.0% of the total number of tickets reported on.



*Young men on the bunggul grounds, painted and ready*



*Guests arriving at the Garma gates*



*Dance performance each sunset*



*Rounds of applause*



*Faces of Garma*



*Ladies from the Healing Place, Dilthan Yolngu*



*Intense platforms on very remote communities*

## No More campaign

The No More campaign is about respecting women and placing the responsibility for reducing family violence on men, who are the most common perpetrators of family violence. The campaign primarily works with sporting codes and clubs to disseminate this message.

Campaign founder, Mr Charlie King, said the program is an effective model of breaking down silos and working together across programs and agencies to address family violence.

The session on the No More campaign included a panel of speakers from the Northern Territory Police, the Department of Correctional Services and AFL NT. All three organisations are partnering with CatholicCare NT on the program. Erica Simms, a police officer from Nhulunbuy, commented that “we can’t deal with this insidious issue on our own”.

An initiative of the No More campaign has been to work with AFL NT to implement a policy that football clubs cannot be registered with AFL NT unless the club has a domestic violence action plan in place. The No More campaign’s vision is that all sporting clubs have a domestic violence action in place in the future.

### Elders Visiting Program

The Elders Visiting Program involves Elders regularly visiting prisoners in Northern Territory prisons. Elders come from 14 communities across the Northern Territory.

A Panel discussion on the program included co-chairs Mr Marius Pirrawayingi Purantatameri and Ms Mildred Inkamala. They said the role of the Elders is talk to prisoners in language and instil the idea that the prisoners “are good people, who have just done a bad thing”. The program aims to reduce recidivism and improve reintegration back into the community.

Mr Mark Payne, Northern Territory Commissioner of Correctional Services, commented that the program is “so much more than just a visitor program.” He said the program creates critical links between prisoners and their culture and country, and also helps Corrections to deliver their programs in a culturally appropriate way, through Elders providing advice to Corrections on any issues that prisoners are experiencing.

### Maranguka Justice Reinvestment Project

The Maranguka Justice Reinvestment Project is a grassroots initiative of the Indigenous community in Bourke, New South Wales.

Mr Alistair Ferguson, Executive Director of Maranguka, said the project is aimed at redirecting resources that would be spent on prison into the community to address the underlying causes of imprisonment and to prevent young people from entering the justice system. It currently costs \$800 per day to keep a young person in custody; the project is “looking at how to invest that \$800 differently”.

Having decided that “enough was enough”, the Burke community has been involved in co-designing the solutions and the project has a strong community governance structure. It is underpinned by a collective impact framework that allows the community to work with a number of parties, including the corporate and philanthropic sectors. Key collaborators on the Project, Lend Lease and Dusseldorp Forum were represented on the Panel.

Since the project commenced, Domestic and Family Violence prevalence rates have decreased by 8 per cent in Bourke. “For many years Bourke didn’t have a seat at the table, so now they’ve built a new table”, Mr Anderson said.



## 4 Sharing Yolngu culture and knowledge

### 4.1 Opening ceremony

At Garma's opening ceremony, the traditional owners, the Gumatj Clan, performed a ceremony welcoming guests to Gulkula and officially opening Garma for 2017.

Yothu Yindi Patron Mr Jack Thompson asked guests to reflect with him "here today at this moment we see Australia as a nation as it should be."  
"People see today a ceremony that is as ancient as it is wonderful. A ceremony crafted from the very bones of this land. It is a ceremony that is as alive and vibrant today as it was thousands of years ago."

The theme of the opening ceremony was fire. The Gumatj men and boys presented their Gurtha, or fire dance, in the yellow colours of their clan group. Senior Gumatj Clan Leader Mr Djunga Djunga Yunupingu told guests:

"Our fire is an Australian fire. Lit by our ancestors. And it moves through our song and our dance and through us."

Dr Galarrwuy Yunupingu welcomed everyone to Garma with words of fire. He said:

"Welcome to all of our guests. You are our special guests and you will be treated with great respect by all of us"  
"I want to give you some more words."  
"I want to give you the words of the fire."

"The fire is now our future and I have given the fire to you so you can talk to us with tongues of fire."

Mr Djunga Djunga Yunupingu also spoke at the opening ceremony about his late nephew, Dr G Yunupingu's power to bridge cultures through his music:

"This place is where we find unity. Two laws, two people, one country. This was the work of my nephew Dr G Yunupingu who through his songs, spoke to the nation in his own language."

Gumatj singers performed a powerful tribute to their kinsman, the late Dr G Yunupingu, singing one of his songs about the Gurtha or sacred fire. The Prime Minister's wife Lucy Turnbull wept along with grieving female Gumatj clan Elders. A minute's silence was held and guests joined hands in a symbol of unity.

The Prime Minister reflected that Dr G Yunupingu "brought the Yolngu language to all Australians, his music will be forever cherished."

Mr Djunga Djunga Yunupingu lamented that "He left us without truly knowing his place in this nation," poignant words that set the scene for the many discussions which followed on makarrata.

### 4.2 Bunggul

After the opening ceremony, guests walked together to the bunggul grounds to take in the splendour and colour of the traditional dance at the opening bunggul.

For two hours on each of the four evenings, the ceremony grounds at Gulkula became the point of focus and energy.

Together the men and women revealed the wonder of Australia's original dance movement - here on the ceremonial grounds that have now staged thousands of bunggul dances.

Through the bunggul, Yolngu express themselves, make

statements, exhibit their prowess, heal rifts, manage disputes and form alliances and lasting bonds.

As in previous years, the bunggul also provided an opportunity for guests to join in. Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, men and women, the young and the old, were brought together through these artistic expressions of dance.

As Director of Bunggul Ceremonies, Senior Gumatj Clan Leader Mr Balupalu Yunupingu was responsible for overseeing and coordinating four evenings of traditional Bunggul.

Balupalu invited surrounding clans to dance each sunset. The Event Director has a difficult responsibility, organising the gapan (paint), the nunga's (traditional dress), and with Balupalu, the designs on the bodies of the Gumatj clan. Together, the logistics of homelands transportation is factored into the bunggul. Laynhapuy Aviation provides the flights into Gove return to the homelands, and other regions, from which dancers were chosen.

The Yothu Yindi Foundation assists many of the Yolngu clans and family members to Garma from across various Indigenous communities and we would like to thank the following Yolngu groups for providing such an exceptional artistic contribution:

Gumatj, Djapu, Galpu, Wangurri, Ngaymil-Dhatiwuy, Dhalwangu, Madarrpa, Marrukulu-marrangu, Waramirri, Mangalilli, Golumala, Dhudi-Djapu, Munyuku clans.

The Yothu Yindi Foundation would also like to thank the songmen and the yidaki masters, whose sounds are carried far and wide across the Dhupuma escarpment, drawing people in to observe and participate in this ancient annual gathering.

### 4.3 Cultural curriculum

On Garma's first day, guests were guided across the Garma grounds on a cultural induction to the Gulkula site. Guests learned about the profound meaning of the site at Gulkula for Yolngu. Gulkula is where the ancestor Ganbulabula brought the Yidaki (didjeridu) into being among the Gumatj people.

On the tours, Gumatj Clan Leaders told the story of Ganbulapula's search for honey, of how Ganbulapula used his walking stick to hit the trees and so disturb the bees. With his hand shielding his eyes from the sun as he looked up, Ganbulapula could see the tiny black bees hovering around their hive in the hollow of a tree. Ganbulapula is also known to look upwards to trace the flight of bees.

Guests learned how honey and the actions of both the Yirritja and Dhuwa moiety ancestors establish a link with people and land and sea-country across North East Arnhem Land.

At this year's Garma, the cultural curriculum also included guided Learning on Country each morning at 11am and a Spear Making workshop at 2pm on the Sunday with the Yirralka Rangers. Yirralka Rangers are responsible for managing the Laynhapuy Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) in Northeast Arnhem Land. Activities undertaken by the Yirralka Rangers within the IPA include maintaining and enhancing biodiversity on land and at sea, protecting cultural sites, developing alternative sources of income and building Yolngu people's skills and capacity.

The Yothu Yindi Foundation thanks the Laynhapuy Homelands Aboriginal Corporation for these activities and the Dhimurru Aboriginal Land Corporation for running the Learning On Country components of Garma.

## 5 Storytelling through art, cinema and music

### 5.1 Gapan Gallery

The Gapan Gallery is an open-air art gallery in a grove of stringy bark trees on the Gulkula site. The gallery displays works from prominent and emerging Arnhem Land Yolngu artists.

The official opening of the Gapan Gallery was held on the first night of the Garma Festival. The gallery was opened with guests sitting in the main gallery area in the darkness observing a women's crying ceremony. The gallery was then lit up to reveal stringy bark trees painted ghostly white with prints mounted upon them trees and illuminated by strategically placed spotlights.

This year's Gapan Gallery featured work from the Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre located in Yirrkala, the Bula'bula Arts Aboriginal Corporation, which is situated in Ramingining and art works by prisoners from the Alice Springs and Darwin Correctional Facilities.

One of the prints, Ganybu by Rerrkírrwaja Munungurr was gifted to Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull during the Key Forum. The print tells the story of two spirit men called Djirrawit and Nyälun who made a fish trap (Dhawurr) in the Gurriyalayala River at Wandawuy.

The Yothu Yindi Foundation also displayed a selection of striking photographs from previous Garma Festivals. These such images, a first of its kind, was enjoyed by the local people themselves who hadn't had the chance to see such imagery from previous Garma events.

### 5.2 Music

The music stage was constantly alive over the course of Garma, and guests fell asleep and awoke each day to the sound of melodies echoing across the Gulkula grounds. Many of the artists who performed in 2017 have local roots, again highlighting the incredible musical talent emerging from Arnhem Land.

Artists included:

- Emily Wurramurra
- Garranali Band
- Yirrina Matjala
- Salt Lake Band
- David Spry and the Moral High Ground
- Neil Murray
- Dhapanbal Yunupingu
- Ganga Girl
- Radical Son
- Friends and Family play songs of Warumpi Band
- Yirrmal
- Bärra West Wind

Two musical performances by young Indigenous artists bookended the ABC's Q&A program. Emily Wurramurra, originally from Groote Eylandt, performed a number of songs with her band before the show, while Yirrmal Marika closed the show with his song Spirit of Place.

### 5.3 Cinema

Four films were presented by Blackfella Films over the course of the Garma Festival.

The film shown on the first night, *In My Own Words*, is a raw and heartfelt film telling the story of adult Indigenous students in Brewarrina in New South Wales, learning to read and write for the first time in their lives. Key to the success and continuity of the literacy program is the local Indigenous people who are trained on the job to be the program's teachers. The audience were taken on a journey with the students sharing their funny moments, but also their frustrations and tears.

*Speari*, shown on the second night, brings Bangarra Dance Theatre's outstanding dance work to the screen. The film follows a young man named Djali from the outback to the streets of Sydney on his quest to understand what it means to be a man with ancient traditions in a modern world.

*We Don't Need a Map*, screened on the third night, is a bold and provocative poetic essay-film exploring the history and meaning of the Southern Cross.

*Zach's Ceremony*, shown on the final night of Garma, is a coming of age story about Zach Domadgee. The audience were taken on a journey with Zach as he grows up and wants to be seen as a man. The documentary includes footage captured over a 10 year period, including rare footage of Zach's initiation ceremony on country. The film touches on the theme of living and walking in both worlds, with Zach growing up in the modern world in Sydney while wanting to stay connected to his culture and family in Domadgee in Far North Queensland.

A special guest at this year's Garma, Zach's father, Mr Alec Domadgee, captivated the audience at the end of the screening by telling the film's unique background story.

## From the grounds

### Garma's guests

The Gumatj people and the Yothu Yindi Foundation were delighted to welcome more than 2500 guests to Gulkula this year.

Garma Festival would have none of its colour and vibrancy without the many people who make the journey to North East Arnhem Land this year and every year.

Guests at Gulkula this year festival included corporate groups, schools, media, performers, volunteers, exhibition stall staff and community members from North East Arnhem Land.

Guests at this year's festival had a range of motivations for coming to Garma. One of the musicians who performed at the festival said:

"I came to Garma to be on country, to connect more with Yolngu people and to rekindle some old Yolngu family connections. It's a learning thing for me. Most Australians, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, could really benefit from coming to this area. There's nowhere else in the nation where people can learn so much about Aboriginal culture, about Yolngu culture."

A member of a corporate group explained that she "came to Garma to engage with some of the big issues facing Australia's First Peoples, but also to expand [her] networks in the social impact sector."

The impressions that people took away from Garma were also varied:

"My biggest impression is that we must learn more about our own cultures. Seeing how caring the Yolngu people care for each other, compared to how rushed we are was quite enlightening."

Another festival-goer said that:

"A big surprise for me was how intact and complex the cultural stuff is. Hearing Djapirri [Mununggirritj] describe cultural practices at a very complex level was a bit of a revelation for me."

This same person wished that there "had been less politicians and more Aboriginal culture."

Another guest at this year's festival was particularly touched by the Gapan Gallery:

"I found the women talking about the designs at the art gallery very moving. People can learn a lot from that."

A member of Sydney University's team that facilitated the Youth Forum said:

"It's been a really good experience. I've learned a lot about Yolngu culture. I've heard about other people's hopes and dreams for the future."

"I also had the privilege of going to a couple of healing ceremonies. It was an amazing insight into women's business and cultural practices here."

"It was great to hear some case studies and success stories, as well as some of the challenges."

Guests at Garma also committed to taking away a personal action, for example:

"Going away from Garma, I will think more about keeping my family connections alive, doing more collaborations musically and on a personal level."

Another person said:

"As an Aboriginal person it's been quite spiritually awakening for me. Because back home there are stark differences in the way we practice our culture. I will take a more open-minded attitude home with me, and a new appreciation for culture."

Garma's volunteers

Garma's many volunteers are pivotal to the festival's continued success. Their hard work, relentless energy and willingness to go the extra mile ensures that Garma maintains its reputation as the nation's leading Indigenous cultural gathering.

This year there were three main categories of volunteer:

- Site Assistants – Who set up and packed down Garma and maintained the cleanliness of campsites.
- Ticketing and administration assistants – Who processed guest registrations, showed guests to their campsites and responded to queries.
- Transport Assistants – Who ensured people could get to and from the site.

The Majority of volunteers spent two weeks on site at Gulkula, from Friday 28 August to Thursday 10 August.

At Garma 2017 there were in total of 35 volunteers. They came from every corner of Australia. For many it was their first time volunteering at Garma, while for others volunteering at Garma is an annual tradition stretching back many years.

The reasons why people volunteer at Garma are varied and sometimes personal.

One of Garma's 2017 volunteers explained her reasons for coming to Garma:

"I came up to Garma because I wanted to do a little bit to help in a small way. I also wanted to find out more about Aboriginal culture and country. As an avid bush walker I've spent so much of my life in the bush while knowing nothing about Aboriginal perspectives on country."

Another Garma 2017 volunteer said that:

"I live in the Northern Territory, where Indigenous people make up almost one-third of the population, but in Darwin I feel so disconnected from Indigenous cultures. It's only through films and reading that I have any understanding of, for example, the importance of connection to country for Indigenous people. It's been both enlightening and humbling to come to Garma and see for myself the ancestral ties between the land, or and the Yolngu people."

For another volunteer at this year's festival, it was about making a small contribution to a festival that puts "Indigenous issues at the forefront of the national political conversation for at least a few days."



*Traditional dress of a Yolngu performer*



# MEDIA CONTENT

*"The Yothu Yindi Foundation is grateful for the continuing coverage we receive in mainstream and Indigenous media, which brings the issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to the top of the national agenda. We're particularly thankful to our Official Media Partners, the ABC, and our Media Supporters, NITV for the crucial role they played in sharing the conversations taking place at Garma with a national audience. We will continue to offer engaging content that remains truly unique and loyal to the Yolngu way of life, whether that be print, radio, TV or digital, our belief is that there is a story for all media category."*

Denise Bowden, Director of Garma

## **Tanya Orman, NITV**

*"Garma is an extraordinary exploration of the richness of Indigenous philosophy & hospitality."*

## **Dan Bouchier, ABC**

*"Garma brings together existing and emerging leaders to discuss, debate and ventilate the big issues affecting all First Australians - in a safe and significant environment."*

## **Avani Dias, ABC**

*"The premier forum for Indigenous Affairs in Australia."*

## **Bridget Brennan, ABC**

*"At Garma Yolngu clans share their stories with Australians who made the trek to the Top End for this important forum overseen by the Yothu Yindi Foundation."*

## **Peter McEvoy, Producer ABC Q&A**

*"Garma has become the leading forum for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians to deal with the big challenges facing our nation and Q&A has been pleased and proud to be part of Garma in recent years. Garma gives Q&A the opportunity to provide the national audience with insight into voices that often don't get the prominence they deserve in our national conversation."*

## **Helen Davidson, The Guardian**

*"A highly charged, high-level political forum."*

## **Stephen Fitzpatrick, The Australian**

*"Garma has become the premier annual gathering for expressing Indigenous aspirations and concerns, whether political, cultural, social."*

## **Laura Morelli, NITV**

*"This festival is Australia's leading Indigenous cultural exchange event and a national hub for major forums with discussion, policy and action formulation."*

## **Graeme Richardson, The Australian**

*"The Garma Festival is a wonderful display of all that is good in Aboriginal culture."*



*Garma Q&A broadcast from the bush*

# MEDIA EXPOSURE

## OVER 100+ GARMA STORIES

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*A blend of youngsters and the elderly watch on*



*A night of comedy under the stars*



*Yirrmaal performs to the Garma audience*



*ABC's Q&A audience*